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See Something, Say Something, Do Something

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Over the past few years, If You See Something, Say Something has become a mantra in this country. We hear it on the news, see it on television or take note of signs with this message posted in airports, shopping malls and other public places. This slogan has also been adopted

safety program, is a novel idea for getting all employees involved in day-to-day safety. It capitalizes on the idea that we are all our “brother’s keeper” by stressing our need to watch out for one another and, when someone does or is about to do something in an unsafe manner, we stop to discuss it. In theory, when “If you see something, say something” is tied to safety, it should help companies reduce incidents, accidents and injuries on mine sites and related construction projects.



Even though this slogan may be promoted on the job, employees’ perceptions of this initiative are unknown. Do employees feel this is a “tattle-tale” program where they are being

for use by many businesses including some in the aggregates processing and heavy highway construction industries.

The Presence of “See Something, Say Something” in Health and Safety Programs

Incorporating “If you see something, say something” into a company’s health and

asked to “police” the safety behavior of their co-workers? Or, do they step up and “say something” when they “see something” of concern? Research shows that employees sometimes see hazards or suffer what they believe to be minor injuries and do not tell their supervisors. In addition, (Ragain, 2016) found employees are good at documenting

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Tales from the Road



Side by Side

*In the mornin’, before the suns up,
In the evenin’, beneath the moon,
They will travel through the darkness,
Side by Side – Payin’ Dues.*

“Side by Side”
Brother Trucker

I met my wife, Tania, in 1990 in Edinburgh, Scotland. She was a beautiful, worldly princess from New Zealand and I was a gangly, raw construction worker from southwest Iowa. We were both traveling and working our way around Europe. This chance meeting was the beginning of a life-long love affair and partnership that would take us around the world and back again.

We traveled and worked our way around Europe together. Working in Scotland as a bricklayer laborer and bartender, in Greece as a dishwasher and hostess and in the Netherlands as tulip bulb counters. When the money ran out eight months into our travels and I had to return home, she stayed to work in London and saved enough to come live with me in Iowa (in my parent’s house). Together we saved up enough money for our next adventure. We bought a VW Bus and drove to Alaska to try our hands at being lumberjacks. It was back-breaking work but she worked as hard, or harder, than everyone else. She never complained about being cold and broke. When her visa expired, and our luck ran out, she returned to New Zealand and I

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Upcoming Events

(Click event for more information)

2018 Eastern Iowa APAI Golf Outing

Date: August 14, 2018
Location: Amana Colonies Golf Course, Amana, IA

2018 Western Iowa APAI Golf Outing

Date: August 28, 2018
Location: Majestic Hills Golf Course, Denison, IA

2018 Strategic Asphalt Committee Field Trip

Date: September 11-12, 2018
Location: NW Iowa with overnight in Sioux City

2018 APAI 63rd Annual Convention

Date: November 28 – 29, 2018
Location: West Des Moines Marriott, West Des Moines, IA

2018 IMPACT Leadership Conference

Date: September 12-14, 2018
Location: The Madison Hotel Washington, D.C.

1st International Conference On Stone Matrix Asphalt (SMA)

Date: November 5-7, 2018
Location: Westin Peachtree Plaza Hotel, Atlanta, GA

2019 NAPA Annual Convention

Date: January 20-23, 2019
Location: JW Marriott Beach Resort, Marco Island, FL

2019 World of Asphalt

Date: February 12-14, 2019
Location: Indiana Convention Center, Indianapolis, IN



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went back home to Iowa. We spent a year and 8000 miles apart.

I spent that next summer working on the highway thinking about her and what



she meant to me. That winter, I packed up my backpack and went to New Zealand to get her. We have been together ever since. We have had some hard times, like everyone else, but she has always stood with me and I have always stood with her.

Working construction is a tough, tough lifestyle. It's long hours, time away from home and family and it's very hard on relationships. It takes a strong commitment, and a will to work together, to get through

the long seasons. This article is a testament to both the men and women who work in our industry, and the men and women who carry the load at home, with family, and often another job. It is the love and support of these wives, husbands and children that allows the hard work to continue, for deadlines to be met, for the extra effort that makes Iowa's asphalt industry so great.

The opening verse of this story is from the song "Side by Side" written by my good friend Andy Fleming of the Brother Trucker band. He wrote the song about Tania and me. My favorite verse of the song goes like this:

*He smells like diesel, She kind of likes that
His tattered jeans stained with fumes.*

*It's like he's with her, doing laundry.
Something Simple, Sounds so good.*

Tania has stood with me through 16-hour days, tack-covered jeans, night work, late dinners, unemployment checks, rain days, and she has encouraged me in all of my efforts to move forward in our industry. She is a great mother to our son, Henry. She loves asphalt. She is the foundation of my life, both spiritually and professionally. She is a great ambassador for the people who

work in our industry and for all the people who support those who work in in our industry. Thank you, Tania, and thank you to all of you who stand behind the women and men in our industry. We love you.

She likes the smell of diesel.

I kind of like that.

Smoother is Better,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bill Rosener'.

Bill Rosener

A promotional poster for the 63rd APAI Annual Convention. The background is a photograph of a two-lane asphalt road stretching into the distance. At the top center is the APAI logo. Below it, the text '63RD APAI ANNUAL CONVENTION' is written in large, bold, yellow letters. Underneath that, 'NOVEMBER 28-29, 2018' is written in even larger, bold, yellow letters. At the bottom, in smaller white text, it says 'WEST DES MOINES MARRIOTT HOTEL WEST DES MOINES, IOWA'. The bottom of the poster has a solid yellow background with the text 'SAVE THE DATE' in large, bold, black letters.

SAVE THE DATE

APAI Summer Meeting Reinigorates Attendees

The APAI 2018 Summer Meeting on July 19-20 was a refreshing two days of information, partnering and recreation. The event featured a “Partners Lunch” with presentations from special guests: Director of the Iowa DOT, Mark Lowe; District 4 Engineer, Scott Schram; Scott County Engineer and 2018 President of the Iowa County Engineers Association, Jon Burgstrum; and City of Dubuque Engineer and Past-President of the APWA, Jon Dienst. “I love the addition of the Partners Lunch,” said Bill Rosener, Executive Vice President of the APAI. “Our industry is built on a mutual respect with our local agencies partners, along with our partners at the Iowa DOT. This meeting

helps strengthen our commitment to building quality roadways with all three levels of government.”

The luncheon was followed by a beautiful and informative trip to Round Lake Winery, a cruise on West Okoboji, and a delicious dinner under the stars with camaraderie being served as the main course.

Friday morning featured a round of golf at Emerald Hills for the APAI Championship. The title was won handily by the team of Brad and Kendra Henningsen, Royce Fichtner, and Noel Schulz.

Thank you to all of our attendees, speakers and sponsors for making the 2018 APAI Summer Meeting Great Again!



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the unsafe behaviors they observe, but they are not as good at directly intervening in those unsafe behaviors. They are not stopping and effectively changing unsafe behavior when it occurs. “When you consider that employees observe more than three unsafe acts a week on average – and 12% of employees observe more than five unsafe acts each week – this is a legitimate concern” (Ragain, 2016).

To illustrate, research has shown that a sense of powerlessness often keeps young workers from telling their supervisor about safety concerns (Tucker & Turner,



2013). Those involved in this study said they take a ‘wait-and-see’ approach, in hopes that other workers might notice the hazard or that the situation would resolve itself. In addition, workers did not believe individually that they would have any effect on the situation. When asked what would happen if they did not have co-worker support, one participant said, “You’d be alone and nothing would get done” (Tucker & Turner, 2013, p. 108). However, if co-workers share the same concerns about a hazard they are more likely to go and discuss it with their supervisor together.

Even though this slogan may not always be acted upon, there is no doubt many companies have employees who stop their work and say something to a supervisor or co-worker when a hazard, issue or unsafe condition is observed. In these cases, the situations are corrected to ensure no one is involved in an accident or injured on the job. In an ideal world, every time a hazard

or problem is identified, employees will stop work, say something or do something about it. Unfortunately, we do not operate in an “ideal” world and this does not always happen. The barriers which prevent employees from saying something are not all known nor understood.

An Inquiry into The Barriers of Speaking Up

Previous research (Ragain, 2016), involving 2,600 employees, **found only about 39% indicated they would intervene in hazardous situations they witness at work.** We know employees generally take their responsibility for safety seriously. So, the question remains, when unsafe conditions or actions occur, why do workers say nothing approximately 61% of the time? Scace (2017) summarized Ragain’s research to highlight several things which may contribute to an employee’s unwillingness to speak up when they see something which is unsafe:

- **Pressure to Produce:** When employees feel pressure to produce they tend to block out everything around them and do not see the unsafe actions they or their co-workers may be taking to get the job done.
- **Unit Bias:** As a rule, employees, who see an unsafe condition or action, will wait to say something to a supervisor or co-worker until they finish the task on which they are working.
- **Deference to Authorities:** As a rule, employees will not speak up to their supervisors or “the boss”.
- **Bystander Affect:** When there are more people around, the less likely an employee will speak up. In this situation, it is assumed someone else will help or speak up.
- **Defensiveness:** This is the natural reaction we have when confronted

about doing something wrong. Research reveals 28% of workers become defensive and 17% become angry when a co-worker points out an unsafe behavior.

- **Stress:** If employees speak up, it has the potential to place them in a stressful situation with co-workers; therefore, they may not say something because of possible workplace and/or co-worker tension.
- **Rationalization:** In cases where an unsafe action is observed, employees may rationalize not speaking up by saying “no one else has said anything, so it must not be a big deal.”

What was also surprising, about results of Ragain’s research, is that they did not fluctuate across different industries, countries and cultures. Based on their responses and previous research, one might ask whether initiatives like “see something, say something” are effective or if they are just another “flavor of the month”? Every day, our employees see unsafe actions or conditions which, if brought up, could be stopped. However, because of the reasons listed above and causes outlined in other research, much too often nothing is said and the unsafe conditions or actions are not addressed. Why do employees stay silent? What keeps them from stepping up in these situations?

Using Research to Help Understand and Mitigate Perceived Barriers

Employees are provided with policies, procedures and best practices focused on keeping them safe while at work. But sometimes a company’s culture, unintentionally, allows employees to drift from a written policy or practice to one which is less restrictive or not followed. The written or verbal safety messages, sent out by companies, are generally helpful in guiding employee behavior; but in the actual workplace, an employee’s safety behavior may be different from what is desired and expected. As a result, having a pulse on your organization’s current safety climate could provide valuable information into barriers to speaking up and taking

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proactive steps to mitigate hazards in the workplace.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), from 2016 to 2018, administered a series of safety climate surveys to employees in the mining industry. Results from these surveys shed



more light into this phenomenon and help us understand why workers do not always say something when they see something.

External Pressures on the Job

First, previous research highlighted pressure to produce as a primary reason for employees not stepping up and saying something if hazardous situations or actions are observed. Forty percent of employees in the NIOSH study also indicated they felt impossible production pressures to some degree. One point of interest in these survey results is that, for those workers in their first few months on the job, they are more likely to feel less pressure. However, over time their perceived pressure to produce increases, particularly once they reach 6 years in their position. In this regard, workers with more experience in their job may be less likely to say something if they feel an increased sense of stress. In addition, data from the survey showed a positive correlation with workers' risk-taking behaviors. Specifically, **as workers' felt sense of pressure to produce goes up, so does their risk tolerance.**

In situations such as this, front-line leaders and co-workers must say something if unwanted safety behaviors, caused by not

following policies and procedures, occur in the workplace. Specifically, companies need to look at how a "see something, say something or do something" initiative is delivered to their employees. To be successful, they must ensure supervisors and their teams truly understand what it means

and know their actions are supported under all types of circumstances. Employees need to know and believe it is not about "snitching" on someone or being a "tattle-tale" nor is it about blaming or pointing fingers at members of their team. It is about doing the right thing and taking care of one another. We tend to get hurt when we forget to do the

little things, overlook some of the hazards associated with the tasks we perform or neglect to do things we know we should do. Helping each other, by pointing these things out, might prevent someone from getting hurt or even worse.

Insufficient Leadership

Case study research indicates that poor leadership can result in accidents or even fatalities as well as poor mental and physical health among employees (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work [EU-OSHA], 2012). Additional occupational safety and health advocates argue the importance of leadership as well. For example, in his article *Becoming A Safety Leader*, Tavenner (2007) discussed how successful programs push the responsibility for safety down into the organization and that, as responsibility for safety is pushed down, safety becomes a team effort. Tavenner (2007) stated, "Safety is a team game that takes involvement from everyone. Developing employees into safety leaders and fostering an action-based culture while pushing responsibility for safety down into an organization creates a team based approach that results in superior performance" (np).

However, employees cannot take responsibility for safety if they are too scared to say something. In the NIOSH survey, 33% of hourly workers felt they could not question safety rules or procedures. Leaders, at all levels, will determine whether members of their team perceive they feel safe enough to speak up in their workplace. Supervisors, who believe their only role is to manage people, budgets, projects and meet production demands, will probably be less sensitive to listening to members of their team who might be inclined to point out unsafe conditions or behaviors in the workplace. Having employees who observe something and say something will not occur if leadership is lacking.

Consistent Proactivity

Based on the research discussed, it seems that leadership is critical if we expect our employees to step up and say something when they see an unsafe behavior or condition. In a 2017 leadership seminar, a quote was offered by Kurt Uhler: "Leadership comes from influence, and influence can come from anyone, at any level and in any role". Therefore, when circumstances present themselves and someone must step up or take charge, each of us has the potential to become a leader. There are still opportunities that can be seized in the workplace to further develop leaders. For example, the NIOSH survey found that 14% of employees do not make suggestions to improve health and safety. It can be hypothesized these same employees do not speak up if they see something unsafe at work. Along the same vein, 11% of employees do not regularly report health and safety-related incidents, turning an eye to hazardous situations. Strong leaders, who strive to develop individuals and teams, will generally have the skills required to foster the openness and security employees need to encourage them to speak up when they see an unsafe condition or behavior in the workplace...weak leaders will not have these skills.

Conclusions

Developing an understanding of why employees do not speak up, when they see unsafe conditions or behaviors,

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should encourage companies to develop educational practices aimed at improving employee involvement in workplace safety. Educational sessions, when developed, should focus on providing both front line leaders and employees, with the skills they need to effectively intervene when they observe something which is unsafe in their workplace. Improving employees' knowledge in this area is important because (Ragain, 2016) found employees have a desire to speak up, but often choose not to intervene because they are not equipped to do so effectively.

Employees in high-risk industries like road construction and mining should feel supported and encouraged to speak

up when they see an unsafe situation or co-worker behavior. As a starting point, companies should consider conducting an evaluation of their safety culture, policies and best practices to see if they need to be updated or changed to allow employees to feel more comfortable speaking up if they observe an unsafe situation. If employees know they can approach their co-workers or supervisors and freely discuss safety concerns, without fear of retaliation or losing their jobs, positive changes in the culture and proactivity in the workplace will begin.

In addition to evaluating their safety culture, policies, best practices and skills of their leaders, companies must take time

to evaluate how they educate employees about the need, intent and goals of all safety initiatives in which they expect their employees to participate. This educational process should include not letting our "ego" get in the way; being humble, stepping up and becoming a leader when circumstance require it. Too often programs or initiatives are rolled out with little or no employee education and as a result, they generate minimal participation or just "go by the way-side". If employees are not provided with the "why" or given direction, they will not commit to following a program nor will they meet a company's expectations. As Ragain said, "we need to stop assuming that it is only a matter of motivation and start addressing the real factors that keep employees from speaking up and doing so effectively" (2016).

The full article was published in *Rock Products Magazine*, pg 112, August 2018.

Dr. Joe McGuire is an Environmental Manager with CRH Americas Materials and has been in the industry for over 30 years working in the environmental and safety areas. He has a Ph.D. in Education and is developing training materials for those in the industry to use. He has provided information or training sessions for the construction industry associations in Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin, and for National groups too. He has published research articles extensively in industry trade magazines and journals and has published 9 training booklets dealing with safety and environmental topics.

Emily Haas, Ph.D. is with Human Factors Branch of NIOSH's Pittsburg Research Division. She studies organizational culture and risk management in areas specific to leadership in order to discover ways to strengthen the safety culture in mining workplaces.

Scott Bohm is Safety Manager for Hallett Materials. He has worked in the Asphalt and Aggregates Production industries for more than 20 years. He has received numerous safety related certifications and is used throughout the company to train employees. Bohm has been very active in developing educational materials, conducting research and evaluation of training processes.

APAI Welcomes New Members

APAI continues to add new members. At their last Board Meeting, the Board of Directors elected one Associate Member and one Consulting Engineering Firm to the Association. Thank you to those who have helped recruit these new members.



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Please welcome these new members and show your support for them, by contacting them and utilizing their services. To find contact information for these members, go to <http://www.apai.net/associate-members.aspx>.

APAI Open Houses Shine with Innovation

The APAI staff and contractor members have had an eventful spring and summer with Open Houses in Keokuk, Tama and Hamilton Counties along with the City of Bettendorf. These projects highlighted the use of the High-Performance Thin Overlay (a.k.a. Hi-Pro) and the asphalt interlayer. More opportunities to see these innovative processes later this summer and fall. Thank you to all of our host agencies and contractors for highlighting the innovative qualities of asphalt. [Click here for more pictures and videos.](#)



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