

Building a safety community

There's strength in community. Larger and more inclusive than safety committees, task forces, or departments, safety communities involve all types of workers at an organization – even those without formal safety training or experience – to contribute to a strong safety culture. In a safety community, people with unique perspectives and talents come together to help create a safe and healthy workplace for everyone.

To build a safety community, it's important to understand the motives, strengths, and challenges of its members. Here are six personas who commonly make up an organization's safety community:

Change-maker

Motivated by forward progress, the change-maker is always ahead of the curve when it comes to new tools and technologies. With an *onward and upward* mentality, the change-maker is always discovering techniques and processes to achieve important goals.



Strengths:

- Prepared with a plan for every scenario
- Up to date on the most modern and innovative tools and technology
- Knows the best tools and equipment for any job or task

Challenges:

- Can focus more on the future than what is happening right now
- Often doesn't prioritize cost efficiency

Go-getter

The go-getter is driven by the goal of a safe, healthy, and thriving community and they enjoy solving safety and health problems. They are opinionated and compassionate, driven by their vision of a world without injuries or illness.



Strengths:

- Inspires change
- Has a recommendation for every problem
- Good under pressure

Challenges:

- Can miss smaller day-to-day issues while they strive for safety utopia
- Can overpower other voices with their own recommendations and solutions

Enforcer

Known by others in the community to do everything "by the book," the enforcer wants perfection in compliance, policies, and checklists. Failure is not an option for the enforcer, and they will do anything it takes to always keep workers safe.



Strengths:

- Passionate and focused
- Never cuts corners
- Always intervenes when they observe unsafe behavior

Challenges:

- Relies too heavily on negative reinforcement
- So focused on following procedures they miss an issue's root cause

Realist

The realist wants to find practical solutions for all safety issues. They are never afraid ask "why?" Why do we do it this way? How will this impact the community?



Strengths:

- Will always speak up, even if they are a lone voice
- Uncovers issues that no one else has thought of
- Asks questions that lead to positive change

Challenges:

- Can create tension, especially with those who are change resistant
- Can impede progress

Rookie

The rookie is new to the safety and health arena and has a strong desire to learn as much as possible. What they lack in experience, they make up for with fresh eyes and enthusiasm.



Strengths:

- Soaks up ideas like a sponge
- Provides a fresh perspective, exploring previously unexplored ideas
- Is eager to make a difference

Challenges:

- Can delay progress while they receive the right training and gain experience
- May cause frustration among experienced team members

Ally

For the ally, the team's greater good is the number one priority. They do not usually come up with ideas, but they will adopt a good idea and create excitement around it. They will support and champion the ideas of others to make everyone safer.



Strengths:

- Identifies and promotes good ideas
- Cares deeply about the well-being of their people
- Relates well to anyone who doesn't live and breathe safety

Challenges:

- Can seem disconnected as they don't often express their own opinions
- Seen as biased when they side with ideas based on who presents them

The advantages of working with safety personas

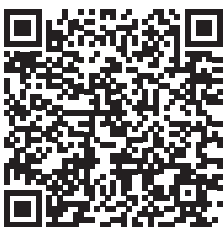
The biggest boost to a safety and health program is acknowledging the unique perspectives, experiences, and ideas that each persona can bring to every issue.

Diversity of thought leads to stronger policies and procedures and increases worker buy in as everyone can see how they impact the whole organization. It can also help identify missing voices in your safety community and help you recruit the best team to address safety challenges and opportunities.

At the end of the day, the result will be a stronger safety community that truly appreciates the strengths that others bring to the mix.

Activity ideas

- Group discussion: As a group talk about the personas in your group and how each can benefit your health and safety efforts.
- Along with safety personas, everyone has a preferred style of working. Scan the QR code below to fill out the [work styles activity](#) to see how you prefer to work. How does it complement your persona? How does it challenge your persona?
- With personas in mind, review a safety policy or procedure. Use the personas to help you find different ways of looking at the policy or procedure. Does this perspective lead to changes?



Scan code to download the work styles activity pdf.