



# COMPLETING THE SAFETY PUZZLE

BY WYLIE DAVIDSON



## HOW MANY TIMES

have you done a puzzle in your lifetime? 20? 50? 100? At least a few times I'm sure, and if you have children that number may be even higher!

Regardless of how large or small that puzzle was, you probably started in the same way most do. Many of us start in the same way by creating the borders, finding the edges and corner pieces, and from there we work our way toward completing the image. Often referring to the box top for guidance.

As safety professionals, we often approach our safety programs the same way: start with the basics and then focus on the rest. For many of us, we are at the tipping point. We have the corners and sides in place. We have most of the image figured out with our policies, procedures, guidelines, and our proper gear and equipment. What we are missing are the few last pieces of the puzzle to make it complete. Those missing pieces are what we personally bring to the puzzle: the pieces that define who we are and what is most important.

One of the toughest challenges we face in attempting to create, grow, and sustain a positive safety culture program is getting our employees to buy into the program, to comply and engage. Compliance and engagement are the standards we use to measure how well our safety programs track with employees, but a standard we often find more important is how much an employee wants to comply and engage. So, how do we close the gap between asking them to be safe and them intrinsically wanting to be safe?

It's simple. We need to make safety

personal. We need to help them determine who and what are most important to them. Placing those pieces in their own personal safety puzzle empowers them to create their own safety legacy.

Let's face it, we will all leave a legacy, good or bad. We don't really have a choice in that fact. We do have a choice however in the type of legacy we leave. Making the conscious choice to start creating a positive safety legacy is the first step. A lot of what will create that legacy is formed by our character, how we act and treat others – and our competence, what we bring to the table every day.

## TOP 5 Pieces to Your Safety Puzzle Legacy

### 1. Know Your "Why"

What means the most to you? Your family, your quality of life, your future

### 2. Know Your Value

Know your role in what makes up your "why" and the impact you have on them

### 3. Know What You Can Give Back

Identify ways you can share your knowledge and experience with others, both on and off the job

### 4. Unleash the Energy

Put forth the energy to share your knowledge, mentor others, and lead by example

### 5. Constantly Keep Building

Continually build, share, and grow your own legacy

Now, no one likes to discuss dying, especially in a safety magazine. Many may find it counterintuitive, but I recently attended a service for a lifelong friend of mine whose father passed away. At his service the pastor spoke of his life, his accomplishments, and his character. He said it's not the dates on the tombstone that make a difference, but it's the "dash" in between. Your dash represents everything you've done in your life, your accomplishments,

your character, and the impact you made on those around you. It's ironic because the dash is so small, but it means so much. He encouraged people to "live your life on the dash" because that's where you do your living, make your impressions, and ultimately where you will leave your legacy for others to follow.

The goal is not to live forever. We all know that's not going to happen. The goal is to create something that will live forever; a legacy for others to follow. Make yours legendary!

So how do we complete the puzzle?

We start by finding the passion to comply and engage. By determining who and what are most important to us and by placing them in our own personal safety puzzle, and by leaving a legacy that others will follow and look up to.

When you're not sure why you should work safely or start to lose focus, take a step back and refer to your own personal puzzle box top for clarification. Everything you need to know about leaving your own safety legacy is right there between the corners and edges. **ESG**

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