**Effective Safety Coordinators – the key success steps**

**AN INTRODUCTION**

On 14th May 2015, OSHE held its 2nd Safety, Health and Environment Conference and Dr. Robert Emery, among many other Health and Safety experts, was invited to share his strategies to be an effective Safety Coordinator. With over 30 years of experiences in Health and Safety, and speaking with multiple national board certifications under his belt, he akin the role of an effective Safety Coordinator to that of a salesperson. In fact, he pointed out that Safety Coordinators are often unfairly viewed by the mass as only a front line ‘complaint box’ in addition to their main jobs in NUS.

What then is his advice for Safety Coordinators to be champions of safety in their own department? We sum up his selling strategy in three steps:

**Right:** Dr Emery giving his talk at SHE Conference 2015

**STEP 1: KNOW YOUR BUYERS**

Understand and appreciate what your colleagues’ values. As Dr. Emery explains, all universities, including NUS, does three things: Research, Education and Service. We need to appreciate faculty members as key people in the university who are indispensable to fulfilling all three missions of NUS and understand their needs and concerns.

**STEP 2: KNOW WHAT ARE YOU SELLING**

The idea of ‘safety’ may not always mean the same thing between you and your colleagues. We need to recognise that there are many features of safety which one can sell (Figure 1), and believe in the product that we are selling. To decide which will make the deal, always ask: Which would your buyer be interested in?

**Figure 1: Safety in different perspectives**

**STEP 3: KNOW HOW TO SELL**
Communicate succinctly using terms which your colleagues understands, and justify your actions for doing so. Also be effective and efficient in both your written and oral communication skills! You may employ different tactics such as persuade, convince, induce, impress, discourage, or whichever is more effective for you to move the buyer. However, always remember that being an active listener and someone who cares about the buyer’s feedback can score you a sale better!

**CONCLUSION**

Safety Coordinators in NUS are not only the bridge between OSHE and your department, but also advocates for protecting the health and safety of everyone. It was heartening to see many of them in the audience interacting actively with Dr. Emery to find out how they could fulfill their roles more effectively and uphold safety in their departments.

To put Dr. Emery’s pointers into practice, OSHE would love to know your needs and hear you out on how we can serve and support you better while you drive safety in your department:

1. To contact your Safety Officer, [click here](#).
2. To get the full slides of Dr. Robert Emery’s and other speakers’ talks, [click here](#).

---

1 Dr. Robert Emery is Vice President for Safety, Health, Environment and Risk Management for The University of Texas Health Science Centre at Houston. He is also a Professor in Occupational Health at the University of Texas, School of Public Health. Dr. Emery has over 30 years of experience in health & safety and holds the unique distinction of being the only person to hold national board certification in all of the seven main areas of health & safety.