

SAFETY DIRECTOR BULLETIN

SHIFT BRIEFING EFFECTIVENESS

Safety professionals have been telling agencies about the importance of daily morning briefings with crews. A recent article, *The Lens of Language Intelligence*, by Barry Nelson and Chuck Pettinger, in the December 2024 issue of the *Professional Safety Journal* discusses research that shows how to make pre-task briefings more effective. If an agency commits time at the beginning of each day to hold briefings, it should want to get the maximum benefit or return on its investment.

Researchers analyzed thousands of audio and visual recordings of morning briefings across several industries using artificial intelligence, voice-to-text translators, and natural language processors. They used the tools on a mega scale to measure a pre-shift briefing's content, participant interaction, and indicators of caring and other emotions. A scale was developed to score the talks from 0 to 3. The research showed that talks that scored above a 2.5 with deeper discussion of a job's hazards, participation by all members, and verbal & facial indications of caring for each other, had an injury rate $\frac{1}{4}$ of that of agencies whose morning talks scored under 2.5. That's a significant return on investment.

Here are some of the highlights of the article.

- Only 25% of surveyed crews attended pre-task meetings. For those who did, workers spent 0% to 2% of the meeting contributing to the dialogue. Further, the authors found that 40% of the cases involved only one person speaking, effectively creating a monologue rather than a dialogue of potential hazards and safeguards.
 - The authors assert that effective leadership is more likely to happen when organizations foster a culture where every voice is heard, every concern is addressed, and every action is guided by a commitment to caring for each other.
 - Extensive research shows that high-quality shift briefings correlate with improved psychological safety, comprehensive hazard analysis, effective communication, stronger relationship-based leadership, and attributes such as employee engagement, trust, and mutual respect.
- Tracking certain metrics of morning briefings can serve as powerful leading indicators of the effectiveness of a team's safety culture.
 - Is the day's work and scope clearly articulated?
 - Number of participants' contributions to the conversation
 - Number of expressions of caring and trust for each other
 - The specificity of hazards discussed
 - Identification of potential injury precursors
- The core of improved morning briefings lies in encouraging authentic conversations. Employees should shape the conversation, discussing what matters to them and resolving issues. When the dialogue starts with the work at hand, it naturally leads to general discussions about safety, hazards, and hazard mitigation.

Key takeaway: The article used AI and mega data to show that properly structured shift briefings have multiple benefits to an organization. However, tracking the same metrics as above on the department level and educating leaders on the skills needed to hold better conversations can lead to a greater return on the time invested.

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