

Action Plan Communication

WHY / WHAT / HOW

Here is an expanded way to look at problems and issues at work. When people create an “action plan” to fix a problem, they often first identify WHAT the issues are that need to be fixed. This is important; however, it is incomplete. It is missing the WHY and the HOW of the issue — WHY we are doing this work, and HOW it specifically gets done.

Action Plan Communication

Three steps toward communicating a complete action plan:

1. WHY — Know and describe workers’ core values and motivations for doing this work.
2. WHAT — Identify the key issues and problems of what needs to be corrected.
3. HOW — Describe the specific, detailed activities people can take to accomplish this work.

After – Worker Values, Culture, and Community¹

If you have a general audience, keep the language simple and direct. (Use “use” – do not utilize “utilize.”)

If your audience is other managers, etc. — then use the appropriate lingo.

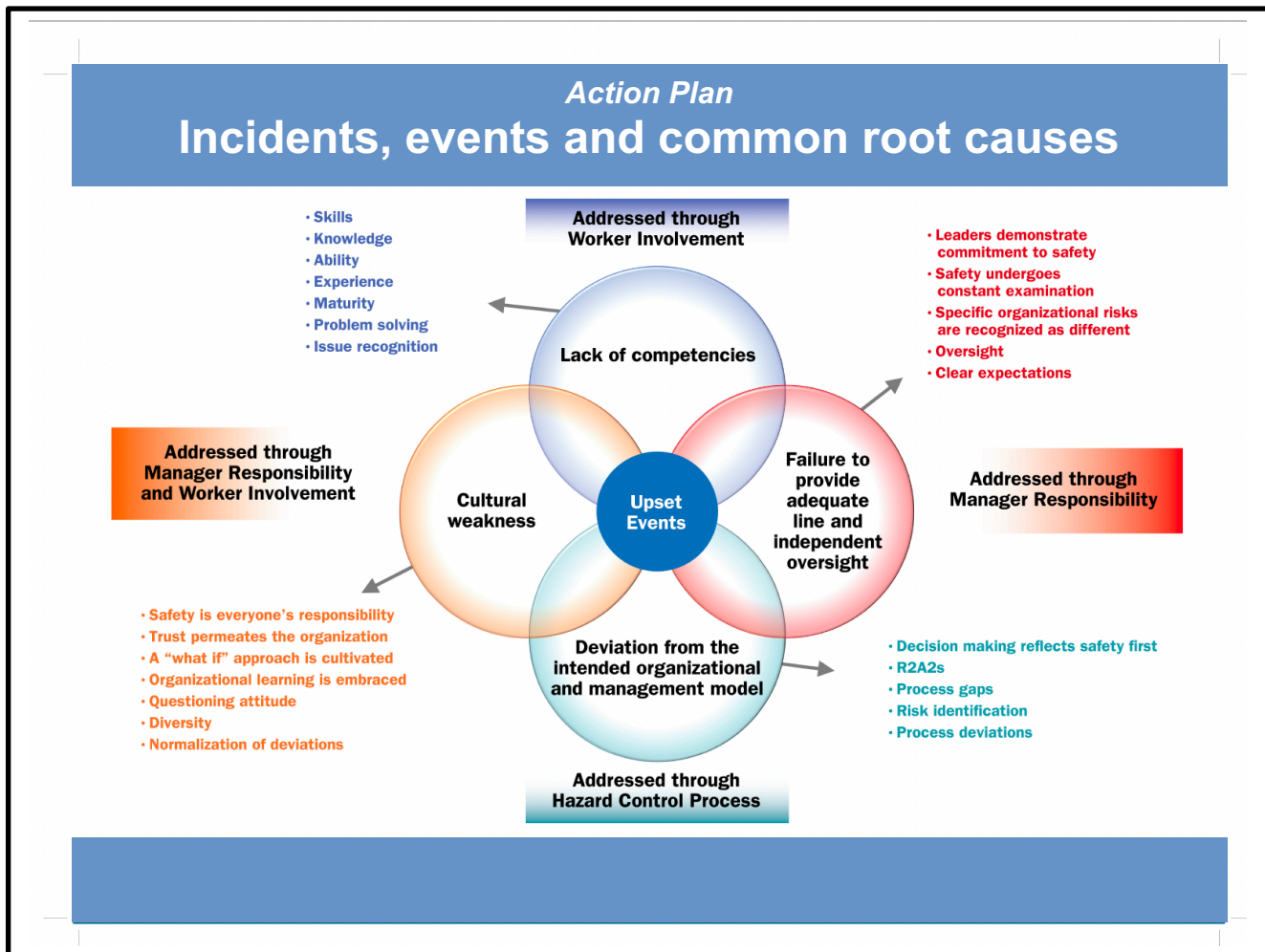
However, if your audience is other managers who will need to communicate with a general audience, keep using everyday, simple, and direct language to reach the most people.

If you want more details:

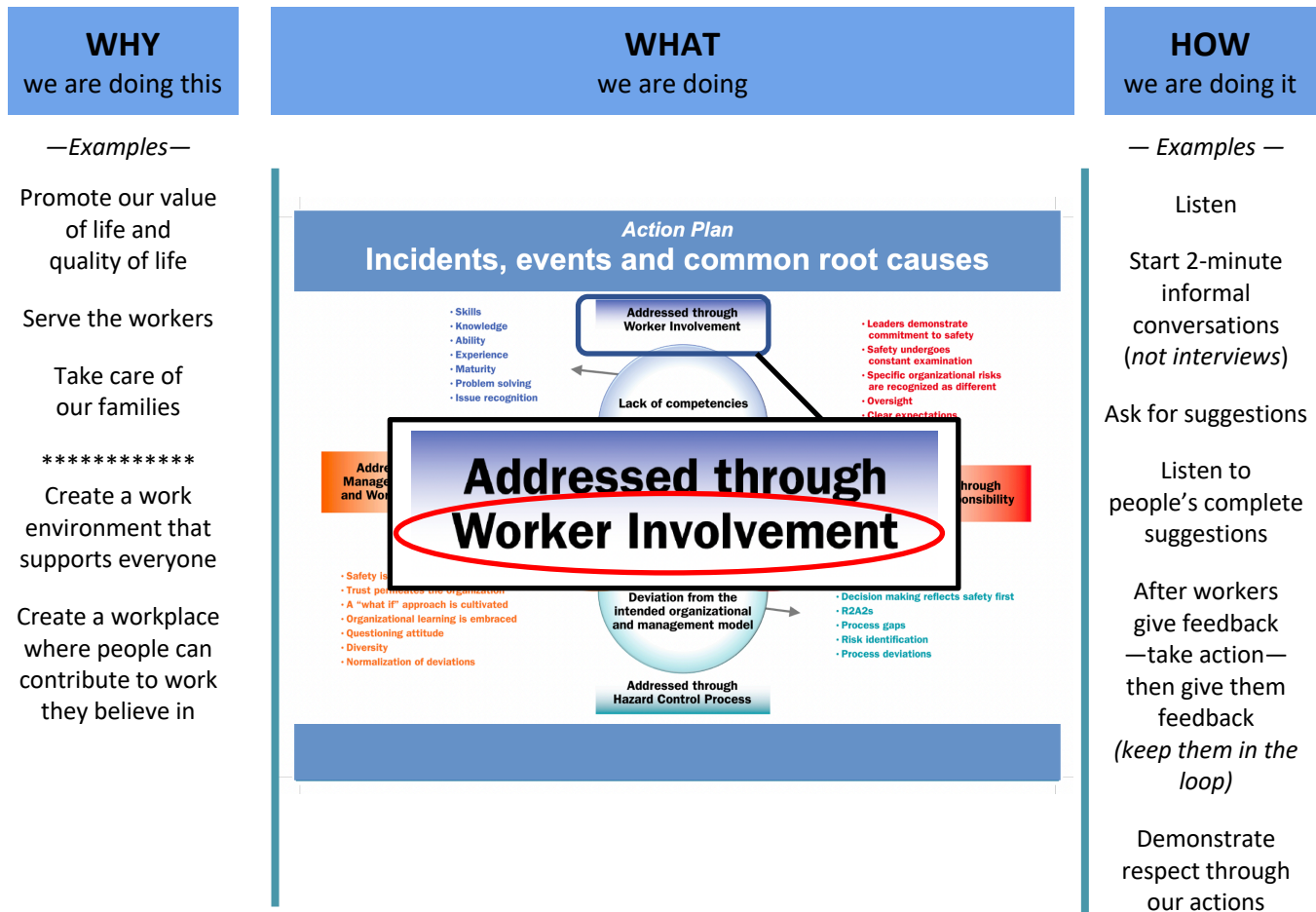
1. WHY — Know and describe workers’ core motivations and values for doing this work.
State the core value at the beginning when promoting the action plan. This sets the context for the work ahead. This is not a “mission statement” or a “program objective.” Instead, these values are part of people’s everyday thoughts and conversation. Therefore, the language you use needs to be personal and informal. A word of caution: Stating the core motivation or value should not be overused — otherwise, it becomes a slogan and loses its meaning.
 - *Example: Instead of assuming that the purpose of a safety measure is to prevent injuries — state the more basic, human value, that we value life and the quality of life.*
2. WHAT — Identify the key issues and problems and what needs to be corrected.
This is where the key elements of an issue and its corrections are outlined. The scope must be wide, going beyond “worker error” to examining the work environment, work culture, regulations, spoken and unspoken rules, and more.
3. HOW — Describe the specific, detailed activities people can take to accomplish this work.
Here, specific, detailed, hands-on activities are outlined to bring the corrective actions directly to the workers and their worksites.
 - *Example: Instead of saying, “Improve communication” — describe specific actions where people talk and listen to each other with personal, informal conversations.*

¹ Nicholas, R. Worker Values, Culture, and Community. 2010.

As an example, this chart will be expanded to show how the sequence of the three steps might take shape to meet a specific action.



Action Plan Communication Worker Involvement



When promoting **Worker Involvement**, start by describing the key, shared value that workers want to contribute to the process. And end by describing specific activities that by their very nature will promote workers' suggestions and feedback.

1. WHY — *Because we want to create a workplace where all of us can contribute to work that we believe in, where we know we are included as part of the team...*
2. WHAT — *We want to find ways, with everyone's help and suggestions, where we have ongoing worker involvement in all of our projects.*
3. HOW — *Here are some ways we can begin...*
 - a. *We can start short, 2-minute, informal conversations with each other; ask how the other person is doing; ask if they need anything. How can I help?*
 - b. *We can make sure that we listen to their entire suggestion and feedback, not cutting them off.*
 - c. *Then we can take action whenever possible, making sure to give them feedback on their feedback (even if there is no news yet), making sure everyone knows they have been heard.*

Action Plan Communication Problem Solving



When promoting **Problem Solving**, start by describing the shared value that workers want to be seen as part of the team, to participate in the process and be heard. And end by describing specific activities that by their very nature will promote workers’ suggestions and feedback.

1. WHY — *Because we want to create a workplace where all of us can contribute to work that we believe in, where we know we are included as part of the team and our full suggestions are heard...*
2. WHAT — *We want to find ways to meet, with everyone’s help and suggestions, where everybody’s observations about problems and their solutions are heard in their entirety in all of our projects.*
3. HOW — *Here are some ways we can begin...*
 - a. *We can first let everyone know what the key issues are and give people time to think about it.*
 - b. *Then we can come together and brainstorm as a team. First, all ideas are considered. The word “NO” does not exist because even a bad idea can lead to a good idea.*
 - c. *And then, after enough time, all of us can begin evaluating the suggestions and refine the options to arrive at the best choice.*