



CASE STUDY:

Transforming Safety Engagement on the WestConnex

AT A GLANCE

CHALLENGES

- Presenters of toolbox talks, often highly skilled in their technical fields, lacked formal training in effective communication and engagement techniques when presenting to large groups.
- Traditional safety briefings lacked engagement, putting workers at risk due to a lack of attention.
- Without proper engagement techniques, critical safety information was at risk of often not being retained by the workers, posing significant safety risks.
- The high-risk environment of the WestConnex project necessitated repetitive content delivery with a focus on safety awareness and compliance.

CONTACT

For more information on how Jeremiah can enhance your safety briefings, please contact info@jeremiahhartmann.com.au or 0430197244.

OVERVIEW

In 2021, the WestConnex project, which is Australia's largest continuous tunnel network project, encountered significant difficulties in keeping workers engaged during maintenance and project works safety briefings and toolbox talks. Senior management noted that the existing methods of delivering these talks were ineffective, which could lead to safety hazards and non-compliance among contractors and in-house workers. Additionally, these briefings often had to engage large groups of up to 250 attendees daily, making maintaining attention and ensuring information retention even more challenging.

KEY FACTORS:

- **Dry and Monotonous Delivery:** The toolbox talks were often delivered in a dry, monotonous manner, failing to capture the workers' attention.
- **Lack of Presentation Training:** While the individuals delivering these talks were highly qualified and capable in their roles, they lacked formal training in presenting to large groups, which is essential for making the sessions engaging and impactful.
- **Repetitive Content:** The content of the toolbox talks was often repetitive, leading to disengagement as workers felt they were hearing the same information in each briefing.
- **Perceived as a Waste of Time:** Many attendees viewed the briefings as a mere formality and a box-ticking exercise to cover the liability of the principal contractor, rather than as valuable and informative sessions.

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IMPLICATIONS:

- 1. Increased Safety Risks:** Workers were more likely to overlook important safety practices without proper engagement, leading to higher chances of accidents and injuries.
- 2. Non-Compliance:** Poorly delivered safety talks were at risk of leading to a lack of adherence to safety protocols, potentially resulting in regulatory non-compliance and increased liability for the project managers.
- 3. Low Morale:** Ineffective communication during safety briefings could lead to frustration and low morale among workers, impacting overall productivity.
- 4. Missed Opportunities for Improvement:** The talks' repetitive and disengaging nature risked missing valuable opportunities to reinforce safety culture and improve practices.

SOLUTION:

- Jeremiah was brought in to revitalise the safety briefings and toolbox talks. The approach included:
- 1. Specialised Training Programs:** Jeremiah provided training for toolbox talk presenters to enhance their communication skills and make their sessions more engaging and impactful across sites in NSW, VIC and QLD.
- 2. Dynamic Delivery:** His team delivered over 600 toolbox talks, transforming them into engaging sessions that effectively communicated safety messages.
- 3. Practical Insights:** By incorporating professional presenter delivery combined with useful insights gained through the partnership, we ensured that the safety information was relevant and easily understood.
- 4. Large Group Engagement Techniques:** We implemented specific strategies to manage and engage large groups of up to 250 attendees, ensuring that every participant was attentive and absorbed the necessary information.
- 5. Reinvigorating Content:** The communications team streamlined the briefing content, retaining essential safety protocols while making it easier to follow. Jeremiah consistently delivered the same safety information in varied, engaging ways to avoid repetition and maintain engagement. This ensured each session reinforced critical safety messages compellingly.

THE NUMBERS:

The impact of the intervention was significant:

- 1. Worker Engagement:** Over the course of delivering approximately 600 toolbox talks, we effectively briefed between 60,000 and 120,000 contractors and in-house workers.
- 2. Safety Compliance:** Post-training surveys indicated a 40% increase in worker engagement during safety briefings and a 30% reduction in safety incidents and near-misses.
- 3. Training Effectiveness:** We also conducted six in-house Toolbox Presenter Training sessions in Melbourne, Brisbane, and Sydney, training a total of 81 attendees. Feedback from these sessions showed an average satisfaction rating of 9.2.