50 Thing You Can Do: How to Invigorate the Occupational Hygiene Profession in an Evolving World

Sandra Barnes, CIH, Chevron Corporation
Debbie Brown, CIH CSP, 3M Company
50 SIMPLE THINGS YOU CAN DO TO SAVE THE EARTH

We Can Make a Difference
Background and Demographics

- 73 respondents
- 35% Outside the United States
- 50/50 Industry/Other (Academia, Consulting, Students, Government)
- Survey Respondents were asked three questions keeping the following in mind:
  - Today's workplace is changing due to globalization and technology innovation.
  - How people work is affected by revolutionary changes in information and communication technologies.
  - Many companies utilize outsourcing and off shoring.
  - In the U.S., the industrial hygiene profession will likely face a skill shortage as many practitioners approach retirement.
What Needs to be Done Within the Profession

Question:
What is the most critical objective we must achieve to address current and future challenges to our profession?
What Needs to be Done Within the Profession

1. Promote
What Needs to be Done
Within the Profession

1. Promote
   - Within Private Industry
   - Within Health Care Industry
   - Outside of manufacturing/industrial services
   - International Focus
What Needs to be Done Within the Profession

1. Promote
2. Recruit
What Needs to be Done
Within the Profession

2. Recruit
   - Enrollment into OH Programs must be increased
   - Experienced professionals will be retiring from the workforce
   - Target teenage, high school populations
   - Target universities, job fairs
   - Companies encourage training and education to grow their employees.
   - Compensate accordingly
What Needs to be Done
Within the Profession

1. Promote
2. Recruit
3. Set Standards for Education and Professional Development
What Needs to be Done Within the Profession

3. Set Standards for Education & Professional Designation
   - Do university programs offer a balance of theory and practical?
   - Develop risk quantification skills
   - If people are fulfilling an OH role, minimum skills and training requirements must be set.
What Needs to be Done Within the Profession

1. Promote
2. Recruit
3. Set Standards for Education and Professional Development
4. Stretch Beyond the Borders of OH
What Needs to be Done Within the Profession

4. Stretch Beyond the Borders of OH
   - Fulfill management roles
   - Understand roles and responsibilities of Environmental, Safety & Emergency Response Planners and Responders
   - Take on safety and environmental roles and responsibilities to be more marketable.

“Ours is a profession of expanding boundaries. OHs willing to participate in broader HES discussions will be most valued by organizations.”
What Needs to be Done Within the Profession

1. Promote
2. Recruit
3. Set Standards for Education and Professional Development
4. Stretch Beyond the Borders of OH
5. Additional Themes
What Needs to be Done Within the Profession

5. Additional Themes

Reputation:
- Change professional title to make it more meaningful and relevant to a larger community (national and international)
- Operating on all levels – “crawling around in basements and talking to the CEO in one day”

More Stringent Regulations
- Certification requirements for certain types of monitoring/consulting
- More strict exposure limits & more research to understand appropriate exposure limits
What Individuals Are Doing

Question:
What is the most powerful thing you’ve ever done to advance or assist the occupational hygiene / EHS profession?

50 Things You Can (and Should) Do.
What Individuals Are Doing:
The Most Powerful Thing You’ve Done

1. Teach
What Individuals Are Doing: The Most Powerful Thing You’ve Done

1. **Teach**
   - Educate the next generation of professionals, researchers.
   - Prepare students for careers, involve them in research.
   - Refine the OH curriculum.
What Individuals Are Doing:
The Most Powerful Thing You’ve Done

1. Teach
2. Mentor, Encourage and Guide
What Individuals Are Doing: The Most Powerful Thing You’ve Done

1. Teach
2. Mentor, Encourage and Guide
   - Supervise and coach OHs.
   - Establish mentoring, networking for OHs.
What Individuals Are Doing: The Most Powerful Thing You’ve Done

1. Teach
2. Mentor, Encourage and Guide
3. Educate
What Individuals Are Doing:
The Most Powerful Thing You’ve Done

1. **Teach**
2. **Mentor, Encourage and Guide**
3. **Educate**
   - Peers, management, workers, other professionals.
   - Be able to articulate & demonstrate the need, value and potential complexity of OH. And that OH is good business management.
   - Develop tools for non-OHs to make simple exposure risk assessments.
What Individuals Are Doing:
The Most Powerful Thing You’ve Done

1. Teach
2. Mentor, Encourage and Guide
3. Educate
4. Lead and Influence
What Individuals Are Doing: The Most Powerful Thing You’ve Done

4. **Lead and Influence**

- Serve in leadership roles.
- Be a founder.
- Be a business leader.
- Encourage, assist OHs to seek certification.
- Lead by example.
What Individuals Are Doing:
The Most Powerful Thing You’ve Done

1. Teach
2. Mentor, Encourage and Guide
3. Educate
4. Lead and Influence
5. Reach Beyond Borders
What Individuals Are Doing: The Most Powerful Thing You’ve Done

5. **Reach Beyond Borders**

- Educate, develop, mentor those serving the global workforce.
- Establish OH departments in various countries.
- Work with government agencies and transfer technology.
- Deliver OH seminars for the local safety community.
- Foster international communication; increase OH fluency in the international community.
- Evolve OH practices, initiatives for global application.
- Contribute to international harmonization of methods.
What Individuals Are Doing:
The Most Powerful Thing You’ve Done

1. Teach
2. Mentor, Encourage and Guide
3. Educate
4. Lead and Influence
5. Reach Beyond Borders
6. Professional Activities and Volunteering
What Individuals Are Doing:
The Most Powerful Thing You’ve Done

6. Professional Activities and Volunteering

- Pursue education; achieve certification.
- Participate actively in Committees.
- Other volunteer involvement: presentations, organizing roundtables, PDCs, etc.
- Write and publish.
- Research and contribute to the science.
- Develop and participate on teams.
- Create innovative, cost-effective tools.
What Individuals Are Doing:
The Most Powerful Thing You’ve Done

1. Teach
2. Mentor, Encourage and Guide
3. Educate
4. Lead and Influence
5. Reach Beyond Borders
6. Professional Activities & Volunteering
7. Outreach and Community
What Individuals Are Doing:
The Most Powerful Thing You’ve Done

7. Outreach and Community

- Reach out to students, recent graduates.
- Introduce people to the profession; spark interest and encourage them to pursue OH.
- Help to retain OHs in the profession—it’s as important as recruiting.
- Participate actively in the community, including during times of crisis.
What Individuals Are Doing:
The Most Powerful Thing You’ve Done

1. Teach
2. Mentor, Encourage and Guide
3. Educate
4. Lead and Influence
5. Reach Beyond Borders
6. Professional Activities (incl. Volunteering)
7. Outreach and Community
8. Additional Themes
What Individuals Are Doing:
The Most Powerful Thing You’ve Done

8. Additional Themes

- **Give Back:**
  - Provide internships.
  - Give new professionals opportunities for experience, career advancement.

- **Ethics:**
  - Ensure ethical standards and performance.
  - Take a stand on ethical grounds.

- **Prevention.**
What Individuals Are Doing:
The Most Powerful Thing You’ve Done

1. Teach
2. Mentor, Encourage and Guide
3. Educate
4. Lead and Influence
5. Reach Beyond Borders
6. Professional Activities & Volunteering
7. Outreach and Community
8. Additional Themes: Give Back, Ethics, Prevention
What Else Individuals Are Thinking

Question:
Do you have any other thoughts you’d like to share?
What Else Individuals Are Thinking
A Small, Non-Random Sample

- Tough decisions must be made about where the profession is going.
- We need to be flexible in how we view ourselves.
- The next 10 years may determine the future of our profession.
What Else Individuals Are Thinking
Path Forward and Opportunity

- Change is beneficial in the long run.
- We must do a better job of anticipating emerging health issues, defining our role in them.
- We must be recognized as a resource by the communities we live in.
“Graying” is a U.S. matter. The international arena is ripe for promoting OH to younger professionals. This presents opportunities if we learn to work across cultures.

A global workforce creates opportunity for flexible OHs willing to undertake non-traditional roles.

Make sure your passport is current.
A Final Thought

“I believe that people who get involved in the IH profession, whether it’s at the local level or the committee level or in the community, get much more satisfaction out of their efforts than the amount that they put in.

In other words, more involvement is a win-win…

I strongly encourage people to get involved in their profession and if they are already involved, consider even more involvement. Although time constraints can make things difficult, the rewards are great.”
Acknowledgments

Thank you to the 73 HES/OH professionals who took the time to respond.

We appreciate their commitment to our profession and their thoughtful, insightful replies.