

Toward a Strategy for Improving Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Messaging to Small Business

Schulte P.A., Cunningham T.R., Hennigan B, Guerin R.J.



The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

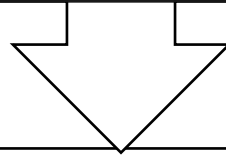


Number of Private-Sector U.S. Firms, Establishments, Employee by Firm Size 2015

Establishment Size	Firms	Establishments	Employees
1 to 4	2,923,143	3,321,099	7,128,946
5 to 9	1,087,990	1,432,184	9,553,986
10 to 19	668,493	967,961	13,355,898
20 to 49	420,687	665,162	20,575,454
50 to 99	129,641	222,187	15,639,989
100 to 249	62,799	126,247	19,348,669
250 to 499	16,278	32,232	11,161,233
500 to 999	6,635	11,904	8,870,601
1000+	4,004	7,121	16,602,675
ALL	5,319,670	6,786,097	121,637,451

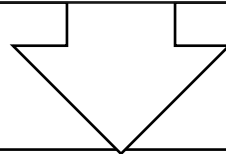
Overview

Components of a Framework of issues to consider in developing



Communication Strategy

By a public health or OSH agency



Small Business Employers

Critical in OSH communication:

- Target: small business employer
 - Responsible for OSH
 - Controls resources for prevention efforts

Messaging

- Contemporary understanding: communication by electronic means
- General understanding: transferring information by any means

- Communication occurs in an environment where recipient is also information seeking
 - They may overlap

Reasons why OSH agencies cannot effectively communicate with small business employers

- Perennial conundrum
- Lack of research; need more
- OSH not championed in small business populations
- False belief in “one size fits all”
- Small business have difficulty obtaining and acting on messages

For communication and intervention purposes using the term “small-business”

- Misleading
- Counterproductive
- Various size cut points
- Various capacities for prevention action

Need a better understanding of meaning of term small business

- Business age
- Structure
- Management centrality
- Culture
- Psychosocial experience
- Financial resources

Utilizing communication theory

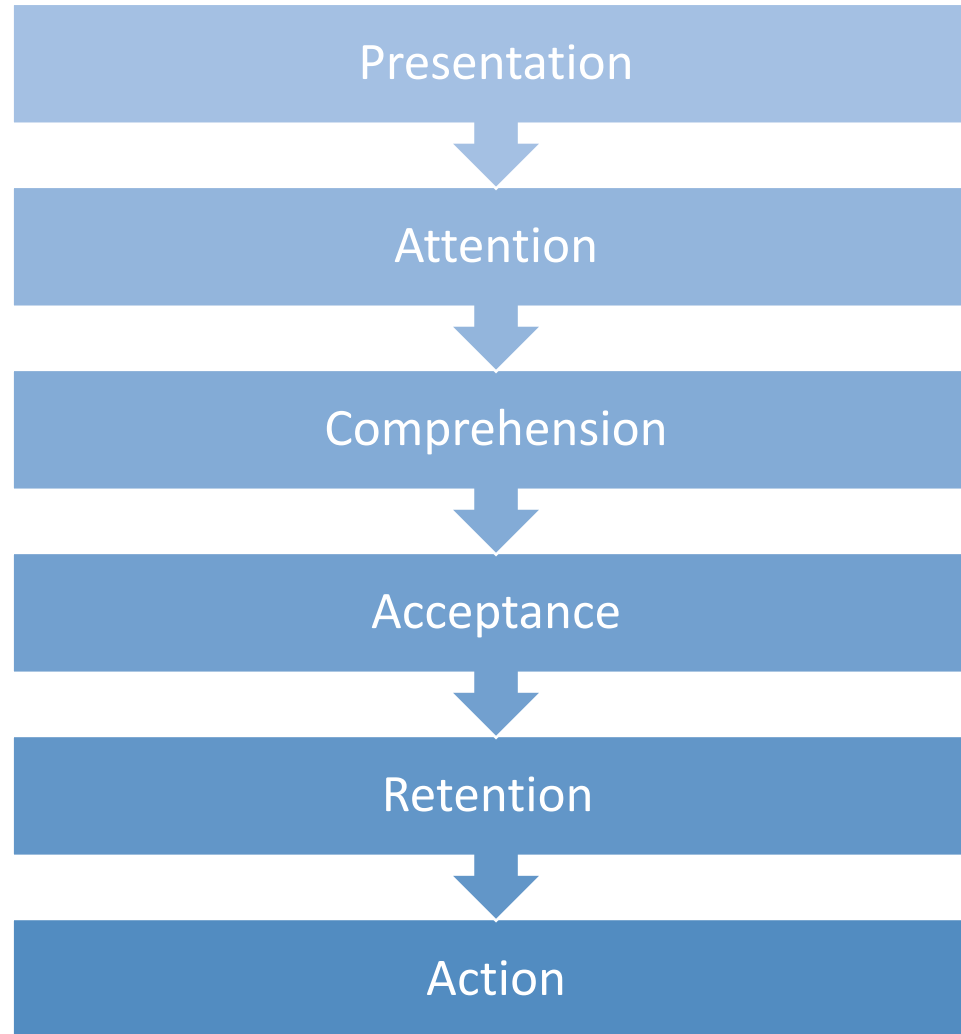
- Theory-based approaches are critical for effective communications
- Communication by public or OSH agency generally has followed the Shannon-Weaver Model:



(Shannon and Weaver, 1949)

May be outmoded for OSH

More matrixed approach (McGuire 1985)



Elements in a strategy for agency communication to small business

- Theory based
 - (e.g., utility of Theory of Planned Behavior demonstrated by Brosseau et al 2005); Health Belief Model: quite useful
- Tailoring and Targeting of
 - Message
 - Channel
- Segmentation
 - Not generally feasible unless the population of small businesses can be identified
 - Include segmented messages

Segmented messages-“if” statements

- (e.g., If your company is a start-up this message is for you
or
- e.g., If your company has more than 70 people, look at this)

An approach to test

Segmented audiences: use 4 options based on prevention experience

- Adaptation of categories used by Champoux and Brun 2003
 - Does your company have any specific OSH activities?
 - Does your company have a formal OSH program?
 - Does your company involve workers in OSH activities?
 - Does your company have an extensive OSH program?
- *Make them mutually exclusive
- Tailor messages and channels for each option.

Role of motivation of small business employers

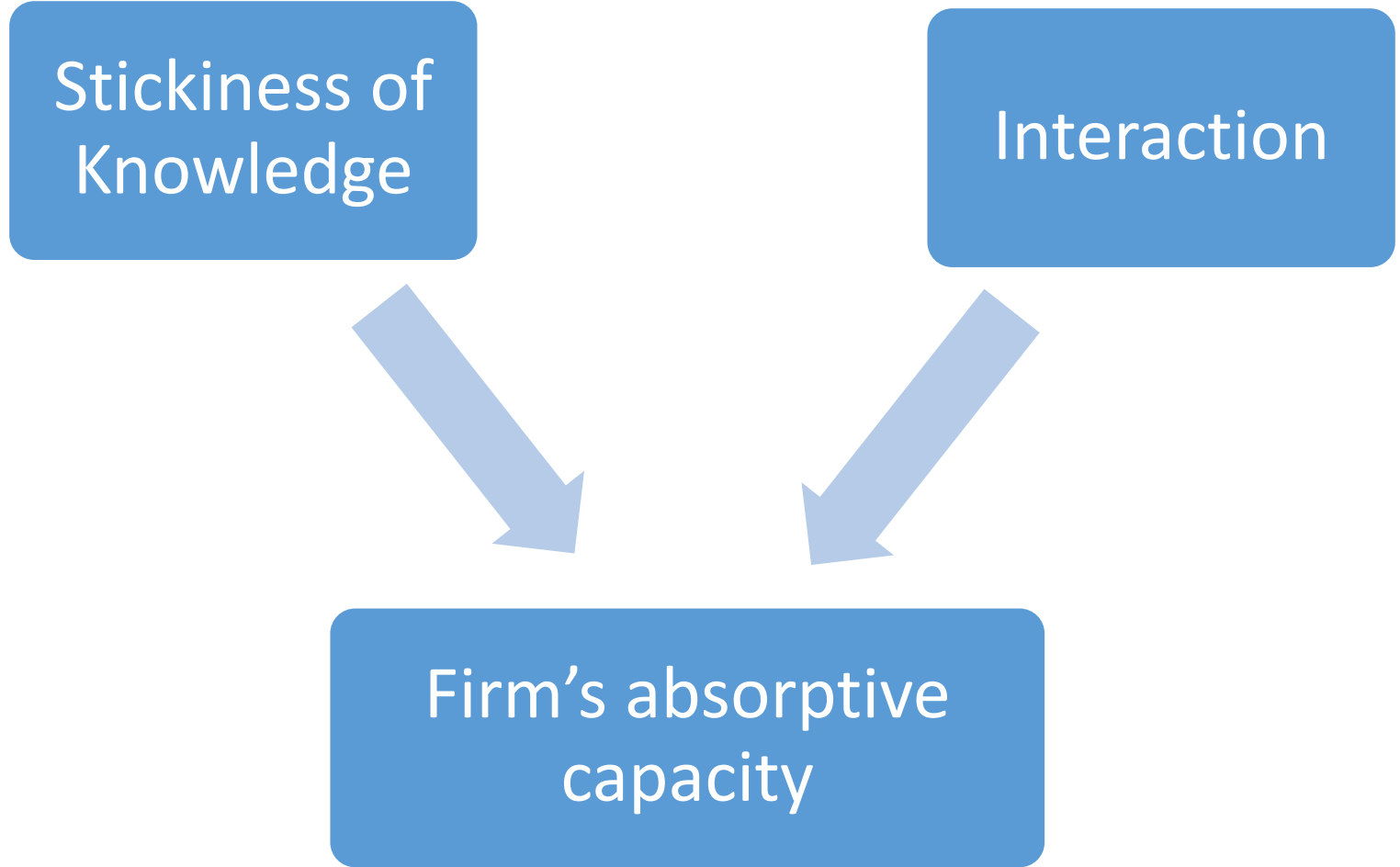
- Sparse literature
- Some notable exceptions: (Kvorning et al 2015, Hedlund 2010, Eakin et al 1992, Hasle and Limborg 2006)
- Motivation of employers: crucial factor
- Fear appeals are most effective if you have efficacy guidance
- Importance of making “business case”
(Brousseau and Li 2005; Cagno et al 2016)

Can We Use the Concept of Knowledge Stickiness?

- Pertains to complexity of knowledge
- Costs that accrue to recover, to engage, and use it
- Knowledge considered sticky if accessibility (understandability and utility) is low

Absorptive capacity

- Uptake of knowledge influenced by qualities of recipient
- Influenced by inherent recipient characteristics and interactions
- Interaction with customers, suppliers, accounts, consumers, insurers, advertisers, regulators and others
- Knowledge alone is not sufficient



Indarti, 2011

Interaction

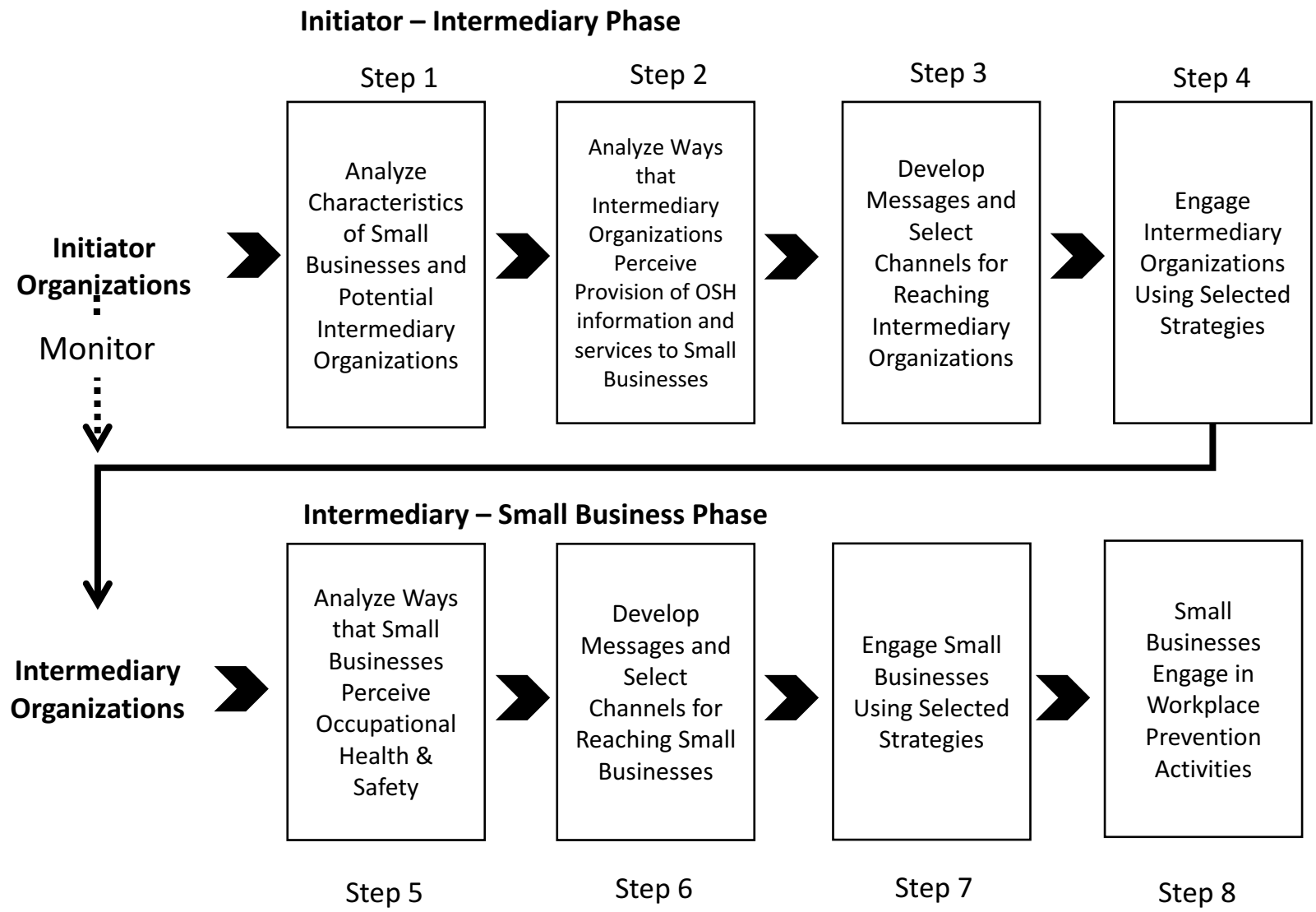
May affect knowledge stickiness

May be part of communication process

Those a firm interacts with

May be intermediaries in the communication process

(Hasle et al 2011;
Cunningham et al 2011)



Extended Model for Small Business OSH Intervention Diffusion (Sinclair, Cunningham, & Schulte, 2013)
 Still a transmission model but would benefit from feedback loops

Enhance intermediary models

- Conduct formative research with candidate organizations
- Engage influential individuals identified in formative research to be involved in the communication
- Collaborate with intermediaries on how they will engage small business (Bruening et al 2016)

It may be time to

- Develop national and international strategic plans for communicating with small business
- Prioritize research and messages



May have an impact on morbidity, mortality,
and injury

Thank You

pas4@cdc.gov