



AIHA's 2020 Environmental Scan Report

aiha.org



HEALTHIER WORKPLACES | A HEALTHIER WORLD

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In 2019, AIHA invested in a rigorous, multi-year research study...

to identify current and future industry trends. These findings were translated into an actionable content strategy for the Association. The CPAG Content Priorities Summary, released at the end of 2019, is a direct result of those findings.

AIHA's Content Priorities are a critical component to the Association's strategy for ensuring organizational success and future relevance. It's important for industrial hygienists and occupational health and safety professionals to understand these Content Priorities to help shape strategies for individual career success. These priorities are also important for globally promoting the relevancy of the IH/OH profession in tomorrow's marketplace.

The current Content Priorities, which are more detailed in the CPAG Summary, are developed through partnership with outside firms who conduct research on the global trends most likely to impact the profession in the future. The use of internally gathered data, along with a series of focus groups and surveys involving Association members and non-members, helps shape the content priority strategy. This process is revisited approximately every five years, with annual "pulse checks" to ensure the selected priorities are still the most relevant.

During the spring of 2019, AIHA engaged McKinley Advisors to conduct a comprehensive research study. The overall goals of the study were to determine whether key priorities previously identified by AIHA were still relevant to industrial hygiene professionals and to assess what other new trends and developments may be on the horizon. The research effort consisted of telephone interviews, focus groups, and an electronic survey.

If you have any questions about this report or want to discuss it further, please contact Alla Orlova (aorlova@aiha.org), AIHA's Managing Director of Education and Technical Initiatives.



Project Goals

AIHA's goals were straightforward.

- Take advantage of the study to identify current and future trends.
- Determine what key priorities remain relevant to the professions in the field.
- Uncover new trends and developments that lie on the horizon.

The entire process would take five months, from February to July 2019.

The research done by McKinley Advisors was conducted in multiple stages, briefly described below.

Telephone Interviews (March 2019 – May 2019)

McKinley conducted 15 telephone interviews with key member stakeholders as identified by AIHA. Interviewees included volunteer leaders and committee members who varied in specialization, tenure in the industry, and location.

Focus Groups (March 2019 – May 2019)

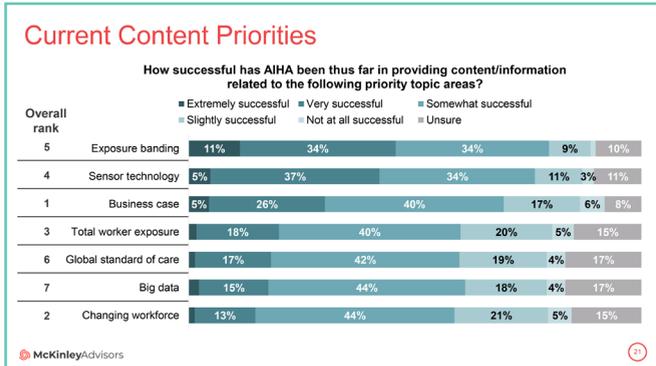
McKinley conducted three focus groups, one with 13 members identified by AIHA (internal), and two with non-members working in the industrial hygiene industry (external). External focus group participants were acquired through a third-party panel provider. One of the external focus groups was held in-person in Chicago (9 participants), and the other was conducted virtually (8 participants).

Electronic Survey (April 2019 – June 2019)

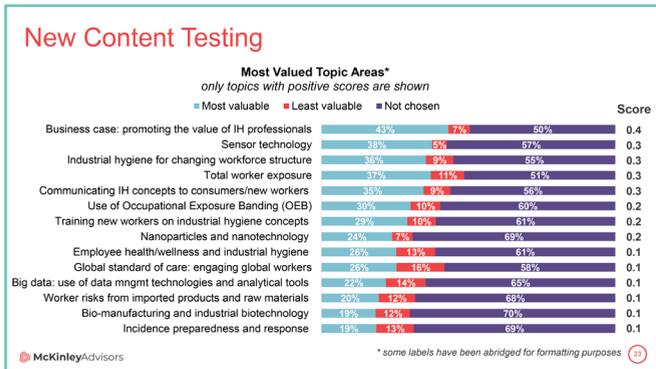
In collaboration with AIHA, McKinley developed an electronic survey that sought to understand current and future trends in the industrial hygiene industry and assess the relevance of existing content areas covered by AIHA. McKinley delivered the survey to 8,092 members and nonmembers identified by AIHA. A total of 916 individuals participated in the survey, resulting in a response rate of 11%. Upon closing the survey, McKinley analyzed the results in aggregate and by various respondent demographics (membership status, age, job title, etc.).

Key Findings

While AIHA has been very successful in providing content and information related to exposure banding, sensor technology, and business cases for the IH professional, according to respondents, there is a need for more information on Big Data and changing workforce priorities.



Respondents also considered the business case priority the most valued topic area addressed by AIHA. Sensor technologies and total worker exposure topics were also highly valued.



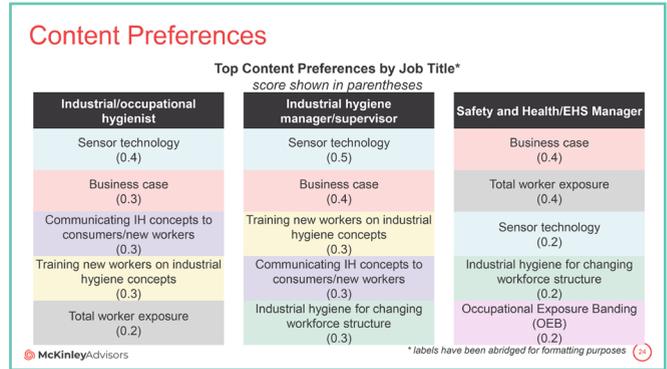
Of the three primary self-identified job positions, the business case promoting the value of IH professionals was one of the top two content preferences. Sensor technology is also highly preferred, though occupational health and safety (OSH) professionals and EHS Managers prefer content on total worker exposure over sensors.

A similar preference for sensor technology and the business case can be seen across age brackets, especially for professionals between the ages of 45 and 64. In all brackets, the business case remains a top content preference.

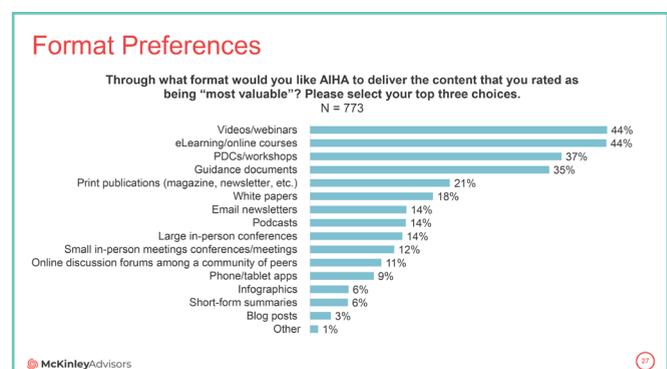
Online learning continues to rise as a viable platform for continuing education, with 44 percent of respondents considering videos, webinars, and eLearning courses the most valuable format for content delivery. Professional Development Courses (PDCs) and

Guidance Documents were rated by more than a third of respondents as successful and valuable content. These results remain consistent even when broken down by age, tenure length, and job title.

Blogs, short-form summaries, and infographics are considered the least valuable, often due to the limitations of these content forms in providing detailed and nuanced information required by OHS professionals.



More than half of respondents strongly agree that moving forward, AIHA should be creating new content around emerging issues. This remained consistent across job titles, with 70% of those identifying as consultants strongly agreeing with this statement.



Interestingly, respondents also balance their content needs through several other organizations outside of NIOSH and OSHA, which are not surprisingly the highest rated information sources outside of AIHA. Interestingly, Internet search engines (Google, Bing, Yahoo, etc.) are the third-most rated information resource for content, ranking higher than research journals, BGC (formerly ABIH), and other comparable organizations.



Content Priority Changes

Based on the extensive research for this content priority cycle, AIHA will be retiring two previous priorities and adding a new priority for the next five-year cycle. AIHA will continue maintaining content priorities for total worker exposure, the changing workforce, occupational exposure banding, and Big Data/sensor technology.

Sunset: Global Standard of Care

While AIHA does support a harmonized standard of care for global workers through critical tools, resources, and applicable international standards — and remains committed to this — it collaborates with several other organizations, including through IOHA. Consequently, AIHA has little direct control over outcomes. Therefore, while still a committed goal, it is not a major content priority.

Shift: Business Case

Research and discussion indicates that the business case of the IH professional is still important, but not in the form of a content priority. AIHA is a champion in generating awareness and promoting the value of the profession to both corporations and communities. However, this can be better accomplished by pivoting this to branding and public relations goals, rather than prioritizing business case content. Instead, it's recommended that AIHA shift the content priority here to providing education on soft skills and further define the vision of making available, equipping proper tools and support to OHS professionals for better integrating and interfacing with management, C-suite and community leaders.

Communicating IH Concepts

OHS professionals are exemplary technical experts, skilled at training and communicating with colleagues at all levels of an organization. This shifting of the business case priority reflects a need for soft skill development to ensure they are better equipped to communicate complex topics in a manner readily understood by non-OHS staff. This further builds upon the importance of educating a broader based audience, including senior management and others not technically trained.

2020-2025 Content Priorities

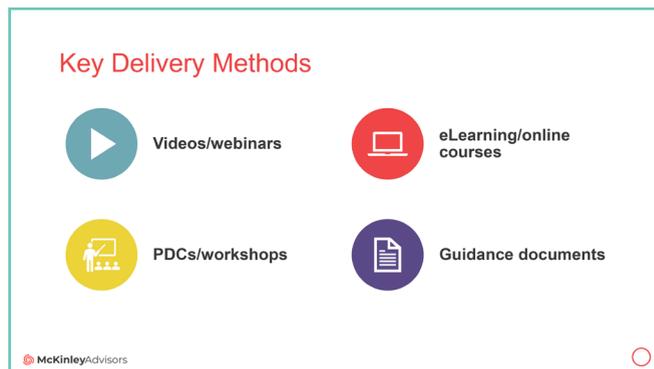
CPAG reviewed the data provided by McKinley Advisors and recommended five new content priorities which were approved by AIHA's Board of Directors.

These priorities are:

- Big Data and Sensor Technology
- Communicating IH Concepts
- Exposure Banding
- Serving the Changing Workforce
- Total Exposure Health

Guiding Principle for Delivery of Content Priorities

AIHA is viewed as providing the best, most valuable and relevant educational opportunities for the profession. The Association's primary competitors for these resources are government agencies. As such, AIHA's strength resides in its nature as a provider of professional education within the nonprofit sector, adding a balanced perspective for the industry.



It's highly recommended that AIHA continue to embed the business case argument into PDCs and other educational offerings. Online and eLearning education should remain the key delivery vehicle for busy OHS professionals in the field, as well as for their managers, supervisors, and consultants, due to the depth of offerings, availability, and ease of use.

It's also recommended that Guidance Documents be optimized for electronic delivery and reference in a more mobile-friendly format. This takes advantage of current and future technology, making these cornerstone resources indispensable for reference when needed most.

Several trends were targeted as important to watch for future implications to the profession:

- The growing trend of the rejection of expertise
- Anticipatory and artificial intelligences
- Dark and fast data
- Personalized artificial intelligence
- More "human humans", with relation to accelerated speed of change
- Implications of an aging workforce
- Growing advocacy needs for an increasingly independent workforce
- A bifurcated workforce, differentiating between mission-critical employees and task-oriented workers
- New forms of work as workplace environments change
- Human-machine cooperation, with an increasing need for soft skills, mentoring, and experiential learning