

Reflections on the American Society of Safety Professionals' Future Safety Leaders Conference

November 8 & 9, 2018, Chicago, IL

The 2018 Future Safety Leaders Conference (FSLC) was a fantastic experience for the Oregon State University ASSP leadership team. The conference delivered informative lessons about the future of occupational safety and health, as well as personal career development in the safety profession.

Safety is about prevention, but it is also about understanding the business side of a company and understanding why people think the way they do. Being a safety professional is not about being the expert in the field; it's about problem solving and becoming familiar with what workers are doing and how they are doing it. Safety professionals need to have strong communication and leadership skills. They need to build relationships and focus on being a positive asset to a company. It is important to remember that workers are not setting out to purposefully get hurt – safety professionals need to listen to their stories and figure out how to help them.

We greatly appreciate the opportunity to attend the FSLC and we will put all we learned over those two days to good use as we embark on our next journey into the world of professional safety.

- Stephanie Fitch, OSU-ASSP Secretary



*OSU ASSP Executive Team
(Cristian Reyes, Melissa Myers, Jillian Cote, Stephanie Fitch)*



Cristian shows off the results of team building

Highlight: James "Skipper" Kendrick

One of the FSLC presentations that stood out to us as being especially useful was James "Skipper" Kendrick's talk on how to succeed in the workplace. Skipper (as he prefers to be called) is a CSP who owns Kendrick Global Enterprises, LLC. In the past, Skipper was the Director of Global EHS training for Textron Inc. where he managed over 45,000 employees worldwide. Formerly ASSP's society president, Skipper recently received ASSP's highest honor of being named Society Fellow. Considering Skipper's long and successful career in EHS, he possesses a high level of knowledge on how EHS professionals or any professional for that matter can succeed in the workplace, and at this conference he shared some of that hard-earned knowledge. We believe one of the best pieces of advice he gave conference attendees was that upon being hired for a company, especially in a management position, "don't come in too strong- take a step back and observe the environment." Even though you might be management, that doesn't mean that you will understand company dynamics immediately. You should talk to all different kinds of employees in the organization and ask them

what is going well and where weaknesses or problems lie. Skipper also covered how important it is to “build your own brand” within the workplace. According to Skipper, building your brand includes the following:

- Know your strengths and uniqueness
- Know your values and priorities
- Share your knowledge
- Show—don’t tell
- Understand your value to the company
- Listen, then process (remember, you have **two** ears and **one** mouth)
- Deliver consistently
- Create networks
- Find mentors



James "Skipper" Kendrick, CSP

Below are the top 10 take-aways from Skipper’s talk that we believe everyone should know before entering their profession:

- 1) “If it’s not in writing, it doesn’t exist.” In other words, if you are promised something by your organization, ask for it in writing. For example, if your manager leaves the company, you might not receive that promotion that he/she promised you if it isn’t in writing. Also, use email to communicate important topics and issues and then save those emails. This paper trail can support and protect your position.
- 2) “Keep your office space clean and neat.” Your managers and coworkers WILL notice how organized you are, and based on this trait alone, you may be given more responsibility within the organization.
- 3) “Don’t make excuses when you are late.” Just own up to the fact you didn’t leave in time and don’t do it again.
- 4) “The greatest helping hand you’re going to get is at the end of your own arm.” Meaning that you are the main person that you should rely on to set yourself up for success in your career.
- 5) “Never underestimate who you might meet who will support your career.” Often networking can occur in the most unsuspecting circumstances and it’s up to us to take advantage of those circumstances.
- 6) “Stay positive in the workplace- don’t gossip!” Maintaining a positive attitude and having the reputation of being slow to judge other people will go a long way in making your career more successful.
- 7) “Be open to learning from the older generation- they have learned from a lot of experience.” This is especially important now as much of the workforce is retiring. Take advantage of the older generation’s knowledge while they are still working!
- 8) “Being a part of a group is a compromise.” When you are working in the group setting, you will never be able to do tasks/projects fully how you want to. Embrace and accept collaboration!
- 9) “After having a casual conversation with an important person such as a CEO, don’t give them your business card.” This may sound unintuitive, but they are likely given business cards very frequently and it can be annoying to have people constantly trying to get a foot in the door. If they like you, they will ask for yours. That being said, if the conversation is pertaining to the industry and/or you feel that it would be appropriate to give them your business card, trust your instincts!
- 10) “Know that companies treasure their brand.” When you are first hired, make an effort to learn the brand and culture. This knowledge will help you fit into your new environment.

Visit: <http://www.safetybyskipper.com/about-kge/> for more information.

- Melissa Myers, OSU-ASSP Vice President