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### Uses of Collective Digital Storytelling:

- Culture or Value clarification / re-inforcement
- Innovation or creativity
- Onboarding
- Acknowledgement of goal attainment and learning how and why
- Complex knowledge sharing where deep understanding is needed
- Organization Change



**Richard Hawk**  
Safety Professional  
and Presenter

www.  
MakeSafetyFun.com

# Collective Digital Storytelling™

## A unique approach to Safety Videos

**Richard Hawk**, The World's Leading Expert on Making Safety Fun, talked with **Terry Mroczek**, on what makes her approach (Collective Digital Storytelling™) to customized safety videos different.

### What is different about CDS-based Safety Videos?

**Rich:** I always hear **pained groans from employees who have to watch monthly safety videos because many of them are so poorly made, repetitive and downright cheesy. Why do you think that is the case?**

**Terry:** I think that people's expectations have gone up. There are great TV shows now, series on cable networks, movies that are amazing with great stories. People have grown to expect a more nuanced and creative approach based on how visual storytelling has evolved. Unfortunately, some videographers who produce safety videos have either neglected to take that into account or don't use creative storytelling approaches to grab and keep their audience's attention. It's almost like the employee audience lives in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but they are being fed 1950's approaches.

**Rich:** And we can't really lower people's

expectations, can we?

**Terry:** No, we can't go back or expect people to just force themselves to digest videos they can't relate to.



**Rich:** I've always said **that you need to present information in a new way in order to get people's attention and use other techniques like involving them, creating anticipation and interest. How do you do that in your videos?**

**Terry:** I use very similar principles. First and foremost, clients hire me because they want something different. They realize that their same-old meetings / videos or

training sessions are not achieving the desired results because their employees are not mentally present. And, when you think about it, how will anyone learn anything if they aren't interested, aren't listening? If they're not listening, they won't remember and it follows that they can't apply something they don't remember.

**Rich:** Right. But there are so many safety videos out there and video based safety training packages that companies buy. They are easy to just pop up on their intranet and have people watch them.

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*...the employee audience lives in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but they are being fed 1950's approaches.*



**CDS™-based videos are much more than just safety videos.**

**Employees are part of the video and share real situations, values and learning.**

**Peer-to-peer communication has proven to be a power influencer of behavior.**



## Building and reinforcing Safety Values

**Terry:** And that is the unfortunate thing. They are looking for something easy and simple when in fact, changing people's behavior so that they behave more safely, is not easy. Building a safety culture that values and lives safety every day is not easy and it's not and it's not going to happen with employees being required to watch a 20 minute video once a month. That is just like checking a box. Just because someone watched it doesn't mean they change.

**Rich:** But, isn't a

**It is the *process* of creating the video that is important.**

**safety video just a safety video? Why should we expect more from it that just fulfilling a requirement.**

**Terry:** Because that's a limited view of a safety video. It's just accepting it as fact, that all safety videos are just boring and there is nothing we can do about it. I don't think that is the case, though. I think, no, I know, that safety videos

can be so much more than just videos. I know because I've made them and gotten feedback from my clients. The approach I use is more of an intervention where the actual video is just a part of it. I've worked in the field of Organization Development for close to 30 years and I bring all that experience. It is the *process* of creating the video that is important.

**Rich:** Tell me a little bit more about Organization Development and how it influences your approach.

**Terry:** Organization Development or OD is a field that focuses on change; behavior change in organizations on a large scale. Whether it be culture change, leadership development, a change in direction or strategy, OD applies techniques that help the organization build needed skills, adopt new behaviors, shed old behaviors and develop resilient employees. So, if leaders in an organization want to develop a more safety-based culture, reinforce or renew values that then drive desired safe behaviors, OD professionals provide the methods for

doing just that. It's not enough for the leaders to just command people to "work safer". People have to *choose* to work safer and being safer when no one is looking requires developing a value around it.

**Rich:** Values drive behaviors. And leaders have to influence people to develop those values, right?

**A strong value around safety encourages people to behave safely, even when no one is watching.**

**Terry:** Absolutely. And it's not enough for the leaders to just model those behaviors. Yes, they need to do that, but that's not the only thing. Leaders need to develop the environment that encourages safe behavior.

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## Keep in real: make it relate-able

**Rich:** So, how does a video do that? You mentioned something about the *process* of creating a video.

**Terry:** The process is key. Most clients are not familiar with this type of approach, so I explain it this way. First we talk about what they want to accomplish, whether it be getting more people engaged in safety, emphasizing or reinforcing values or whatever. That way I get an idea of the goal. Then we discuss how we can involve employees in the process. We may identify employees who exemplify what they are trying to accomplish or trouble spots they are experiencing. I'll ask clients to tell me about goals they've achieved that they should promote or even near misses or accidents that they need to learn from. We'll also discuss key messages they want to get across. All of these things help me identify what should go in the video. Employees are asked to be interviewed on camera and I'll ask them to talk to me about what they've learned or what they value about safety. It can go in many directions.

**Getting people to reflect on their actions, talk about things that mean something to them, is very powerful.**

**Rich:** So, employees aren't acting out some hokey accident or fake scene?

**Terry:** No, not at all. You see that in those cheesy videos you were referring to in the beginning. I like to keep it real. Real is so much more relate-able than some canned skit. Getting people to reflect on their actions, talk about things that mean something to them is very powerful and their fellow employees who see that, can tell it means something to them. It reinforces values in the person who is doing the talking and in the person who is watching it. That way, the video captures *their* story, *their* values. It reinforces ownership because it isn't someone else's idea of what they should see and employee to employee communication is powerful too.

**Rich:** That sounds pretty unique. But doesn't that require a significant time investment on the part of the company. Making employees available for interviews etc.

**Terry:** It does require a time commitment, but I understand that a business has to get things done and all work can't get put aside just because I show up with a camera. I don't bring intrusive equipment, I travel light and most times it's just me, so I can be flexible. Most interviews don't last very long and I'm able to work around what an employee has to get done. But, that's the thing, my clients realize that every time I interact with an employee, it is a positive experience because I'm able to get employees to reflect on something they may not think about very often or maybe never at all. The act of me asking sets the process in motion where values are surfaced and reinforced and that is a step in the process that builds and reinforces values.



Every project has a story.

Every initiative has a story.

Every Accomplishment  
Loss  
Failure  
Change  
Employee  
has a story...

That can be learned from.

Who should tell the story?

Everyone.



## Collective Digital Storytelling™

*The power of  
multi-perspective  
storytelling through  
digital media*

New  
Perspectives  
=  
New  
Understanding



Facilitates  
Organization  
Learning:

Surfaces assump-  
tions, principles  
and conceptual  
frameworks—  
why we do what  
we do

*Why do we...  
Why should we...  
...behave safely?*

### Spreading the message

**Rich:** So, employees are involved because they are part of the video and they personally gain from just the experience of being part of the video?

**Terry:** Yes, and the company gains because their goals are being accomplished. Not only those things, but then after I leave a plant or location, I'm told that employees are buzzing about what they talked about and are excited about seeing the final product. So, as a result of the process, there are more conversations about safety values and interest in seeing how it will play out in a video where they are featured or their co-workers are featured.

**Rich:** Who pulls all the footage together into the final product?

**Terry:** I do. Most of my clients allow me the freedom to identify additional themes based on what I hear or even gaps in what employees are not talking about. I may come back to them and say, "I've heard these things and we could position them this particular way in the final video." The vast majority of my clients are good with that because, as I said before, they are coming to me for something different, understand that it is more than just a video and trust my background in OD.

**Rich:** So, the client ends up showing the video that you've assembled. Does the process end there?

**Terry:** It doesn't have to. I usually rec-

ommend that it be shown to employees in groups; large or small, so they can experience the reaction of the other employees to it. I usually suggest some kind of discussion points afterward to encourage more reflection on the topic and actions afterwards that reinforce the points. So, I don't just stop working once the video is edited and it uploaded. I get the client to think about other viewers, like family members or new employees. I ask – who else would like to see this? Who else would benefit from seeing it?

**Rich:** The best videos I've seen have some kind of story, some kind of narrative. How to ensure that it flows and it's not just a parade of employee interviews?

**Terry:** That comes from good editing and knowing the peaks and valleys in storytelling. Timing is critical, comic relief is necessary. I use music and various visual techniques to keep it flowing. Each project is different and each organization is unique, so I try to make the video in a way that the employee audience can relate to. So, it's not just interview after interview. It is a narrative around themes that were identified in the beginning or themes that emerge during the process.

**Rich:** Well, thanks for the overview Terry. It definitely sounds like a unique and encompassing approach to what could be just a safety video.

**For more information about Collective Digital  
Storytelling™, contact Terry:**

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