



THE FUTURE OF HEALTH AND SAFETY LEADERSHIP

A 2021 Survey of Incoming Safety
Professionals

Table of Contents

Foreword	04
Key Survey Results	05
Conclusion	16



About Avetta

Avetta connects global organizations with 150K + qualified suppliers, contractors, and vendors across 120+ countries. We support the continued growth of 500+ clients and their supply chains through trusted contractor prequalification, safety audits, monitoring, and more. With real results in reducing incidents, our highly configurable solutions elevate safety and sustainability in every workplace.



About Waldorf University

Waldorf University is a private liberal arts institution located in Forest City, Iowa. For more than 100 years, Waldorf has been the cornerstone in the lives of thousands, setting the solid foundation for success among students, their families and their communities.

Along with our physical campus, Waldorf has a thriving online education program that reaches around the world. Through this online platform, Waldorf offers a broad range of quality online academic programs delivered in an innovative, flexible format while providing a positive experience that impacts the lives of students. Waldorf currently offers over 120 possible degree and concentration combinations ranging from occupational safety and health to emergency management and business just to name a few.

Please visit www.waldorf.edu or call 877-267-2157 to speak to an admissions representative today for more information.

Foreword

The task of revisiting and transforming workplace health and safety routines post-pandemic has already begun. Interestingly enough this transformation coincides with the entry of a new generation of workforce to the market.

With the majority of baby boomers on the verge of retirement, and an entire new cohort of Millennials and Gen-Z-ers all set to join the workforce in the next few years, the world of work as we know it will be fast transformed. For example, just one out of ten baby boomers believe that they are personally responsible for reskilling as technology disrupts traditional roles. On the other hand, three times as many Millennials and Gen-Z-ers believe that it's their responsibility and not their employers to develop new skills.ⁱ

Millennials and Gen-Z-ers currently make a little over a third (38%) of the US workforce. In the next five years Millennials will represent 75% of the global workforce, making the generation the most dominant in the workplace. As this new worker demographic steps onto the world stage, the impact of their entry is expected to have ripple effects across sectors. The workplace health and safety space is also expected to witness radical shifts as younger generations quickly ascend in the workforce ranks and become decision-makers of the future.

To better understand the pulse of this rising workforce and their impact on workplace safety, we invited 615 students enrolled in the Waldorf University Occupational Safety Program to take a survey, and received over 50 responses.

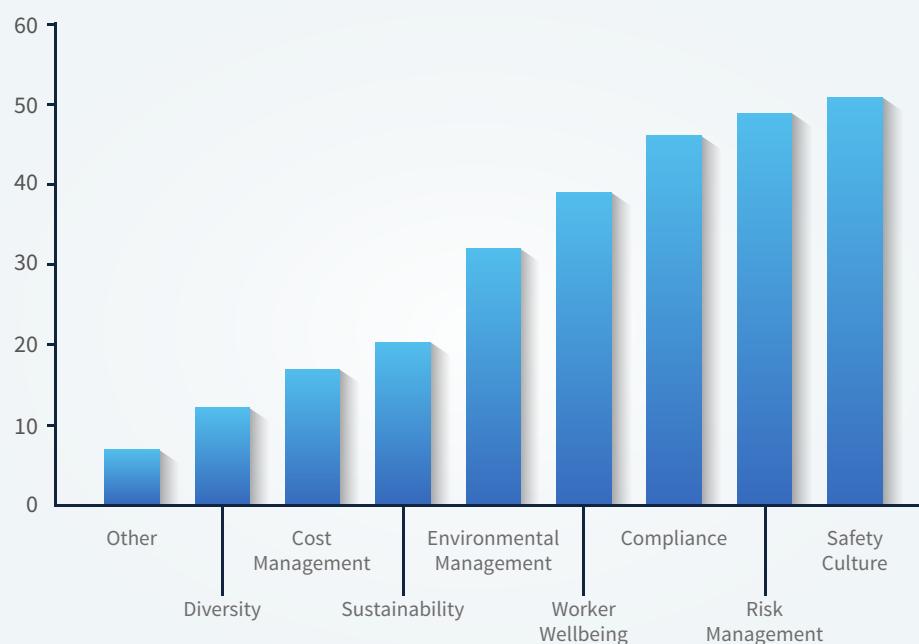


KEY SURVEY RESULTS

1 Key Issues that Require Sustained Focus From Safety Leadership

According to the estimates of the ILOⁱⁱ, almost four percent of the global Gross Domestic Product or more than USD 1.25 trillion is lost every year to workplace injuries, accidents or diseases. This figure underlines the criticality of a positive and all-inclusive safety culture and the role that it can play in ensuring a safe workplace through safety training, safety prevention programs, safety recognition drives and much more. According to OSHA, an established safety culture can help a company reduce injury and illness costs by 20 to 40%ⁱⁱⁱ. And, it comes as good news that in the Avetta survey, a whopping 94% of the respondents have highlighted the importance of addressing safety culture for safety professionals.

Key Issues that Safety Professionals Need to be Wary of



Q1- What issues are important for safety professionals to address? (Check all that apply)

Risk management, compliance and worker wellbeing are other areas that the respondents believe that safety professionals need to prioritize. However, less than half of these budding professionals (38.88%) have stressed the importance of safety professionals focusing on sustainability, especially when it is fast gaining global relevance as a key indicator of long-term value creation.

A recent survey reveals that 81% of companies are more vested on sustainability today than three years ago. In fact, the survey also highlights that the trend towards sustainability within supply chain is more dominant among companies of all sizes across industries.^{iv} These figures reinforce the fact that sustainability is here to stay. And, embracing health and safety as a cornerstone of sustainability will always yield positive outcomes for both the business and the employees.



2 Safety Leadership Traits That Are Going To Create a Difference

According to the estimates of the International Labor organization^v, almost 2.3 million women and men globally succumb to workplace injuries, accidents or diseases every year. This sums up to an alarming 6000 deaths every day. These figures reinstate the importance of strategic safety leadership and the role it plays in the success of any safety culture or program. So, what is it that makes a safety leader stand out? In the survey, the majority of respondents (81.48%) stated that the ability to communicate is an extremely important trait that makes a safety leader successful. Other key traits that are extremely important for future leaders to nurture according to the respondents are accountability and consistency.

As was evident during the pandemic, seamless communication with communities, stakeholders and teams can help safety leaders navigate the chaos and establish acceptance at a time when there's increased human desire for transparency.

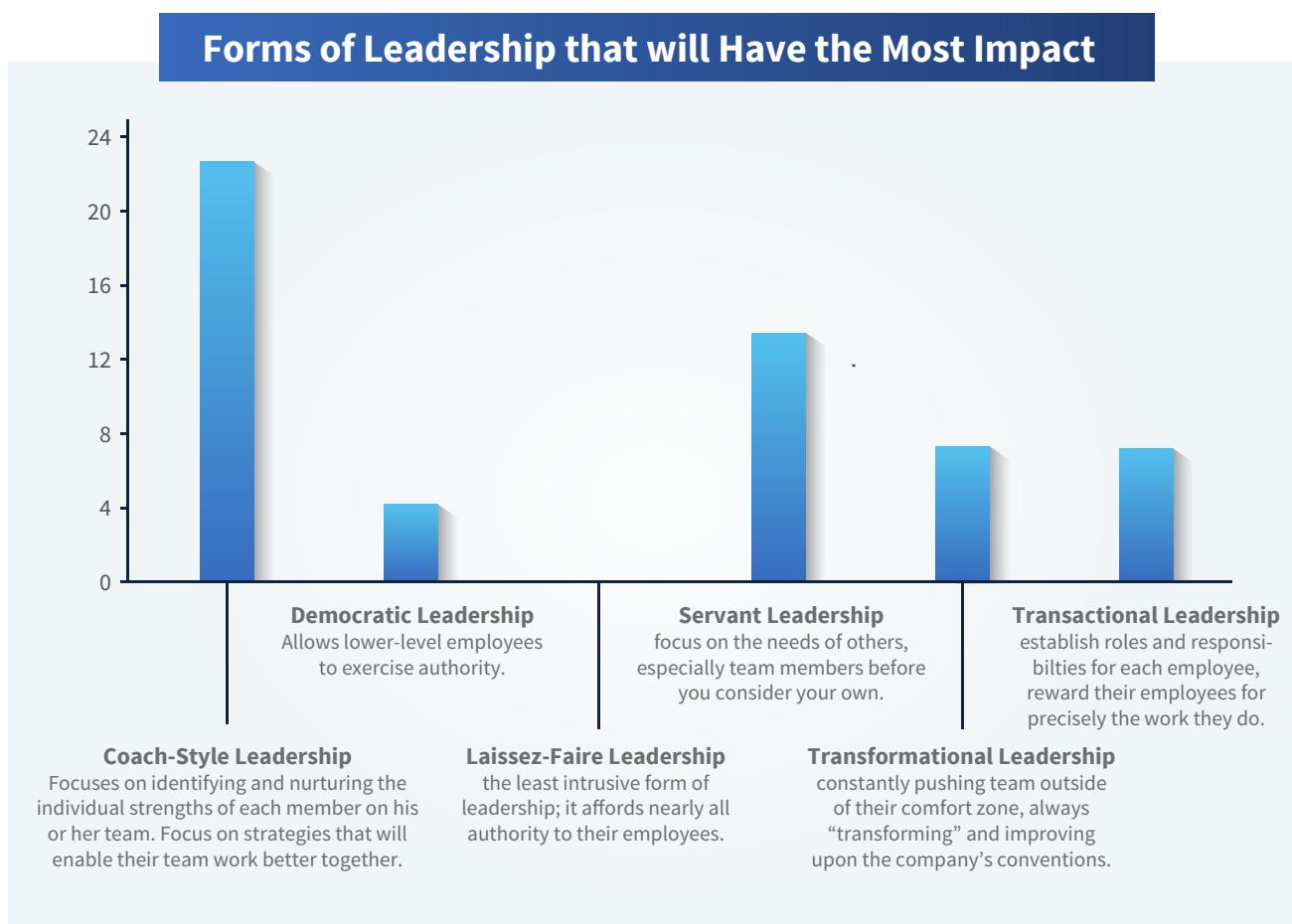
Traits that will make Successful Leaders of Tomorrow



Percentage of respondents who feel these traits are extremely important to become a successful safety leader

The most important thing for future leaders aiming at enhancing workplace safety is to continuously emphasize safety not only through their communication but also by serving as role models. When it comes to identifying the safety leadership style that can have the most impact, the majority of the survey respondents (41.51%) have preferred coach style leadership that involves identifying and nurturing the individual strengths of each member on the team and focusing on strategies that will enable the team work better together.

The relative impact of different leadership styles on safety outcomes hasn't been widely spoken about. But one thing is certain that the future safety leaders are more inclined towards capitalizing on both individual strength and team work to drive sustainable safety outcomes.



Q3- What form of leadership do you believe is the most successful?

3 Key Challenges that the Future of Work Holds for Safety Professionals

Before the pandemic wreaked havoc across the globe, safety professionals were already staring at a future brimming with technology disruption, non-conventional work arrangements, surge of workplace stress and opioid overdoses. The pandemic has just added newer concerns and responsibilities for safety professionals. It comes as no surprise then that the respondents in the Avetta survey, on a scale of 1-5 have highlighted unforeseen black swan events like the pandemic and financial meltdowns as the biggest challenge facing safety professionals in the next 5 to 10 years.

On the other end of the spectrum, very few respondents in the survey think that supplier/contractor safety will actually pose a challenge to safety professionals down the line. One supporting evidence for this general belief could be the prevalence of technology-driven supplier risk management tools that are expected to provide companies with more all-round visibility of their suppliers/contractors risk profile, contract status, compliance stance and much more.



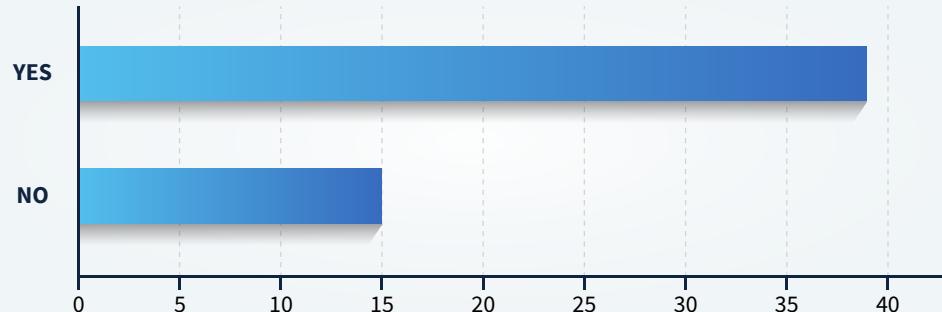
Q4- What do you think the biggest challenges will be for safety professionals in the next 5 years? 10 years? (Please rank with 1 being most important and 5 being least important)

4 The Importance of Learning and Technology Orientation for Future Safety Professionals

The proliferation of technology, changing demographics and increased focus on diversity and inclusion are some of the sweeping trends that are shaping the future of the safety professionals. Are the future safety leaders doing enough to adapt and prosper in the circumstances that the future entails? The good news is that the majority of the respondents (93.33%) in the survey want to become well versed about the benefits of the latest safety professional technologies. In fact, a whopping 72.22% of respondents are also learning about newer technologies in their curriculum that can help safety professionals mitigate risks. Some of the technologies mentioned include:



Technology Orientation Levels of the New Workforce

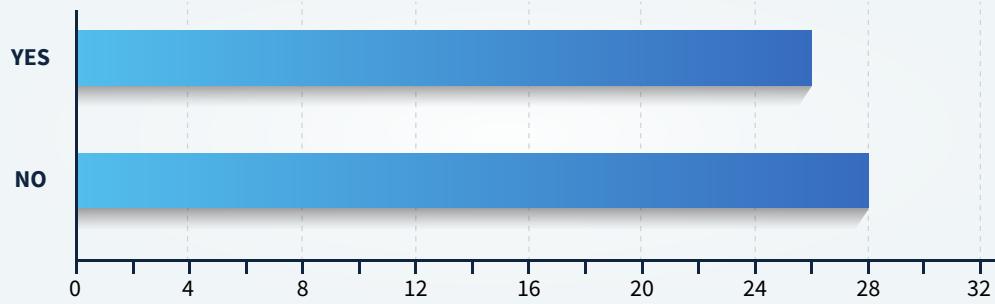


Q5- In your education, are you learning about new technology to help safety professionals mitigate risk?

This level of technology orientation among the young professionals is a stark contrast to the veterans in the industry. More than half of the respondents (51.89%) believe that current safety professionals are not up to date on the latest technology, psychology and attitudes. These respondents believe that existing professionals already in the field can improve with incrementally integrated safety training sessions and education. Also focusing on people management skills, participating in refresher courses and increased reliance on subject matter experts (SMEs) can go a long way in helping these professionals stay future-ready. According to one respondent,

“The field of safety is ever changing and constantly growing especially during times like the pandemic. We need more training on how to help motivate and keep a remote work force safe as well as protect them”

Views on The Current Safety Leadership

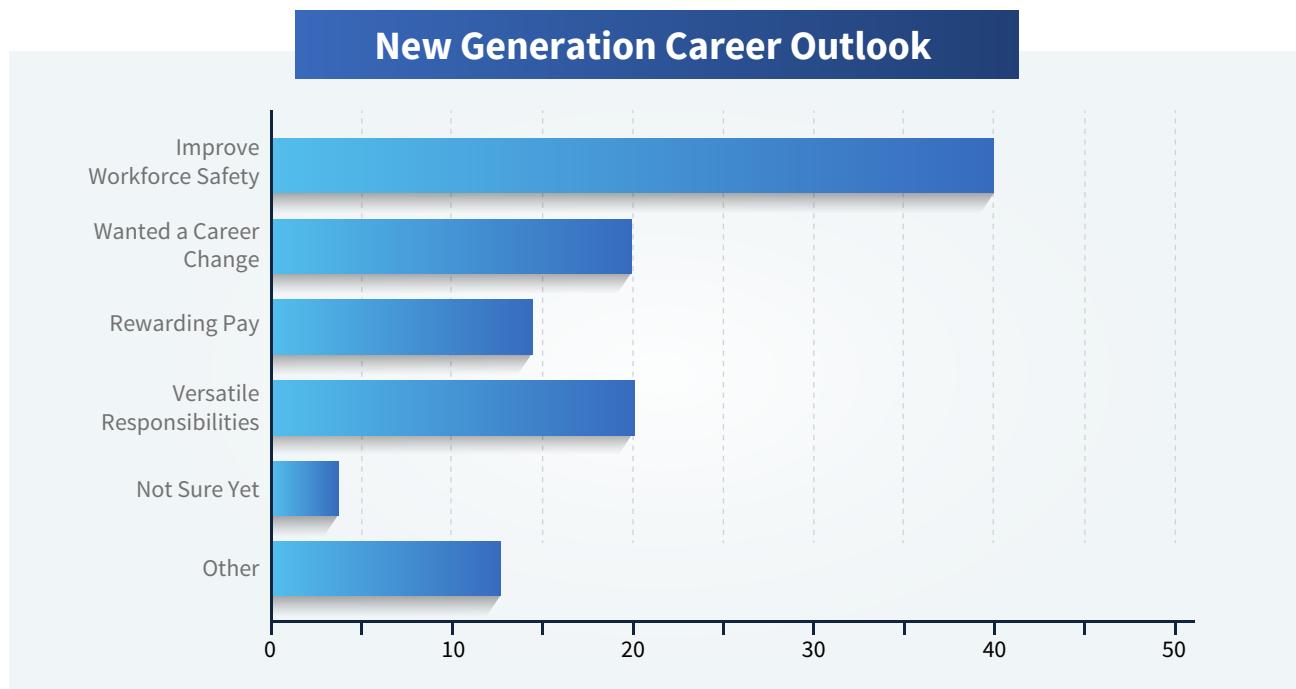


Q8- Do you believe that current Safety Professionals are up to date on the latest technology, psychology and attitudes?

5 The Future of Safety is In Safe Hands

The role of a safety leader is fast changing as organizations move aggressively towards flat horizontal structures where doing more with less staff is the norm. Future safety leaders and professionals will be expected to know more areas than ever, especially since modern businesses will be increasingly on the lookout for safety professionals who are multi-talented individuals.

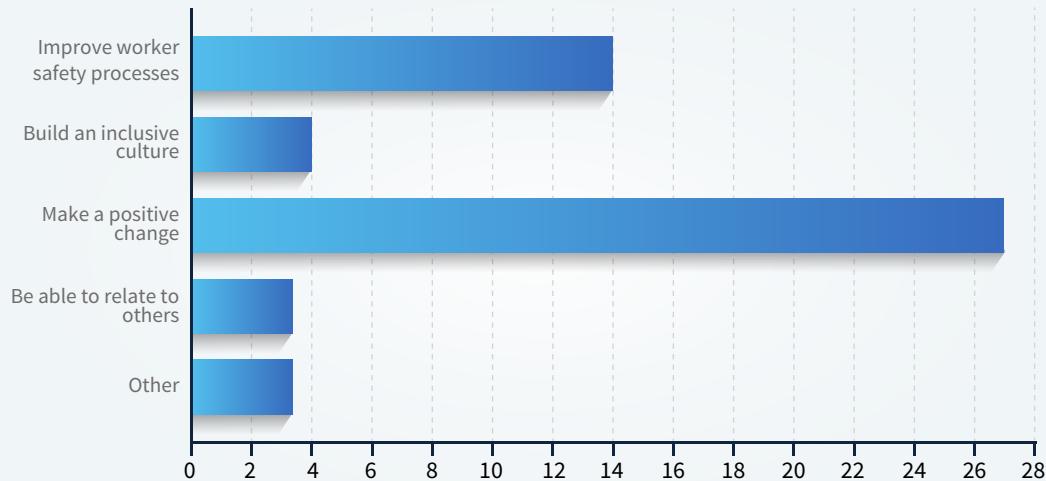
More than half of the respondents (56%) in the Avetta survey are very confident about stepping out of the classroom and implementing the ideas that they are learning into real world applications. The best part is that a majority (52.9%) have chosen this profession because they hope to make a positive change as a safety leader in the future and around 28% wish to improve worker safety processes. Additionally, when asked about the key factors that prompted them to select a career path in workplace health and safety, almost 70% of the respondents stated that it came from a desire to improve workplace safety.



Q11- What made you choose the career path as a health and safety professional?
(Check all that apply)

These figures as a whole spell an exciting future for the occupational health and safety space which now stand to welcome a fresh new breed of leaders who are more learned, proactive, focused and visionary than ever before.

Goals and Objectives Shaping the Future Leaders

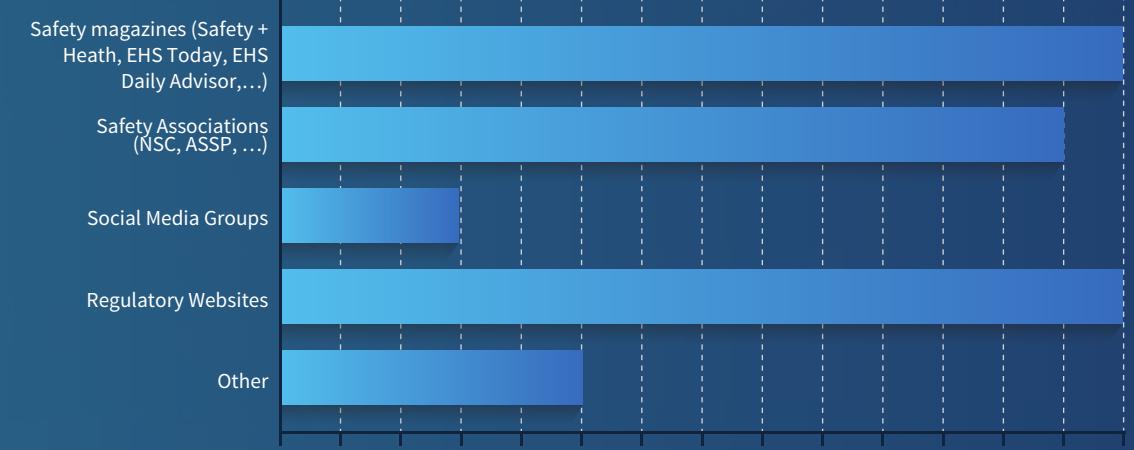


Q12- What do you hope to achieve as a Safety Leader in the future?



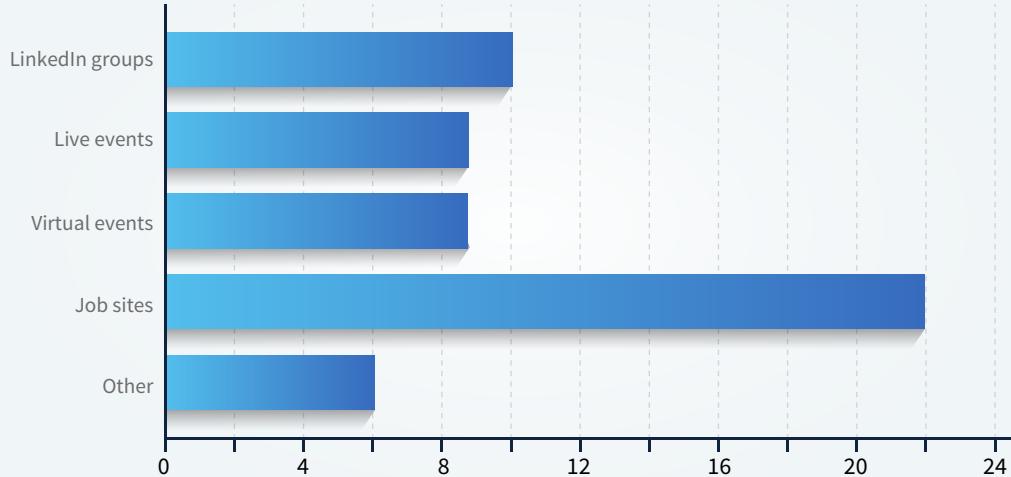
6 Networking Models and Job Preferences

When it comes to accessing safety news and information, 25% of the respondents prefer both reading top safety magazines like EHS Today, EHS Advisor, etc. and visiting regulatory websites for updates on latest safety legislations and trends. For networking with other safety professionals, 40.74% of the respondents prefer job sites and another 22.22% prefer LinkedIn groups.



Q13- Where do you go for safety news and information?

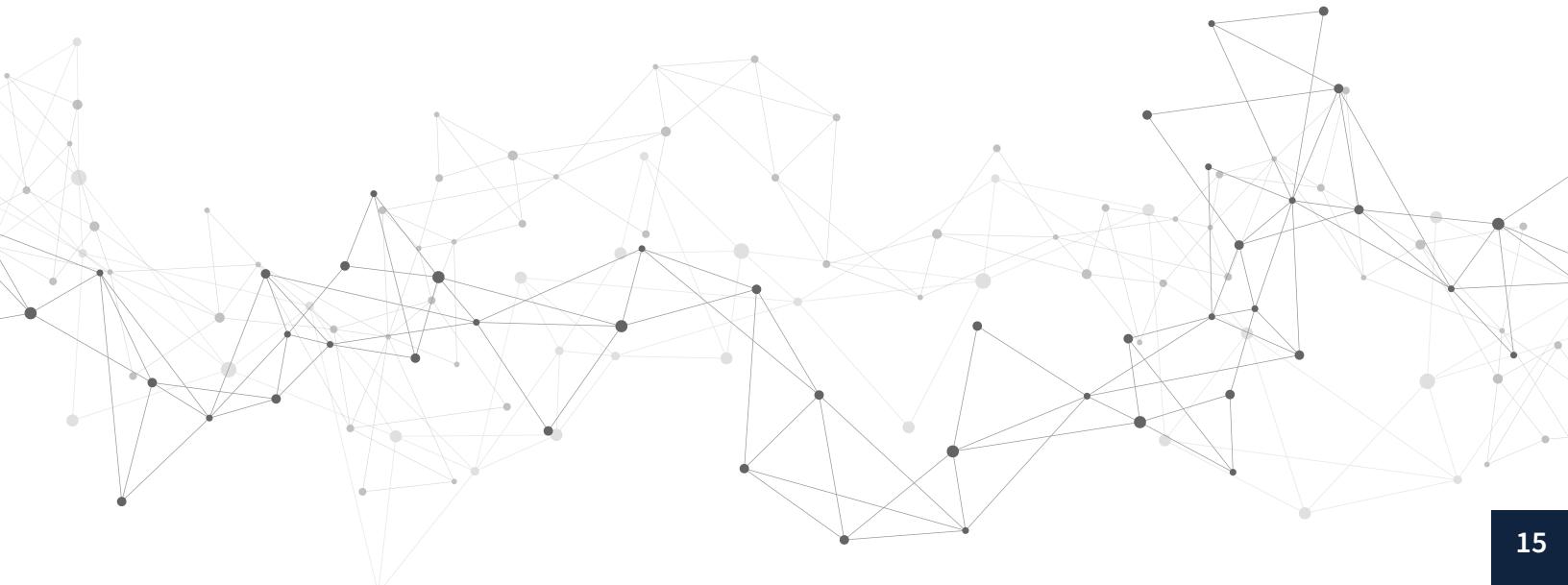
Preferred Networking Channels



Q14- Where have you found the most success networking with other safety professionals? (please specify)

CSP reigns as the most preferred certification that 40.66% of the respondents intend to pursue followed by ASP (24.18%) and CSHM (17.58%).

From a job preference standpoint, it's interesting to note that above compensation and flexibility, company culture (41.18%) takes precedence for new jobseekers. This underlines the criticality of a favourable and empathetic work culture, especially in the light of the new WFH protocols and how far it can go in ensuring that companies have the right talent at their disposal.



Conclusion

While the future of safety entails significant hazards, unprecedented challenges and exposures, it also spells new opportunities for workforce training interventions and learning.

At Avetta, we constantly strive to prepare organizations, their workers and their extended arms (suppliers and contractors) for new safety challenges, regulations and compliance requirements. Our robust, evidence-based worker safety training and awareness programs, recommendations and risk management solutions can promote safety, health and well-being of workers while helping them stay future-ready.



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