



**Establishment and Management of Focus Groups to Establish
the Optimum Methods of Communication with a View to
Encouraging Changed Behaviours on Chemical Related Health
and Safety Issues**

The Marketing Works

June 2004

**Establishment and Management of Focus Groups to Establish
the Optimum Methods of Communication with a View to
Encouraging Changed Behaviours on Chemical Related Health
and Safety Issues**

The Marketing Works

June 2004

Authors:

Simon Strutt MA (Oxon), Carolyn Bird BA (Hons), Peter Arnold BA (Hons)

Disclaimer: This report and the work it describes were funded by the Health and Safety Executive. Its contents, including any opinions and /or conclusions expressed, are those of the authors alone and do not necessarily reflect HSE policy.

COPYRIGHT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Marketing Works would like to thank colleagues at HSE for their help and advice throughout this study

Consultation

We thank all respondents for their help and co-operation in this study, and for making time in their busy schedules to be interviewed or attend the focus groups

CONTENTS

- Executive summary
- Research objective
- Method and sample
- Qualitative research
- Main research findings
 - The sample
 - Awareness of hazards in general
 - Available sources of hazard information
 - Prompted hazards
 - Packaging messages
 - Influencing their behaviour
 - Channels of communication
 - Reactions to the messages
 - Effectiveness of possible headlines
 - Increasing website awareness
 - Guidance sheets
 - Styles of layout
 - Key pointers for changing behaviour
- Conclusions

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Decision makers in Micro Firms work under immense pressure, doing the work as well as managing others, coping with financial pressures with minimal resources, juggling priorities and working very long hours. Furthermore, they do not feel the need to search for help or information with regard to the ill effects of working with hazardous substances – when they do think about such issues (which is rare) they are generally content to leave it to the ‘common sense’ of their staff, and regard common risks as ‘just part of the job’

Different sectors face different risks – and they need to be communicated with in a way that takes their business activity into account. They do not respond well to ‘general’ safety messages.

They believe other safety issues are more important – hygiene for bakers; slipping/electricity/customer well-being for hairdressers; fire for motor repairers; dangerous equipment for carpenters. They are too busy to bother about risk factors in general, so expecting them to take action in several areas is unrealistic. Hence, we recommend ‘joined up’ action by the various safety agencies, giving micro firms a clear priority, a single safety improvement to work on, one at a time.

The tools to communicate with Micro Firms comprise two elements: the medium/channel and the message/style. The most effective channels would be to harness existing trusted channels – notably suppliers who have a proven expertise in the business sector in question (such as the flour salesman for bakers). Otherwise, using packaging and trade publications to communicate information. The ideal message has an element of shock – pictures of skin damage, the word ‘cancer’ – and needs to recommend very simple actions. The favoured style of printed communication would be a tabloid/agony aunt approach – bold, clear and straightforward.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

To understand what tools Micro Firms in 4 key sectors need to help them protect their employees from the ill effects of working with hazardous substances from a health point of view

Achieved by:

- Identifying what types of tools would be most helpful to the Micro Firms in these sectors
- Discovering which channels would be most effective in communicating these tools
- Identifying what stimulates these Micro Firms to take positive action in other areas of their business
- Gaining feedback on the sector-specific sheets already in existence
- Understanding the sector-specific needs of:
 - Motor Vehicle Repair
 - Small Bakery
 - Carpentry
 - Hairdressing

METHOD AND SAMPLE

2 stage approach:

- **Stage 1:** 8 x face-to-face interviews with micro businesses – 2 per sector. This was followed by an interim debrief and review of method.
- **Stage 2:** 4 x focus groups, one within each sector:
 - Motor Vehicle Repair
 - Small Bakery
 - Carpentry
 - Hairdressing

Sample for Stages 1 and 2:

- Recruitment of the sample involved identifying, contacting, selecting and inviting appropriate Micro Firm decision makers
- All had their own premises, less than 10 staff, independent status, more than 2 years in operation
- We recruited owner/managers for the Depths and the Groups
- The geography covered the North West, South Wales, South East, Scotland
- Fieldwork (Depths and Focus groups) undertaken in March & April 2004
- All research was undertaken by Simon Strutt, Carolyn Bird and Peter Arnold of The Marketing Works

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Two of the key strengths of **qualitative research** are that it allows issues to be explored in detail and enables researchers to test the strength of people's opinion. However, it needs to be remembered that qualitative research does not allow conclusions to be drawn about either the extent to which something is happening or percentages of Micro Firms who have certain attitudes and opinions. Qualitative research is designed to be **illustrative rather than providing statistically representative data**. It should also be remembered that throughout this report we record **perceptions, not facts**. Participants may hold views based on incorrect information; these perceptions are reported here. There is a tendency for qualitative discussions to elicit critical views.

MAIN RESEARCH FINDINGS

THE SAMPLE, and their working situation

Motor Repairers

Working long hours, often in quite small premises, predominantly male, with between 7 and 15 years experience, managing 2 to 6 staff

Bakers

Very busy, constantly having to consider not only health and safety but hygiene, often in old-fashioned premises or as part of a convenience/food store, mainly female, 5 to 12 years experience, managing 4 to 9 staff

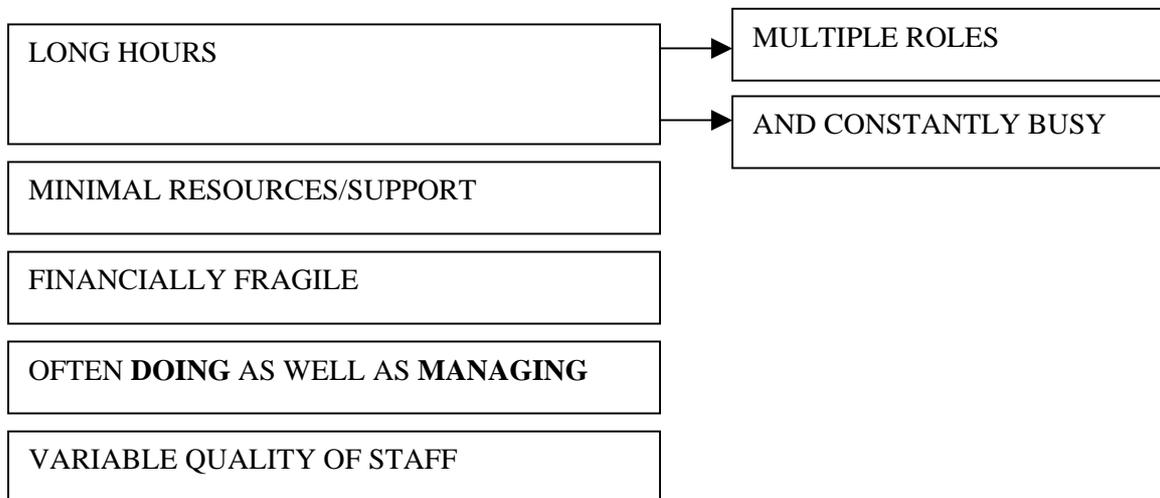
Carpenters

Often working for contractors, all had their own workshops, constantly moving from one job to another, some also undertaking roofing, plastering and general building work, 3 to 30 years experience, 2 to 6 staff

Hairdressers

Ranged from small old-fashioned establishments to modern city premises, constantly facing trainee issues (sickness, absence, inexperience), sometimes running beauty and sunbeds, 3 to 38 years experience, 2 to 9 staff

ALL SECTOR SUMMARY



MAIN RESEARCH FINDINGS

AWARENESS OF HAZARDS IN GENERAL

They were all asked: “What do you consider to be the health hazards faced by you and your employees through contact with substances?”

Motor Repairers

- Paints, thinners and dust were top of mind *“Anything that’s in the air when they are flattening down”; “Isocyanates in paint, but it’s not as bad as it used to be years ago”*
- Ensuring correct and adequate ventilation was key *“Aerosols may have substances in them that we’re not aware of, so we have to ensure the correct ventilation”*
- Damage to skin and eyes was also mentioned, as were flammable products *“You can get skin damage from thinners”*
- The use of eye protection and gloves was mentioned in passing, as use of them was effectively taken for granted – although not always: *“Brake cleaner stings a bit when it gets in your eyes”*

Bakers

- All were more concerned with hygiene than with health and safety – all mentioned this before talking about anything else *“You aren’t supposed to work if you’ve got any illness or disease”*
- Machinery usage was also seen as a potential hazard *“The biggest one is machinery, you have to be careful”*
 - Burns were also an issue *“Getting burns from the doughnut fryer”*
- Machinery cleaning, degreasing and maintenance received some mentions – this was seen as the main source of ‘chemical usage’ *“We descale a washing machine with acid, I do that myself, tip it into a bucket and into the machine”*
- Pest control was another issue they faced, although this was always contracted to an outside provider *“Rentakill come and do that”*
- Only a couple spontaneously mentioned flour dust, as they took it for granted that it was *“Part of the job”; “It gets in your lungs a bit”*

Carpenters

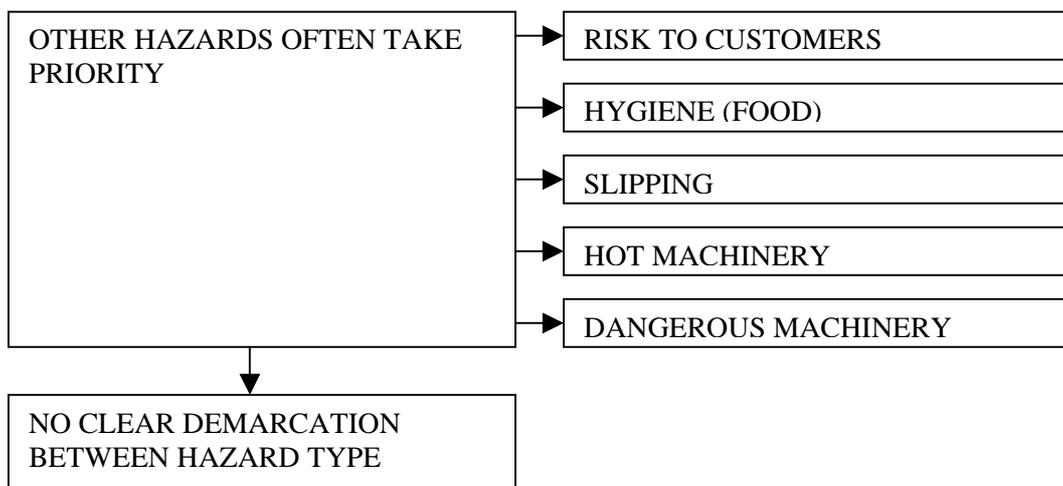
- All mentioned the hazards of dust – particularly from MDF *“Having to wear a mask with MDF dust inside, but I won’t wear a mask outside”*
- Adhesives were the most commonly-used chemical products, and these were most top of mind *“The fumes are awful with full contact adhesives”*
- Other chemicals were occasionally used, but the hazards posed by them were thought of as more of an inconvenience than anything more serious *“When you get expanding foam on your skin it just doesn’t come off – I try and use gloves when I can”; “Some treated timber can give you a bit of a rash”*
- Tools and machinery were also mentioned – it was felt that safety and prevention of accidents was simply down to the user’s experience, and was their own responsibility *“The people who operate the tools”; “I won’t go onto a roof without a proper roof harness for the job”*

Hairdressers

- Cutting fingers was mentioned first *“We’re always getting cuts from the scissors”*
- Water/hair slipping hazards were of great concern *“You can easily slip on hair too, if it’s on the floor”; “I’m always saying to my trainees to wipe up any spills”*

- This was primarily mentioned in the context of ensuring that customers were not injured in the workplace
- Electrical hazards - in particular trailing wires and the use of plug sockets – were also an issue *“They never mention wires, they are very important, I had a lady who nearly tripped”*; *“Plug sockets and water don’t mix”*
 - As with slipping hazards, more mentions were for the safety of customers than for the staff
- Of secondary concern were peroxides and dyes *“You should wear gloves and aprons all the time, dye stains your hands”*; *“Bleach can burn if left on the skin for too long”*

ALL SECTOR SUMMARY



AVAILABLE SOURCES OF HAZARD INFORMATION

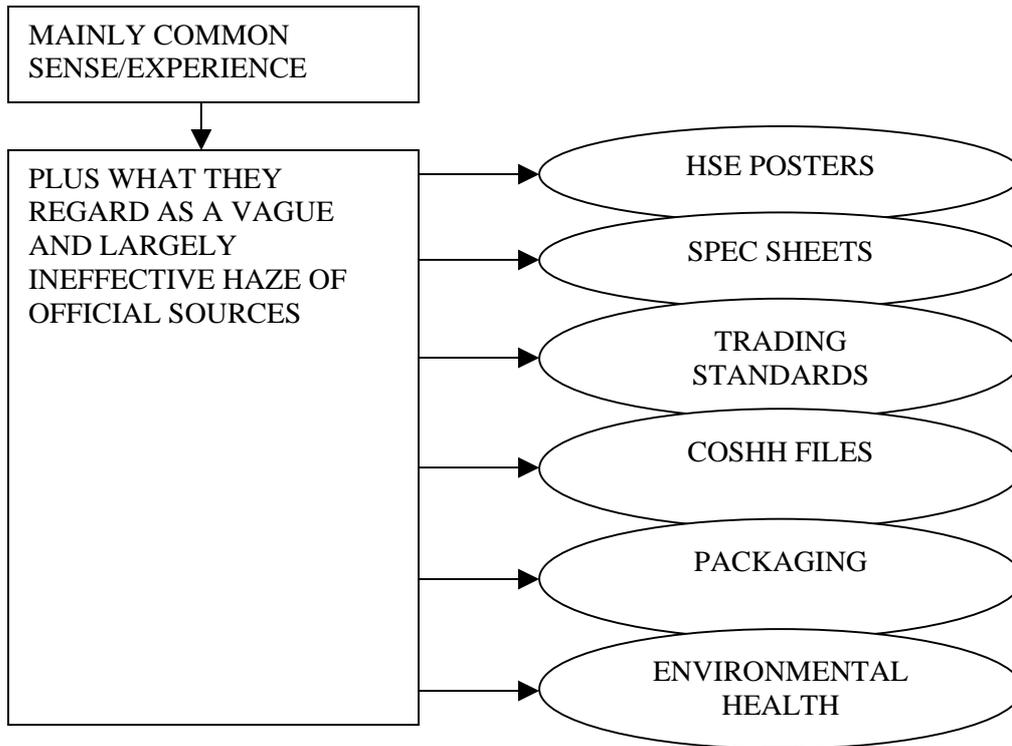
They were all asked “Do you know of any information sources to help you with these hazards?”

For all, ‘**common sense**’ was quoted as THE means by which products were handled correctly – it was simply ‘done’ “*All of the things are just everyday to us, we just do it*”; “*A lot of it is just common sense, you know what the chemicals are and how to use them*”; “*It’s just common sense, you don’t take chances*”

- Coupled with ‘**common sense**’ was learning by experience, and talking to others “*Some of the older lads told me what to do*”; “*You learn from college upwards*”; “*Learn by experience, chop your fingers off once and you aren’t going to do it again*”
- All groups mentioned the **product packaging** itself, although hardly any would read it more than once “*What I use is on the glue tin, but I won’t read it twice*”
- 4 overall (2 motor repairers, 2 hairdressers) spontaneously mentioned **COSHH**. One of each had a ‘**COSHH file**’ listing all the different products used, “*There is a COSHH booklet with guidelines about hazardous products but I’ve never referred to it, it’s somewhere in the salon*”
- Both the hairdresser and motor repair groups mentioned they had ‘**HSE Posters**’ pinned up in their staff rooms. The major criticism (especially from the hairdressers) was that they were very general, and not aimed at the specific industry “*The posters we put up in the staff room talk about machinery and all that, they are just for general H&S, they should do one just for the hairdressing industry*”
- For a couple of motor repairers, the information they had stemmed from **legal requirements** “*It’s illegal to spray a vehicle unless the area is fully ventilated, we know that because we have to*”
- Motor repairers also mentioned ‘**spec sheets**’ which came with the products “*You get spec sheets with the products, saying it’s harmful to skin or whatever*”
- Bakers were very reliant on **Trading Standards/Environmental Health** to tell them “*You have government agencies on food and hygiene, you can contact local councils, environmental health or the HSE*”; “*Trading Standards tell us*”
- A few carpenters received some hazard-related information **in the post** (largely viewed as junk mail) “*I get a lot of post advertising all sorts of things to do with health and safety, protective clothing and so on*”
 - For the others, this was not viewed as a valid or indeed useful source “*We are besieged with stuff, it almost all goes in the bin*”
- Hairdressers tended to rely on their suppliers and technical **helplines** for help and support although they would not be used for any H&S related queries “*All have helplines, their technicians talk to you about colouring advice and so on*”
- A handful stated that their **Trade Associations** could provide information “*The FSB are quite good at sending you information about legislation*”; “*With the NAMB – National Association of Master Bakers, information and legislation is just sent out to you – or you can ring them*”

AVAILABLE SOURCES OF HAZARD INFORMATION

The reality for Micro Firms is that they depend upon common sense, and largely ignore the various official sources, as follows:



AVAILABLE SOURCES OF HAZARD INFORMATION

They were all asked "Have you ever sought or received further information?"

Motor Repairers

- 2 had undergone inspections (one from the FSB and one from a 'health and safety' consultant) - only one acted upon the advice "We had a go with their recommendations and they were unworkable - you're supposed to wear goggles and gloves when mixing paint, but you can't hold the mixer with your gloves on"; "The FSB came and did a risk assessment, some things we just weren't aware of but we are now"
- Other than this, a couple had requested safety sheets ('spec sheets') for unfamiliar products (they then never referred to them again) *"Some of the rubbing compounds we had no information on, everything should come with a data sheet now"*

Bakers

- One had recently had an asbestos inspection, and took note of the findings
- Other than that, they rarely sought advice, other than from Environmental Health or the Local Authority (as their prime concern was hygiene as opposed to health and safety) *"You can turn to them for more help, it's better to ask for help than them come in and find the problem"*

Carpenters

- None had sought further guidance, other than one who vaguely remembered asking for a data sheet *"You can get a hazard sheet from suppliers, saying what you're dealing with and whether you need a mask or whatever"*

Hairdressers

- Occasionally they would need to refer to product information if it was something that they were unfamiliar with *"If something comes out, then you read the leaflets and check it out, then you don't bother again"*
- Other than this, they would call their helplines *"You can always ring the L'Oreal helpline"*

OVERALL LITTLE INFORMATION IS SOUGHT

THERE IS A REACTIVE APPROACH TO HEALTH AND SAFETY

"It's only if something came up, if you saw something and it wasn't right, then you may try and find out"

PROMPTED HAZARDS

Awareness and views

Each sector was then prompted with a statement (see boxed text) regarding certain risk factors specific to their sector

Motor repairers:

“The main hazard is isocyanates which can cause asthma and dermatitis. Processes include mixing, spraying 2-pack paints in a spray booth, cleaning spray guns and applying them with brush or roller. Other small tasks include flattening, SMART repairs and welding. Valeting and cleaning cars with solvent based products and

- All bar one stated that the above was simply part of the job, and that any safety precautions were merely common sense *“Only if you’re stupid with it - if you don’t wear a respirator or a mask”; “If they go into a booth with breathing apparatus and wear the right stuff then what’s the problem?”*
- One person had no idea of the dangers posed by isocyanates - and didn’t know what isocyanates were *“I’ve never heard of isocyanates...I’m aware they have to wear masks but I thought it was safe in solid form, my men are currently rubbing things down without masks”*

Bakers:

“The main hazard is flour dust which can cause asthma. Processes include bag opening, tipping, dough mixing, weighing and handling flour improvers, hand moulding, dividing, using a dough brake and emptying stand-alone dust collectors”

- All bar one knew that asthma was an issue, but again it was ‘par for the course’ of being a baker, and handling it safely was simply a matter of ‘common sense’ *“You get your flour dust, you can’t help that, but it’s down to common sense, you stand away from it when mixing the flour”*
- One person hadn’t thought of asthma at all - and stated that it was not a problem for her staff *“My 2 bakers, one has just retired, and he never had asthma”*
- The majority saw the description as being aimed at larger concerns than their own *“It’s all a bit industrial sounding”*
- The focus group in particular were less concerned with the processes mentioned above, as they felt that *“The ones that mix the flour have covers on them anyway”*
- Additional hazards mentioned were baking powder, hygiene, and burns

Carpenters:

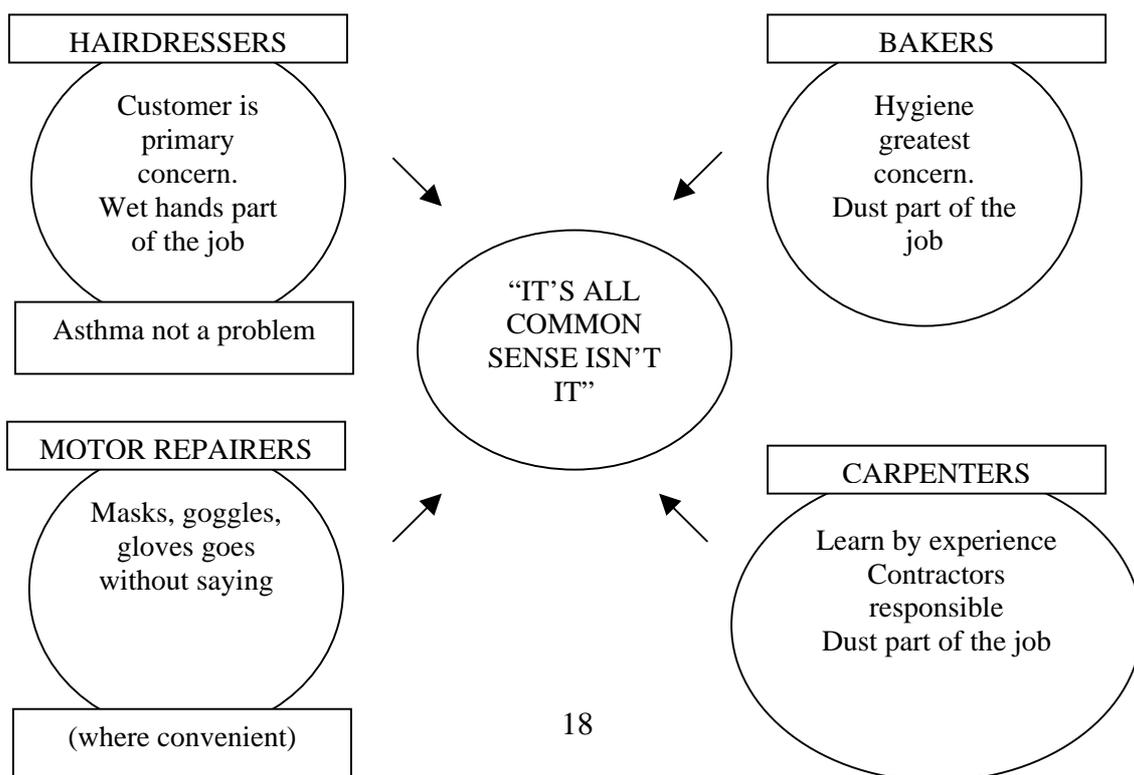
“The main hazard is wood dust from cutting wood which can cause respiratory disease, cancer and dermatitis. The main processes involved are band saws, circular bench saws, cross-cut saws, vertical spindle moulders, overhead and CNC routers, sanding machines, hand-held sanding machines, furniture assembly and emptying stand-alone dust collectors”

- As with the bakers, all knew of the issue of dust, but felt that there was little they could do other than adopt a 'common sense' approach *"Dust is part of the job"*
- They did comment that hand sanding machines were less of a problem than previously, as they tended to have bags attached *"Most hand sanders have dust bags on them nowadays"*
- All however, felt that as they were often working on contracts for clients, that the onus of health and safety was with that client *"Any health and safety responsibility is down to the contractor"*
- Additional hazards mentioned were adhesives and insulation materials

Hairdressers:

"Ingredients in bleaches, perm solutions and henna may cause asthma. Skin contact with products such as bleach, dye, perm solution and hairspray can cause dermatitis. Long periods of work with wet hands can also cause skin disorders"

- Only one was aware of asthma *"I thought if you had asthma you may be more likely to get into trouble, but not that it caused it"*
 - One felt that it was probably 'one in a million' and dismissed it as 'sensationalist' *"You just wonder whether the HSE are seeking out the 1 in 500,000 who get asthma, and then making everyone wear a mask"*
- All knew of dermatitis, but the view was that there was little that could be done, other than using barrier creams *"We drum into them that they should have barrier creams handy"; "It's difficult to wear gloves when shampooing"*
 - A couple felt that it was simply a matter of 'quitting the industry' if dermatitis occurred *"If you had a skin disorder with water then you just wouldn't work in this trade, you'd have to switch career"*
- Additional hazards mentioned were cuts, water, wires, hair and inhaling lacquer



PACKAGING MESSAGES

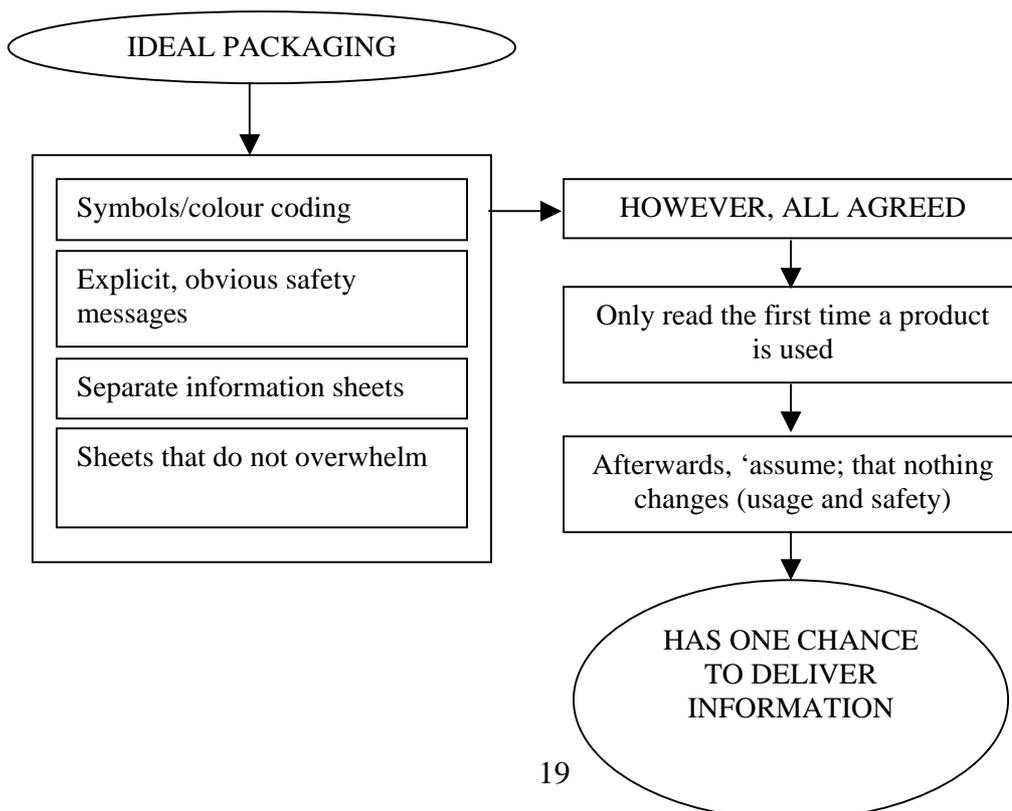
Information coming with the substance

The focus groups were asked to bring along (or recall) examples of product with clearly labelled **health and safety messages**

- **Symbols/colour coding had** more visual impact than paragraphs of text (eg paint tins, cleaning products) *“Symbols are better than words”; “Colour codes for different products and hazards”*
- **Explicit, obvious safety messages** were preferred to ones that subtly implied precautions needed to be taken *“Well, it says ‘wear suitable clothing, inhaling contents can be harmful or fatal - but it could say ‘this is really nasty stuff’”; “Instead of saying ‘use in well ventilated areas’ it should say ‘always wear a mask’”*
- **Separate information sheets in addition to being printed on the product** ensured that there were ‘2 chances’ to read information *“I can then pass the sheets around for people to read”; “Warnings on the packaging, a bit like cigarette packs”*
- **Sheets that do not overwhelm with information** - Car repairers in particular felt that manufacturers were putting too much ‘technical’ information into their data sheets *“Data sheets are getting so complex, we need a degree to understand them”*

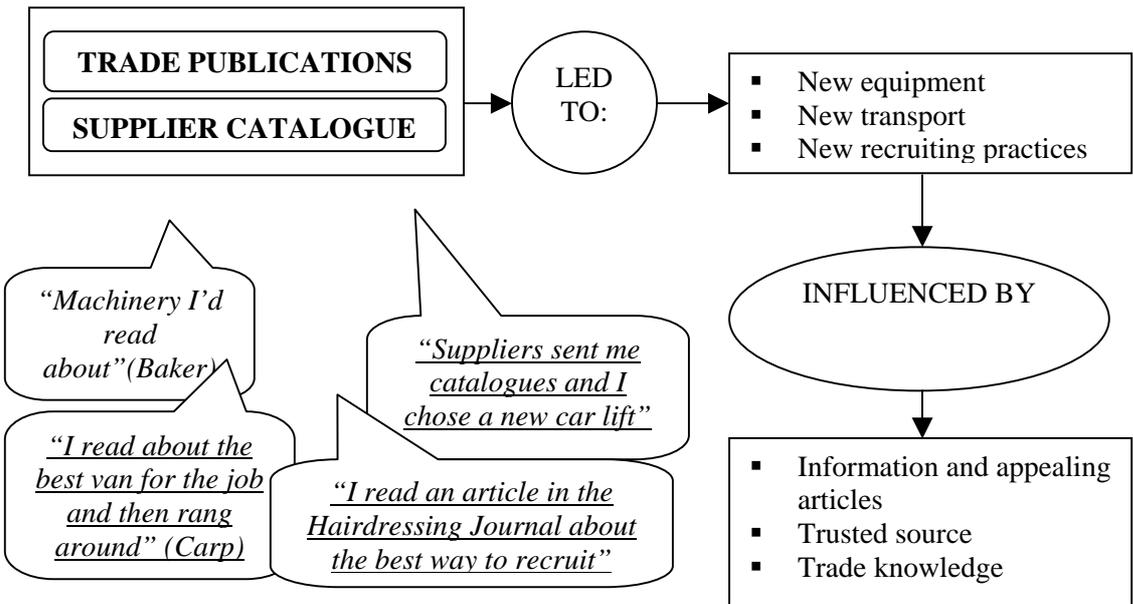
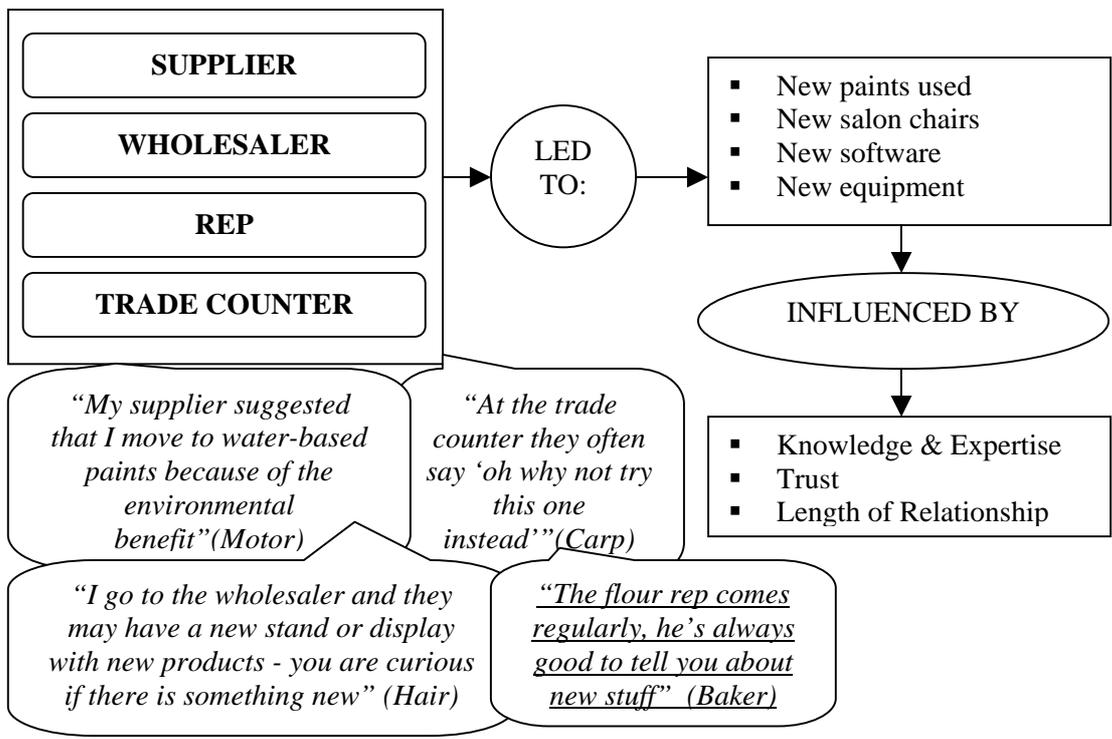
APPROPRIATELY SIGNED PRODUCT/PACKAGING

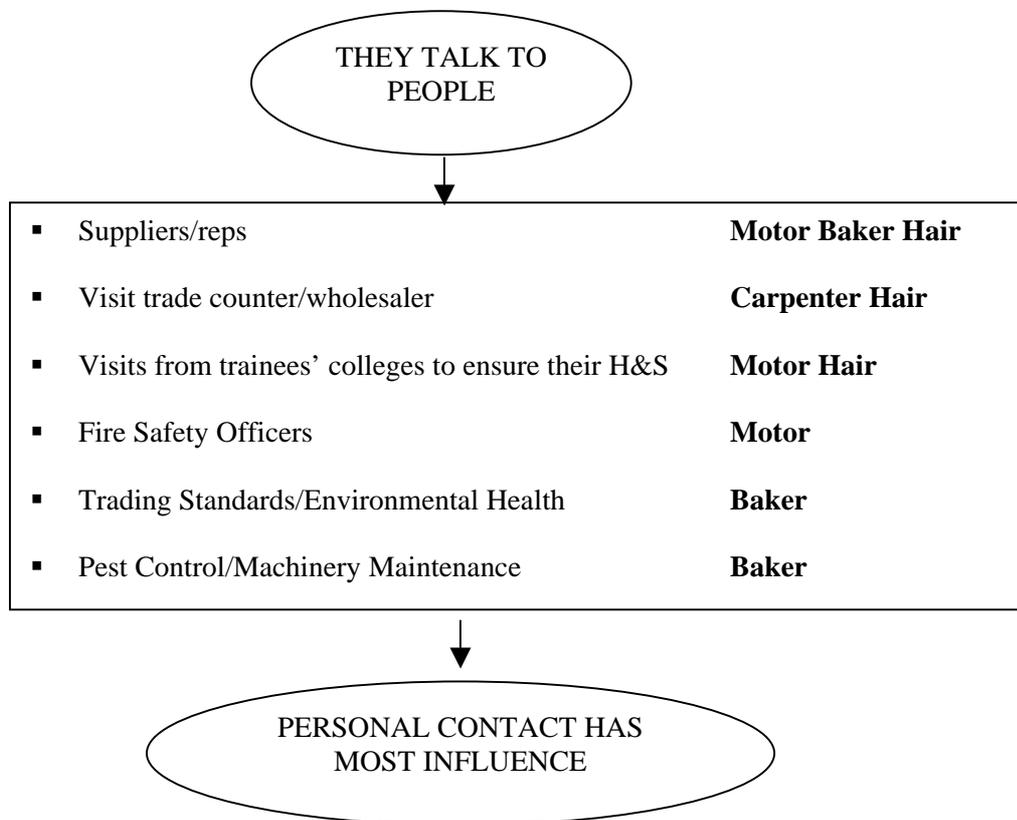
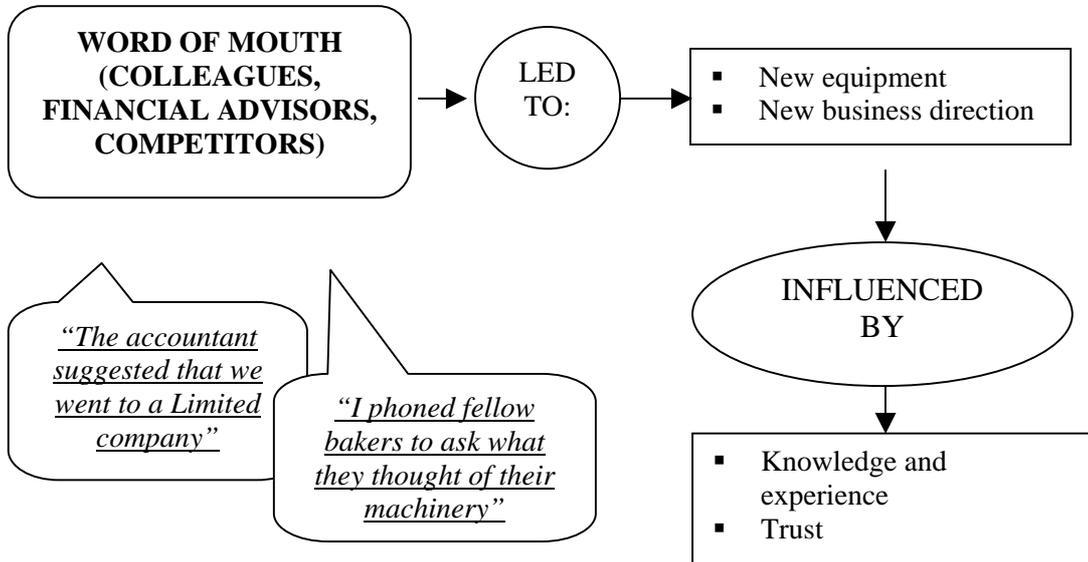
The key issue



INFLUENCING THEIR BEHAVIOUR

What influences the way their business runs in other areas?





CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION – PROMPTED

Respondents were prompted with a number of communications channels (Trade Associations: Websites: Word of Mouth: Suppliers: Conferences: Trade Publications: Consultants) and asked which they found most effective and influential for them.

Greatest potential

Suppliers

- Most had good relationships with their suppliers/wholesalers
- Most felt that suppliers/wholesalers already gave them as much information as they required *“If things change then the supplier lets us know”*
- They equated the supplier with the product *“The products they sell come with the information”*
- Hairdressers in particular relied on the ‘helplines’ from their main suppliers, in addition to their wholesalers *“The main source of advice is the technicians”; “If anything new came out then L’Oreal would inform us and we’d listen”*

Trade Publications/Journals/Catalogues

- All bar the carpenters - despite saying that they had little time - did read such publications *“I have a quick flick through them whilst I’m at work”; “I read British Baker thoroughly, it’s a good way to find out”*
- The key lay in **concise, informative articles** *“Any articles that are short and sweet”; “Interesting information, broken down into bits”*
- Journals included: **Bodyshop Magazine; Automotive Management; British Baker; Hairdressing Journal**

Consultants – with caveats!

- **An independent advisor, not a ‘criticiser’** *“Someone to come in and give us advice, who doesn’t come round and say ‘oh you can’t do this, this and that’”; “See it for themselves, explain to us if we’re doing anything we shouldn’t”*
- **Knowledgeable of their industry** *“Has to be someone who knew about hairdressers or who was a hairdresser themselves”*
- **Cheap/Free** *“If they could be subsidised somehow by the HSE”*
- **At their convenience** *“Have to make appointments, we are busy people”*
- –Bakers and carpenters were particularly concerned about making time for them *“It’s fitting them in during the day, you can’t just stop the job, it’s live and moving”; “It’s hard to get hold of me when I’m on the job”*
- Several car repairers stated that when **fire officers** came yearly to inspect their premises, they could perhaps offer more general H&S advice

Some potential

Websites

- Most had access at home. Around 2/3 had access at work
- There were two main time-poverty barriers to overcome: at work and at home *“You’re tired from a days work, you don’t want to do work things at home”; “I’ve no time to look at work – even though I have my own website”*
- None had previously considered looking on the internet for such information *“I could look it up on the internet, I’ve just never thought about it before”*

- Once all the barriers were overcome, then the key requirement was that any information be brief and industry-specific “Set up in a way that’s not heavy going and generalised, I’m running a business and time is money – I want to find information relevant to me”; “A printout of things would be handy – but it has to be about hairdressing, not all governmental”

Least potential

Conferences

- Lack of time was the main barrier “You’d need time off work to go – no way”; “You don’t have time to go – we’d have to be paid to go there”
- A couple of hairdressers and car repairers were more interested if there was a health and safety element to a trade fair “If there was a big ‘do’ about hair and hairdressing, with this tacked on”; “If it was say at the Motor Show at Donington then I’d go”
- They did not expect to pay “Invite us somewhere to talk about health and safety”

Trade Associations

- Although a handful were members of trade associations (**MVRA, VBRA, NAMB, FMB, Hairdressing Federation**), they were mostly viewed as a ‘badge’ as opposed to anything more “People only join the MVRA for the credibility, they do nothing for you”; “I’m in the Hairdressing Federation, they do little for you to be honest”
- Those who were not members, felt that the strength of the associations had long diminished, and could see little benefit in membership “They have no power anymore”

Word Of Mouth

- The carpenters were the exception, in that they were quite keen on this channel of communication as they tended to gather experience from colleagues and contacts (more-so than the other industries) “We speak to a lot of people each week and we all learn from each other’s experiences and mistakes”
 - This was precisely the reason why others saw it as a problem “What the old lads say isn’t always best”
- A couple of bakers were concerned that there was no authority behind what had been said “There is no proof you said something, you can’t say ‘I told you not to do that’ – they can say ‘no you didn’t’”

<p>WORD OF MOUTH IS WIDESPREAD, BUT LACKS APPROPRIATE AUTHORITY FOR H&S INFORMATION</p>

REACTIONS TO THE MESSAGES

Respondents were then shown a number of messages, and asked which messages they found most persuasive

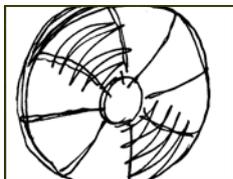
Most effect

This could happen to your staff if you ignore this advice



- The 'skin damage' visual had immediate impact *"That one with the hands is really quite frightening"*
- It was felt to be equally effective if the message was aimed at owners or their staff *"Scaring the staff into taking notice"; "Showing you to look after your staff"; "When people work for me they are responsible for themselves, so that tells them"*
- The bakers felt that it would be very impactful on the packaging itself *"They could have the warnings on the packet"*

Fumes and dust can be dangerous even at low levels and can cause dermatitis, asthma and cancer - and are easily prevented



- For all, the word 'cancer' was very emotive and powerful *"Cancer is a good word to use, that frightens everyone"*
- However, the carpenters felt that the issue of dust was one that was hard to prevent in their line of work *"You can't really stop dust, it's just not practical"*

Three easy steps to protect your staff



- This was a simple, straightforward message for hairdressers and bakers, as any small, uncomplicated changes to the way that they worked were welcomed “Nice, straightforward, shows that it’s easy to do”
- However, it had less effect on the other two sectors, primarily because of the visual – wearing protective clothing was ‘common sense’ – and any changes to their business would probably be on a grander scale which would be far from simple “You have to wear certain clothing for certain jobs, we do that anyway”

Some effect

Last year 3200 small businesses in your sector were sued by staff because of the health impact of hazardous substances



Do you want your staff to suffer long-term illness because you didn't take this simple advice?



- Both messages served to make respondents feel uncomfortable
- The potential to be sued by their employees (and customers) was a growing problem “Being sued is always at the back of your mind”
- Both messages created a distinct ‘divide’ between staff and employer “Drives a wedge between employer and employee”; “A bit like blackmail”
- Several took comfort in the fact that they were doing their best to avoid being sued “It’s common sense, if you are doing something right then you’re OK”

Least effect

They closed me down - and all I needed to do was fit a fan!



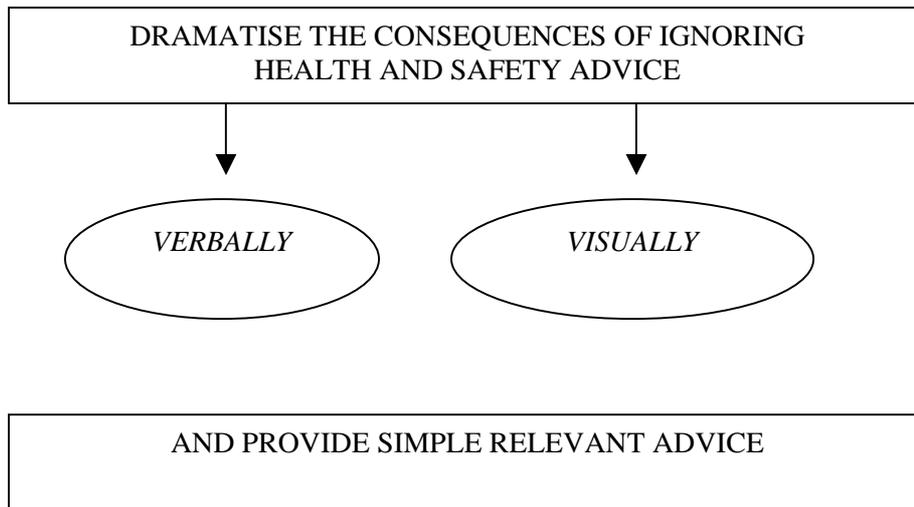
I work in your sector - and we use more hazardous substances than you might think



- All felt that 'being closed down' was the last resort for any business, and the message was 'too dramatic' "*We wouldn't be closed down by the HSE, if they thought we needed one they would say 'you've got 48 hours to fit a fan or we'll close you down' – they wouldn't just close you down then and there*"
- The carpenters in particular stated that any reputable business would know what was needed "*If you've got insurance, then your insurance company would make sure that you've got all the right gear*"
- This message only served to reinforce the views that safety was 'common sense' and part and parcel of running a business "*People who have their own business have to be aware, it's your living, isn't it – that says nothing to me*"

EFFECTIVENESS OF POSSIBLE HEADLINES

Summary



INCREASING WEBSITE AWARENESS

Respondents were asked how awareness for the website could be increased

Poster in the Office

- This was thought to be the most effective means, as it could be viewed by both the staff and the employer *“Both us and our staff can see it and take note of the site”*
- All wanted to receive it in the post, provided that it was **not mistaken for ‘junk mail’** *“On the envelope it would have to say this is from COSHH or the HSE, it has to be official otherwise it may be binned”*

Mouse mat

- This was not thought to be as effective as a poster, but was a useful means of having the web address to hand *“It’s always there under your mouse for you to see”*
- However, many stated that they were effectively besieged by ‘free items’ such as mouse mats, pens and key rings. This mouse mat would therefore be ‘one of many’ *“I get so much of this stuff in the post, you’d think what was behind the message, what are they selling – you’d have to be careful”*

Leaflet/mailer

- This had the greatest potential to be classed as ‘junk mail’ and could easily be discarded along with other literature. *“It has to say it’s important health and safety stuff for it not to be binned”*

GUIDANCE SHEETS

Respondents were then shown a Guidance sheet relevant to their own sector. None had previously seen them, and the majority were quite negative about the actual content

- They were **too complex** *“What’s a monometer?”*
- They were **too detailed, with too much information to take in** *“This is about isocyanates and it’s talking about everything but”; “This can be shortened by a hell of a lot”*
- They contained a lot of **obvious information** - respondents thought that most was simply **‘common sense’** *“Of course our areas are well lit”; “A bit condescending, you don’t need to be told to put cream onto dry skin”; “If you haven’t got common sense then you shouldn’t be using the tools anyway”*
- They were aimed at **large organisations** *“It’s aimed at big businesses, we don’t have a dust extraction unit but we do have a window”*
- Most of all, the majority stated that the language used appeared to be **written by someone unfamiliar with their industry** *“There are machines that we use day in and day out, there’s nobody more qualified than people like us. It beats me why people who write these think that they are more qualified than us who actually use them”; “Written by a pen pusher”*

Spontaneous views

Despite the criticisms, there were certain aspects which were well-received:

- **Check lists and tick boxes** were a simple means of ensuring all procedures were carried out *“Says all the right things, what to do, what not to do”; “Tick boxes like here on the last page, employees could say tick and sign it to say that they are doing it”*
- The **short paragraphs** served to break up the text (but not enough)
- A minority were interested in going online to **download sheets themselves** *“Look it up on the net, click on it, deal with issues one at a time”; “Download it at home when I’ve got the time”*

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Short, concise information and guidance▪ Some want to download sheets▪ Website would benefit from wider awareness |
|---|

Suggested improvements

- Less text, less complex information *“Less waffly, more to the point”*
- More bullets, smaller paragraphs *“It needs to be less like the usual governmental thing, too dull with too many words”*

- Less 'obvious' illustrations – and more useful ones “Why have a picture of somebody shampooing?”; “Pictures are more eye-catching”
- Written by 'someone from our industry' “You need someone in the trade to write it for you”; “Not just worked out by someone who’s sat there and thought what all the dangers could be, but someone with practical knowledge”
- One car repairer suggested that they should be included with the hazardous products “Every time you got a tin of paint and they sent you a sheet too, you’d look at it and it may then eventually sink in”
- **NB** Carpenters could see little use for the sheets, other than for **trainees**. For them, acquiring knowledge was done through **experience** “Maybe for apprentices working their way through college”

STYLES OF LAYOUT

Respondents were asked: “Can we talk about the best way of showing this kind of information, not just on the web but also on a mailer, or an advert or even an article in your favourite trade journal?”

Greatest impact



‘Agony Aunt’ style

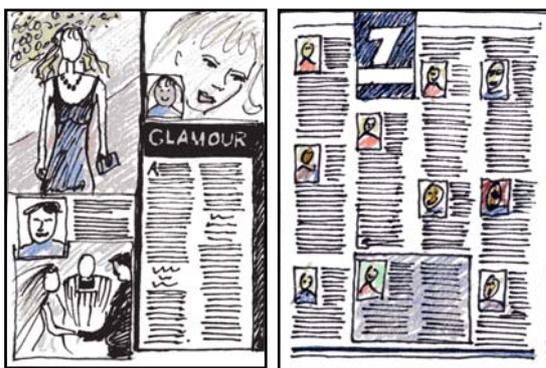
- Simple Q & A approach liked “*What if I do this, how do I do that*”
- Effective for training new staff “*Great for training them, simple answers*”
- Must be short and to the point “*Take out the waffle*”



‘Big headline’ style

- Bold headings have immediate impact “*Say ‘isocyanates can kill’*”
- Less text the better “*Don’t have much small print, stick to the main headings and bullet them*”

Least impact



‘Celebrity’ style magazine

- Too much text, too confusing, little impact, ‘daunting’ amount to read “*When I come home I wouldn’t want to read that much and I wouldn’t have time at work either*”

STYLES OF LAYOUT (cont)

Least impact



TV Guide style

- Colour coding useful to highlight different areas “*Colour coding is good for different issues, or different hazards*”
- But too much text



Tabloid/cartoons/pictures style

- Cartoons inappropriate for a serious subject “*Shouldn't associate hazards with cartoons, they aren't serious enough*”
- Text too compact

KEY POINTERS FOR CHANGING BEHAVIOUR

- Simple, straightforward yet rather 'blunt' messages *"If there was a poster with a nasty picture on it then it may stop a trainee whinging to me that his hands are sweaty with gloves on"*
 - If in poster format then must be hard wearing *"Laminated to make them paint proof"*
 - If in trade journals/catalogues then concise and eye-catching
- Concise and easy to digest
- Ideally 'written in their language' *"Be as close to our work environment as possible";*
"An official poster, written for hairdressers"
- Informing them of the website *"Unless they tell me about these sheets and where I can get them from then there's nothing I can do"*

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

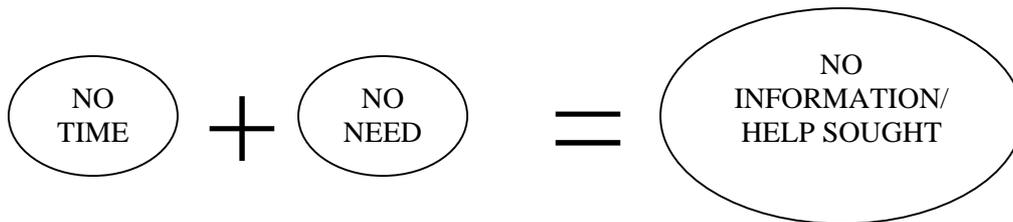
BARRIERS TO CHANGE: ALL SECTORS

1. THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

- Long hours
- Little support/ minimal resources
- Busy with urgent tasks

2. LACK OF PERCEIVED NEED

- They think they know the main hazards
- They believe they can handle them using common sense
- Other risks take priority in many cases



DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SECTORS

MOTOR REPAIRERS	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Aware of isocyanate risks ▪ Generally take appropriate precautions ▪ Other health issues addressed if practical
BAKERS	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Other risks, and hygiene, were higher priority ▪ Flour dust only requires 'common' sense precautions
CARPENTERS	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Awareness of wood dust but 'part of the job' with some taking precautions when practical
HAIRDRESSERS	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Asthma not regarded as major risk ▪ Awareness of dermatitis, but precautions rarely taken ▪ Other risk factors (slipping/electrics/customer safety) given priority

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

TWO WAYS OF LOOKING AT HEALTH, SAFETY, AND HYGIENE ETC

At the moment, Micro Firms are targeted with messages on a number of health-related levels, as follows:

	Health	Safety	Hygiene	Etc
HAIRDRESSERS				
MOTOR REPAIRERS				
CARPENTERS				
BAKERS				



EXPECTING THEM TO TAKE ACTION ON THREE PLUS ISSUES IS TOO COMPLICATED AND TOO TIME-CONSUMING TO ACT ON ANYTHING!

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

THE SECOND WAY OF LOOKING AT HEALTH, SAFETY, AND HYGIENE ETC

They would be more responsive to a single message, providing good practice advice in a single area, phrased in a way that is relevant to their sector

	GOOD PRACTICE
HAIRDRESSERS	
MOTOR REPAIRERS	
CARPENTERS	
BAKERS	

WORKING IN A MORE 'JOINED UP' WAY, AND GIVING THEM ONE KEY PRIORITY FOR THEIR OWN SECTOR: "OK I'LL TRY IT"

HOW CAN WE CHANGE BEHAVIOUR: RECOMMENDED TOOLS

CHANNELS

- Suppliers
- Packaging
- Trade publications (except carpenters)
- Consultants (with caveats)
- (Websites)

All to be sector specific

MESSAGES

- Skin damage (visual)
- Key words (cancer)
- 'Three Easy Steps to Protect Your Staff'

FAVOURED STYLE:
TABLOID/AGONY AUNT



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

HOW CAN WE CHANGE THEIR BEHAVIOUR?

1.

CHANNELS THEY TRUST AND LISTEN TO

2.

ADVICE THAT IS SIMPLE AND SECTOR SPECIFIC

→ Quick and easy to understand

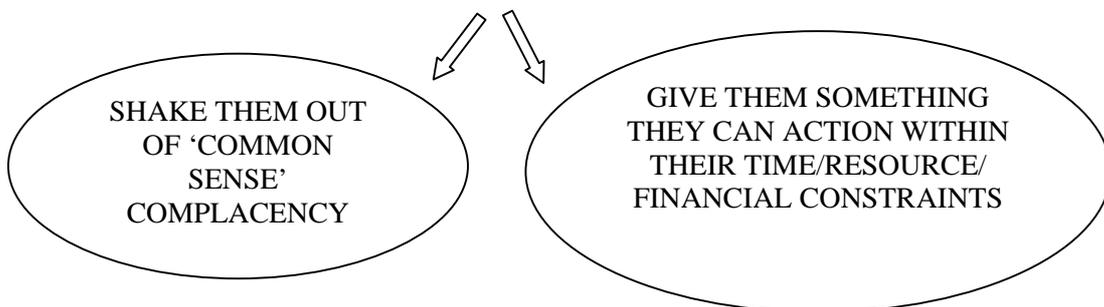
→ Simple to implement

3.

CREATE A NEED

→ Shocking/uncomfortable messages

→ Simple, impartial style



This report was produced by The Marketing Works. For more information please contact Simon Strutt or Carolyn Bird.

The Marketing Works
Stowe Castle Business Park
Buckingham
MK18 5AB
01280 823008