

# amber

**WHITE PAPER**

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# Introduction

Recent studies have shown that approximately 2.78 million workers die from occupational accidents and work-related diseases each year. A further 374 million workers suffer from non-fatal occupational accidents (ILO, 2017). The International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimates that lost workdays globally represent almost 4% of the world's GDP, and in some countries this rises to 6% or more. Occupational accidents should be a big concern for every organisation.

The world of work is constantly changing, and the future holds many unknowns. The ILO states that the greatest challenges and opportunities for creating a safe and healthy future are:

- 1 The rapid change of technology.
- 2 Demographics.
- 3 Sustainable development and occupational health and safety (OHS).
- 4 Changes in work organisation.

(ILO, 2019a)

The increasing rate of invention and the increase in size and complexity of work systems add to the difficulty of keeping people safe at work. Because of the unknown and constant changes, the ILO proposes a human-centred agenda for the future of work to combat occupational accidents (ILO, 2019b). However, for the human-centred approach to work, an organisation needs to have a workforce that is actively participating in identifying and implementing improvements, in other words, an engaged workforce.

There is a growing body of research showing that employee engagement is essential to successful health and safety performance, as well as overall organisational performance. A large part of the success of engagement depends on the quality of relationships that employees experience (Carrillo, 2019). To build good relationships between employee and employer, there needs to be effective, freeflowing, and multi-directional communication throughout the organisation.

The information that can be gained from engaging with the workforce, or “boots on the ground,” is essential to health and safety performance. In order to harness the power of this information, it is important to “capture this information in a way that [reinforces] and [respects] the workers’ story, while at the same time [is] an effective communication tool with, and for, management” (Conklin, 2012). A three-part cycle needs to be implemented. First, workers need to be heard. Second, the management needs to listen, learn, and implement effective changes. Lastly, the workers see the changes and provide feedback. The cycle can then start again. The need for effective communication tools is a vital part of this process.

As a result, Amber, The Health and Safety Communication Platform (Amber) was created. Amber was born from the idea to use creativity and communication tactics to save lives and preserve the quality of life in the workplace and within communities. Amber aims to continually reinforce the trust between employee and employer to create better engagement and communication. It provides the tools to health and safety practitioners and professionals to effectively communicate with workers as well as with leadership.

Amber is an online platform where health and safety teams and leadership can download health and safety campaigns that are designed and conceptualised from cutting-edge research, with high-quality visual graphics and based on tried and tested methodologies. Amber values the power of semiotics (the meaning behind signs and symbols) and semantics (the use of language) to create dialogue and communication within an organisation.



Amber features focus on six sections to promote effective communication designed for safety professionals in high-risk work environments, safety teams or committees and safety managers.

## 1 Branded creative health and safety campaigns

At Amber, we have found that effective communication takes place when the visual content being used is consistent and aligned with the health and safety goals of an organisation. Amber, therefore, brings visual content to one centralised place that is accessible by different departments within an organisation. Amber allows for teams of safety professionals to work together, sharing visual content and minimising repetition of work, while also enabling them to learn from and support different organisational mandates. The visual content is branded to the organisation and/or the health and safety brand to allow practitioners to focus on the message they are trying to convey. Amber aims to give tools and resources to the people on the ground.

### Pain Points Identified:

- Visual content not aligned leading to ineffective messaging.
- Access to facilitation and train-the-trainer guides is expensive.
- Access to workshop design and facilitation is expensive and there is often a high risk for consultants to travel to remote areas.
- Internal staff may be overworked and unable to create health and safety content quickly and effectively.
- Crisis communication requires access to visual content quickly.

### Solutions Designed:

- Create harmony between safety professionals and other departments by aligning content to marketing/branding.
- Learn from departments and support different organisation mandates.
- Give the tools and resources to the people on the ground; empower employees as they are the experts.
- Allows users to focus on the message.

## 2 High-quality visual content ready for print

High-quality content is often difficult to source in remote areas. The cost and production times of bringing in consultants can accumulate and become untenable leading to outdated and/or substandard quality visuals. With Amber, the content and semiotics of the visuals are meticulously thought out and designed to maximise engagement from workers, while the editability of the content allows practitioners to customise content to the organisation as it currently stands. The first phase of Amber is focused on the African continent with the African demographic in mind. Phase 2 will focus on Western and Asian markets. Content in Amber can be downloaded in a ready-to-print file format (PDF) or a digital distribution file format (PNG).

### Pain Points Identified:

- High-quality content is difficult and slow to produce and source in remote areas.
- Visuals available are not always designed with the African demographic or women in mind.
- Often health and safety teams lack training in the importance of semiotics, semantics, visual learning, and employee engagement.

### Solutions Designed:

- Simplify semiotics and bring creative minds to the topic of health and safety.
- The content aesthetic is designed with African photography and illustration.
- Content tested and approved by African user groups.
- Content formatted for print (PDF) or digital (PNG) display and distribution.

## 3 Exposure to non-technical skills

Amber aims to be the best place for non-technical skills development and a source of data for learning for health and safety professionals and practitioners. To this end, the Knowledge Zone was created. A series of pocket books aimed at increasing non-technical skill proficiency can be found inside, and examples include visual communication, negotiation skills and body language. The Knowledge Zone contains guidance, exercises, tips, and relevant examples to help users maximise their Amber experience.

### Pain Points Identified:

- Limited access to non-technical skills development resources.
- Learning how to use new software can, at times, be challenging without guidance.

### Solutions Designed:

- Introduction to non-technical skills through the pocket book series.
- Self-facilitated practical exercises to use what has been learned.
- Guidance and tips on how to use Amber with relevant examples.

# Supporting ISO 45001:2018

## 4 Communicating the context of your organisation

A thorough understanding of the context in which an organisation operates is pivotal in establishing, maintaining, and continually improving an organisation's OHS management system. This is achieved through Amber's Context Report. The Context Report is a summary document noting the most important aspects of the community around the organisation, the current economic environment, the political and legal environment, and the technology of today and the future. It aims to provide the organisation with an understanding of the relevant external and internal matters (both positive and negative) affecting the organisation's ability to achieve its health and safety goals.

Amber's Context Report is timestamped and easily edited to keep up with the changing nature of work and the world. It is also automatically branded to your organisation creating consistency across messages. Additional guidance on how to complete the Context Report is provided through the resources in Amber's Knowledge Zone. The Context Report helps with the implementation of clause 4 of ISO 45001:2018.

### Pain Points Identified:

- The context of an organisation can change quickly and dramatically.
- Communicating the current state of the organisation to workers and leadership is vital to health and safety performance.

### Solutions Designed:

- The Context Report is automatically branded to the organisation to align with other communications.
- The Context Report is easily editable and is timestamped to reflect the organisation that exists today.
- Guidance on how to create the Context Report is provided.

## 5 Workshops designed for participation and consultation of workers and leadership

The participation of workers and leadership in the development and implementation of health and safety policies is widely regarded as indispensable. Amber enables health and safety teams anywhere in the world to have access to creative workshops that help them talk about health and safety. Importantly, the workshops enable teams to learn about health and safety from workers and/or leadership. Amber Workshops and interactive Toolbox Talks are based on design thinking principles and promote dialogue about health and safety beyond training and compliance. Our inspiration was to design holistic, engaging and thought-provoking workshops to help with clause 5 of ISO 45001:2018 implementation to build a better culture.

### **Pain Points Identified:**

- Health and safety involves the entire workforce, but creative tactics for inclusion are difficult to source.
- Time allocation for health and safety dialogue impacting shift schedules is seen as an inconvenience and often rushed or treated like a “tick box exercise.”

### **Solutions Designed:**

- Any health and safety team anywhere in the world has access to creative, ready-to-run workshops that will help them talk and learn about health and safety.
- Amber Workshops facilitate health and safety conversations beyond training or induction programmes.
- Amber Workshops are based on design thinking to seek solutions, insights and innovation.
- Amber Workshops are designed with resources to assist teams to implement ISO 45001:2018 with ease.
- Amber Workshops are holistic, focused and have tangible outcomes.
- Amber Workshops are designed to help build psychological safety within the workplace.

## **6 Share your lessons learned within your organisation**

Amber focuses on and trusts in the power of community and, as such, promotes the sharing of lessons. Amber allows users to share health and safety lessons learned with their company. In the future, Amber users will be able to contribute to a central Lessons Learned Database enabling learning to occur across the borders of geography and industry. These lessons learned from each other can help save lives. Health and safety is vital to the success of a business and the economy and is strengthened by learning and talking with each other. Amber has created the place to save and track lessons and insights that add to the dialogue of promoting a strong culture. These lessons learned can contribute to the improvement of an organisation's OHS management system (clause 10 of ISO 45001:2018).

### **Pain Points Identified:**

- Health and safety professionals/practitioners and organisations are looking for resources to improve health and safety culture and operational performance.
- Life-saving resources and insights are difficult to source.

### **Solutions Designed:**

- Learning from each other could help save lives while still focusing on production.
- Amber is designed as the place to store lessons and insights for continuous improvement.
- Archive and retrieve your lessons learned through the Amber platform.

# The Amber business model

In order to effectively build, maintain, and deliver a software solution for the community that is both scalable and responds to the ever-changing IT landscape, a Software as a Service (SaaS) model has been selected as the main delivery mechanism for the platform. This allows for no upfront or ongoing infrastructure and deployment costs when using the platform.

IT software and the associated projects are generally seen as a grudge purchase at the best of times. Working within this known limitation, as well as the perceived high cost of software implementations, the platform has been developed as a cloud-based solution that not only eliminates the need to fund and deploy software solutions, but also allows for rapid deployment and scaling of the user base as and when there is a need.

The tiered functionality with a monthly subscription model has been chosen considering that not all users will need to use all the functionality of the platform. The subscription model has been designed to work with an organisation by allowing for various user types, with an associated monthly subscription. A free tier on the platform, called Amber Free, provides a place where users can download print-ready resources that focus on public health and safety e.g., HIV/AIDS, mental health, and COVID-19.





## Phase One Roll-Out

Although Amber is a global platform, Phase One will target the African mining and construction space with the aim of expanding into other industries, including agriculture, oil and gas, manufacturing, and hospitality. Created by a team of artists, strategists, engineers and software engineers, Amber is a tool tailor-made for those looking to entrench safety practices as part of their organisation's business culture.

The Amber team will be producing relevant content on an ongoing basis to ensure health and safety professionals are one step ahead when it comes to keeping employees informed about any issue that may arise.

## The Amber Growth Strategy

Through language translation and localised demographic representation (diversity and inclusion), Amber will be launched into new countries, continents and sectors. During our business development, we have identified safety consultants as future customers of Amber.

## Amber Health and Safety Knowledge Network

Amber has attracted support from peers and is in the process of growing a volunteer advisory network of international health and safety practitioners, industry thought leaders and organisational development consultants.

### Listed below:

- Jeffery Lyth (Safety Differently Book Club; [LinkedIn](#))
- Ian Dennis (Health and Safety Practitioner; [LinkedIn](#))
- Thabile Makgala (2019/2020 Chairperson: Women in Mining South Africa; [LinkedIn](#))
- Mandy-Jane Tlou Sebola (Geologist; [LinkedIn](#))
- Skhumbuzo Zondo (Trend and African Youth Advisor; [LinkedIn](#))
- Lynette Gous (Training and Development; [LinkedIn](#))
- Emily Jones (Social Economics; [LinkedIn](#))

*[LinkedIn Link](#)*

# The Amber vision

Amber's vision is to use creativity to save lives in the workplace and beyond. We are guided by our respect for life and are driven by our three values.

**Be Curious:** To seek out knowledge, always be learning, and to find inspiration everywhere we can. This enables us to have informed decision-making processes and to understand the context in which we are working.

**Be Bold:** This value promotes innovation and teaches us to embrace change so that we can always be growing the organisation.

**Do:** Execute decisively. Be proactive in our actions. Be agile and lean.

# The Amber business case

The nature of business today scrutinises all spending and it could be difficult to justify investing in workplace safety, health and wellbeing. But the gap between the costs of inaction and the benefits of action has never been wider. Inaction can lead to huge fines, loss of lives of workers, decreased productivity, and brand-damaging regulatory responses.

On the other hand, integrating safety, health and wellbeing into the core values of an organisation can create competitive advantages such as a boost in productivity, lower staff turnover, reduction in insurance premiums and legal costs, reduction in absenteeism and increase in organisational reputation. There is a definite financial gain for investing in the safety, health and well-being of employees. Research shows that for every €1 invested in occupational safety and health, there is a return of €2.2 (ISSA, 2013).

Societal pressures on organisations to conduct business sustainably and responsibly have fortified the relationship between financial and social performance. Customers and investors are more attracted to organisations that operate in an ethical and responsible manner.

## Feedback from Amber original users on COVID-19 content

"Greetings from Botswana. I'm Warona. I just wanted to express my gratitude for the COVID-19 Toolbox Talk manual you shared on Facebook. As a SHE officer I'm thankful for receiving some aid that will help in my area of work."

**Warona, Safety Officer**

"Thank you for this valuable information. I am in the ECD sector and this is helping a lot in preparing myself and staff ahead of time for when the sector does open again. We don't have any clear direction for ECD as yet and therefore I appreciate this guidance."

**Sheila Martin, Montclairs Little Steps Daycare**

"You have an amazing concept and team, we are very proud to work with you. This was all you. Wonderful work, truly remarkable. Congratulations."

**Mark Wernich, Cluster General Manager Africa at Taj Hotels**

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**THE HEALTH & SAFETY COMMUNICATION PLATFORM**