

Beware!

THE MILLION-DOLLAR GRAPE

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WHEN IS A GRAPE WORTH A MILLION DOLLARS?

We all learned to tie our shoelaces when we were small. This simple, careful act of safety prevents you from tripping. It's a routine, like putting on a seatbelt. We dodge hazards every day and mentally tick off the automatic safety tasks that keep ourselves and our families safe. But for some reason, we let it lie. Whether we are the culprit or we walk past the mess, our first instinct is to wait for someone else to clean it up.

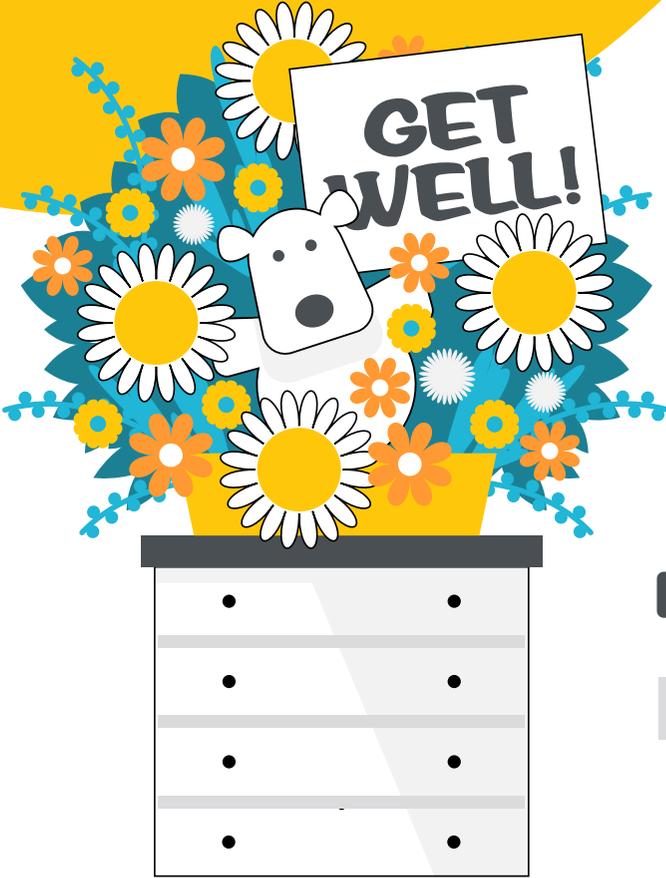
That is a major problem in the grocery retail industry. The very act of ignoring a spill on the floor can actually lead to millions of dollars in damages. Just consider the humble grape. An innocuous, seemingly harmless inch-long fruit couldn't possibly cause such an impact. In truth, whether it is a grape, a blueberry or any other seemingly unobtrusive item, if someone slips on it, that grape is now worth a million dollars.

When we talk about the million-dollar grape, what we are really talking about is slips, trips and fall hazards in general. Why do they matter? In 2016, 9.2 million people were sent to the emergency room for fall-related injuries¹. Slips and falls are the number one cause for all workplace-related injuries², but they are also the most preventable. So why are they still taking down bipedal humans in astounding numbers?

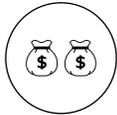
Let this eBook be your guide on how you can reduce the likelihood of a million-dollar mistake. By understanding why they are so common and using proven methods to empower your frontline staff, you can help prevent them from happening.



**SLIPS AND FALLS ARE THE
NUMBER ONE CAUSE FOR ALL
WORKPLACE-RELATED INJURIES**

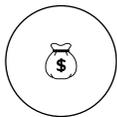


WHY IS THIS TOPIC IMPORTANT?



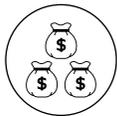
\$2 million

Settlement claims for a slip and fall accident are commonly in the million dollar range³. In 2016, a woman in Florida received nearly \$2 million after falling outside a USA Grocers in Tallahassee³.



\$895K in damages

In 2016, a Walmart shopper successfully filed a claim for a slip and fall accident 5 years previous that led to medical expenses and severe pain. The jury agreed that Walmart was at 100% fault for not cleaning up the water that the plaintiff slipped on. The shopper ended up with \$895K in damages⁴.



\$16.4M to \$13M

In 2016 a woman slipped on a puddle of standing water outside a garden area at Lowe's. Even though Lowe's did have an orange safety cone nearby, that only reduced the original claim of \$16.4M to \$13M⁵. This is one of the highest settlements recorded.



A simple search reveals thousands of similar cases, with big box retailers paying out the largest amount in claims and damages.

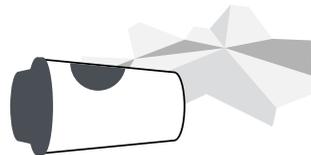
There are endless stats⁶ on how pernicious slips and falls are. From the damage they do, to the frequency they happen, one thing becomes more and more apparent - they are completely preventable. Imagine knowing that you can prevent head injuries, broken hips, cracked femurs, and still not choosing to do it? It is completely within anyone's grasp to provide a completely safe shopping experience.

WHY DO INCIDENTS KEEP HAPPENING?

How can a little grape bring us down? We talked to Terry McGuire, VP, Intertek Catalyst about where he sees the major issues are. "Humans are not really designed to be bipeds," Terry explained. "As soon as we learn to walk, we start tripping and slipping and we never stop."

Terry can look at a workplace environment and can spot hazards anywhere. With over 30 years in the communications industry, Terry has devoted his career to helping companies prevent this type of needless incident.

"I have built my career by surrounding myself with a powerful team of dedicated experts to create effective communications that will keep safety and loss prevention top-of-mind," he said.



WHAT'S MISSING IN EMPLOYEE TRAINING?

All employees are trained on safety and loss prevention protocols. And then, that's it. Off we go without much thought. There is a type of blind faith in training that one session is enough to understand how to prevent future incidents.

"Training is great, and it is so important, but by itself it becomes useless over time. I talk about the Ebbinghaus Forgetting Curve⁷ a lot in our communications to our clients. It shows that we all start to forget what

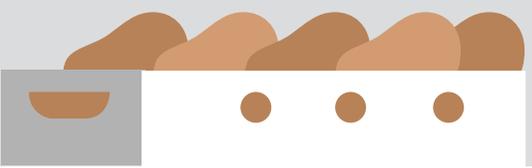
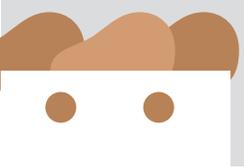
we've learned almost immediately after we've taken training—as time goes on, we forget more and more. Training is only good if it is followed up with continuous communications that remind us of the important aspects of that training."

So, when it comes to the million-dollar grape analogy, why is it so important to discuss it?

By knowing why and how slips, trips and falls keep happening, we can look at reducing how often they happen.

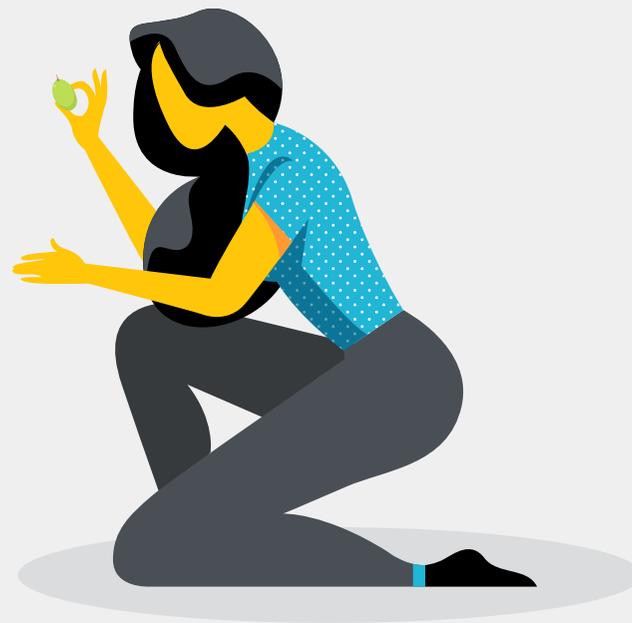
That's where a successful creative communications program comes in.





WHAT DO SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATIONS LOOK LIKE?

“Instilling a positive culture of safety and loss prevention and creating habits among the workforce to take care of the seemingly insignificant small things can stop them from turning into big things. Picking up the grape is an excellent example. It expands to wiping up a spill or straightening out a mat. If a single worker takes care of the smallest thing, like a grape on the floor, the lawsuit doesn’t happen, the injury doesn’t happen, the slip doesn’t happen,” Terry explains.



WHERE DO YOU START?

It all starts with empowering your frontline staff. They are your biggest asset and key to eliminating slip, trip and fall hazards. Is it possible to greatly reduce the likelihood of an accident? According to Terry, he's seen it happen.

"The answer is a resounding yes! We've had clients invest hundreds of thousands of dollars on robots to roam the store and clean up spills, pick up grapes, cherries, banana peels and avocados. Don't get me wrong I love robots, but what we are talking about people is taking care of people. No one wants to get hurt at work, no one wants to see a customer sustain an injury and no one wants a lawsuit against their store. The frontline workforce is the best defence against slips trips and falls, and they're much cheaper than robots."

Terry's team has worked with major grocery retailers to dramatically shift an injury-prone culture into one that embraces and actively promotes safety. The team has seen a 60% reduction in employee injury-related costs and 96% increase in employee engagement. For major campaigns, like handwashing, they've seen a 16% improvement in hand hygiene compliance and more specifically a 48% improvement in hand hygiene compliance in key, high-risk units.

60% reduction in employee injury-related costs



96% increase in employee engagement



16% improvement in hand hygiene compliance



48% improvement in hand hygiene compliance in key, high-risk units





HOW CAN YOU CREATE CHANGE?

It's no secret that creating a successful employee communications strategy can be one of the most frustrating processes for any business. No one person is the same. We all receive information differently, at our own pace and with our own set of experiences and biases.

In the past, an HR department may have printed off an announcement or reminder on bright pink paper and posted it to a corkboard. Nowadays, employees require a sophisticated suite of tools and messaging that directly relates to them, their jobs and how they can achieve success each day.

Truth is, disengaged employees cost U.S. companies up to \$550B a year⁸ and 96% of employees want to see signs of empathy from their employers, which in turn advances employee retention⁸.

Engagement and empathy. Two very powerful tools that, when combined can completely elevate any communications strategy. Add in a powerful grouping of tools that are launched throughout the year through various touchpoints and you have a complete package.

WHO IS GOING TO DO ALL THIS?

Many companies will look to internal resources to communicate major safety and loss prevention strategies, but often those internal resources are mired down by multiple tasks at once. They may also not fully understand the breadth and scope of a successful campaign, and without the data and research to help them, how could they?

That's why partnering with a with an expert in employee engagement and communications can lead to tremendous results. It has to be an agency that knows the importance of what they are doing and has major retailer success-stories to back them up.

"My purpose is people," Terry explains. "To focus my skills and experience in communication design toward employee safety and loss prevention strategies gives me a purpose that is truly meaningful to me. Workplace injuries and deaths are far too common. When I can help a worker take the right action at the point of decision — I may have helped prevent a life-changing injury."

Behind the inherent good that is a result of a successful safety and loss prevention program, there is also a lot of pride in communicating in a way that truly clicks with an employee. "People are used to good content and there is a strong appetite for excellent creative," Terry advises. Today, internal communications initiatives have to mimic the style and tone of external communications, where appropriate. That means incorporating new tools like QR codes on posters or developing fully interactive eLearning modules. You can even bring in augmented reality (AR) for a completely immersive experience.

"Employee communications should strive to be as fun and engaging as the content people are sharing through their phones...maybe without the cats."

An agency you partner with has to do the big lift for you. But first they must act as an extension of your company. The company's tone, objectives and strategy from the top down must line up with your safety and loss prevention initiative. That's where experts in workplace culture assessments come in and investigate your challenges, your goals, who you are as a company, and what you stand for.

There is, in fact, quite a bit of research and psychology behind any employee communications. 61% of employees are feeling extreme stress on the job⁹. With an already overworked workforce dealing with anxiety around their job, the last thing you want to be responsible for is bringing in an initiative that causes more work for them and friction between leaders and staff. Stress can destroy engagement. It's up to you to create a calm, welcoming environment that fully aligns with your own values. You can leave all the heavy work to a skilled agency ready to take it all on.

CONCLUSION

Grapes, lettuce leaves, avocados. While this sounds like a delicious salad, it is actually a recipe for disaster when left unattended on the floor.

Accidents are bound to happen, even with the best intentions and training. But study after study shows that people tend to get complacent after their initial training. Things start to, pardon the pun, slip from their memory and attention to detail is lost.

By building a sequence of communication touchpoints, using cinematic creative, engaging copy, and always thinking of the employee's experience first, you can transform hazards and near misses into something that only happened in the past. You can eliminate the likelihood of a million-dollar grape tripping up your customers and bottom line.

"The lesson for employers is to use your workforce—your most valuable asset, to take care of the little things so that they don't turn into big things."



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Endnotes

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