Engineer your Influence

Applying the F.L.O.W.™ Model to Advance Process Safety

www.behumanbesafe.com

Helping you lead safety from the inside out

◆ You're Not Alone

If you're reading this, you've likely felt the tension.

You care deeply about getting safety right. You see the risks before others do. You understand the systems, the interfaces, the alarms, the interlocks, the training gaps. And still, it can feel like your voice doesn't always carry the weight it should.

You're not imagining it. You are often the one standing at the intersection of **technical integrity** and **organizational pressure,** where safety becomes a matter of priorities, trade-offs, and timing.

This guide isn't here to tell you what you already know. It's here to **acknowledge your reality**, **name the patterns**, and offer a new path forward, one rooted in influence, clarity, and human connection.

Because safety leadership isn't just about knowing the answers. It's about helping others understand the questions.

Common Pain Points of Process Safety Professionals

1. "They don't see what I see."

You're trained to spot risks before they escalate. But when you raise concerns, you're met with blank stares or worse, polite nods followed by silence.
It's not that people don't care. It's that they don't always understand the systems you're talking about, or the consequences of ignoring them.

You're not alone in feeling like the translator between danger and decision-making.

2. "I'm always the 'no' in the room."

You want to enable progress, not block it. But too often, you're cast as the bottleneck, the one slowing down timelines, raising red flags, challenging

optimism. Over time, this wears on your confidence. You start holding back, filtering what you say.

This guide is about reclaiming your voice, not as the 'no', but as the one who brings clarity and courage to the table.

3. "Leadership only listens after something happens."

You've issued memos, reports, recommendations. You've joined meetings and risk assessments. But nothing moves, until there's a near miss or an audit or a crisis. It's exhausting to be right in hindsight.

You deserve to be heard *before* the system fails. That's why we need to talk about influence, not authority, but influence built on trust, insight, and timing.

4. "We're expected to do more with less."

Cost cuts. Headcount freezes. Training hours reduced. You're still expected to keep the systems safe, but with fewer resources and more distractions.
You carry the emotional weight of what could go wrong, often silently.

Influence isn't just about persuading others, it's about protecting your own boundaries, energy, and purpose.

5. "I'm tired, but I still care."

Burnout in process safety is real. Especially when you care. Especially when you keep showing up, even when change is slow.
And yet, you keep showing up. Because deep down, you believe this work matters. You believe people deserve to go home safe.

This guide is for that part of you. The part that still hopes. Still fights. Still leads.

◆ Why Influence Matters in Process Safety

You became a process safety professional because you care about protecting people, assets, the environment and doing things right. You know the details: how systems behave under stress, how failures propagate, how margins erode over time.

But influence is what determines whether that knowledge becomes action. Because insight without influence doesn't save lives. It doesn't stop the next incident. It doesn't change the system.

Why It Matters to You

Influence gives you a **way to be effective,** not just right. It gives you the tools to **bridge the gap** between what you see and what others act on. It helps you protect your energy by shifting from fighting resistance to creating alignment.

And most importantly, it allows you to **lead with integrity** in a world where safety is often compromised, not out of malice, but out of misalignment.

You don't need to yell louder. You need to be heard differently.

Why It Matters to Others

Leaders & Executives

They need to make decisions under pressure, often with incomplete information. When you influence effectively, you help them see the **long-term risk**, not just the short-term gain. You give them **confidence** that safety supports business performance, not hinders it.

Influence helps leaders invest in prevention, before they're forced to pay for failure.

Operators & Frontline Teams

These are the people working closest to the hazards. But they can't always see the system-level risks. They rely on clear guidance, intuitive procedures, and a culture where speaking up is safe.

Your influence creates the conditions where safety is not just compliance, but common sense.

Project Managers & Innovation Teams

In fast-paced projects, especially in the energy transition and circularity space, timelines are tight and safety can be sidelined. By influencing early and constructively, you embed resilience **into design**, not just into documentation.

You're not the one slowing things down. You're the one making sure they stand the test of time.

Regulators & Auditors

When process safety is treated as an afterthought, organizations face reputational and legal risk. Influence helps position safety as **a visible, structured, and proactive part** of business operations.

It's not about passing inspections. It's about demonstrating true leadership and accountability.

Communities & the Public

People trust that the factories near their homes, the chemicals in their supply chain, the infrastructure they depend on, are designed and operated safely. Your influence doesn't just impact your workplace. It shapes public trust in industry.

Every quiet win in process safety is a step toward a safer, more sustainable future.

Influence = Impact

This guide isn't about turning you into a marketer or a politician.
It's about helping you speak the language of **impact,** not just accuracy.
It's about learning how to **frame the context**, **link to what matters**, **optimize the message**, and **build the relationships** that move the needle.

Because your technical expertise is already powerful.
Influence is what makes it unstoppable.

◇ The F.L.O.W.™ Model: A Human-Centered Influence Framework

If you've made it this far, you already know that technical knowledge alone isn't enough. You've probably had moments where you laid out the facts, showed the risk, offered the right solution … and nothing changed.

That's not because you weren't clear. It's because the system you were trying to influence wasn't ready to listen. So how do we shift that?

That's where **F.L.O.W.™** comes in. Not as another checklist, but a **mindset for influence**. A way to bring process safety into conversations that matter, in a way that resonates.

Why "F.L.O.W.™"?

Because influence is rarely linear. It's dynamic. It moves through relationships, trust, timing, and connection. Like water, it adapts to its environment. It finds the path of least resistance, while still holding power. And when harnessed well, it shapes everything around it.

F.L.O.W.™ stands for:

- **F – Frame the Context**
- **L – Link to Drivers**
- **O – Optimize the Message**
- **W – Work the Relationships**

Each element supports the others. Together, they form a way to **engineer your influence,** with the same care and intention you apply to engineering processes.

Where Did It Come From?

This model was built from years of lived experience, both in the control room and the boardroom. It's rooted in the real-world challenges of process safety professionals who wanted to make a difference, but often felt stuck. It reflects what works when technical truth meets organizational reality.

It's inspired by moments of frustration, but also by breakthroughs, when someone found just the right way to connect, and everything shifted.

This is your map for those moments. Let´s go through the four elements of F.L.O.W. ™

◇ F – Frame the Context

Have you ever walked into a meeting and realized everyone was talking about the same issue, but with completely different assumptions?

That's what happens when context is missing.

In safety, we often jump straight to the technical:

"The relief valve is undersized."
"Procedures aren't being followed."

But we rarely pause to ask:
What's the context this issue is emerging in? What pressures are shaping these decisions or non-decisions?

Framing the context means zooming out before you zoom in.
It means helping others, especially decision-makers, see the full picture that's shaping behavior.

And that picture is rarely simple.

What leaders are dealing with

Many of the people you're trying to influence are operating in **high-stakes, high-velocity environments**. They're making decisions in a **VUCA world**: volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous.

They're navigating:

- **Conflicting KPIs** (cost reduction *and* growth *and* innovation *and* compliance)
- **Shifting investor expectations**
- **Public and regulatory scrutiny**
- **Unrealistic timelines driven by market demands**
- **Rapid organizational change and resource constraints**

It's easy to assume leaders aren't prioritizing safety.
But often, it's not because they don't care, it's because **they're overwhelmed by complexity**, or they **lack a clear line of sight** to how the system is really functioning.

So what does "framing the context" really mean?

It means helping others understand how technical risks are connected to **strategic realities**. It's about surfacing the invisible pressures and systemic patterns behind the visible problems. And it's about doing so without blame, so that the door stays open for collaboration and change.

When you frame the context well, you shift the conversation from:

- "Why didn't you fix this?"
  to
- "How did our system lead us here, and what could we do differently?"

What this might sound like:

- "This isn't just about training gaps, it's about how strategic headcount reductions impacted onboarding capacity."
- "There's a deeper pattern here: our timelines are consistently too tight to allow for robust HAZOPs. That's not an isolated project issue, it's a structural one."
- "I'm curious, how are budget pressures influencing how we prioritize integrity investments right now?"
- "We've made decisions that made sense individually. But looking at the pattern, we might need to step back and reframe."

✍️ **Reflection Questions:**

- What pressures (financial, regulatory, operational) are decision-makers currently navigating?
- What recent events, internal or external, might be shaping leadership's mindset or priorities?
- How can I surface these contextual factors in a way that invites collaboration rather than defensiveness?
- How can I help others see the system behind the symptoms, without making it personal?

◇ L – Link to Drivers

Imagine this: you're in a meeting with the leadership team. You've flagged a concern about control loop stability on a critical reactor. The risk is real. You know it could lead to a costly unplanned shutdown. But the room is focused on hitting the next production target fast.

If you present the issue purely as a technical risk, they might thank you… and move on.
But if you frame it in terms of **what they care about,** uptime, cost control, operational reliability. You shift the conversation.

Real-World Drivers You Might Encounter:

- **Operations Director:** minimizing downtime, keeping throughput stable
- **CFO:** controlling maintenance costs, avoiding financial risk
- **Project Manager (energy transition):** delivering on time, securing investor confidence
- **ESG Lead:** reducing environmental impact, maintaining brand integrity
- **HR or Training Manager:** reducing turnover, improving skills & safety culture
- **Plant Manager:** ensuring license to operate, keeping audits clean

By understanding **their goals**, you can present safety not as a constraint, but as a **contributor to success**.

A few examples from the field:

1. Linking to Uptime

"Installing a more robust overpressure protection system here reduces our risk of unplanned shutdown, keeping production targets intact and reducing troubleshooting time."

2. Linking to Brand & Public Trust

"Strengthening our emergency response procedures isn't just about compliance. It protects our reputation in the community and demonstrates leadership in safety culture."

3. Linking to Circularity & Innovation Goals

"Incorporating HAZOP into this phase of the circularity project may feel like a delay, but it actually helps avoid rework and boosts investor confidence in the resilience of the technology."

4. Linking to ESG Strategy

"If we can show strong process safety performance alongside carbon reductions, it strengthens our ESG profile and gives us a competitive edge in the sustainability space."

5. Linking to Financial Impact

"This investment prevents small leaks from becoming major shutdowns, saving us hundreds of thousands in potential production losses and maintenance callouts."

A note on tone:

Linking to drivers isn't about selling out your integrity.
It's about **connecting the dots,** so safety isn't siloed, but **strategically embedded** in how decisions are made.

You're not shifting the message to dilute it.
You're shifting it to **make it land**.

✍️ Reflection Questions:

- What's at stake for this stakeholder financially, operationally, reputationally?
- What would success look like for them?
- How can I position safety as something that supports that success?
- What language do they use when talking about performance, risk, and outcomes?
- Where are they under pressure and how can safety reduce that pressure?

◇ O – Optimize the Message

You've done the hard work.
You've understood the context. You've linked your insight to what matters.

Now comes the part that can feel surprisingly tricky: **actually saying it.**

Because even when your message is clear in your head, it doesn't always come out in a way that *lands,* especially with people who don't speak your language, live your reality, or feel the same urgency.

Optimizing the message isn't about softening the truth.
It's about shaping it, so that others can truly hear it.

Why this matters:

Think about a time you poured effort into a report, an email, a slide deck… and it was met with blank stares or polite "thanks, we'll look into it."
The issue didn't go away, but the message didn't move anyone either.

That's not because your content wasn't strong.
It's because your audience didn't know how to receive it.

We forget sometimes: communication isn't about delivering information.
It's about creating **connection** and **shared understanding**.

And when it comes to safety, that's what makes the difference between being heard now or only in hindsight.

What it sounds like when it works:

Instead of leading with the procedure number or equipment ID, you start with the human or business impact:

"If we don't address this venting issue now, we could be exposing people to a toxic release and risking our license to operate."

Then, only once attention and understanding are there, do you bring in the detail.

This isn't dumbing it down.
It's *translating expertise into relevance*.

How to get better at this:

- **Lead with meaning, not method.**
  Start with why it matters. Save the details for when they ask for them.
- **Use stories and analogies.**
  A quick story or visual can cut through far more effectively than a table of numbers.
- **Keep it human.**
  Help people see the real-world consequences, not just the technical terminology.
- **Adapt the tone to the moment.**
  Sometimes a question is more powerful than a statement. Sometimes it's not about sounding "smart," but about being *clear* and *open*.

✍️ **Reflection Questions:**

- If I only had 90 seconds with a senior leader, how would I explain this issue?
- Am I opening with what's meaningful to *them*, or what's important to *me*?
- Is my tone inviting dialogue or closing it down?
- Where might I simplify, shorten, or reframe for clarity?
- What's one recent moment where my message didn't land? Why not?

◇ W – Work the Relationships

If context is the system and communication is the tool, then **relationships are the bridge**.

You can have the clearest insight, the most aligned message, the best data, but if the trust isn't there, none of it moves.

That's why the final piece of the F.L.O.W.™ model is about something deeply human: relationships.

Not transactional ones. Not just "who signs off on what."
But real relationships built on credibility, curiosity, empathy, and time.

Why this matters:

In safety, especially process safety, **you often need to speak up before there's a visible problem**.
That requires influence. And influence is built on relationships.

Trust isn't something you turn on in a crisis.
It's something you invest in **before** the moment you need it.

This is especially true when you're challenging established timelines, costs, or priorities.
People need to know that you're not there to block them. You're there to support them, even when you bring uncomfortable truths.

A short story you might recognize:

You flag a safety concern to a project lead. They nod, but don't seem to act.
The issue escalates weeks later, and only then do they say,

"Why didn't you push harder?"

But what if pushing harder isn't the point?

What if the real power is in having a strong enough relationship that your *first nudge* is already enough?

This isn't about being everyone's best friend. It's about being **someone they trust, listen to, and want to engage with**, even when it's hard.

Relationship work in practice:

- Take a walk with the plant manager after a tough meeting.
- Drop by an engineer's desk with a "what do you think?" instead of a demand.
- Invite an operator into a review session, not just for optics, but for insight.
- Recognize where you've been in "compliance cop" mode and shift to curiosity.

These are the invisible things that make the visible things happen.

✍️ **Reflection Questions:**

- Who are my key allies and who's missing from my circle of influence?
- Where do I sense resistance and how might I shift to connection?
- Am I showing up consistently with credibility and care?
- What's one small relationship I can strengthen this week?
- How can I ask for feedback that builds mutual trust?

The Be Human Be Safe Invitation

Reading this guide might have stirred something in you, recognition, reflection, maybe even relief. At Be Human, Be Safe we believe that technical excellence and human connection go hand in hand. You deserve the tools and community to lead boldly and with heart.

You've seen that your challenges are real. That you're not alone. And that there is a way forward. But reading is just the beginning.

Applying the F.L.O.W.™ model isn't about changing everything at once. It's about **starting small**, building momentum, and having the right conversations in the right way,with the right support.

That's where we come in.

At **Be Human Be Safe**, we offer coaching, workshops, and programs to help process safety professionals like you turn insight into impact, without burning out or giving up your integrity.

If this guide resonated with you, we invite you to take the next step.

You are the voice of safety and your voice matters.

Option A: Tell us what you need

As we build our products and gain momentum we'd like to meet your needs. Help us out by sharing your thoughts. Give your input

Option B: Get Ongoing Support

Want to keep this momentum going?
Be Human Be Safe offers coaching and custom sessions to help you apply the F.L.O.W.™ model in your real-world context. Book a 30-min call

Option C: Invitation to Connect on LinkedIn or via Email

Have thoughts, questions, or want to share your story? **If you had one conversation this week where you showed up differently, what would it look like?** And what would it mean to have someone in your corner while you do? LinkedIn Email

F.L.O.W.™ Model Reflection

Use these questions to reflect on how you can apply the F.L.O.W.™ model in your day-to-day role. This is not about having the right answers, it's about becoming more conscious, confident, and connected in how you influence safety.

Frame the Context

- What pressures (financial, regulatory, operational) are decision-makers currently navigating?
- What recent events, internal or external, might be shaping leadership's mindset or priorities?
- How can I surface these contextual factors in a way that invites collaboration rather than defensiveness?
- How can I help others see the system behind the symptoms, without making it personal?

Link to Drivers

- What's at stake for this stakeholder financially, operationally, reputationally?
- What would success look like for them?
- How can I position safety as something that supports that success?
- What language do they use when talking about performance, risk, and outcomes?
- Where are they under pressure and how can safety reduce that pressure?

Optimize the Message

- If I only had 90 seconds with a senior leader, how would I explain this issue?
- Am I opening with what's meaningful to *them*, or what's important to *me*?
- Is my tone inviting dialogue or closing it down?
- Where might I simplify, shorten, or reframe for clarity?
- What's one recent moment where my message didn't land? Why not?

Work the Relationships

- Who are my key allies and who's missing from my circle of influence?
- Where do I sense resistance and how might I shift to connection?
- Am I showing up consistently with credibility and care?
- What's one small relationship I can strengthen this week?
- How can I ask for feedback that builds mutual trust?