Construction company adopts a safety management system and new training, leading to world-class health and safety results.

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Harmon®

Company
Harmon, Inc.

Solution
Safety Management System & Safety Training

Industry
Construction

Size
1,000 Employees
$225M Revenue

Location
Minnesota, U.S.

HSI's Safety Management System (SMS) helps reduce incident rate via improved tracking and reporting, and standardized training.

Company Overview:

Harmon Inc. is one of the largest commercial construction glaziers in the U.S., with 17 locations. They have more than 1,000 employees and have grown their glass installations company to include some of the most majestic skyscrapers, educational institutes, and medical buildings in the U.S.

Challenge:

Preventing and tracking safety incidents is important for any construction company, however many still rely on older processes which can limit reporting and communication throughout the organization. Harmon was no different. They tracked safety rates by region either on paper or spreadsheet. Nothing was centralized, so no information was accessible company-wide. If incidents or near-misses were shared between teams or locations, it was done haphazardly through phone calls or email. This antiquated system meant if an injury happened at one location, it may not get communicated nationwide, so similar incidents would continue to occur.

Not only was Harmon awash in paperwork and disjointed spreadsheets, they used lagging data points to track

results which meant they could not proactively address their problem areas. As the company grew, so did the scale of potential issues, making it difficult for them to change things for the better. Improving their safety practices not only meant a safer work environment and safer workers, but better business continuity across the board.

When Harmon hired a new Director of Environmental, Health, & Safety (EHS), his first area of focus was to implement a safety management system to allow better documentation, more flexibility, consistent training, easier reporting, and better companywide communication.

Why It Matters

Incident rate improved from 4.6 to below 1.0

More data for corrective actions increases employee safety

Safety training no longer met with resistance

"When I first took over, the company was using spreadsheets, phone trees, and some email to track safety... There was very little sharing between regions so a preventable injury in Baltimore may not get communicated to Denver, and the same mistakes would continue to happen."

Jon Liesmaki, Director of Environmental, Health, & Safety (EHS) at Harmon, Inc.

Not only was safety tracking a problem, Harmon used outdated video tapes for safety training. They were not engaging, leading to eye rolls from employees, but they checked the box for compliance. Sometimes, the company had one employee attend OSHA classes as needed. That employee was supposed share what they learned, but there wasn't an effective mechanism for disseminating the information.

Solution

A change was clearly needed, and the benefits were apparent. Even so, executive buy-in was needed to upgrade the process.

Liesmaki's previous experience with safety management systems and safety training programs helped the company understand how the investment would take the safety program to the next level.

> *"I had so many things I wanted to change, so I dedicated a lot of time to making sure I got this right. It started with leadership. They had to understand that we needed to make this change to get results. Then I demoed 27 different systems and landed on the HSI SMS."*
>
> Jon Liesmaki, Director of Environmental, Health, & Safety (EHS) at Harmon, Inc.

Harmon tested 27 different systems to ensure they found the product and technology that would best suit the company's needs.

Liesmaki worked closely with his IT department and regional managers to talk through workflows and figure out how they wanted the system to operate. By taking time to do the research, Liesmaki gained support from executive leadership before rolling the new system out to the entire company.

Harmon decided on the HSI SMS to manage their safety program. Plus, by partnering with HSI, Harmon not only received a robust and flexible safety management system, they were also able to roll out new HSI safety training available through HSI's online LMS.

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Keys to Success

Harmon identified these keys to rolling out a successful SMS and new safety training program:

- **Simple and efficient:** The team meticulously designed the workflow processes for reporting an injury, making it easy for the workers in the field. The process had to be simple and useable even by employees who are not particularly tech savvy, or they wouldn't adopt the system.

- **Usability testing:** The HSI team set up a sandbox platform so Harmon could test the system for usability. The sandbox allowed Liesmaki and other team members to see what was going to work and what they needed to tweak prior to a nationwide rollout.

- **Phased approach:** The company implemented the system in a phased approach to help onboard the team and get them used to the new processes. After the initial modules – injuries, near misses, and hazard observations – were rolled out, they added an audit module, a certification module, and a training module with online safety training courses.

- **Automated notifications:** Automation is key to adoption. When a corrective action is assigned, a notification is sent seven days before it's due. Additional notifications go out on a regular schedule until the due date. If it's not completed, alerts go the employee and their manager to increase accountability.

Through the HSI SMS, all documentation is found in one place including accident reports, witness statements, and manager comments. The user-friendliness and flexibility means more people are inputting more data from more locations.

Ease of use was key to adoption across the country. In weekly meetings, staff from multiple locations log in, go through the incident and near miss reports, and offer appropriate training. To help manage staffing, the company tracks employees who are on restriction and when they'll be released for duty.

Results

Performance indexes and safety ratings are incredibly important to construction companies as a lower rating means they can't get contracts, which impacts the bottom line. These metrics can only get better with access to actionable data.

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"The amount of information at our managers' fingertips was eye-opening to them," said Liesmaki. "Within year one, we had five to six times the number of reports over the previous year. With this amount of data, we were able to identify our deficiencies, and we're actually able to fix things. I set up a performance index calculation which shows our incident rate went down from around 4.4 to 1.7, which is an order of magnitude. We've been at or below 1.0 for many months, and that is world-class in any industry let alone the construction industry."

And the eye rolls have subsided when it's time for safety training.

The construction industry is changing, and companies are realizing they can't grow without embracing technology to thrive and outpace the competition.

Using the HSI SMS, Harmon generates five to six times more records than during the previous years. These additional records allow the company to see where their deficiencies are and improve safety programs. The benefits are comprehensive – not just for the company, but for the individual employees. A safer work environment leads to a better workplace, better employee well-being, and the type of company for which employees want to work. Harmon is well on their way.

About HSI

HSI is your single-source partner for EHS, Compliance, and Professional Development solutions. HSI provides integrated e-learning content, training solutions, and cloud-based software designed to enable your business to improve safety, operations, and employee development. Across all industries, HSI helps safety managers, and technical employees, human resources, first responders, and operational leaders train and develop their workforce, keep workers safe, and meet regulatory and operational compliance requirements. HSI's focus is on training, software, and services for safety and compliance, workforce development, industrial skills, and emergency care. HSI is a unique partner that offers a suite of cloud-based software solutions including learning management, safety management, chemical SDS management, and more, integrated with content and training so businesses can not only monitor and manage multiple workflows in one system, but train employees via one partner.

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