

Issues Forum

Online Safety Management Systems

July 2013



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Introduction

The last decade has seen the emergence of online safety management systems (SMS). The shift away from resource hungry databases reflects the desire of companies to work smarter and have instant access to key health and safety (H&S) information at the press of a button.

In this Issues Forum, we examine the benefits of online SMS and a best practice system. We will highlight the main advantages that online SMS offer in relation to an organisation's accident and claims profile, from the perspectives of both incident prevention and claims defensibility.

This edition is written in conjunction with Mark Delo, Chartered Safety Practitioner and Managing Director at Riskex Ltd.

Why online safety management systems?

Cutting through the traditional approach

Online SMS can help organisations break free from the restrictions of traditional paper and network-based management systems. Created internally, such systems can suffer from data integrity issues, problems with version control, limited functionality and visibility, as well as never being quite complete in build or refinement - all of which can result in a lack of business confidence in the data. Monitoring

performance is easier when data can be gathered from multiple sites, divisions and operations and analysed at the click of a button. This is a real advantage over a paper based system that can be laborious and prone to inaccuracies. The better the reporting the more risk focused the health and safety professional can be within the organisation.

Offline SMS usually involve word and excel files stored locally or even using hard copies of printed documents stored in filing cabinets. Both rely on extensive manual interaction with information not always

readily available and difficult to share with other business locations, quite apart from it being time-consuming to analyse.

Online SMS offer intuitive tools that speed up the assessment and recording processes whilst efficiently guiding users to ensure that only relevant information is collected. Task management ensures that no events are missed, whilst advanced analysis tools will easily retrieve and process data in a variety of formats in real time. All of this from systems accessible via any internet enabled device.





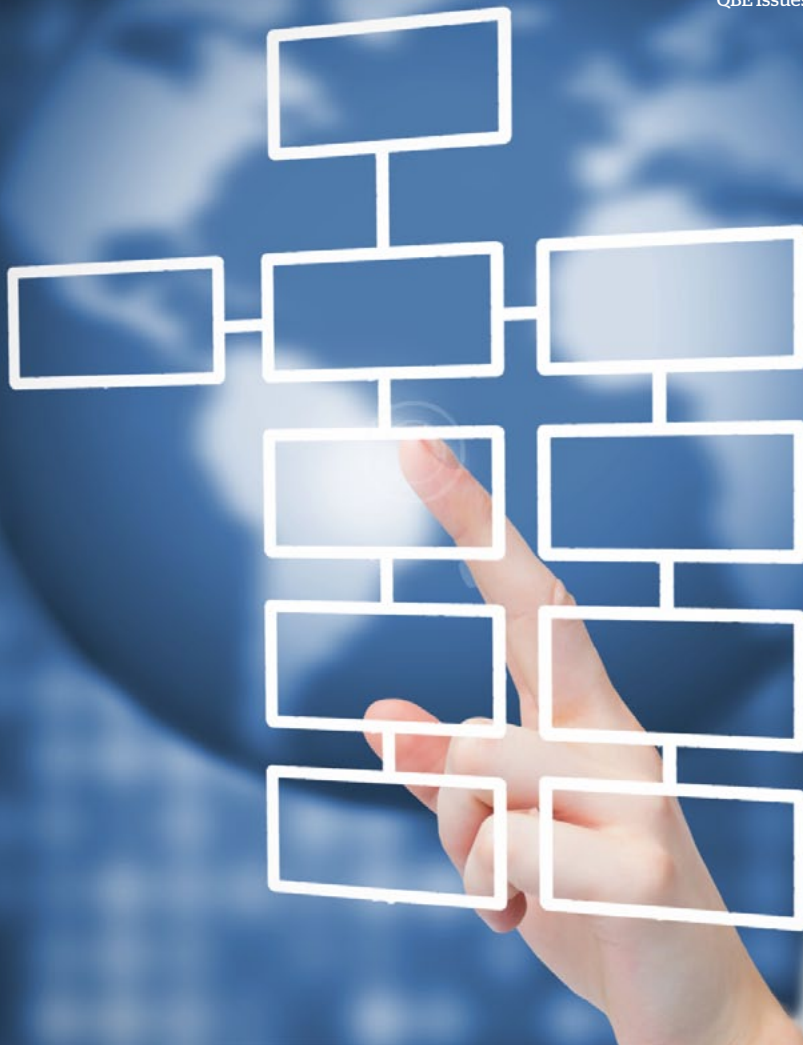
An insurer's view

In QBE's experience, mounting a successful defence to liability claims requires the capture of quality evidence and having the right documentation is absolutely crucial.

With the 2013 Ministry of Justice Reforms in England and Wales, insurers and their clients must work to tight time-scales in which to investigate a claim and put forward a decision on liability. It is more important than ever to make the correct decision on liability early in order to reap the potential cost benefits. An insufficient investigation often means that it is difficult to challenge the version of events presented by the claimant, for example if there are suspicions that an injury or condition may not be work related.

Online SMS ensure that critical information is captured in one central place and is easily retrievable.

Quality online SMS provide insurers with the assurance that their policyholders have robust H&S processes in place, that corrective actions are closed out and that lessons have been learned from past incidents and are used positively for continuous improvement.



The benefits from a risk management perspective

Developing a positive culture

HSG65; the HSE's guide to Successful H&S Management, encourages organisations to integrate an SMS that helps a business manage, monitor and comply with legal obligations.

A professional online SMS that grows with an organisation and is kept up-to-date with changes in legislation and in the workplace makes sharing best practice easy and effective.

For organisations struggling to move away from a culture where safety is still seen as 'the job of the H&S Manager', online SMS can support positive change by delegating ownership of key H&S tasks to operational managers and line supervisors.

Process benefits

Having an online SMS saves time, money and effort for a number of important reasons. It:

- Centralises information, reducing duplication
- Creates easy to find materials, records and data
- Improves legibility and accessibility

- Complies with the Data Protection Act
- Manages confidentiality and gives access control
- Facilitates easy reporting
- Makes Health and Safety professionals more risk focussed
- Demonstrates greater control which provides comfort to insurers
- Reduces business risk
- Improves claims defensibility by showing a clear audit trail.

Proactive monitoring and review

For an organisation to continuously improve its H&S standards, it needs to be able to create and track corrective actions. Effective task management tools can assist here, especially if they include the ability to upload supporting documentation, such as risk assessments, training records and photographs.

Traceability and tracking information

It is often beneficial to be able to track and trace activities that are safety related, particularly if there is an incident which could result in a civil claim and/or criminal action. With paper-based systems, documentation can go missing or

information may not be recorded at the time, both of which may hinder the investigation and resulting corrective actions. With online SMS, which capture and prompt for information, the chances of this happening are greatly reduced.

Wider business benefits

Supporting external certification

It is no coincidence that the emergence of online SMS has come at a time when organisations are increasingly looking to secure external accreditation to best practice standards for health, safety, environment and quality, such as OHSAS 18001, ISO 9001 and ISO 14001. For organisations striving for a fully integrated management system which incorporates each of these disciplines, online SMS can provide the underpinning framework.

Business risk registers

An online SMS captures essential information that is relevant to a company's liability risk profile, from audits to accidents, claims to competence and training records. The system can equally capture other key business risks or feed into a higher-level business risk register, ensuring that health, safety, liability and insurance risks are given the same consideration as other business risks.

The key functions of a best practice system

Alerts

Your SMS should alert you and key stakeholders to important events and tasks. For example, senior management should know when serious incidents occur, wherever their location. Online systems can ensure important information is communicated to the appropriate people.

Task management

H&S management isn't just about identifying risks; it's also about ensuring corrective actions are put in place and followed through. This is where task management features come into their own. Assigned tasks not only ensure you never miss important dates but also allow you to trace the progress of any actions, from initiation through to completion.

User levels and permissions

Different user access levels allow you to control permissions whilst also allowing you to delegate certain roles and responsibilities to managers where required.



Archiving

Having an audit trail and archived copies of historic assessments is a vital element of an online SMS. The ability to retrieve archived documents quickly can save vital time and resources during stressful periods such as in the event of a civil claim or criminal action or auditing of your organisation.



Conclusion

Online SMS provide intuitive tools that enhance the management of health and safety. They improve an organisations ability to apply lessons learned which can be fed back into the business to prevent incidents and improve claims defensibility.

Housing all safety and liability information in one central system allows risks to be prioritised and ranked, corrective actions to be tracked and progress monitored against a range of activities and projects across single or multiple locations.

The management information that the system captures and the reports it produces provide the business case for change, support the analysis of health and safety performance against corporate objectives, and provide tangible evidence that obligations under health and safety legislation have been discharged.

For businesses that favour an Enterprise Risk Management approach, online SMS provide a tool to improve the business risk profile, with the functionality to integrate other disciplines such as Environmental and Quality systems, Business Continuity Management, Asset Management and Fire Loss Prevention.

Further information

- <http://www.qbeeurope.com/risk-management/riskex.asp>
- <http://www.qbeeurope.com/documents/riskmanagement/standards/QBE-Casualty-Risk-Management-Standards-Risk-Registers.pdf>
- <http://www.qbeeurope.com/documents/riskmanagement/standards/QBE-Casualty-Risk-Management-Standards-Claims-Management.pdf>
- <http://www.qbeeurope.com/documents/riskmanagement/standards/QBE-Casualty-Risk-Management-Standards-Standard-Disclosure-Documents.pdf>
- <http://www.qbeeurope.com/documents/casualty/risk/issues/Claims%20defensibility.pdf>
- <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg65.htm>

Author Biography

Paul Tacey
Senior Risk Manager
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Paul joined QBE in 2011 bringing over 10 years of management and health and safety experience at global organisations, predominantly in the Logistics and Manufacturing sectors.

Paul specialises in claims defensibility and risk profiling.

Paul holds an honours degree in Business Management and the Nebosh National Diploma in Occupational Health and Safety. He is a Graduate Member of IOSH and a Member of the International Institute of Risk & Safety Management.



Author Biography

Mark Delo BSc MBA CMIOSH
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Following a career working in science and safety, Mark Delo formed his own Safety Consultancy called 'Safe and Sound' in 1990. From the outset Mark invested in state of the art technology, a 286 laptop costing £5,000 and software to make his reports stand out from his competitors.

AssessNET was conceived by Mark in 1999 following a fascination with the Internet and an idea to develop a system to assist his consultancy business to become unique with the latest cutting edge technology. Mark soon realised the potential of AssessNET as a system that could be sold to clients and as improvements in Internet speed and security became available more and more clients wanted to license AssessNET. In 2004 Mark formed a new company called Riskex Ltd with the sole responsibility of developing and marketing AssessNET. In 2011, Mark travelled around the world demonstrating AssessNET to Governments and Corporate customers and today AssessNET boasts an enviable client base operating worldwide and provides a highly professional Safety, Health and Environmental management system for use by any company.



Riskex are the developers behind the market-leading cloud-based H&S Software Solution, AssessNET. Developed and maintained in the UK by a team of developers and H&S professionals over the past 12 years, AssessNET has won acclaim for helping organisations comply with legislation and in assisting the development of H&S cultures to prevent risks to companies across the globe.



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