You Can't Improve
MANUFACTURING SAFETY
from Inside
a Filing Cabinet

Last year,
over **122,000 Americans** were injured in manufacturing incidents.
<u>Over 300 died!</u>

Did you know that over 122,000 Americans were injured in manufacturing incidents last year?^I Each missed an average of 9 days of work, directly costing employers approximately $10,000 per injury.^{II}

The grim reality is that accidents, injuries, and fatalities can happen at any manufacturing plant, big or small. In many cases, safety leaders can only hope to contain them, unless of course they have the right tools to drive real improvement and change.

As a safety leader, if you truly want to make a difference, the first step is to graduate from all those paper checklists flooding your filing cabinets, the documents in your hard drive, and the endless spreadsheets. Let's face it, without countless hours of tweaking and analyzing, spreadsheets aren't any better than paper.

So, if you truly want to get better, and if you genuinely want to drive change, you need to take a good hard look at the information you're gathering (not to mention how you're gathering it). The information you gather from all those Gemba walks and observational sessions tell a much bigger story when you have the tools you need to efficiently collect and analyze it. Imagine being able to clearly see the trends and tendencies that could be putting your jobsites at risk.

Today's safety leaders are using technology to gather meaningful data that helps drive continuous improvement.

In this paper, we will highlight the many ways that mobile software can be used to find, document, and fix on-the-job safety infractions.

We'll discuss how mobile devices and apps can rescue information from the depths of your filing cabinet (or database, or spreadsheet, or giant stack of paper on your desk) and put it to work. We'll explore how you can use all the information gathered with your mobile device to understand where things are going wrong, where you can implement new training procedures, and where a change in process might help you improve.

Finally, we'll explain how doing all of this can help you save on costs, mitigate risk, and most importantly: continuously improve.

What we're not going to do in this paper is act like we know more about safety than you...because we don't. But we we've worked with a lot of safety professionals over the years, and we know a lot about how technology can lead to a better workplace and happier workers, not to mention a competitive advantage in the marketplace.

There are 3 Types of Safety Professionals. Which one are you?

Maybe we're overgeneralizing here (we probably are, so bear with us), but we've noticed that safety professionals usually fall into one of three categories.

The Box Checkers

Box Checkers are safety managers that always do the least amount of work possible needed to do stay compliant.

The first group we call the **"Box-Checkers"**. Box Checkers are safety managers that always do the least amount of work possible needed to stay compliant. They check in. They do their thing. They check out. Wash. Rinse. Repeat.

Box Checkers aren't bad people. In fact, the world needs Box Checkers. (They're better than people who don't check any boxes at all, right?) But the stakes are too high for safety professionals to just go through the motions. Chances are, if you've gotten this far into a white paper about manufacturing safety, you're probably not a Box Checker anyway.

SAFETY
TRAINING

Safety Cops lack the resources needed to really make a big difference on a greater scale.

The Safety Cops

The second type of safety professional is the **"Safety Cop"**. Safety Cops truly care about the health and safety of their co-workers. Safety Cops believe in training. They believe in a strict adherence to compliance, and in never making the same mistake twice. Safety Cops do everything in their power to get faster, better, and more efficient.

Problem is, many Safety Cops lack the resources needed to really make a big difference on a greater scale. Whether it's a lack of proper tools, technology, or respect from their colleagues, Safety Cops face huge barriers every day that can be quite difficult to overcome.

While Safety Cops do their best to make the jobsite a safer place on a day-to-day basis, they can't quite make any global changes in the long term. But there's hope for all you Safety Cops out there. There are steps you can take to get to the next level.

Continuous Improvers make sure safety measures are being met, preventative measures are being set, and corrective actions are being taken.

The Continuous Improvers

Finally, we call the last group of safety professionals **"Continuous Improvers"**. Continuous Improvers go above and beyond every second of the day to make sure safety measures are being met, preventative measures are being set, and corrective actions are being taken. And as a result, they have total buy-in from the crews they work with.

Continuous Improvers are so into safety that they're almost annoying. *Well, they probably are a little annoying, but in a good way, because they do things that really make a difference at the workplace.* But Continuous Improvers are so into the job, so well-informed, and so well-armed with technology, data, and information that they wind up making a difference. Where would the world be without Continuous Improvers? The safety industry certainly needs more of them.

But how do you drive continuous improvement, especially in an industry with pitfalls and peril around every corner? Keep reading to find out.

4 Ways to Become a Safety Continuous Improver

Ditch papers and cabinets for smartphones and tablets

1

We all know that the key to success in any industry is to always use the right tool for the job. Well like it or not, smartphones and tablets are the right tools for safety jobs that involve forms, checklists, incident reports, inspection reports, etc.

Paper? If you're still using paper, you're not using the right tool. Lugging around heaps of papers can quickly become messy and overwhelming. Plus, paper is also notorious for getting lost, destroyed, or ending up drenched in buffalo sauce before flying out of your passenger's side window.

And spreadsheets? Don't get us started on spreadsheets.

Mobile devices, on the other hand, are like the holy grail of tools for safety leaders. They're easy to carry and use in any location or situation, whether you're performing an audit, inspection, or walkthrough. Mobile devices also have great features already built-in (like camera and GPS) that help you gather better evidence that you can share with others and even use as a teaching tool.

Mobile devices are like the holy grail of tools for safety leaders

Get the right software

2

You can do a lot of great things with the right mobile application. At a high level, you can completely centralize, manage, and automate your auditing and inspection processes. In other words, you can store, access, and search data from all your locations in one place. This data includes things like historical information, pictures, and documentation for everything from audits and inspections to checklists and walkthroughs.

With the right safety software on your mobile device, you can also take photos of violations or problems, draw on them with your finger, and then attach them to forms while performing inspections. You can also automate workflows and set automatic triggers to kickoff time sensitive CAPAs (more on that later).

And if you partner with the right software company, you can even customize your forms to do cool things like setting the latest OSHA guidelines to pop-up within the app at the appropriate time and place. *This capability provides great ammunition when a grizzled veteran worker gives you grief for pointing out a potential hazard or violation.*

Most importantly, mobile safety applications generate data, data that can make you look smart when you share and analyze it with co-workers, management, and clients. And rightfully so, because when you get a deep level of insight into your operations with cold hard information, you can quickly help your company make better decisions.

Did we mention that some of the better software even lets you do this all while you're offline? Yes, you can do all the above without internet access. Here's how it works:

Imagine you're in a plant where you can't get an internet connection. But because you have offline access to your forms, you can still perform your inspection or audit. You fill out your forms with a few taps and swipes, add some photos, trigger some alerts or tasks, and set your app to upload all this data to your different systems and programs the minute you get a signal.
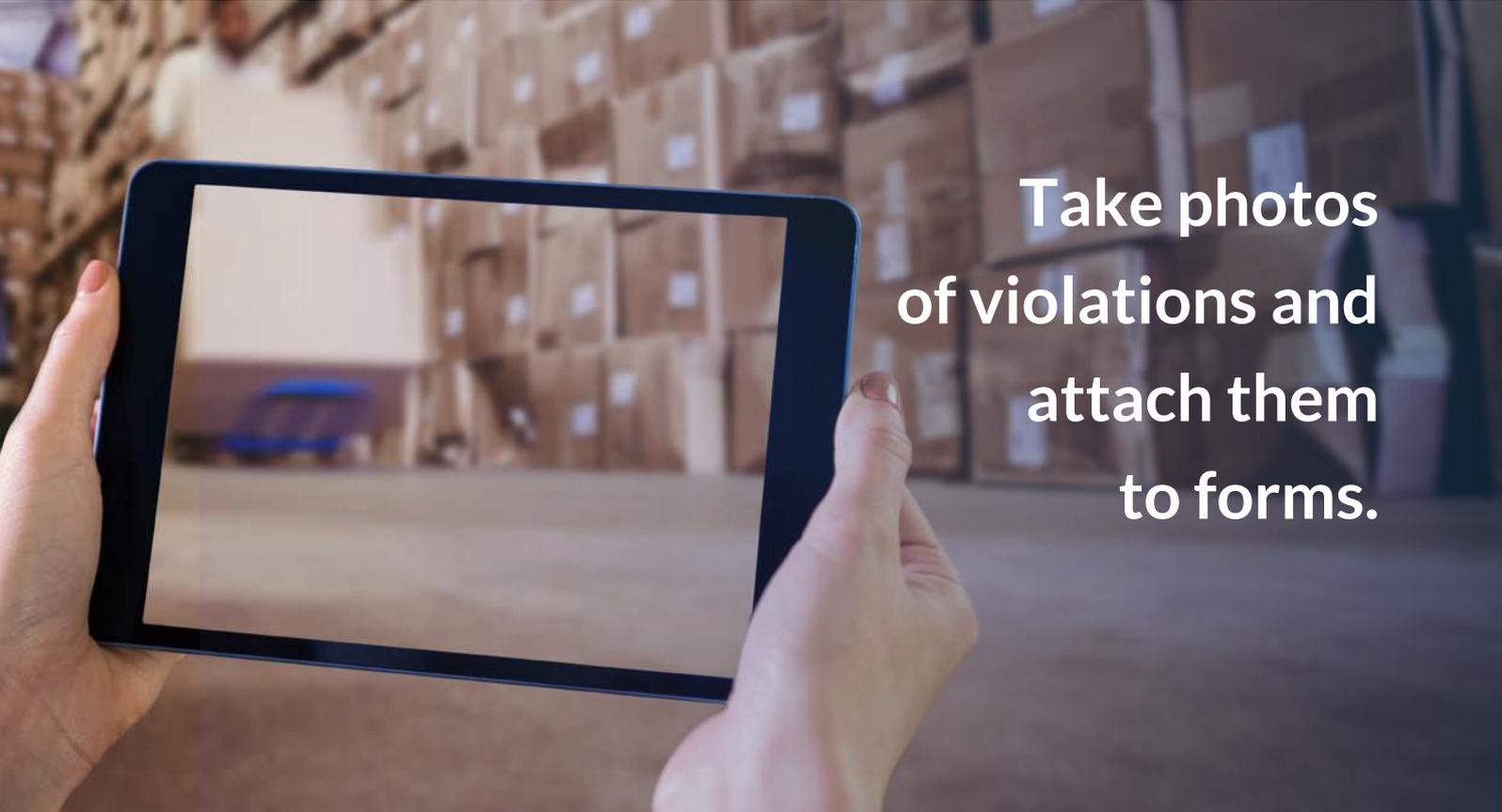
Take photos of violations and attach them to forms.

Track and automate CAPAs

3 Many safety professionals still manage their Corrective and Preventative Actions (CAPA) processes with paper, spreadsheets, and various other homegrown solutions like carrier pigeons and tin can telephones.

But the key to CAPA is speed and accuracy. Time is of the essence in manufacturing, so you need to get things fixed as soon as possible...and prevent problems from happening again. After all, if a piece of equipment is malfunctioning or if employees aren't following proper safety procedures, what's more important than getting that corrected right away and making sure it doesn't happen again?

When you manage CAPA with a mobile application, you can show employees what's going on instead of telling them.

Instead of just saying, "You're doing it wrong!", you can pull up the data you've gathered and trends you've discovered to show them how they're doing, and help them visualize why it's so important that they follow protocol.

For example, when an issue arises and needs to be corrected, you can leverage your mobile software to create a learning experience for your workers. You can show them the relevant compliance recommendations directly on your mobile device, and educate them on the proper actions to take to make sure the problem doesn't happen again.

Automation, a major benefit of any software, makes the CAPA process even more effective. Automated CAPAs can trigger activities based on an entry, response, or incident. Based on the information submitted in a form, the software automatically kicks off the appropriate action plans, notifications, maintenance requests, or requests for audits or re-inspections. At the same time, when violations are found, submitted forms can automatically route reports or alerts to the right people in and outside of your company for follow-up or review. Simply put, you can automate almost everything...and still have access while offline.

The key to CAPA is speed and accuracy

Get the most from your data

4

When you take the time to analyze the data you collect every day, you start to get a good understanding of problems that may be happening at ground level, while getting a constant pulse on how your safety initiatives are working at your current jobsites.

Even better, as data starts to accumulate, you can start making smarter decisions based on historical information gathered from audits and inspections over the years. You can use this information to identify trends, which in turn can help you generate preventative actions for each of your locations before even setting foot on the site.

With the right data and a willingness to learn from it, information can help you start generating the kinds of thoughts and conversations where real learning can happen. Over time, this real learning can spark better ideas, smarter decisions, and ultimately lead you down a path towards becoming a Continuous Improver.

Things that will make leadership happy, too

Mitigate Risk

For safety leaders, there's always plenty of risk around every corner. There's the risk that an employee gets hurt or killed. There are also environmental risks, health risks, and risks of being fined, sued, or completely shut down for noncompliance.

In speaking with several safety leaders, we at Form.com have learned that one of the more common risks looming over your shoulder is the potential of getting wrapped up up in a state or federal audit. That's why you're so careful about documentation. You know you should always be resilient and ready for an audit. You also know that you should have all your information available and ready because at the drop of a hat you could be requested to present all documentation on an employee, their injury, and anywhere from dozens to hundreds of other documents and details related to the job.

If all your safety forms are digital, you can access information from recent jobs directly on your mobile device. This means no more frantically digging through binders and file cabinets and no more trying to track down whoever took that binder out of the file cabinet and never returned it. While you may miss the adrenaline rush you get while frantically trying to find that one lost file, after a few days of being able to report on any site over any period of time, you'll never look back.

If all your safety forms are digital, you can access information from recent jobs directly on your mobile device.

Savings and Efficiencies

We've talked about the investment you'll need to make to get your safety program to the next level (mobile devices, form software, etc.). But it's really a no brainer of an investment when you consider the savings you'll realize by improving efficiency, reducing fines, and limiting accidents. In fact, various studies have shown that every dollar invested in injury prevention returns between two and six dollars.[III]

Competitive Advantage

A data-driven safety program based on a philosophy of continuous improvement can ultimately separate you from the competition.

First, a high rating with insurance carriers will significantly reduce your premiums, freeing up cash for you to invest in your business. Second, a track record for safety sets leadership minds at ease. After all, the last thing they want is the bad publicity (and potential liability) that comes along with any major workplace accidents or incidents.

Finally, when you upgrade your program from the cabinet to the cloud (or your own personal server), you're displaying the social responsibility that customers and clients love, and the dedication to safety that employees appreciate.

Higher Morale

In any high-risk occupation, positive morale starts with safety. After all, nothing rattles a crew more than witnessing (or even worse, experiencing) a serious accident while on the job. You want your team to come into work each day trusting that their safety is your top priority. But to gain that trust, you must first prove you're being sincere.

To do this, invest time in training employees and ratcheting-up their awareness and vigilance. Establish operations that prove you won't tolerate anything less than safe work processes. Invest in technology and use the data you gather to prove to your workers that you are doing your best to constantly and continuously improve. And if that means you need to occasionally dust the cobwebs off the checkbook, then do it. Safety improvement is a worthy investment in any economy.

Every 1 dollar invested in injury prevention returns between 2-6 dollars.

The last thing a big company wants is bad publicity (and potential liability) from a major accident or incident.

Recommendation

As a safety leader, your goal should always be to drive continuous and ongoing improvement until fatalities and injuries are reduced to zero. Sound outrageous? Maybe it is, maybe it isn't. And maybe you'll never get there. But like a good NFL defensive coordinator, your goal should always be to hold the opponent to zero points. Otherwise, there's always room for improvement.

The bad news is, you're probably never going to get there if you're working out of a filing cabinet. Paper-based inspections are time consuming, easy to misplace, and don't provide the level of data you need to make real improvements. The good news is, you can get pretty close to creating an injury-free workplace when you combine the right technology and data analytics with a strict vigilance of safety protocols and potential hazards. After all, mobile safety software can mean the difference between a one-time inspection and a system of continuous improvement.

Don't be a Box Checker. Don't be content being a Safety Cop, either. You want to become a Continuous Improver, but to get there you'll need to do more than cross your t's and dot your i's. You need to find and fix problems at individual locations and apply solutions companywide. You need to use data and analytics to help you make better, more informed decisions. But perhaps most importantly, you need to bring new technology to the table and fight for what you need to improve.

I.   https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/osh2.pdf

II. https://www.oshatrain.org/courses/pages/700costs.html

III. http://www.metalformingmagazine.com/magazine/article/?/The_Hidden_Costs_of_Accidents

Got questions? We can help!

Form.com is a flexible platform designed to take time-consuming procedures done on paper and spreadsheets and turn them into user-friendly forms. Our mobile and offline app allows you to access and complete forms from anywhere, even while offline, and our team of experts will work with you every step of the way to create your ideal solution.

For more information

Call **1-888-708-8118**

or email **info@worldapp.com**

Powered by WorldAPP