

Supporting Your Organization's Green Initiatives with Results-Driven EHS and Risk Management Technology

Hardly a day goes by when you don't hear something about an environmentally friendly or "green" initiative taking place in your community and/or organization. Businesses and individuals alike are recognizing the impact (both negative and positive) that daily activities can have on the environment. From a regulatory perspective, EHS and Risk Management professionals have long been mindful of the appropriate ways to dispose of used chemicals, monitor stormwater run-off, track air emissions, document these activities, etc. But when you move beyond the basics, it's easy to become complacent and not dig much further.

Have you ever considered your company's safety training and other related risk management programs? Are they "green" too? Consider something as common as paper. You generate a lot of paperwork when developing lesson plans, conducting training, documenting incidents, handling worker's comp claims, etc. Did you know that a typical business office generates about 1.5 lbs of wastepaper per employee per day? The EPA estimates that the average U.S. office worker uses about 10,000 sheets of copy paper annually. And according to The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), every recycled ton of paper saves approximately 17 trees and 462 gallons of oil. Basic math reveals that there is an incredible opportunity for improvement.

What about the logistics of conducting training? Having employees and/or trainers travel to various locations or hiring 3rd party consultants can be expensive AND have a negative impact on the environment. The studies that carefully illustrate the need for lowering fuel emissions are too numerous to list, but I think we all understand the impact driving and flying can have on the environment. There is a better way to deliver and manage even your basic orientation and refresher training without putting your employees behind a wheel or in the seat of airplane.

Now consider the use of Internet-based software solutions to address these programs and processes. Some of you may already be taking advantage of these types of tools, but many of you haven't made the technological leap yet. Maybe you've tried to get budget approval on numerous occasions, but you haven't quite been able to make the case to upper management. Here's a suggestion. Take the facts & figures that you already have and paint them *green*. You'll be amazed what a little splash of color can do to a black and white report. Illustrate the facts that not only will your organization see cost, time and productivity efficiencies, but that the resulting positive environmental impact can be equally or even more significant. In short, you have an opportunity to greatly improve your organization's safety and risk management programs AND support sustainability at the same time. It looks like the grass really is "greener" on the other side - the technology side.

By Shane Austin, CSP
Director - Safety and Risk Management
PureSafety