Introduction

Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) professionals often find it challenging to justify the purchase of new software systems, even though it is understood in broad terms that such systems can simplify and streamline business processes. While human resources, payroll, finance, and operations are often given the green light to seek state-of-the-art solutions to "get the job done", OHS may be left behind in automating health and safety processes.

This paper provides a list of management concerns that can be used as a checklist when preparing your business case for a new OHS software system.

Challenges: Current Management Issues in OHS

Here is a summary of some of the common management issues and concerns that are heard across companies nation-wide. Any solution should be able to address most, if not all, of these issues.

- ☐ How can I merge information from these disparate desk-top and paper-based systems to make informed business decisions?
- ☐ How can I identify workforce productivity trends and costs?
- ☐ How do I manage lost time in the workplace?
- ☐ How can I ensure employees are medically fit to perform their jobs?
- ☐ How do I assure compliance with various state and federal government regulations?
- ☐ Can I provide consistent OHS programs across all sites and locations in the organization?
- ☐ Am I able to protect the confidentiality of personal health information?
- ☐ How can I support proactive health and safety practices?

Corporate Need	Integrated OHS Software Response
Promote Efficient Practices	• Streamline/Standardize Work Processes • Improve Data Consistency • Facilitate Roll-Up Reporting • Integrate and share data between functions
Meet Regulatory Requirements	• Streamline regulatory reporting/recordkeeping • Track regulatory compliance • Adhere to international data privacy requirements
Ensure a Safe and Healthy Workplace	• Identify health and injury/illness trends • Support effective absence management • Track key health indicators and consolidate medical surveillance and exam activity
Reduce OHS Infrastructure Costs	• Minimize drain on IT resources • Reduce reliance on costly hardware and software systems • Free-up physical space occupied by paper files

Benefits of Implementing an Integrated, Enterprise-wide OHS Software Solution

1. Centralization and Integration:

An integrated Occupational Health and Safety software application can provide integration with the organization's HR system as well as between OHS functional areas improving productivity. The integration of Medical, Safety, and IH records allows functional areas to "talk" to one another, share information and report findings collaboratively, eliminating redundancies.

2. Streamlining and Standardizing Work Processes

An integrated Health and Safety software system is an effective tool to help organizations streamline and standardize their OHS business processes across multiple sites and locations. This promotes data integrity and consistency in data analysis.

3. Easy and Efficient to Deploy

An integrated system is far less draining on IT resources. Without isolated, inefficient systems to support, IT staff can focus on other projects, and the hardware and software required to support disparate systems can be eliminated.

4. Robust Management of Data Security

Organizations must comply with and adhere to very strict regulations on data privacy and security. A system with configurable and robust security options will allow you to control who has access to what information on a enterprise, site, role, or individual basis. A solution and/or vendor that is compliant with formal and recognized standards for information security offers additional assurance that your data will be protected.

Disparate Data Management Systems Are Negatively Impacting Your Business

One of the biggest challenges to effective data management in any department, whether it be HR, finance or OHS, is the use of various, disconnected systems. For example, within many companies and government agencies, health and safety data is not managed within a single repository but instead is spread across OHS functions and many separate computer and even paper-based systems. These systems are often isolated from or duplicated by each other and are inefficient and redundant to use or rollup.

When medical, industrial hygiene, and safety personnel use independent systems to provide collective reports to management, the data provided is inconsistent and fragmented. As a result, trends which impact the bottom line are invisible or at best difficult to identify. **If not corrected, disparate OHS systems will only continue to drain resources and negatively impact productivity.**

Conclusion

You can't manage what you can't measure. By moving to an integrated, comprehensive health and safety software system can companies and government agencies truly gain insight into OHS trends and make informed business decisions that align OHS business practices with current management need.