

SAFETYCHAIN SUCCESS STORY: HOW CANADA'S LARGEST PORK PRODUCER ELIMINATED PAPER & UNLOCKED POWERFUL FSQA DATA





Many food manufacturers and processors feel the burden that paper-based systems place on their company but transitioning to an automated system understandably seems overwhelming. It may never feel like the “right” time to pursue this type of project. Yet, in many cases, a technology project will actually be far simpler and more productive than continuing to drain your company’s resources with paper systems.

For HyLife™, a leading pork producer in Canada, the time came when the company could no longer justify paper-based systems. They were pursuing an expansion and realized that using even more of their precious space with growing volumes of paper would simply be impractical. Thus, they sought to address this challenge with a solution that would allow them to take their company data off the clipboard and into the Cloud.

In the coming pages, we’ll examine how HyLife™ implemented the FSQA solution, SafetyChain, to solve their paper-related challenges. With direct insights from Tracy Ouellet, Applications Manager for HyLife, you’ll learn:

- ▶ The major issues HyLife wanted to solve with technology
- ▶ Internal considerations which had to be addressed before implementation
- ▶ The key drivers behind the project’s success
- ▶ Benefits HyLife has experienced after partnering with SafetyChain
- ▶ Valuable learnings for anyone considering a technology project

Before we dive in, let’s first learn a little bit about HyLife™ with a brief background.



About HyLife™

HyLife™ is an international farm-to-fork pork producer with plants in Canada and Mexico. As one of Canada's largest pork producers, the company processes over two million hogs per year. HyLife™ products are known for their world-class quality and superior shelf life.

The majority of their products are exported, currently to 20 countries, including Japan and China. The company is always growing, and they continue to expand to more countries all the time.



As a manager in the company's Solutions team, Tracy's team of application analysts along with developers support, implement, and develop software. The department sits between business and IT functions and works collaboratively with these teams to bring the best solutions to the business.

What Challenges Did HyLife™ Want to Solve With FSQA Technology?

HyLife's project started with a desire to eliminate paper. The company had an expansion project underway, and its plans called for more filing space. Yet, Tracy and her colleagues knew that in a processing plant, maximizing the value of the space is critical. Filling up new real estate with binders and filing cabinets was clearly an inefficient use of space.

Moreover, the workflows surrounding paper were tedious and time-consuming. Paper was being touched multiple times; for example, they had two dedicated "paper pushers" whose primary responsibilities included collecting, validating, keying-in, and filing paperwork. Then, before audits, that paperwork would have to be retrieved, and if anything went missing, it would need to be tracked down.

Taking up significant plant space and dedicating two roles to managing paperwork alone were inefficient uses of resources. As such, these two factors became the driving force behind HyLife's search for FSQA technology. Yet, while they set out initially to solve their paper problem, they ultimately found that technology was able to address far more inefficiencies than they had originally thought it would.

In fact, HyLife's main objective was to simply digitize the data collection process. To do so, however, they had to first address some internal considerations.





What Internal Considerations and Challenges Did HyLife™ Have to Address?

Build vs. Buy Analysis

Prior to pursuing any new technology project, HyLife's Solutions team conducts a build vs. buy analysis to determine the best fit for their company. If the problem is specific to HyLife, they often choose the build route, as they have talented software developers, they can leverage to create customized solutions. Still, a great deal of thought goes into this decision.

To begin, the Solution team conducts thorough research to ensure they understand the business requirements. This involves shadowing members of various departments, including the employees who will be directly impacted by the solution.

To further determine whether building or buying a solution is the right choice, they perform extensive mapping of deliverables, milestones, and constraints. They also map out timelines for rollout phases. Then, they explore which practices and solutions are available to meet their unique needs, and what value each of these solutions can offer. If a custom build won't add extensive value and there's a viable product available, they will purchase a solution, as was the case with SafetyChain.

Change Management

Due to the expansion project taking place, numerous employees would be impacted by both the physical expansion and the implementation of new software. In particular, the Cut floor was being redesigned. To prevent too much change from taking place at once, the company staggered these developments. The software was implemented prior to the transition to the new Cut floor, so the teams using it would be comfortable with it before entering a new work environment.

Limited Resources

Tracy spearheaded this technology project independently due to the number and scale of the current project list. There were many tasks she had to spearhead, including the build vs. buy analysis, requirements gathering, and evaluation of food safety programs to understand every form and document, which would help her during standardization.

She worked closely with her HACCP and QA teams, providing and collecting feedback as she shadowed them. While her resources were limited, Tracy says that asking “why” enough times prompts people to stop and think about why things are done certain ways. This, in turn, allowed the project to be about more than just going paperless and to include improving efficiency and streamlining processes.

In addition to navigating the internal considerations they faced, HyLife also credits a number of other factors to the project's success.

What Were the Biggest Drivers of Success for the Project?

Many of the factors that contributed to the project's success were tackled before the implementation even began. Here are just a few of the most noteworthy drivers which ultimately supported an effective rollout.

- ▶ **Enlisting champions:** Tracy notes that it was important for her to get to know stakeholders and end-users well. She advises collaborating with anyone who has an influence in their department, as these individuals can champion your project in the background. To get their support, Tracy clearly communicated the many ways the technology could provide value to the business and improve their daily routines.
- ▶ **Challenge existing processes:** Instead of simply taking one's existing paper processes and directly translating them into electronic forms, Tracy advises taking the time to look for opportunities to improve. HyLife didn't just duplicate their paper processes; instead, they asked questions like, "Why do we have multiple forms when there could just be one?" Of course, it's not always possible to condense everywhere, but in many cases, data can be captured once, and a single form used in multiple places.
- ▶ **Standardize:** By taking the time to standardize SOPs, data, and terminology up front, HyLife saved considerable time during implementation while also making everything scalable for possible future replication.
- ▶ **Make Data Visible to Operators:** HyLife leveraged SafetyChain to make automatic updates visible across the floor via VMS screens. This enables them to catch errors early. Now, if a noncompliance occurs, employees can spot the issue immediately and provide a corrective action on the line without having to shut it down. Moreover, the issue can be caught early enough so that the product isn't being touched multiple times, which minimizes the risk of cross-contamination. Even if the line does need to be shut down, changes can be made swiftly, before any further damage occurs.
- ▶ **Shadow Operators on the Floor:** Tracy worked closely with teams on the floor to:
 - ▶ understand their actual needs,
 - ▶ earn respect, and
 - ▶ mitigate pushback based on the reasoning that "it's always been done this way."

As you can already see, the project started to deliver more value than simply eliminating paperwork, even from an early stage.



What Value Has Been Created for HyLife™ by Implementing SafetyChain?

The value that the SafetyChain implementation has created for HyLife spans far and wide. While the company will only continue to discover new benefits the longer they use the system, here are just some of the advantages they've already noticed:

Elimination of Paper Pushers

HyLife had some talented personnel performing low-value work. By eliminating the majority of their paperwork, the company has been able to reassign their “paper pushers” to higher value-added activities. Plus, they can now sign off on 200 documents per day with just a single person. Since the system requires fields to be completed, there's no need to babysit, either. Data is instantly collected, which also eliminates the need for rekeying.

Faster Response Time to Food Safety Issues

While it might take up to two or three days to identify FSQA problems before, that lag time has been eliminated thanks to real-time visibility. This significantly reduces rework, as problems are caught in minutes or hours versus days later. As all food companies know, the ability to spot and address issues quickly can be the difference between large losses and gains.



About SafetyChain

SafetyChain is the leading FSQA platform ensuring compliance, safety, and quality for process manufacturers. Trusted by over 1,500 facilities, SafetyChain is the only enterprise solution uniting production, quality, safety, and supplier management.

About the Partnership

The Marel and SafetyChain Software partnership brings together the leading platform for FSQA and Innova, the #1 Food Processing Software (MES) to fish, poultry, and meat producers. This innovative approach focuses on increasing yields and maximizing productivity for customers in North America.

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