CASE STUDY

Innovative Zipper Manufacturer Ditches Legacy Quality Management System and Adopts Next-Gen EQMS

How ComplianceQuest Helped YKK Transform and Modernize Quality Processes

“Senior management really pushed us to hit our launch date and I was ecstatic that we reached our goal. This was a huge success.”

—Kippy Hillhouse, ISO Engineer
Background

Founded in Tokyo in 1934, YKK manufactures and sells zippers, and other fastening products including hook & loop fasteners, plastic buckles and notions, webbing, and snaps and buttons for a variety of industries such as apparel, personal protective equipment, transportation, hygiene, sports and outdoor, medical, tactical gear and furniture.
The Challenge

Recently, Japan-based YKK Corporation began a company-wide migration from Lotus Notes to Microsoft Outlook. The roll-out prompted its North and Central America Group (NCA Group) to upgrade its quality management system (QMS) and other applications which relied on the Lotus Notes platform.

Kippy Hillhouse, Engineer for YKK (U.S.A.) Inc. began the search for a new QMS for the NCA Group. Hillhouse’s responsibility was to ensure that systems were implemented and standards were met to comply with the company’s goals and core values.

“We were using outdated software from the 1990s,” explained Hillhouse, who knew YKK needed something more modern and flexible. “We looked at our current vendor’s cloud-based option, but it wasn’t a viable choice because it mirrored the premise-based solution and lacked the features we needed.”
The Solution

Hillhouse wanted an enterprise quality management system (EQMS) that was not only cloud-based, but also included built-in features, functionality, and workflows to make current processes easier. In October 2019, she reached out to ComplianceQuest, a highly flexible, 100% cloud-based EQMS built on the Salesforce platform.

Streamlined Document Management Process

As part of the migration process, there were almost 3,000 documents to transfer into the new system. So ComplianceQuest assigned a dedicated project manager to provide guidance and support throughout the transition as well as an expert to assist with document migration.

"We had work instructions, forms, and SOPs, which were imported into templates in ComplianceQuest,"

Strategy for Success

When ComplianceQuest came on board, they started working closely with Hillhouse and her team to create a strategic plan for the migration. "We had deep discussions about the issues we needed to resolve and what we wanted moving forward, such as the quantity and types of users we had, and the apps we wanted," Hillhouse said. "From there, we established our timeline and go-live date, which coincided with the beginning of our fiscal year."

"Companies often settle for software that isn't up to par because it's already there, or it would cost too much to change or modify," Hillhouse noted. "With ComplianceQuest, we knew we could achieve our goals because they had a well-proven process and strong design and setup teams."

CHALLENGES

- Legacy QMS, antiquated digital solutions
- Premise-based
- Report generation time consuming
- Manual, duplicate data entry process

VALUE CREATED

- Greater insights, business intelligence
- Radically improved reporting capabilities
- Cloud-based platform
- Increased agility, efficiency, and speed

SOLUTIONS

- EQMS
- Complaint
- Document
- Training
Hillhouse explained. “On our old system, we manually added documents to an offline template, and now everything’s online, which greatly simplifies and streamlines our efforts.”

Improved Reporting Capabilities

One of Hillhouse’s greatest frustrations was not being able to generate and share reports quickly and easily. It could take days to run training or complaints reports which were manually compiled from database entries, spreadsheets, and manual tracking.

“The process was complex and hindered our ability to make timely and informed business decisions,” Hillhouse said. "With ComplianceQuest, I can jump right into the system and quickly create reports from a template or from scratch. It’s user-friendly and customizable with a lot of helpful features such as the ability to add, remove, and change the order of columns, and create new views.”

Today, YKK’s reporting capabilities are in a whole new league. They can be used to analyze processes, monitor the status of their trainings and complaints, and to support key business decisions.

“Everything is automated and fast; we can generate reports for information, strategic, and planning purposes, which makes a huge impact on our productivity and efficiency,” Hillhouse noted.

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Powerful, Safe Production Environment

In the past, if they needed to customize their QMS, Hillhouse would have to either hire a specialist or try to figure out a work-around. However, if they upgraded the software or issued a new release, it would overwrite those changes, wasting valuable time and resources.

Today, Hillhouse is free of those constraints. "Anytime ComplianceQuest worked on something for us, they put it in their sandbox to make sure it didn't impact something else. After testing in their production environment, they moved it to the YKK sandbox which gave us a chance to test and provide feedback before going into production."

“Nothing gets overwritten, and customizations are still available with new releases,” Hillhouse continued. “Plus, as an administrator, I can personally customize many areas, such as adding values to a field when needed, and that’s really freeing.”

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Empowered for the Future

“The support and communication at ComplianceQuest have been top-notch, even on days when there was a lot of pressure,” Hillhouse said. “I’d call them, we’d put our heads together, and we would always come up with a solution. It always happened. Always.”

On April 1, 2020, they went live, and Hillhouse was thrilled that they launched as planned. YKK’s NCA Group has implemented 900 licenses, with 700 more planned in the future. With improved workflows and reporting, increased security, and a multi-language interface, they are poised for global growth internally and externally.

“I’ve rarely seen anyone hit a target like that as quickly as we did, especially with the number of documents to migrate and customizations to corrective and preventive action. We started working in November and went live on April 1 with three modules. Senior management really pushed us to hit our launch date, and I was ecstatic that we reached our goal,” Hillhouse said.

“This was a huge success.”
About ComplianceQuest

ComplianceQuest is the fastest growing, 100% modern cloud Enterprise Quality and Safety Management System (QHSE) natively built and run on the Salesforce platform. Our unified QHSE solutions help our customers of all sizes deliver quality products and services in the safest and most sustainable way by mitigating risk, problems, and inefficiencies and protecting customers, employees, suppliers and brand.

For more information, or to request a demo with a ComplianceQuest expert, contact ComplianceQuest today.

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