

Embracing Digitalization

Enhancing Recall Management with
Innovative Software Solutions and Global Collaboration



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Authors' note: Recall process management standards and best practices remain an evolving field, with limited formal research conducted thus far. Drawing upon the authors' collective 30+ years of experience in recall process management, this article delves into the transformative potential of digitalization within the food and consumer goods industry, and looks to a future where there is more researched evidence of the power of these technologies to impact consumer safety.

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Published by:

DLG e.V.
Competence Center Food
Eschborner Landstr. 122 · 60489 Frankfurt am Main · Germany

1st edition, as of 5/2024

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In today's rapidly evolving world, characterized by technological advancements and shifting consumer expectations, the digital landscape is reshaping industries at an unprecedented pace. Nowhere is this transformation more evident than in the food and consumer goods sector, where embracing digitalization is becoming increasingly crucial for success. As companies strive to stay ahead of the curve and remain competitive in an ever-changing market, understanding and harnessing the power of digitalization have become imperative.

Against this backdrop, recall management emerges as a critical aspect of digital transformation within the food and consumer goods industry. Recall incidents, while unfortunate, are an inevitable reality for companies operating in this space, posing significant risks to brand reputation, consumer safety, and financial stability. In response to these challenges, companies are increasingly turning to digital solutions to bolster their recall management strategies.

This article addresses the significance of digitalization in the context of recall management, highlighting the benefits of utilizing recall management software tools and participating in a global recall ready community. It explores how leveraging technology-driven solutions, such as recall management software tools, can revolutionize the way companies respond to recall incidents. Additionally, it underscores the importance of active participation in a global recall ready community, wherein industry stakeholders collaborate to enhance preparedness and response capabilities.

As we navigate the complexities of the digital age, it is essential for companies to stay informed and proactive in their approach to recall management. By embracing digitalization and leveraging innovative tools and collaborative platforms, companies can not only mitigate risks and protect their brand reputation but also drive long-term change in the way consumers are protected in the food and consumer goods sectors. This article aims to shed light on the transformative potential of digitalization in recall management and inspire actionable insights for industry professionals seeking to thrive in today's dynamic business environment.

Understanding the Shift Towards Digitalization

The digital revolution has fundamentally altered the way businesses operate, offering unprecedented opportunities for efficiency, collaboration, and innovation. In the food and consumer goods industry, digitalization encompasses various aspects, including supply chain management, customer engagement strategies, and ensuring product safety standards. Companies that embrace digital transformation are better positioned to adapt to changing market dynamics, enhance operational efficiency, and deliver superior customer experiences.

In contrast to the streamlined and efficient processes enabled by digitalization, manual processes present numerous disadvantages that hinder the growth and success of businesses. Traditional manual methods, such as paper-based record-keeping and manual data entry, are not only time-consuming but also prone to errors and inconsistencies. These inefficiencies can lead to delays in decision-making, increased operational costs, and compromised data accuracy.

Moreover, manual processes often lack transparency and accessibility, making it challenging for stakeholders to access real-time information and collaborate effectively. This can



impede communication among internal teams, supply chain partners, and regulatory authorities, hindering the timely resolution of issues such as recalls or quality control issues.

Digitalization addresses these inefficiencies by leveraging technology to automate and streamline key business processes. By digitizing recall management, companies can gain real-time visibility into their operations, track product movements, and proactively identify and address potential issues. Digital tools enable companies to standardize data, automate processes, and maintain airtight records.

Moreover, digitalization enhances collaboration and communication across the entire supply chain, enabling stakeholders to share information, collaborate on outcomes, and coordinate responses to issues such as recalls or quality control issues in real-time. By breaking down silos and facilitating seamless information exchange, digitalization fosters greater transparency, efficiency, and accountability throughout the industry.

The Imperative of Effective Recall Management

Recalls represent a critical aspect of operation for food and consumer goods companies, posing significant risks to brand reputation, consumer safety, and financial stability. Effective recall management is essential for minimizing these risks and safeguarding public health.

Traditionally, recall processes have been mired in manual, paper-based systems, which inherently come with their own set of challenges. They are often slow, prone to errors, and inefficient, leaving companies exposed to greater risks and prolonging the resolution of recall incidents. However, in today's dynamic business environment, relying solely on such antiquated methods is no longer viable.

Companies require agile, technology-driven solutions to streamline recall processes and mitigate risks effectively. These solutions leverage the power of technology to streamline recall processes, from initiation to resolution, empowering companies to respond swiftly and decisively to recall incidents.

An ideal recall management solution should encompass a range of features to facilitate efficient and effective recall management. Some key features include:

- **Easy to use, cloud-based platform:** A user-friendly interface accessible via the cloud ensures that stakeholders can easily navigate the platform and access critical information from anywhere, at any time.
- **Data fields based on global GS1 standards:** Standardized data fields based on GS1 standards ensure consistency and accuracy in product information, facilitating interoperability and data exchange across the supply chain.
- **Multi-channel outreach:** The ability to communicate with customers and stakeholders via multiple channels, including email, call, fax, and SMS notifications, ensures broad reach and timely communication during recall incidents.
- **Customizable workflows:** Customizable workflows allow companies to tailor recall processes to their specific needs and requirements, ensuring flexibility and adaptability to changing circumstances.
- **Real-time progress tracking:** Real-time tracking of recall activity allows stakeholders to monitor the status of recall activities and identify potential bottlenecks or issues that require immediate attention.

14.8%

increase on
recalls over
12 months

€ 10 mil.

average cost of
a recall in EU

470

contamination related
recalls in Q3

69.4%

increase in
poultry recalls

According to Sedgwick Recall Index 2023 Edition 3:
Product Recall European Edition

- **Response center:** A centralized response center provides stakeholders with free access to secure, interactive recall accounts, enabling them to actively participate in a coordinated response effort.
- **Audit trails and reporting:** Comprehensive audit trails and reporting capabilities enable companies to maintain thorough records of recall activities, track changes, and generate detailed reports for regulatory compliance and analysis purposes.

By using tools with features like these, companies can not only mitigate risks effectively but also minimize the impact on their brand reputation and bottom line. The digitization and automation of recall processes empower companies to respond swiftly, accurately, and transparently to recall incidents, ultimately enhancing consumer safety and trust in their products.

Effective recall management is not just about reacting to incidents as they occur; it's about proactively investing in the right tools and strategies to not only prevent them from happening in the first place, but also manage them effectively when needed. By embracing technology-driven solutions, companies can navigate the complexities of recall management with agility and confidence, ultimately safeguarding both their business interests and the well-being of consumers.

Leveraging Recall Management Software Tools

Recall management software tools offer a comprehensive solution for streamlining recall processes, from initiation to resolution. These tools enable companies to centralize recall data, automate communication with stakeholders, track product movements, and generate real-time reports. By digitizing recall processes, companies can significantly reduce response times, improve accuracy, and enhance transparency throughout the supply chain. Moreover, recall management software tools facilitate seamless collaboration among internal teams, regulatory agencies, and industry partners, enabling swift and coordinated responses to recall incidents.

One of the primary benefits of these software tools is their ability to automate communication with stakeholders. By leveraging features such as automated notifications and alerts, companies can ensure that all relevant parties are promptly informed about recall incidents with information that enables them to act, thus expediting response times and minimizing potential risks.

Tracking product movements throughout the supply chain is also faster, easier, and more accurate with a software tool. This functionality is invaluable during recall scenarios, as it allows companies to quickly identify affected products and trace their distribution, enabling targeted and efficient recall efforts.

Real-time reporting capabilities are another key feature offered by recall management software tools. By generating comprehensive reports on recall activities, companies gain valuable insights into the effectiveness of their recall processes, enabling them to identify areas for improvement and implement proactive measures to mitigate future risks. Being able to access customized reports on demand also makes compliance checks and other regulatory requirements exponentially easier.

Perhaps most importantly, these software tools facilitate collaboration among internal teams, regulatory agencies, and industry partners. By providing a centralized platform for communication and data sharing, companies can ensure swift and coordinated responses to recall incidents, thereby minimizing the impact on consumer safety and brand reputation.

Ultimately, recall management software tools aren't just about optimizing processes. A good tool empowers companies to effectively navigate recall scenarios with accuracy, speed, and collaboration.



According to Recall InfoLink, inc. 2024

Becoming a Global Recall Ready Community

Participating in a global Recall Ready Community presents a paradigm shift in the recall process, complementing the utilization of recall management software tools. This community embodies a collaborative approach to recall management, uniting supply chains under a common framework of standardized data and shared simulation exercises.

In today's food and consumer goods landscape, where supply chains span continents, relying solely on individual entities to manage recalls in isolation leads to inefficiencies and delays. The global Recall Ready Community addresses this challenge by promoting proactive communication, modernized recall simulations, and collaborative preparedness among its members.

By embracing this approach, companies can cultivate trust, transparency, and accountability within the industry. Proactive communication ensures that relevant stakeholders are promptly informed about recall incidents, enabling swift and coordinated responses. Modernized recall simulations provide an opportunity for members to test and refine their recall procedures in a controlled environment, enhancing preparedness for real-world scenarios.

A proactive approach to recall management involves not only having a plan in place to prevent a recall from occurring but also practicing it. Practice is what prepares your team and trading partners to respond quickly and effectively in the event of a recall. The following are some best practices for food and consumer goods companies to take a proactive approach to recalls:

Case Study

Company A, a food manufacturing firm, used a recall simulation to prepare its recall team, stakeholders, and the supply chain. Prior to the simulation, Company A convened its recall team to strategize, recognizing gaps in their existing plan that wouldn't suffice in a real recall crisis.

During the meeting, roles and tasks were assigned, with a primary communicator designated to manage the recall platform. Collaboration with international teams ensured seamless access to customer and product data.

Subsequently, a date was set for the simulation, with key stakeholders informed in advance. The simulation encompassed all key processes, from data retrieval to message customization and action indication. Stakeholders received clear instructions on their roles during a recall.

Post-simulation, Company A conducted a brief survey, revealing enhanced readiness among participants. Both employees and supply chain partners expressed increased confidence and preparedness for effective recall actions.

1. **Assemble a team:** Gather a diverse team representing all relevant business components to ensure effective communication and collaboration.
2. **Establish a supportive environment:** Create guidelines for an environment conducive to rational decision-making, preventing rash actions under pressure.
3. **Ensure access to Resources:** Equip the team with necessary communication resources and modern tools for efficient process execution.
4. **Gather comprehensive data:** Collect various forms of data crucial for decision-making, spanning the product life cycle.
5. **Define the problem:** Utilize available information to precisely define the issue's scope, scale, and urgency.
6. **Make informed decisions:** Prioritize public safety and brand reputation while considering regulatory obligations.
7. **Prepare tailored communication:** Develop communication materials tailored to different stakeholder groups' needs and preferences.
8. **Package information effectively:** Organize recall information for easy access and understanding, facilitating swift action.

9. **Monitor progress and adjust:** Simulate media coverage and customer feedback to refine communication and make necessary adjustments.
10. **Wrap up and evaluate:** Document actions and outcomes for evaluation and continuous improvement.

By adopting a community mindset, companies can leverage the collective expertise and resources of the community to enhance their recall management capabilities. This collaborative approach not only benefits individual companies but also contributes to the overall resilience of the industry, ultimately safeguarding consumer safety and strengthening brand reputation.

Becoming a global Recall Ready Community is about recognizing the interconnected nature of modern supply chains and embracing collaborative strategies to enhance recall preparedness. By working together towards the common goal of consumer protection, companies can navigate recall scenarios more effectively, minimize risks, and uphold the highest standards of safety and integrity.

Embracing a Digital Future

Recall management tools, such as Recall InfoLink, are essential for businesses to efficiently handle product recalls and ensure consumer safety. These tools allow companies to initiate and track the recall process through a centralized platform. To operate Recall InfoLink, users typically start by inputting relevant product information, such as batch numbers, affected dates, and reasons for the recall. The platform then helps to disseminate recall notices to relevant stakeholders, including retailers, distributors, and consumers, through various communication channels such as email, SMS, or automated phone calls. Additionally, it assists in managing responses from recipients, tracking the progress of recalls, and maintaining compliance with regulatory requirements. To use the tool, companies only need internet access, a compatible device, and a user account. Moreover, ensuring accurate and up-to-date product data is crucial for optimally leveraging the tool and executing an effective recall.

By leveraging recall management software tools and participating in a global recall ready community, companies can enhance their ability to respond swiftly and effectively to recall incidents, thereby safeguarding public health, protecting brand reputation, and driving long-term success in an increasingly digital world.

As we navigate the digital future of the food and consumer goods industry, let's take proactive steps to enhance our recall management capabilities. Consider integrating recall management software tools into existing systems and processes, and explore opportunities to collaborate within supply chains, using proactive communication to create Recall Ready Communities.

Now is the time to take action because the future of digital solutions has come. Invest in the right technology, engage with industry peers, and pave the way for a safer, more resilient reality for your business and the consumers you serve. Together, we can embrace digitalization and ensure that recall management remains a cornerstone of excellence in the food and consumer goods industry.



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