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case study

RCA Program Development Workshop Helps Helena Industries Achieve Goals by Building Program Foundation

This work was performed by the Sologic® team when it was known as Apollo Associated Services, LLC.

Helena Industries

Helena Industries, with headquarters in Collierville, Tennessee, is a leading toll manufacturer of chemical products used for agriculture, lawn and garden, and industrial applications. With four plants located strategically in the United States, the company is widely considered to have an excellent record for quality and safety. But to stay out ahead of the constant customer demand for responsiveness and dependability, the company focuses on proactive continuous improvement through constant upgrades in equipment and processes. Equally important, Helena also invests heavily in training and growth opportunities for its employees, to keep the company at the forefront of quality, efficiency, and customer service excellence.

Interview

For Helena, the two-day Program Development workshop was attended by key company personnel, one of which was Philip Berryman, manager of the Cordele, Georgia facility. This facility has about 70 full-time employees and up to 100 temporaries - depending on the season - and formulates, manufactures, packs and ships as many as 1,500 products. Berryman and his counterparts from the other three plants were tasked with incorporating root cause analysis efficiently and effectively into the everyday culture of their plants, and moreover, with sustainability for the long term. Following are excerpts from a discussion Sologic had with Phil Berryman concerning the effectiveness and value of the Program Development workshop.

Sologic: Why did Helena Industries decide to enlist the Sologic team to help lay a solid foundation of your RCA program?

Berryman: The decision to adopt a standardized RCA methodology was not made out of necessity. Already, our quality was impeccable and our earnings were growing. The decision was taken as part of our goal for continuous improvement. We decided this was the next logical step, and we saw the the Program Development workshop as the best way to speed up and smooth the installation of the program into the plants.

Sologic: The two-day Program Development workshop is designed to help organizations develop their RCA program from the ground up, satisfying all of the necessary elements for a complete and effective program. Was the

As part of this effort, Helena decided to adopt a standard problem-solving methodology throughout the company and, after diligent research and investigation, chose to partner with the Sologic team in this endeavor. Helena chose the Sologic team for its systematic approach to root cause analysis, along with the sophistication and level of support for program development. Helena also determined that the method used would integrate well into the organization, including its existing LEAN and ISO programs. Specifically, Helena chose to kick off implementation of root cause analysis with by setting the program on a solid foundation, which helps the organization focus on practical application of total program development, change management and organizational development.

workshop of value to you in this regard?

Berryman: Yes. The workshop was tremendously useful in this respect. The pre-workshop reading assignments gave us all an overview of the approach, which was instrumental in preparing us to build our program in the two-day process. When I left the workshop, I had a complete understanding of what we needed to do going forward to have a successful program.

Sologic: Would you recommend Program Development for other companies?

Berryman: Absolutely, I highly recommend it for any company deciding to use Sologic as its standard RCA methodology, which fosters consistency in approach and language throughout the organization.

Sologic: The workshop is divided into a number of modules which allows for scaling the Sologic program to fit the needs and resources of the organization. Which of the modules have you found most impressive?

Berryman: Without a doubt, the section on 'building the Threshold Trigger Diagram' because of the way it helps us determine the right time to conduct a formal RCA. In addition, the plant goals and objectives help us ensure that no important problem gets unintentionally ignored. And then, the process of cross checking the recommended number of monthly and annual RCAs to be performed ensures a good balance. This was extremely valuable in assuring that team members conduct enough RCAs to stay proficient with the process, while protecting them from feeling overwhelmed.

Interview

Sologic: Program Development services are designed to lay out the roles and responsibilities that are required for a successful program, but in a way that allows the organization to choose which elements they may already have in place, and which functions they may need to add. In other words, it allows the organization to take advantage of existing strengths without creating redundancies or new bureaucracies. Did you find this to be the case?

Berryman: Yes I did. As an example, we found that we didn't need a dedicated first responder role so we chose not to put together responder teams that would go out and investigate. We're a small chemical processing plant and record a lot of data already, so we didn't need that formality. We operate 24/7 and may already have 8 or 10 operators in the plant, as well as lab personnel, and they all already have a good understanding of what needs to be done if there is an incident, so we felt we already had this role covered. But the workshop explanation of required roles and responsibilities was useful in assigning RCA job duties and deciding who is responsible for what. When it comes to the concept of Problem Management Boards - a group that monitors the status of RCAs and problem solutions - instead of creating a new committee, we chose to use an existing team to satisfy these requirements by simply adding these functions as new agenda items.

Sologic: What other tangible benefits has Helena observed?

Berryman: First, our dedication to RCA has been well-received by all customers. They are impressed that we're focused on fixing even the small problems. Second, we have addressed some recurring problems and have not seen them repeat. Third, although we already had an excellent record on OSHA recordables, we are more equipped to avoid even the occasional costly mistake.

Sologic: Were there any intangible benefits you've gained through the process that you didn't necessarily expect?

Berryman: Yes, it was a morale boost for the plant, and created an atmosphere in which people are more willing to bring problems forward to be solved. Years ago, we had more of a top-down, management-by-results system. We've been transitioning to a more inclusive management style over the last 8-10 years, and the RCA method provided by the Sologic team has really supported that cultural change. With the problem-solving-team approach, we automatically turn the process over to the people. Because they feel part of the plant and the process, this generates ownership and establishes trust, which is a great motivator. After all, they deal with the equipment and processes every day, so know the plant better than anyone.

Workshop

To reap the full benefits of an effective RCA program, the Sologic Program Development Workshop helps organizations to develop a comprehensive implementation strategy that establishes: program goals, training strategy, a set of metrics, RCA workflow processes, and clearly defined roles and responsibilities. These key infrastructure elements are then integrated

into existing organizational structures and workflows in a way that minimizes bureaucracy while capitalizing on existing systems. Equally important, a change management assessment and plan help foster the needed "buy in" from individuals who ultimately will be tasked with the regular duties of the RCA program.

Sologic

The Sologic team has provided root cause analysis (RCA) training, consulting, software and investigation solutions since 1987, formerly under the name Apollo Associated Services, LLC. Sologic helps organizations attain and maintain leading positions in a competitive global market by achieving measurable results, including: cost reduction, throughput gains, time savings, quality improvement, injury reduction,

improved regulatory compliance and reduction or elimination of day-to-day problems. Sologic RCA is a five-step method that includes managing information, defining the problem, analyzing cause and effect relationships using Causelink™ cause and effect charting software, identifying and implementing solutions, and reporting findings.

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