

Case Study.
General Mills.
USA.

Transforming Safety In A Global Food Company

A focus on achieving a 'zero-loss culture' – with the goal of making safety not just a priority, but a value – has reduced the company's global total injury rate.

150 Years of Making Food People

General Mills, headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota, is a leading global food company with brands – such as Cheerios, Betty Crocker, Blue Buffalo, Pillsbury, Haagen-Dazs, Annie's and Cascadian Farm, to name just a few – that are enjoyed in more than 100 countries on six continents. Throughout its history, General Mills has invested in making the world around it better and their workplaces safer. They believe that being successful in the marketplace and being a force for good go hand in hand. This belief is more important than ever for General Mills as the company navigates enormous changes in its industry and the global economy.

Consumer expectations for food companies have never been higher. Consumers are increasingly looking for foods that reflect their values from a company they trust. General Mills is committed to responding with expanded offerings, new product benefits and increasing transparency about the sourcing, production and safety of their food products.

At the same time, General Mills believes that the health of its business depends not only on the health of the planet, but on the safety and health of its employees. The idea of workplace safety is not at all new to General Mills. More than one hundred years ago, a mill explosion in downtown Minneapolis resulted in loss of lives that led to a



strengthened company commitment to employees and to community philanthropy.

General Mills has always had a strong food safety culture with a "halo effect" on human safety. Throughout the company's history, human safety has been a priority to plant managers who have long been committed to "doing the right thing" and to taking care of the people who work for them.

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As part of this investment, Stedronsky turned to dss+ to partner with, based on their unique blend of safety management practices and deep engineering operations experience. With over 215 years of operations history at 240 plants worldwide, dss+ stood out as an expert practitioner of its own safety processes.



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According to Stedronsky, dss+ was also engaged for their extensive experience in assessing and improving workplace safety culture, bringing clients practical real-life experience, and for their success in assisting organizations worldwide in their safety journeys. He shared, "Our Innovation, Technology and Quality (ITQ) organization had demonstrated years earlier that by improving the culture of safety, the injury rate would fall. We knew we needed to focus on culture and dss+ was a good fit to help us get better."

The initial engagement involved teaching people to be better at safety, and senior leadership was the first audience. To kick-start the process, General Mills surveyed 15,000 employees to gain initial insights into safety behaviours and perceptions of management's safety leadership.

Based on the findings, a multi-year strategy was developed to create a customized safety management and training capability. The objective of General Mills' strategy was to develop a world-class safety culture that complemented the company's strong corporate value system and to increase process standardization and operating discipline to create value in other areas, including quality and system performance, finance and logistics.

The phased and sequential approach was intended to be transformative rather than transactional by attacking problems at the root cause. The goals were to help strengthen corporate and site safety governance, as well as develop critical corporate safety processes and customized training for direct delivery. As a result, an ongoing transfer of knowledge would continue to positively impact the safety culture at General Mills.

Gregg Stedronsky shared, "dss+ took the time to get to know us as an organization and helped with understanding our culture, so we could adapt dss+ approach without diluting its effectiveness. As a result, we've embraced the safety observation process and changed safety leadership behaviours as we strive for zero-loss. To date, we've



conducted over 2 million safety contacts to remind ourselves to be safe at work and when leaving to go home. We've also trained over 1,000 team leaders and 5,000 employees as we continue on our journey – and that's just the beginning."

Global Standards Established For A Zero-loss Culture

General Mills' focus on achieving a zero-loss culture – driving out all losses from its business, including safety incidents – has resulted in a new corporate approach to managing safety and in fewer injuries.

In addition to embracing a new safety observation and behavioural change process, General Mills established company-wide safety standards in 2015 that provide specific safety requirements, such as personal protective equipment and risk assessment methods at production facilities. General Mills continues to expand these standards to ensure uniform compliance across the company.

General Mills also established a Global Safety Governance Board (GSGB), composed of regional operating vice presidents, which meets quarterly and is responsible for safety oversight in the supply chain and the pace of global standards development. In fiscal 2016, the GSGB

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conducted regional impact assessments of detailed safety standards, aligned with enterprise-wide leading indicators of safety performance, and initiated the sharing of lessons learned from safety incidents across the global supply chain.

Safety Management System Implemented



Compared with peer food group companies, General Mills has historically had a strong safety record. But the company is committed to continue to improve by using clear safety management systems. In fiscal 2016, global supply chain locations began the process of phasing in a single standardized Environmental and Safety Management System (ESMS) as part of the global zero-loss strategy. One global system will provide process uniformity and expand the company's safety and environmental management capabilities globally.

The company continued its commitment to demonstrating and teaching leaders how to lead in a zero-loss culture. A customized training workshop, jointly developed between General Mills and dss+, was attended by 1672 global leaders in 2015 and 2016. In addition, the newly

established Central Safety Committees (CSCs) at all locations assumed primary accountability for leading and monitoring safety improvements. Communication within these committees focuses on leading metrics, process rigor and measuring implementation of foundational safety standards, providing visibility of process improvements globally.

Safety Leadership and Responsibility At General Mills

At General Mills, workplace health and safety are the responsibility of line management and each individual employee. All employees are expected to work safely by following policies, procedures and training. Senior-level responsibility for workplace safety programming lies with the Director of Global Safety and Environment, who reports to the Vice President of Engineering, Global Safety and Environment. A Corporate Safety Council which includes key members of the company's leadership team also meets bi-annually to review safety progress and key initiatives.

According to Ed Roethke, Senior Manager of Global Safety and Environment at General Mills, "dss+ helped us build a customized strategy and key processes to improve the safety culture of our organization over time."

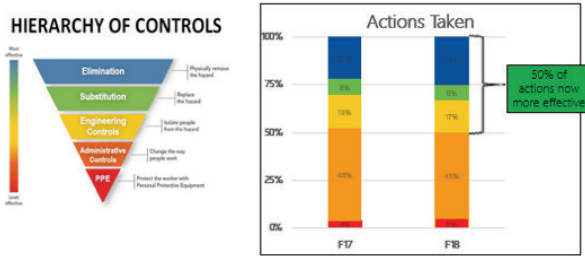
Roethke also shared, "What's different today is the amount of time we now spend talking about safety versus just 5 years ago. Safety is now truly a part of our culture and a key value for General Mills. The overall professionalism and longstanding history of safety at dss+ simply shows why we respect dss+ as a valued partner who is helping us understand how culture affects our safety journey."

The Results Of A Sustainable And Global Transformation

Safety observations and corrective actions continue to rise as further evidence of the success General Mills is experiencing on its ongoing journey to a world-class zero-loss safety culture. With strong foundational processes in place, General Mills will continue to focus on eliminating severe incident potential through more rigorous application of the hierarchy of controls.

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9353 Corrective and Preventative Actions Taken



That’s why leading with safety at General Mills has been successful. It has raised awareness about preventing employee and food safety incidents by reinforcing the company’s key safety principles:

- We lead with safety
- Every incident is preventable
- We are all accountable

Nothing Is More Important Than Making Sure Employees Come Home Safe

dss+ can help your organization reduce risk and build a sustainable, effective safety culture. For 50 years, we have been advising leading industrial companies around the world on operations improvements and workplace safety. The independent research company Verdantix has ranked dss+ as the top EHS consultancy for brand preference. Our workplace safety experience can help you not only identify risks but can also reinforce safe work practices and help correct unsafe acts and conditions.



The Value Of dss+ To General Mills

By seeking to collaboratively attack problems at the root cause, dss+ helped General Mills on its journey of safety culture improvement in several ways. dss+ provided General Mills with:

- Coaching to strengthen supply chain safety structure, process improvement teams and initial global standards.
- Building safety expertise in leadership to drive effort and to sustain the gains. Worked across several global pilot sites to prove safety training concepts and implementation of global standards.
- Developing and customizing of Lead with Safety Training in “Train the Trainer” format for dozens of global trainers who in turn delivered leadership safety development workshops to company leaders globally.

As Gale Paul, dss+ Project Manager has observed, there are at least three key takeaways from this engagement which can apply to other organizations facing similar challenges with decentralized global operations.

- First, it is important to set the foundation for safety through leadership and effective corporate governance.
- Second, to effectively deploy safety improvements globally, it is essential that in-country or in-region resources lead the implementation – primarily to help understand any cultural and language challenges.
- Third, to make safety really stick, it must be embedded in the company’s business processes.



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