ML Crane Group saves time & money by refreshing safety culture

Customer Spotlight

ML Crane Group

mlcranegroup.com

Albuquerque, NM headquarters; 8 branches

500 field employees

#15 in ACT 100 list of largest crane owners in North America

Safety System Challenge
Incident investigations indicated poor planning and communication in the JSA process

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Response
Focused that ensuring the right conversations were taking place and everyone was meaningfully engaged in the JSA process

Tim Smith had been contracted as a consultant for a fairly typical task: to assess the safety culture at ML Crane Group and recommend an appropriate software program to improve it. Then he discovered FactorLab—and all bets were off. Intrigued by the novel approach and impressed by the extensive analytics accompanying SmartTagit, Smith eventually stayed on as Safety Director to lead ML Crane Group into unimagined territory with a career-invigorating solution: SmartTagIt. Soon the company was gaining unprecedented insight into safety processes, people and culture that would lead to improvements that had previously seemed impossible. And those improvements weren't just to safety but also to the company's bottom line. This is their story.

CHECKED BOXES OR INJURIES AVOIDED?

Compliance is good, but it's not everything. That was the takeaway Smith delivered to his colleagues at ML Crane Group as the organization looked to improve its safety numbers. After all, there's a difference between checking boxes and actually preventing incidents from happening in the first place.

Reducing safety risks promised a number of benefits for the company: they would be able to better protect their people, increase productivity and extend the life of expensive crane equipment. But what about regulations? They still needed to be met, particularly to avoid harsh penalties. That's where the beauty of continuous improvement came into play: once they could instill effective preventative safety practices across the organization, compliance would become automatic.

Getting started with SmartTagIt. The company was ready to move beyond annual hazard communication policies and into a daily culture of preventative safety practices. With the goal of fostering a learning culture filled with prevention-oriented safety processes, ML Crane chose SmartTagIt for its extensive evaluation criteria for daily planning

Business Impact

ML CRANE GROUP

Customer since 2020

1400 JSAs per month

Number personal of Jobs Safety Analysis made every month

20% reduction

In incidents 2020 vs 2021

50% reduction

In incidents year to date vs 2021

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conversations. They weren't in the market for a new safety management system but instead a way to zero in on the measures that would make their safety program more effective. The objective was to move attention away from backend, retrospective metrics—what had already happened with safety—to what was actively taking place on the field in terms of safety conversations and observations that would spur key preventative actions.

SmartTagIt stood out right away. The company had never evaluated a tool that could deliver natural language processing in service of quantifying conversation quality, and by extension, safety culture. ML Crane worked with the FactorLab team to capture behavior-based metrics from pre-task planning transcripts while also tailoring facility and inspector checklists to their needs. Smith looks forward to taking advantage of the flexibility available across checklists, digital forms, indicators, analytics and more in the future. "I could envision

SmartTagIt fulfilling everything I needed to do to have an effective program," Smith explained.

Putting numbers to culture.
The real-time analytical features that won ML Crane over quickly proved their immense value on the field. With the app, teams had a quick way to capture pre-task planning conversations and review effective examples, creating a library of quick, peer-to-peer references that facilitated on-the-go training and encouraged continuous improvement.

Suddenly, the company had actual data around culture—and a tool that placed ownership in the hands of those carrying out important safety practices. By scrolling the safety feed, field leaders could review other pre-task plan videos, see how they scored and even get tips on how to improve. As more leaders became comfortable with the tool, the company watched pre-task plans evolve past a checklist mentality and into a highly refined set of conversations that get

everyone focused and on the same page. The best part? As teams improved using the app, they also gained efficiencies in carrying out key safety processes. Highly effective planning conversations, for example, could happen in less than five minutes.

SmartTagIt wasn't just helping the company prevent incidents. It was also giving them tangible perspective on how safety processes were playing out in practice and how individual team members could improve their approach. Leaders also enjoyed a more granular level of oversight, since they could easily look at SmartTagIt data and understand who was pencil whipping, who was making an effort to actively engage their teams and what was being missed entirely.

Going for the winback. SmartTagIt has proved to be more than an internal asset for the company. It's also a sales tool. For example, one member of the sales team used the platform, its processes and the

corresponding data as a unique differentiator during the sales process. Thanks to SmartTagIt, the salesperson could clearly outline how ML Crane had evolved its approach to safety. They could also document not only improved outcomes but the increased engagement and high-quality conversations and planning that led to those outcomes.

Similarly, when engaging with a general contractor on a project, the project's leaders were able to use SmartTagIt to impress the contractor's customer and provide reassurance that the company had a solid, auditable safety process in place that would flag, document and prevent incidents.

Taking it to executive suite
SmartTagIt is a highly practical tool for field use—and an asset to the company's bottom line. Since the platform automatically organized and analyzed all

safety-related data, leaders could easily quantify and demonstrate all the improvements teams had made in the field according to high-impact safety indicators. This information helped the organization negotiate insurance premiums and in turn made other departments more aware of the intrinsic value of an engaged safety culture to the organization as a whole.

"Our operations review teams are seeing the connection between taking three minutes on the front end and getting work done incident-free," observed Smith.

At the start of the engagement, ML Crane had never seen anything like SmartTagIt. As it turned out, the platform's benefits stretched wider than he could have imagined.

ML Crane Group needed a tool to help reduce risk, but what they got instead was a cultural refresh that changed the way employees collaborate, communicate, and understand their progress as related to safety. Thanks to SmartTagIt, safety plays a whole new role—and enjoys a whole new status—at every level of business across ML Crane.

HOW WILL YOU IMPROVE?
Ready to get a fresh perspective on how safety processes are really playing out at your organization? Let's connect on how we can help you better understand your safety culture, empower field leaders with practical coaching tools and track continuous improvement according to the right indicators.