

MONTAGE

CASE STUDY – Getting Health & Safety right for your business



Operations across floating structures to the processing site 365 days of the year led to high risk working conditions and required a health & safety reporting system to match the company's rigorous processes.

NZ King Salmon is a Nelson based company – the country's largest supplier of the highly-sought after fish producing 6500 tonnes of King Salmon annually through a broad range of operations requiring different health and safety considerations.

It has recently implemented the Montage Online workflow and business process solution - a web-based application framework designed to automate a business's processes. Its unique design allows the system to be quickly configured for an organisation's specific business processes – in this case the needs of NZ King Salmon for its Health and Safety requirements. The new system has improved visibility of health and safety events, increased governance while increasing support and buy-in from the end users.

Scenario

NZ King Salmon has three freshwater hatcheries where fish are bred and kept until they are about a year old. Then they go into one of five sea farms in the Marlborough Sounds and harvesting starts a year later. Once harvested, they are returned to Nelson for processing. Under the company's various brands including Regal, Southern Ocean and Ora King, and in fresh, smoked or frozen forms, about 60 per cent are sold within New Zealand; the rest go around the world.

The company has just over 400 employees, mostly full-time and working shifts. Many work in processing where soreness and repetitive strain injuries are notable hazards. It operates about six vessels to service its farms. Hazards aboard floating structures can be acute.

Not surprisingly, the company has found most serious incidents on a per capita basis are in aquaculture. But there are also office workers whose job entails being on the road. Over its operations, tasks range from traditional office duties to operating heavy machinery. In some areas, an injury can mean several months off work. Like any business, NZ King Salmon wanted to avoid serious harms to its people.



Gerry McCormick found himself health and safety manager of New Zealand King Salmon, after the company undertook a global search. It needed to find an international leader to take it to another level in a critical area of its operations.

He arrived in Nelson late in 2013 from the United Kingdom where he had worked in the same role on a salmon farm there. He found the company had been and continued to be very focused on health and safety.

But its health and safety reporting system was inadequate. For a start, it wasn't very visible. Staff reported an incident and that was it. They wouldn't see where it went or what happened. There wasn't enough reporting, or measuring of processes. Further, it wasn't being fully utilised.

Incidents could be anything from a near-miss - the potential to cause injury, such as someone tripping over but not hurting themselves - to some serious fractures. Gerry knew the potential for accidents was quite wide. The company also knew the high-risk areas, mainly aquaculture, an outside job, working 365 days of the year regardless of weather or the motion of the sea.

Over several months in 2014, the reporting system was reviewed. It was a clip-on to the company's payroll system. The payroll system worked well but the information available through the health and safety reporting system was limited. Incidents were being reported but the company wasn't getting the outcomes to prevent such incidents happening again. Each year, the system wasn't noting increases or decreases; it was stagnant.

Several out-of-the-box solutions were considered but they were not a favoured option. Out-of-the-box would mean the company would get what it got, which would be more of the same without the opportunity to configure it.

Further, Gerry knew that for the new system to work, there had to be staff buy-in. To achieve that, staff had to feel part of the new system and that meant asking them what they wanted and paying heed.

Gerry and ICT manager Simon Gutschlag did know what they wanted from a reporting viewpoint but they also wanted to make sure those objectives were delivered, which would mean being reassured about support. They needed a business that would design, configure and deploy a system for their company that they could influence and have input into, now and in the future, rather than something straight off the shelf.

The company had previously dealt with Christchurch-based Montage both locally and using staff based in

Christchurch. It knew its work and support levels. Montage was familiar with King Salmon's payroll system which would provide information for a new health and safety system. In the end, the case for working with Montage was compelling.

"We were looking particularly for visibility and ease of access," Gerry recalled. "They were the two big things - anybody and everybody being able to access it, no matter where they were, off a tablet or a computer, just being able to see what's happening, being able to see how many incidents have happened, trends, any areas you can identify with high risks."



Why go with Montage?

"I wanted the historical data," Gerry said. "If we have a new employee or someone who leaves, because that data goes into our existing payroll system, I wanted something that would talk to that because it updates on a daily basis. I don't have to log in and worry about who's here and who's not, who's left, who's fixed-term. It feeds off the payroll system."

"The Montage package offered us the flexibility we wanted and the flexibility for the future."

Said Simon: "We chose Montage because of the flexibility of the tool but also their people. They could grasp what we were trying to do. We didn't have all the answers on day one. We didn't want to lay out a rigid set of requirements because we knew they would change. And they will change in the future. Talking to Montage, they clearly understood that this stuff changes. The Montage package offered us the flexibility we wanted and the flexibility for the future."

The Solution

NZ King Salmon implemented the Montage Online workflow and business process solution - a web-based application framework designed to automate a business's processes. Its unique design allows the system to be quickly configured for an organisation's specific business processes - in this case the needs of NZ King Salmon for its Health and Safety requirements.

Montage staff used their company's standard approach of starting with a clean sheet and listening to the client, then establishing an understanding of the current state and the desired future state before progressing a phased rollout of an agreed, prioritised road map.

The Results

Introducing the Montage solution was easy, even though King Salmon has many different departments. Implementation started in June 2014 one department at a time, usually lasting a week, before moving on to the next.

The first four to five weeks ironed out bugs, niggles or concerns. Queries were answered. King Salmon staff engaged with it, and they liked it.

Logging a near-miss or accident became a simple, one-page report. Every incident entered typically is first investigated by a supervisor of the area and once finished, they send it to their manager for final review. If the manager isn't happy, he or she can send it back for follow-up actions.

Gerry can see incidents at all times and immediately as it's entered. Under the previous system, he could see it only when the manager had signed it off which could take months.

Investigations require much information, of course. The old process went to a manager. Now it is split to team leaders, supervisors and managers. Every investigation has to be seconded and revised by managers as well so it gives even greater visibility.

Only those investigating an incident can edit a report. Nobody can change what an investigator, typically the immediate supervisor, puts in the report.



But the solution means the company can identify trends at the end of each week. On a daily basis, Gerry can identify potentially serious incidents and instigate action.

Accountability has grown because it's more visible. There's no ability to hide anything. That too was what staff wanted and asked for.

"To work, it has to be engaging," he said. "There's no point in changing something or investing in a new system if you haven't got the buy-in. It's a system for everybody and we asked everybody. When we were rolling it out, we asked people to tell us of any issues or problems they were having. The only real problem we had was people remembering their passwords and I know Montage has dealt with that."

Above all, the system is easier - easier to access, easier to generate reports, easier to see information and identify issues.

Said Gerry: "That's what I want, that's what you need for health and safety. You don't want it six months down the line, you want it there and then." He was also aided considerably through the company's top management who recognise the importance and need and are fully engaged. "They're the drivers. I can't do it if they don't support me." Engagement levels have risen, Gerry believes, as has the understanding of the importance of health and safety.

For Simon of ICT, implementation can be summed up in one word: "Easy."

"Software is a service these days meaning it's all done online. From an IT perspective, we don't need to get involved. It's just done. There's a testing environment and, when it's ready to go live, it goes into a live environment and all the user sees is a different address in his browser. It was really seamless and real easy."



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Future

Simon Gutschlag is already recommending the Montage system to others because of his dealings with the company. "Great. No stress. Really easy," he said. "Montage was fantastic in terms of adjusting as we went by. It was a shared risk, shared reward kind of project."

"The way we worked on this project with Montage was indicative of a very good, modern approach to system building. We didn't have all the answers as to how that need would translate into functional requirements. But Montage was certainly a flexible enough partner to say 'Ok, we'll come on the journey with you.' And it's worked out really well."

"We're already working with Montage on another functional area using their system. They're developing some compliance requirement workflows for us." They cover, for example, complex issues such as European border controls, supermarket requirements and Ministry of Primary Industry audits.

"Again, that's another example of Montage understanding we need to be flexible, and their pricing and commercial models are really good. It's been a really good project and I think we'll end up doing more and more with it in future."

