



## SAFETYCHAIN SUCCESS STORY: HOW CANADA'S LARGEST PORK PRODUCER ELIMINATED PAPER & UNLOCKED POWERFUL FSQA DATA







Many food manufacturers and processors feel the burden that paper-based systems place on their company but transitioning to an automated system understandably seems overwhelming. It may never feel like the “right” time to pursue this type of project. Yet, in many cases, a technology project will actually be far simpler and more productive than continuing to drain your company’s resources with paper systems.

For HyLife™, a leading pork producer in Canada, the time came when the company could no longer justify paper-based systems. They were pursuing an expansion and realized that using even more of their precious space with growing volumes of paper would simply be impractical. Thus, they sought to address this challenge with a solution that would allow them to take their company data off the clipboard and into the Cloud.

In the coming pages, we’ll examine how HyLife™ implemented the FSQA solution, SafetyChain, to solve their paper-related challenges. With direct insights from Tracy Ouellet, Applications Manager for HyLife, you’ll learn:

- ▶ The major issues HyLife wanted to solve with technology
- ▶ Internal considerations which had to be addressed before implementation
- ▶ The key drivers behind the project’s success
- ▶ Benefits HyLife has experienced after partnering with SafetyChain
- ▶ Valuable learnings for anyone considering a technology project

Before we dive in, let’s first learn a little bit about HyLife™ with a brief background.





## About HyLife™

HyLife™ is an international farm-to-fork pork producer with plants in Canada and Mexico. As one of Canada's largest pork producers, the company processes over two million hogs per year. HyLife™ products are known for their world-class quality and superior shelf life.

The majority of their products are exported, currently to 20 countries, including Japan and China. The company is always growing, and they continue to expand to more countries all the time.



As a manager in the company's Solutions team, Tracy's team of application analysts along with developers support, implement, and develop software. The department sits between business and IT functions and works collaboratively with these teams to bring the best solutions to the business.



## What Challenges Did HyLife™ Want to Solve With FSQA Technology?

HyLife's project started with a desire to eliminate paper. The company had an expansion project underway, and its plans called for more filing space. Yet, Tracy and her colleagues knew that in a processing plant, maximizing the value of the space is critical. Filling up new real estate with binders and filing cabinets was clearly an inefficient use of space.

Moreover, the workflows surrounding paper were tedious and time-consuming. Paper was being touched multiple times; for example, they had two dedicated "paper pushers" whose primary responsibilities included collecting, validating, keying-in, and filing paperwork. Then, before audits, that paperwork would have to be retrieved, and if anything went missing, it would need to be tracked down.

Taking up significant plant space and dedicating two roles to managing paperwork alone were inefficient uses of resources. As such, these two factors became the driving force behind HyLife's search for FSQA technology. Yet, while they set out initially to solve their paper problem, they ultimately found that technology was able to address far more inefficiencies than they had originally thought it would.

In fact, HyLife's main objective was to simply digitize the data collection process. To do so, however, they had to first address some internal considerations.







## What Internal Considerations and Challenges Did HyLife™ Have to Address?

### Build vs. Buy Analysis

Prior to pursuing any new technology project, HyLife's Solutions team conducts a build vs. buy analysis to determine the best fit for their company. If the problem is specific to HyLife, they often choose the build route, as they have talented software developers, they can leverage to create customized solutions. Still, a great deal of thought goes into this decision.

To begin, the Solution team conducts thorough research to ensure they understand the business requirements. This involves shadowing members of various departments, including the employees who will be directly impacted by the solution.

To further determine whether building or buying a solution is the right choice, they perform extensive mapping of deliverables, milestones, and constraints. They also map out timelines for rollout phases. Then, they explore which practices and solutions are available to meet their unique needs, and what value each of these solutions can offer. If a custom build won't add extensive value and there's a viable product available, they will purchase a solution, as was the case with SafetyChain.

### Change Management

Due to the expansion project taking place, numerous employees would be impacted by both the physical expansion and the implementation of new software. In particular, the Cut floor was being redesigned. To prevent too much change from taking place at once, the company staggered these developments. The software was implemented prior to the transition to the new Cut floor, so the teams using it would be comfortable with it before entering a new work environment.



## Limited Resources

Tracy spearheaded this technology project independently due to the number and scale of the current project list. There were many tasks she had to spearhead, including the build vs. buy analysis, requirements gathering, and evaluation of food safety programs to understand every form and document, which would help her during standardization.

She worked closely with her HACCP and QA teams, providing and collecting feedback as she shadowed them. While her resources were limited, Tracy says that asking “why” enough times prompts people to stop and think about why things are done certain ways. This, in turn, allowed the project to be about more than just going paperless and to include improving efficiency and streamlining processes.

In addition to navigating the internal considerations they faced, HyLife also credits a number of other factors to the project's success.



## What Were the Biggest Drivers of Success for the Project?

Many of the factors that contributed to the project's success were tackled before the implementation even began. Here are just a few of the most noteworthy drivers which ultimately supported an effective rollout.

- ▶ Enlisting champions: Tracy notes that it was important for her to get to know stakeholders and end-users well. She advises collaborating with anyone who has an influence in their department, as these individuals can champion your project in the background. To get their support, Tracy clearly communicated the many ways the technology could provide value to the business and improve their daily routines.
- ▶ Challenge existing processes: Instead of simply taking one's existing paper processes and directly translating them into electronic forms, Tracy advises taking the time to look for opportunities to improve. HyLife didn't just duplicate their paper processes; instead, they asked questions like, "Why do we have multiple forms when there could just be one?" Of course, it's not always possible to condense everywhere, but in many cases, data can be captured once, and a single form used in multiple places.
- ▶ Standardize: By taking the time to standardize SOPs, data, and terminology up front, HyLife saved considerable time during implementation while also making everything scalable for possible future replication.
- ▶ Make Data Visible to Operators: HyLife leveraged SafetyChain to make automatic updates visible across the floor via VMS screens. This enables them to catch errors early. Now, if a noncompliance occurs, employees can spot the issue immediately and provide a corrective action on the line without having to shut it down. Moreover, the issue can be caught early enough so that the product isn't being touched multiple times, which minimizes the risk of cross-contamination. Even if the line does need to be shut down, changes can be made swiftly, before any further damage occurs.
- ▶ Shadow Operators on the Floor: Tracy worked closely with teams on the floor to:
  - ▶ understand their actual needs,
  - ▶ earn respect, and
  - ▶ mitigate pushback based on the reasoning that "it's always been done this way."

As you can already see, the project started to deliver more value than simply eliminating paperwork, even from an early stage.



## What Value Has Been Created for HyLife™ by Implementing SafetyChain?

The value that the SafetyChain implementation has created for HyLife spans far and wide. While the company will only continue to discover new benefits the longer they use the system, here are just some of the advantages they've already noticed:

### Elimination of Paper Pushers

HyLife had some talented personnel performing low-value work. By eliminating the majority of their paperwork, the company has been able to reassign their "paper pushers" to higher value-added activities. Plus, they can now sign off on 200 documents per day with just a single person. Since the system requires fields to be completed, there's no need to babysit, either. Data is instantly collected, which also eliminates the need for rekeying.

### Faster Response Time to Food Safety Issues

While it might take up to two or three days to identify FSQA problems before, that lag time has been eliminated thanks to real-time visibility. This significantly reduces rework, as problems are caught in minutes or hours versus days later. As all food companies know, the ability to spot and address issues quickly can be the difference between large losses and gains.



► Easy Data Collection Provide Extended Benefits

With SafetyChain, all of HyLife's data is now searchable and easy to analyze through their data warehouse. They have their own graphs and trends with drill-down capabilities, which allows them to filter data and analyze from different pivot points. For instance, they might use these features to explore whether an inspection at a certain time in the afternoon correlates with quality issues in the product or packaging. Ultimately, the system works as a problem-solving and troubleshooting tool, and allows HyLife to better understand their trending data and perform root cause analysis for continuous improvement.

► Electronic Forms Gather More Information

Because HyLife is no longer limited to the logistics of filling out paper, they can ask more questions, add validations and calculations based on inputs, and receive alerts if forms aren't completed when scheduled. Questions can also be added or removed to forms much faster.

► Ability to Become "Swiftly Actionable" with Immediate Feedback

SafetyChain can trigger notifications so that team members can pull product directly off the line as needed. This reduces the number of items affected and minimizes re-works, thereby leading to significant cost savings.

► Immediacy of Data Interpretation: Trend Analysis

With SafetyChain, HyLife can quickly and easily record data and look at reports in little or no time. This allows them to zero in on trends and recurring issues to spot the common denominator of problems.

► Tools Actually Get Used

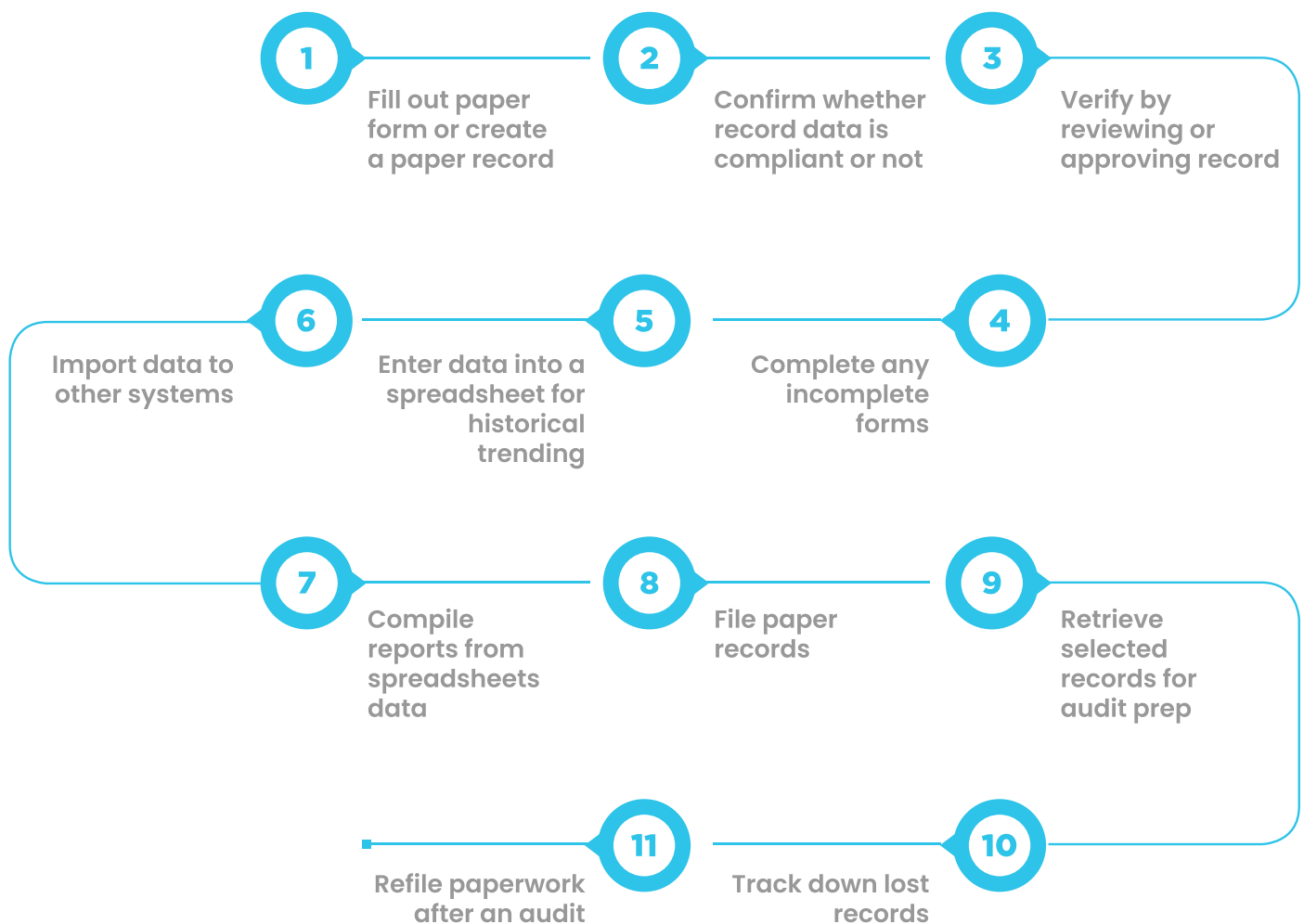
Because of the system's ease of use, operators can collect data with very little effort. Forms are easy to modify and use as a troubleshooting tool.

► Electronic Forms Help Prevent Problems

Electronic forms aid in problem prevention in many ways. One example is label verification. At HyLife, each product produced has a specific label based on the customer. Boxes that are labeled incorrectly could cause an entire container to be denied by the receiving country or customer. Creating a form for label verification with SafetyChain has allowed the company to successfully complete 10,000 inspection forms a month.

## ROI Analysis: Quantifying the Savings with SafetyChain

Of course, one of the most notable ways SafetyChain has helped HyLife save is by significantly reducing paperwork and the costs associated with it. Tracy mapped out the lifecycle of the company's manual paper processes, which included the following steps:





HyLife processes an estimated 16,000 records each month. If there were a \$1-per-record savings with automated versus paper processes (an estimate which is most likely on the conservative side), then the cost savings on manual processing alone provides a return on investment of well over 100%. On average, we know that manual paper processes take far longer than automated, so savings are likely far more than \$1 per record.

Moreover, these savings don't even account for the other major ways' automation has helped the company reduce costs, including:

- ▶ Higher yield and less re-work
- ▶ More on-time starts
- ▶ Improved on-time shipments
- ▶ Eliminated expedited shipping costs

Clearly, the savings extend far beyond the elimination of paper alone.

Based on the success of this project, Tracy has some final advice and learnings to share with anyone considering a technology implementation in their food company.



## What Key Learnings Has HyLife™ Taken Away from the Project?

After a successful rollout, everyone from QA to HACCP teams has embraced the new system. No one would go back to clipboards and eliminating paperwork has reduced a significant amount of stress for employees stemming from issues such as lost forms. Management also appreciates the quick access to data and timely notifications provided by the system, along with the reduction in human error. Likewise, senior executives appreciate the valuable, relevant information it provides.

Although every company is different and has its own unique needs, Tracy has gathered some general key learnings from the project which will likely apply for the majority of food processors and manufacturers interested in pursuing a technology investment.

### 1. Don't allow end-users to demo software

It's easy to fall under the spell of flashy features. To prevent too many different ideas and opinions from circulating, you may want to limit the number of parties involved in the demo and appoint a small team or even a single person to act as the liaison with your software vendor. Of course, you should still keep end-users' needs in mind, as the product will only be leveraged to its fullest if it's easy to use.

### 2. Challenge your current processes

To truly maximize the value of your project, think beyond simply transitioning off the paper form. As you go through and standardize your processes, continue to ask "why" along the way. If people are asking for solutions, find out what it is they don't like about existing processes and how they could be improved.

### 3. Work collaboratively with IT

A strong partnership with IT is essential to any technology implementation, so be sure to get them involved early and provide them with the information they need to fulfill their role in the project successfully.

### 4. Recognize that paper is no longer practical

Some employees may naturally be hesitant to put the clipboard down at first. Yet, with ongoing communication and a solution that puts their needs first, you can encourage traditionalists to accept and even embrace technology.



## Summary

Clearly, HyLife's technology implementation required time and effort to reach the levels of success it did. From the buy vs. build analysis to standardization, there were many steps involved, each of which required careful consideration. Nonetheless, they stand as proof that eliminating paperwork can pay off in more ways than one.

If you're seeking similar improvements in your organization, here are a few key takeaways to remember:

- ▶ HyLife recognized that they were dedicating too many resources – including time, talent, space, and money – to their paper-based processes. As the company grew, they didn't want their paperwork volume to grow with it. Thus, they thought about how their plans for growth and expansion could also incorporate streamlined processes and increased efficiencies.
- ▶ There were a few important internal factors for HyLife to address, including an in-depth build vs. buy analysis, change management, and limited resources. Each company will have its own specific internal considerations and recognizing them from the start is essential to project success.
- ▶ The project's success was due to a number of factors, but pre-work activities such as enlisting champions and standardizing, making data visible to operators, and shadowing operators on the floor were some of the most impactful ones.
- ▶ The value SafetyChain has created for HyLife goes beyond simply eliminating paperwork. Employees have been able to move into higher-value roles, the company can respond to food issues quicker, and easy data collection provides many additional extended benefits.
- ▶ By eliminating paperwork alone, HyLife has saved a lot of money. But then, when you layer on savings from higher yields, reduced re-work, improved shipments, more on-time starts, and the elimination of expedited shipping costs, savings soar.
- ▶ To promote a successful project from the very start, be sure to challenge your current processes and team up with IT.

Lastly, it's become very clear in companies like HyLife that paperwork is just no longer practical. If your organization is among the many still using paper-based processes, there's a huge area of opportunity awaiting. By sitting down and brainstorming about the many ways that paperwork is no longer serving your company, you can take the first important step towards pursuing a technology investment that could help to improve profits and productivity across your operations.



## About SafetyChain

SafetyChain is a digital plant management platform for process manufacturers trusted by more than 2,000 facilities to improve plant-wide performance. It unifies production and quality teams with data and insights, tools, and delivers real-time operational visibility and control by eliminating paper and point solutions.

**[Explore the Plant Management Platform](#)** and see how digitized plant management can meet your needs.