

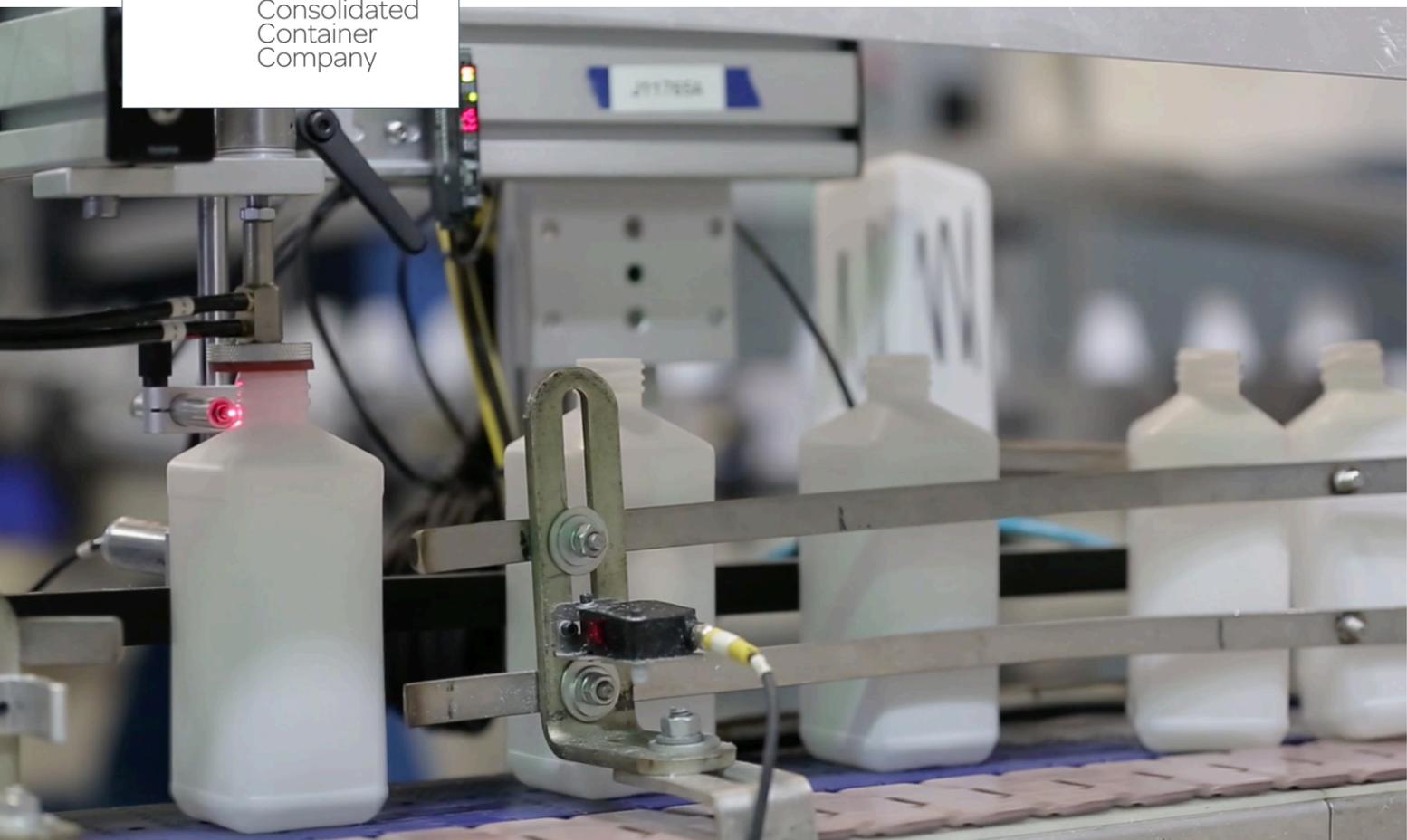
DEFINING A CULTURE OF SAFETY COMMITMENT:

How Consolidated Container Company Exceeded Industry Standards in a Period of Rapid Growth

Interview by Bob Wiltfong



Consolidated
Container
Company



Client Story: Consolidated Container Company

 **DEKRA** Insight

SITUATION

It all started one Sunday about three years ago. Jeff Brubaker was new to his role as SVP of the Operations Services Group at Consolidated Container Company (CCC). He wanted to bring his new company to a higher level of safety but wasn't sure exactly how to do it. Then, sitting in his Atlanta home that Sunday, it hit him. Brubaker remembered a presentation he saw in the early 2000s in Dallas.

"I frantically found the book that I kept from that presentation and looked up the name of the speaker: Don Groover of BST. I knew he could help us become a world-class safety company. I re-found Don [now of DEKRA] and we began this journey."

When Groover and his fellow DEKRA consultants showed up, CCC was doing about 20% better in safety than the industry average as measured by statistics from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. As a leading manufacturer of plastic containers in the U.S., Consolidated had a lot to be proud of among its 59 sites and 2400 employees. But Brubaker wanted more. "I was very interested in going from being just better than average," he says, "to being world class. Culture was the key to making this change."

Consolidated is a company built off acquisitions. It has acquired more than 20 companies in the 15 years of its existence. Brubaker says CCC's way of integrating those acquisitions was "pretty much to leave them alone as long as they were profitable and doing the right thing. So we never really had one common culture. But," Brubaker continues, "a continued top-down push on safety programs wasn't going to get us where we wanted to be."

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AT A GLANCE

The Consolidated Container Company (CCC) is an Atlanta, Georgia based company that **manufactures rigid plastic containers**

CCC employs around **2400 people** at **59 total sites** in the U.S. and Canada

It is a **leading U.S. supplier of rigid packaging solutions** to several end markets including the Food, Beverage, Household Chemical, and Auto Chemical industries

Founded in the early 2000s, Consolidated was purchased in May 2017 by Loews Corporation

SOLUTION

DEKRA used its OCDI (Organizational Culture Diagnostic Instrument) assessment tool at all 59 of Consolidated's plants. Over 1750 of its employees participated in the survey, which gave CCC an excellent diagnostic across the 9 dimensions of safety culture in each building. Each plant manager was able to look at the OCDI and see where its site was weak or strong in safety.

"For example," Brubaker says, "the OCDI showed us several sites where we were not doing a really good job of onboarding or providing continuing education for people, especially in the skilled areas. We saw high injuries in people in their first six months to a year on the job and then, on the other end of our spectrum, people with 10 years or greater years of service at the company, were having injuries. These were experienced workers who had become complacent. In the middle ground, we were actually pretty good. So that was a learning we had out of the OCDI."

DEKRA followed up the OCDI work with site visits to about a dozen of Consolidated's plant locations. Consultants interviewed over 200 employees at those sites to: 1.) Validate the OCDI results, and 2.) Gain better insight as to what the real issues were. "As you would expect," Brubaker says, "we had some plants where maybe safety notices were put on the break room bulletin board but the manager on site didn't

really support them on a daily, hourly basis. You don't always know those things unless you visit a site in person." Based on this work, DEKRA helped all 59 plant managers form action plans to improve their individual safety cultures and activated those plans in December of 2015.

Then, across the top of the organization, DEKRA identified six work streams that needed addressing at all of the company's sites. Consolidated formed work groups to address those work streams and assigned a senior leader to sponsor each work group. Brubaker says those work streams included Significant Injury or Fatality (SIF) potential, developing leadership talent and addressing fatigue.

"We have a pretty lean workforce and we run a lot of overtime," Brubaker says. "But I was surprised at how many of our people were actually working more than 5 days in a row, more than 60 hours in a week. And there's some pretty good research that DEKRA shared with us that says [that kind of work schedule] increases risk factors. So we put out a tracking tool and we now get a weekly dashboard of which employees and which plants are exceeding our goals in terms of working too many days in a row or too many hours in a day. DEKRA has taught us some new things - tools and techniques - and how you can check in with those people and reduce the risk."

RESULTS

Since DEKRA's work started at Consolidated, the company has seen a 55%+ improvement in injury rate and 75%+ improvement in lost and restricted days. CCC safety leaders have conducted over 1000 observations. One plant site has gone beyond the two-per-week standard and has said it will do safety contacts every day even if no one documents them.

"Do we have enough data to say that this is probably a change in trajectory?" he asks. "I think we all believe that it is but we're nowhere near done. That's for sure. We plan on continuing the relationship. There are more sets of training that we want to give to our safety leaders as well as executive leadership. We want to make sure that we consistently send a strong message

from up top about safety excellence and continue to drive our safety culture change with all 2400 of our employees because our senior leadership team is 100% committed to giving that value to our employees."

"DEKRA is super easy to work with," Brubaker concludes. "I think they're experts in their field around psychology and culture and how it affects safety. It's much more than just check the box, go do a few things to get a quick result that will fade and not be sustainable. It's really about making sustainable difference and bringing superior results by getting at the root of what's causing the safety issues."

Not a bad outcome from sitting at home on a Sunday thinking about how to make your company safer, huh?

