

How E. & J. Gallo Changed Its Safety Culture by Proactively Rooting Out SIF Exposures

Founded by brothers Ernest and Julio Gallo in 1933 in Modesto, California, E. & J. Gallo Winery is the world's largest family-owned winery with more than 6,500 global employees and is the acclaimed producer of award-winning wines and spirits featured in more than 110 countries around the globe. Gallo operates 16 facilities across California and Washington that handle the full range of production from manufacturing the bottles, the labels, and of course, the wine.

Safety is of utmost importance at Gallo. The most significant exposures are connected to large tanks. For workers entering these confined spaces, there are risks of exposure to gases left from the fermenting process, which can cause oxygen deprivation.

Twenty years ago, injury incidents "were random and sporadic; some years had few injuries while others could have substantial numbers," said Gallo Senior Safety Specialist Ken Karn. To reduce year-to-year injury rates, one facility manager turned to BST, now DEKRA OSR. Twelve months later, those rates were reduced by half. Those results convinced Gallo to move forward with Behavioral Accident Prevention Process® (BAPP) and implement the same practices across their facilities.

E. & J. Gallo Winery

Modesto, California
Wine and Spirits

Up to 10,000 Employees

When DEKRA started working with Gallo their SIF exposure potential was greater than the industry average of 21%; In 2018, that dropped to 7%, a >75% difference.

Gallo has standardized its incident investigation training to replace the one-size-fits-all method.

More than 350 company leaders have been trained in Safety Conversations.

In 2014, Gallo reached out to DEKRA again in an effort to reduce exposure to serious injury and fatalities. The partnership led to impressive results: DEKRA consultants collaborating with Gallo leadership and safety specialists were able to help reduce Gallo's SIF (Serious Injury and Fatality) exposure potential from >21% (the average) to 7 percent in 2018.

"Before DEKRA got involved, we were doing what most other organizations were doing: If someone got hurt, you quickly reacted to the injury itself," said Karn. "Today, we've changed the culture so that if there is an injury, we first ask, does this incident have the exposure potential to be a SIF? We now address the exposure potential versus the incident outcome (injury). While having a lower number of SIF exposures is important, the key is in learning from each SIF exposure what needs to change to eliminate that exposure."

Investigation Forensics Now Focus on SIF Potential

In 1997 Gallo began implementing DEKRA OSR's BAPP technology company-wide to change the behavior of its frontline workers. The dramatic reduction in incidents during that first year came from changing employee perceptions of how to properly respond to risk exposure. BAPP also helped leadership recognize and value their role in reducing exposure. According to Karn, it was fundamental in changing the company's safety culture:

"In our early days there was the perception that the employees owned BAPP. Several years ago, we changed our approach to help employees and leaders see that BAPP is something that everyone participates in even though they may approach it differently," he said.

More recently, Gallo decided to expand its safety culture by partnering with DEKRA OSR on engaging leadership directly in SIF reduction. At the time, the reasons were obvious:

- The company had no common definition of SIFs.
- There was no strategic approach to mitigate SIFs.
- There was no measurement system for SIFs.

Starting in January 2015 all leadership across our facilities were required to undergo training that focused on, not just mitigating exposure, but identifying exposure

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Derrick Jarvis,
E. & J. Gallo Director of Corporate Safety and Health

risks before incidents occurred. Now, instead of just examining behavior that led to incidents, leadership became comfortable opening up safety conversations that recognized which individual or team activities had SIF exposure potential. At Gallo, it was discovered that there were nine of them:

- Hazardous Energy Control
- Confined Space Entry
- Pinch Points
- Line of Fire
- Working at Heights
- Hazardous Chemicals
- Electricity
- Fire or Explosion
- Heat Illness/Thermal Injury

Through safety conversations between leaders and front-line workers, DEKRA consultants worked with leadership to establish a safety conversation protocol that begins with a brief observation (10-15 second) of how tasks are being completed and feedback on that observed performance and whether it is done safely. If a potential SIF exposure is observed, a forensics of the behavior is conducted to find ways to make it safer. The objective of each conversation is to ensure SIF exposure activities are done safely each time.

Karn said the process helped reconfigure how workers handle hazardous chemicals and heat illness, two

things Gallo hadn't focused on as having that true life threatening or fatal potential.

"Everyone knows chemicals can harm you, but often people responded to the harm somewhat casually saying 'I'll wash it off and it'll go away, no problem'. But that's not always the case," he said. "That way of thinking caused a blind spot. The training helped us recognize how our habitual ways of doing things caused SIF exposure potential."

Derrick Jarvis, Director of Corporate Safety and Health, agrees.

The process, he said, forced Gallo to learn that more resources were needed on identifying exposures that resulted in SIFs. "It helped narrow down where we should be spending our efforts — on good quality incident investigations and root quality analysis, so that the lessons learned on one site can be shared at other sites so we can affect systems throughout the company."

SIF Exposure Falls Dramatically Within Two Years

Two years later, Gallo's transformed its safety culture tremendously. Now, incident investigation training is standardized, which has replaced the one-size-fits-all investigation methods it used previously. More than 350 leaders throughout all the company's locations were

trained in DEKRA's Safety Conversations and more than 50 percent of those are now regularly using the new skills.

Finally, since DEKRA started, Gallo's SIF exposure which was previously over the industry average of 21% had dropped to 7 percent by 2018.

Even at 7 percent, Karn said Gallo won't rest until that number is zero. "What we are changing is the hierarchy of controls to eliminate exposures," he said. "That means communicating clearly to all members of the organization that we can no longer be desensitized by risk and we must help them recognize the SIF potential."

Gallo is sustaining these practices because it created the role of a safety manager in all its units and established a monthly meeting. Each meeting reports monthly incidents, evaluates them, and confirms they were recorded. The process allows them to establish which incidents have SIF potential and what changes are needed to make sure they no longer exist.

What leadership didn't expect was how engaging its workforce to identify and mitigate SIFs ultimately boosted morale and increased trust.

"SIFs are now absorbed in our company language," said Jarvis. "Hazard recognition is now one of the most requested trainings that we have. If we can get folks to recognize the at-risk behaviors, we can get them to recognize other exposures. It is a gateway to getting us to become a workplace with zero harm, period."

RESULTS

21% → 7%

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