

Case Study

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



“Safety is of utmost importance at Gallo.”

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.

When Gallo decided to partner with DEKRA, their injury incidents were sporadic, to reduce year-to-year injury rates, one facility manager turned to BST, now DEKRA. Twelve months later, those rates were reduced by half. Those results convinced Gallo to move forward with DEKRA's behavior based safety (known as BAPP) program and implement the same practices across their facilities.

In addition to the rollout of behavior based safety, Gallo also partnered with DEKRA in an effort reduce exposure to

 **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.

serious injury & fatalities. The partnership led to impressive results over the course of 3 years with a reduction of over SIF exposure potential going from over 21% to 7%.

“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 Ken Karn (2018). “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

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 their Senior Safety Specialist, 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 everyone participates in even though they approach it differently," Karn said.

More recently, Gallo decided to expand its safety culture by partnering with DEKRA 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.

Over the course of one year, all leadership across our facilities were required to undergo training that focused on, not just mitigating exposure, but identifying exposure 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 frontline 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.

“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.”

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E. & J. Gallo Director of Corporate Safety and Health

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▶ SIF Exposure Falls Dramatically Within Two Years

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.

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 That Speak Volumes

21% → 7%

Gallo’s SIF exposure which was previously over the industry average of 21% dropped to 7%.

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