



How CRH Uses Cognibox to Reduce Risk and
Improve Communication with Suppliers

THE STORY OF CRH CANADA GROUP INC.

OVERVIEW

The organization has used a dedicated compliance management system for its suppliers since 2008, but recently felt their existing product had limitations that prevented them from reaching the standards they required.

Shannon Truax-Wardell, Occupational Health and Safety Director at CRH Canada Group Inc., took on the initiative of finding a new supplier management solution that would better suit their needs.

“The company we had been with was acquired and went through a revamp. We struggled with the philosophical changes that we’re happening,” she said.

“The way the new organization was going was more of a hands off approach, and more expensive. I began exploring new options since the program no longer fit our needs.”

THE CHALLENGES

Having The Right Tools In Place

Many organizations believe it’s easier and more cost effective to handle compliance management in-house. But the scope and complexity of supplier prequalification makes manual internal tracking cumbersome. It was a lesson CRH Canada Group Inc. learned early on:

“When we first started the journey, we had been a company that would only handle the basics. It fell onto the operations teams to manage the day to day – and things were not being tracked effectively. Most employees manually entered data through spreadsheets.”


Combine non-automated data entry with an industry that has a vast amount of qualification criteria and you have a recipe for time consuming and potentially inaccurate compliance management.

“We realized the scope of outsourced work had expanded beyond being able to use an internal compliance management system,” Truax-Wardell explained.

Transitioning To A New System

Of course, revamping processes that have been in place for more than a decade will often lead to resistance both internally and with suppliers familiar with an existing system.

But perhaps most importantly, the safety considerations associated with hiring suppliers in this type of industry meant CRH Canada Group Inc. and their suppliers needed to be on the same page when it came to operating in a high-risk environment:



There are many hazards associated with road construction. Mining, blasting, and excavation also have their own unique dangers. So all of our suppliers in turn also operate in this type of environment. To be able to have a function to ensure that our suppliers have the same standards that we have is key.

Shannon Truax-Wardell
Occupational Health and Safety Director at CRH Canada Group Inc.



Communicating With Suppliers

Like most organizations that hire suppliers, CRH Canada Group Inc. requires continual communication and follow up with suppliers that take on work with the company. These can be crucial updates such as revised safety protocols or other pertinent information that needs to be transmitted to either a group of suppliers or to the entire pool.


Without a system to mass communicate safety guidelines or track supplier prequalification, CRH Canada Group Inc. was forced to manually reach out to suppliers when information needed to be exchanged.

“Our previous solution lacked the tools to follow up on supplier prequalification. As an example, we require WSIB clearance certificates every two months – but if we got even one, that was considered lucky,” Truax-Wardell said.



THE SOLUTION

Throughout her research on various compliance management systems on the market, Truax-Wardell continuously heard positive feedback about Cognibox. With many of CRH Canada Group Inc.'s suppliers operating out of Quebec, the fact that Cognibox had strong roots in the province and multilingual support within the solution was a key differentiator from the competition.



Many of our Quebec based suppliers who had already used Cognibox in the past provided positive feedback about their experiences with the platform.


Shannon Truax-Wardell
Occupational Health and Safety Director at CRH Canada Group Inc.



Beyond its proven success in the province and abroad, CRH Canada Group Inc. identified three key elements that ultimately led them to select Cognibox for its supplier prequalification and administration:


A Dedicated Compliance Management Platform

Following up with supplier prequalification and getting the necessary documentation proved difficult with CRH Canada Group Inc.'s previous solution. With Cognibox, that's no longer an issue:



We now use a system that helps follow up on those processes for us. All of our suppliers, regardless of status, are entered into Cognibox. And to access our sites and receive a purchase order for services rendered, they must be qualified in Cognibox.

Shannon Truax-Wardell
Occupational Health and Safety Director at CRH Canada Group Inc.



“The one thing that really helped with the transition was the service that Cognibox was willing to provide to our suppliers. Having a system that was available in both French and English was a huge selling point to us – it helped eliminate any concerns that we would have working out of Quebec. We received a very positive response from our Quebec suppliers about transitioning to Cognibox.”

A Devoted Customer Success Team

Cognibox’s hands-on and enthusiastic customer success team was another significant asset to CRH Canada Group Inc.’s new compliance management system:

“From the get-go, the Cognibox team worked closely with us to establish our compliance needs. As part of the transition, we held town hall meetings – that was very different than our suppliers were used to. The Cognibox team provided materials explaining how the switch was beneficial to the organization and suppliers.”

Having continual support from Cognibox not only smoothed the supplier onboarding transition, it also saved time by handling responsibilities that were not being taken care of in the previous platform:

“Our customer service agents haven’t just done everything we’ve asked of them – they’ve gone above and beyond our expectations,” Truax-Wardell explained. “Whenever we’ve had inquiries, Cognibox has been there to give us an answer within twenty-four hours to help support the suppliers.”

A Powerful Supplier Communication Channel

One of CRH Canada Group Inc.’s most used Cognibox features has been the Billboard module. Billboard is a hub used to communicate important information to suppliers, either en masse or by targeting specific groups. It’s also used to verify that suppliers are seeing and reading these communications.

“We love the functionality of Billboard. The fact that we can see when they’ve read our updates is huge. For example, there was an instance where a supplier did not follow protocol, and we were able to verify that they had not read the update through Billboard and act accordingly.”

CRH Canada Group Inc. also used Billboard to upload their isolation and lockout program communications to all suppliers: “


“We have 18 ‘life-saving rules’ for safety that we’ve uploaded onto Billboard. This helps set our expectations for suppliers so we’re on the same page before starting work on a new project. That goes out to everybody. It’s a much easier solution than emailing everyone from our procurement team individually.”



PERFORMANCE AND RESULTS

Significant Time Savings

After implementing Cognibox, CRH Canada Group Inc. saw measurable increases in efficiency amongst their health and safety experts:



Having a third party provider like Cognibox has saved our safety professionals at least 15% of their day, which allows them to be active in the field focusing on their primary responsibilities.

Shannon Truax-Wardell
Occupational Health and Safety Director at CRH Canada Group Inc.



Cost-Effective Supplier Management

Beyond the saved time, CRH Canada Group Inc. also recognized the positive impact that Cognibox had on budget and expenses.

“Cognibox’s competitive rate has led to substantial cost-savings in our day-to-day operations. If we wanted to do what [they] do independently, it would cost us a lot to build the system and would require hiring dedicated specialists to handle compliance management.”

A Seamless Transition

While switching compliance management systems initially seemed daunting, Cognibox ensured that CRH Canada Group Inc. and its pool of suppliers would easily transition to the new application.

“Cognibox worked their magic to onboard all of our suppliers onto their platform, including data migration from our previous system. They then followed up with each of our suppliers to make sure they were compliant, and helped those who needed updated qualification get set up.”

Informed, Satisfied Suppliers

Truax-Wardell noted that suppliers have given her feedback that the transition to Cognibox has been very easy. She's also seen increased engagement and communication from suppliers working with CRH Canada Group Inc., and that's led to safer, more efficient workflows:

"Using Cognibox ultimately helps reduce risk not just in our workplace, but for the public as well."

ABOUT CRH CANADA GROUP INC.

CRH Canada Group Inc., a CRH company, is a leader and pioneer in the cement industry. For over 137 years, they have provided portland and masonry cements to construct the highways, bridges, commercial and industrial complexes, and single- and multi-family homes fundamental to the nation's economic vitality and quality of life.

ABOUT COGNIBOX

Since 2005, Cognibox has provided comprehensive supplier management, worker compliance and learning solutions that support organizations in their drive towards a safer and more efficient work environment. It offers expert professional services to accompany corporations through their supply chain safety and risk control processes. Guided by its core values of transparency and excellence, Cognibox's flexible, client-centric approach is paramount to the customer experience, and serves over 200,000 members. To find out more, visit www.cognibox.com.



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