



SAFETYCHAIN SUCCESS STORY:
HOW BEAVER STREET FISHERIES
TRANSFORMED ITS GLOBAL SUPPLIER MANAGEMENT
WITH TECHNOLOGY





For many food and beverage companies, managing the complexities of a robust supplier program can be challenging. Keeping track of certificates for hundreds, or even thousands, of suppliers is nearly impossible with traditional recordkeeping methods – not to mention other initiatives geared towards improved performance, such as vendor score-carding. Compound these challenges with ongoing regulatory shifts, and it's no wonder large food companies are struggling to manage their data.

Luckily, technology presents an effective solution for addressing the growing challenges the food industry faces. Recognizing the opportunity to benefit from an intelligent solution that would help them alleviate the complexity of their vendor management program, Beaver Street Fisheries turned to SafetyChain for help.

With thousands of suppliers overall and nearly 400 located outside the U.S., their company sought to manage its program more effectively through digital transformation. With a firsthand account from Scott Lane, Chief Information Officer for Beaver Street Fisheries, we'll explore how this \$600 million company streamlined its collection and management of supplier data, while also realizing additional benefits from introducing SafetyChain. Topics to be covered include:

- ▶ The business challenges Beaver Street Fisheries set out to solve with technology
- ▶ Project considerations, including internal factors that needed to be addressed
- ▶ Keys to a successful implementation
- ▶ Benefits Beaver Street Fisheries has realized since partnering with SafetyChain

To begin, we'll focus on some of the most significant hurdles Beaver Street Fisheries aimed to overcome with technology.

What Problems Did Beaver Street Fisheries Want to Solve with Technology?

Beaver Street Fisheries is a 60-year-old, privately-held company, founded during World War II. Its founder came from Europe and began selling seafood from the back of a pickup truck. Now, the company specializes in the sale of frozen seafood across North America. Its customer segments are divided into two main markets: retailers, including Walmart, Winn Dixie, and Aldi, among other nationally-recognized brands; and, foodservice distributors, such as Sysco.

With roughly 80% of their seafood being imported, managing their hundreds of vendors outside the U.S. was a significant challenge for Beaver Street Fisheries. They improve their processes while also keeping safety as an unwavering primary goal. In addition, their import activities presented two main challenges that brought additional layers of complexity:

- ▶ **Quality:** When purchasing products like grouper, Mahi, and other seafood, quality inspection remains an essential component in the company's everyday processes.
- ▶ **Compliance:** The products Beaver Street Fisheries imports are subject to the oversight of many different regulatory agencies, including the USDA, among others. The ability to track vendor activity is important not only for monitoring supplier performance but also for compliance purposes.

Beyond these general challenges, there were four main challenges Beaver Street Fisheries wanted to address with technology:

- ▶ **The ability to digitally collect supplier data:** Before blockchain technology even existed, Lane envisioned a solution that would streamline the processes of collecting documents from suppliers and delivering requested certificates to customers. The manual collection of documents, then uploading them into the proper customer portals in the required formats, proved to be tedious and time-consuming for staff. Plus, the company needed to make sure they had all of the proper documentation in the first place.
- ▶ **Vendor management and certification complexity:** Beaver Street Fisheries needed a way to differentiate among domestic and international supplier programs. With 20 different classes of vendors, they also sought a friendlier database for managing documents, emails, and other key data for their different types of suppliers. Ideally, the solution would also enable vendor self-management, thereby freeing up time for their internal teams.
- ▶ **Language challenges:** With suppliers located in more than 40 different countries, Beaver Street Fisheries had documents in several different languages. There were also many government agencies involved in the regulation of their import activities.

- ▶ **Internal culture resistant to change:** As Lane acknowledged, no one wants to go to work and undergo significant change. Yet, he believed that replacing their time-consuming, paper-based processes with the ability to collect, document, and share information through a single, unified platform would make all employees' jobs easier.

With these challenges in mind, let's explore some of the internal considerations Beaver Street Fisheries had to address when planning for a successful project.

What Key Project Considerations Did Beaver Street Fisheries Need to Address?

As with any new technology project, Lane anticipated some level of resistance to change with their decision to transform their processes. After all, some employees had grown very comfortable with their current processes. Yet, by communicating the huge potential the transformation could bring, he showed internal partners how a new system would ultimately make processes much easier. Of course, Beaver Street Fisheries also needed to find the right technology and software provider to meet their needs. They wanted a partner who excelled not only in the tech arena, but also had an understanding of and experience with challenges specific to the food industry. They knew that the solution they ultimately chose had to go further than simply storing documents. Instead, they hoped the solution could solve their biggest business problems, including the need to manage a complex supplier program more efficiently.

Indeed, Beaver Street Fisheries is a complex operation with unique needs. With both onshore and offshore processing facilities, a vast number of regulatory and customer programs to satisfy, and a large number of suppliers, a flexible and configurable solution was needed. Ultimately, they found the perfect partner in SafetyChain. And, there were a few key factors they considered integral to the success of the project, which we'll discuss next.



What Were the Biggest Drivers of Success in Implementation?

Undoubtedly, one of the biggest factors in the project's success was Beaver Street Fisheries' commitment to seeing the implementation through in its entirety. As Lane puts it, "There's no such thing as a prototype, just a small commit." With a keen eye on their end goal and an open mind, they approached SafetyChain and described their challenges.

Lane knew that Beaver Street Fisheries needed a complete system which would not only help them catalog a robust database of supplier documents, but also receive alerts for certificates that were about to expire. With some back-and-forth communication and collaboration from both sides, they were ultimately able to implement SafetyChain's platform in a way that fit their unique processes and supported their overarching goal of streamlining vendor management. Throughout the course of the project, these factors led to their overall success:



- ▶ **An IT-first approach:** Lane first wanted to explore the functionalities of the SafetyChain platform to understand how it worked in an ideal environment. Thereafter, he knew that Beaver Street Fisheries' unique processes could be applied to the system to ensure the perfect fit.
- ▶ **Standardization:** By standardizing across multiple business units, Beaver Street Fisheries was able to efficiently multiply the benefits across their entire organization.
- ▶ **Language:** Since vendor certificates and other critical documents were stored in the system in different languages, Beaver Street Fisheries recruited an intern to help translate and convert documents for enhanced uniformity.
- ▶ **SafetyChain team:** The team from SafetyChain got into the trenches and helped Beaver Street Fisheries configure not only forms, but real solutions to business problems. Being both tech and business experts, SafetyChain was able to offer a strong partnership for the company.
- ▶ **Vendor Feedback:** Because the quality of their vendor relationships is such a strong component of Beaver Street Fisheries' success, they consulted vendors to see if they had any suggestions for solutions that would better serve their needs, too.

Beyond these general challenges, there were four main challenges Beaver Street Fisheries wanted to address with technology:



What Key Project Considerations Did Beaver Street Fisheries Need to Address?

First and foremost, SafetyChain addressed Beaver Street Fisheries' primary business challenge: the need to manage suppliers and vendors more efficiently. With a better, more consistent process for managing vendors, the company now has complete visibility into their activities. Whereas key documents were once stored in a filing cabinet, the SafetyChain platform now allows them to see data in real-time and take action as needed. For example, they may have once struggled to catch up on expired documents, but now, they can request new ones as their expiration dates approach. Thus, they have immediate visibility into which suppliers are compliant and which are not, which helps to inform their business decisions.

As a result, vendor and supplier performance is improving. Beaver Street Fisheries distributes report cards to their vendors regularly, and many vendors have taken an interest in achieving the best possible scores. This also helps to address any communication gaps. Whereas some vendors may think they have a flawless performance history, when they receive a report card with only an 80% score, they realize that there's room for improvement. With the addition of the SafetyChain platform, vendors can stay on top of certificates that may be expiring instead of turning them in late, leading to better overall performance ratings.

Another noteworthy advantage Beaver Street Fisheries has seen as a result of SafetyChain is ongoing audit readiness. Lane feels more prepared for audits now that their auditors have to dig less for key documentation. Now, they have tools that demonstrate safety and compliance, and auditors tend to be satisfied with the first sample they produce instead of requesting more information from them.

Beaver Street Fisheries is also using SafetyChain for preventive maintenance. Whether it's a daily, weekly, monthly, or quarterly inspection, management teams can easily access all of the documents that go with a particular inspection. With the same platform and easy-to-use dashboard, everyone has access to the information they need right on the floor. And, the system serves as a proactive tool to help management spot missing critical documents, which can be followed up on promptly to support compliance.

With enhanced visibility and reports into key statistics easily accessible, Beaver Street Fisheries has also been able to make timelier, more data-driven decisions. Plus, they've been able to proudly invite large retailers on-site to demonstrate processes and controls, which can help to maintain confidence in their brand.

In addition to these benefits, Beaver Street Fisheries has taken some key learnings away from their experience with SafetyChain, which are detailed in the final section.

Key Learnings & Summary

After a successful SafetyChain implementation, Lane has continued to see improvement. He underscores the importance for food companies who are seeking to overcome their challenges to partner with a software vendor who is focused on the success of their business. Likewise, he notes that software that provides visibility throughout one's entire organization is key. After all, if you can see it, you can manage it. Finally, both SafetyChain and Beaver Street Fisheries agree that using a team approach is essential to effective change management.

To review some of the other key learnings discussed herein, let's reflect on the ways Beaver Street Fisheries has been able to improve since implementing technology:



- ▶ With more than 2,000 total suppliers and 400 located outside the U.S., Beaver Street Fisheries had complex vendor management needs which they sought to address with technology. They needed to support safety, quality, and compliance while streamlining their vendor management activities. Although their internal teams were used to the standard ways of doing things, they believed new technology could make everyone more efficient in their roles.
- ▶ To address the resistance to change, Beaver Street Fisheries took a team approach when explaining the many benefits of a technology implementation. They also knew that partnering with the right software vendor would be important to ensure their complex needs were met.
- ▶ To drive a successful implementation, Beaver Street Fisheries committed to the project 100%. They also took an IT-first approach, invited vendor feedback, and partnered with the SafetyChain team, who didn't just ease their process by creating forms, but also provided real solutions to their business problems.
- ▶ Since implementing the SafetyChain platform, Beaver Street Fisheries has seen improvements in vendor performance, achieved greater visibility into their operations, saved time and effort on formerly tedious processes, and achieved ongoing audit readiness. They've also been able to use SafetyChain as a tool for performing preventive maintenance and for helping them make quicker, more informed business decisions overall.

Lane admits that he was quite ambitious in his pursuit of implementing technology and that at first, it felt like Beaver Street Fisheries wanted to go from walking to riding in a spaceship. Yet, it's this ambition that helped to carry them through to success. Combined with SafetyChain's expertise, ongoing collaboration, and clear end goals, it made for a tremendously successful project which continues to provide real business value every day.



About SafetyChain

SafetyChain gives over 2000 process manufacturers the flexibility to rapidly address urgent challenges while offering scalability to expand and drive long-term value.

Capture All Critical Data

- Gain real-time visibility into what is happening throughout the facility
- Eliminate organizational silos made worse by competing data sources
- Feel confident your teams are relying on consistently accurate data

Gain Plant-Wide Insight

- Know at-a-glance whether you're hitting your metrics
- Pinpoint areas of improvement to reduce waste, increase yield, and maximize throughput
- Better understand how your teams are performing to create labor efficiencies

Take Rapid Action

- Save time and ensure you're always audit-ready
- Eliminate guesswork so everyone knows what they need to do and when
- Increase efficiency and foster a culture of problem-solving

Plan Scalable Growth

- Drive change, not disruption, throughout your plants
- Ensure the short-term and long-term success of your implementation
- Justify current and future technology investments by reducing waste and increasing productivity

Explore the Plant Management Platform and see how digitized plant management can meet your needs.

Learn more at <https://safetychain.com/digital-plant-management/>