



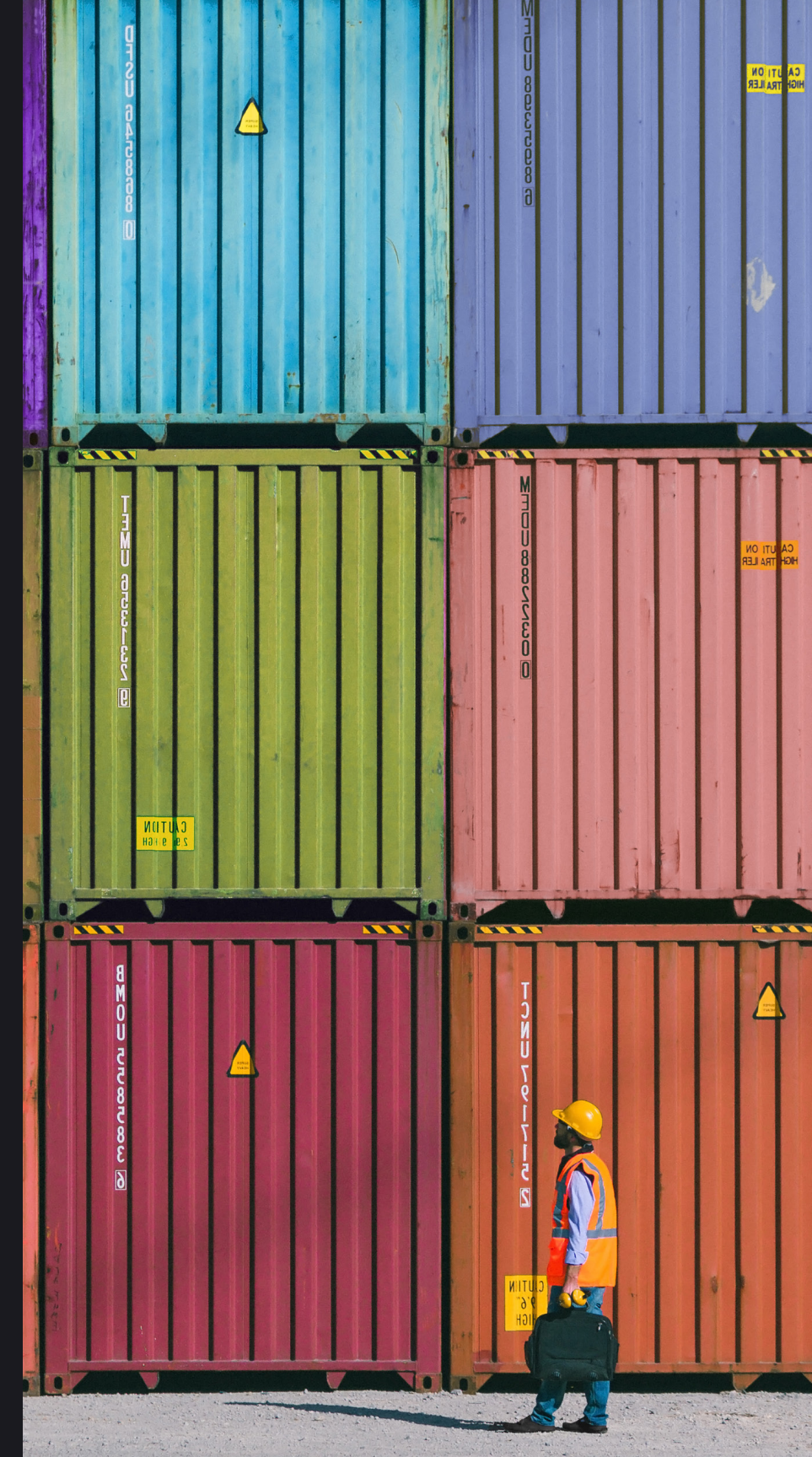
5 supplier quality management basics that benefit from QMS software

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No matter your industry or approach to quality management, supplier quality management is essential. Whether you manufacture cars or create potato chips, use Kaizen or Six Sigma, monitoring the quality of externally sourced materials is crucial. By establishing strong relationships with suppliers, you can gain a range of benefits.

Mitigate risk by onboarding highly qualified suppliers and holding them accountable to requirements and specifications. Recover costs from suppliers and optimize your supply chain for resilience through data and insights. Reduce costs of poor quality by minimizing scrap, waste, rework, warranties and recalls. Foster better supplier relationships by involving them actively in your quality processes.

Supplier quality management goes beyond transactions. It is about cultivating partnerships where both parties work towards shared goals. Fortunately, whatever your industry may be, there are supplier quality management basics that can solidify any relationship. These five supplier quality management basics will help put your business on a sure footing, no matter what you do.



1. Maintain good communications

Good communications are essential to any relationship, and that's no different for suppliers. Suppliers need to be open about what they're providing, and you need to be open about what you want. This is true whether you work with two suppliers or two hundred.

And no matter how many suppliers work with you, it's your overall relationships with them that matters. Modern supplier relationships aren't just transactional. They're multi-faceted, and often continue for long periods. That being the case, communications are essential.

Communication undergirds every stage of the supplier quality management relationship. Whether you're auditing your supplier, or reacting to a recall, maintaining open lines of communication is necessary every step of the way. It's also necessary to communicate what you expect to your own employees, so their audits are tracking the same standards.

If you run into problems with a supplier, open lines of communication make things easier. The supplier won't see your communication as one more complaint, but as part of a relationship where information flows both ways.

The Octave Reliance (formerly ETQ Reliance) Document Control feature helps you keep the lines of communication open. Whatever information your users require will be immediately available to them on the QMS platform. Furniture manufacturer Herman Miller used Octave to keep communications open with their suppliers. When a corrective action was necessary, Reliance made it easy for Herman Miller to get what they needed. "Whenever HMI (Herman Miller Inc.) staff notice a problem that needs to be addressed, an HMI quality person assigns a corrective action directly to the supplier," said Senior Quality Specialist Ken Grisso. As a result, Herman Miller has reduced by 50% the time required for a corrective action. Where a paper-based corrective action process took an average of thirty days, corrective actions using Octave Reliance took only fourteen days.

2. Assess your risks

No matter what supplies you require, there are risks involved. Whether it's a late shipment or a faulty product, it's good to consider all the ways Murphy's Law might kick in, before it does.

Octave Reliance's Risk Assessment feature organizes all the potential risks associated with a supplier. However your various branches assess risks, Octave Reliance will provide a centralized digital location for this data. Reliance's Supply Chain Quality app can also mitigate risk by automating receiving and inspection so suppliers are required to inspect materials according to your specifications, before those materials even ship.

Better yet, the way Octave Reliance collects data can make risk a lens through which you view your business. Octave Reliance lets you filter corrective actions by risk, which will give you a better view of which suppliers are high risk and which are more reliable. That in turn gives you the chance to rank suppliers by risk factor, and measure how you may need to alter your supplier relationships. In keeping with the idea that supplier relationships are just that, Octave Reliance also helps by allowing your suppliers to view open corrective actions, rather than be left in the dark, uncertain about where they stand with you.

3. Have a single source of truth

It's difficult enough keeping track of multiple employees. And when you've got multiple employees in multiple departments, it tends to mean multiple software systems. Add to that keeping track of multiple suppliers, and you've got an exponential headache. With that many information inputs, it's essential to have a single source of truth for your organization.

Octave Reliance gives you that single source of truth. Octave Reliance can interface with your ERP and other existing programs, getting your data out of silos and into a central location accessible to all users. For tasks like supplier audits, that centralization can mean efficiencies that translate into savings. Octave Reliance gives you the chance to configure audits according to how you do things, no matter how many audits your team handles, or what questions go into an audit. And since Octave Reliance is a cloud-based program, any employee who can use the program can access those audits. That means efficiencies, and time and money saved on what used to be proliferating paperwork.

4. Use root cause analysis to find solutions

Sooner or later, you're likely to get a less-than-perfect item from even the best supplier. When that occurs, quality professionals know that root cause analysis is a solid way to keep one slip-up from becoming a systematic problem. But root cause analysis can be a troublesome multi-step process, especially when you're working with a supplier.

Octave Reliance's Corrective Action feature is perfectly suited to help you navigate any complicated multi-step

process. The real-time dashboards provided by Octave Reliance's CAPA functionality get all the information you need in one place. Better yet, it's in one place that you, and your supplier, can get access to. And once you've got a corrective action plan figured out, you'll be able to collaborate on it in the cloud.

If you're looking for further root cause analysis tools that complement Octave Reliance's root cause modalities, check out our Root Cause Analysis toolkit.

5. Use technology

Covid-19 has been a crash course for everyone in handling distributed teams. It's only driven home something that savvy quality professionals already know: the best solutions are as distributed as workers are during Covid.

A cloud-based software solution like Octave Reliance enables supplier quality no matter where your employees

are, or when they're working. Should a problem with a shipment come up at an odd hour of the night, employees can find that out, and access information about it, no matter where they are. Better yet, the fact that this information's kept in the cloud makes it more secure than it would be otherwise.

Beyond the 5 supplier quality management basics

While these five are important to any business' supplier quality management program, they're just the start for any business looking to improve their quality initiatives.



About Octave

Octave is a leader in enterprise software, turning data into decisive action and intelligence into your edge. Our software solves for and simplifies complexity, from the design and build to operations and protection of people, property and assets— for any scope, at any scale. For decades, we've partnered with customers to sharpen performance, elevate efficiency and amplify results. From factory floors to entire cities, our solutions are tuned to scale up what's possible from day one onward.

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