

WINNEBAGO: ALWAYS STRIVING TO ‘BE GREAT’

THE COMPANY

Winnebago Industries is a highly respected manufacturer of motorhomes, travel trailers, boats, and specialty vehicles. Founded in 1958 in Forest City, Iowa, the company's namesake brand is synonymous with quality and innovation in the recreational vehicle (RV) industry. Winnebago is celebrated for its wide range of products that cater to a variety of needs and budgets, and its commitment to quality craftsmanship and customer satisfaction.

Over the years, Winnebago Industries has demonstrated a strong commitment to innovation and sustainability, continuously adapting to the evolving needs of its customers. They have been pioneers in incorporating energy-efficient technologies and sustainable materials into their designs, using state-of-the-art materials and manufacturing methods to deliver outstanding quality, safety, and innovation.

THE PROBLEM

Winnebago currently has manufacturing facilities in Iowa, Minnesota, Florida, and Indiana. The company has always valued its culture of quality and continuous improvement, so in 2019 they made the decision to implement QMS software that could automate quality workflows, organize information more effectively, and help them streamline their processes to achieve greater efficiency and accuracy.

Their Supplier Approval process, for example, was entirely dependent on manual effort, with no automated tracking mechanisms to keep tasks from slipping through the cracks. It was up to individual requesters to keep track of their supplier approvals and follow-up whenever a process appeared to be stalled.

Winnebago also lacked clear criteria for qualifying and approving suppliers. The company frequently sent quality surveys to prospective suppliers, but there was no consistent process for assuring that those were completed and returned. They also lacked an automated notification process to alert various stakeholders throughout the organization when a new supplier was to be onboarded. The Finance, Operations, and Warranty departments, for example, often found out well after the fact.

Similar issues were prevalent among most of Winnebago's other quality processes as well. Tae Banack, the company's Quality Systems Manager, had overseen QMS at numerous other firms, including highly regulated companies in the life sciences, medical device, and pharmaceutical industries. She saw an opportunity to modernize Winnebago's quality management systems in a way that would empower the company's employees to work more effectively and efficiently.



Banack also wanted to find better ways to measure and report Winnebago's quality performance. The organization had limited visibility to some important quality metrics, especially in the area of supplier quality. A modern QMS system could help them with up-to-the-minute information, including executive dashboards.

THE SOLUTION

In early 2019, Banack and her team evaluated a handful of QMS platforms, scoring each one based on must-have criteria, nice-to-have features, and unexpected "bonus" attributes that the team had not initially considered.

There was one non-negotiable requirement that the team put at the top of their list. The new QMS system needed to be easily configurable by non-technical employees. They wanted power and flexibility, but they immediately ruled out any system that required custom programming.

The Winnebago team selected Intellect QMS and the Intellect no-code platform because it is flexible and easy to use, and because it could fit virtually any business process that involves a data entry form and an associated workflow. They could easily modify apps to meet their changing needs, and even deploy new apps built to suit their custom requirements. Intellect's extreme configurability makes it so easy to build new apps that the Winnebago team sees value in using it to address short-term needs, even where a permanent solution is not required.

Winnebago also needed a QMS platform that could scale easily, meeting the diverse needs of various business units across the enterprise. They saw that it could help them comply with Sarbanes-Oxley (SOX) and other key requirements. As a cloud-based platform, Intellect can easily serve multiple locations, without additional on-site hardware.

At the same time, Winnebago needed their new QMS solution to support native mobile apps for iOS and Android, without requiring full-time connectivity. The team wanted to capture photos, notes, and other information quickly and easily on the production line. Intellect's mobile apps make that possible, and they provide a friendly, easy-to-use interface for employees. "We have a lot of areas in our plants where Wi-Fi is not reliable," said Banack, "so being able to work offline is critical."

THE RESULTS

Since their initial rollout of Intellect QMS, Winnebago Industries has implemented 18 apps. Document Control and Supplier Qualification were their first priorities. The latter was a custom app designed to automate and streamline the end-to-end process of qualifying and approving new vendors. Because of the extreme configurability of Intellect's no-code platform, the team was able to design an app from the ground up to meet their unique needs.



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In addition to the core QMS apps like CAPA, Supplier Management, and Document Control, the team at Winnebago has rolled out a handful of custom apps. A New Product Development app, for example, helps them manage the very complex stage gate process for the company's new product designs, including sub-processes for Change Management, Issues Resolution, Floor Plans, Prototypes, and Pilots.

They also developed a custom app to manage their Change Control Board (CCB) process, another app to manage rework campaigns, and even a Sales Program Request app for managing discounts and other approvals within the Sales and Finance organizations.

Tae Banack credits her dedicated Intellect enterprise support rep for helping the Winnebago team get the most possible value from the platform. "We learned a lot from her during that time," said Banack, "and she came up with some great configuration solutions to help us achieve what we wanted."

Intellect has helped Tae Banack and her team take Winnebago to a new level of performance. The company has formalized its CAPA process, focusing on high-risk cases and robust root cause analysis to implement the most effective possible actions.

With Intellect, quality metrics are now available to everyone in the organization. Most notably, the team now has real-time visibility into supplier performance, which has led to a direct reduction in supplier-related impacts to the business. Intellect provides Winnebago with a single source from which to track the status of any quality management workflow process. That has improved accountability throughout the organization and eliminated the need for tedious follow-up that drains staff time and energy. Users love using Intellect as well. "It gives me a clear visual of the items I need to work on," said one Winnebago employee. "If one of the other employees is out, any of us can go in and see what was wrong with a particular part."

The team at Winnebago has identified new areas for improvement, with Intellect as a supporting platform. The Safety team plans to roll out Intellect's Employee Training app, and Winnebago will deploy an app for Employee Suggestions as well. Now that they understand the full potential of the Intellect platform, there is virtually no limit to the places that Winnebago can go.



"The Supplier Quality app has all the information that I need in an easy-to-read summary.

At a glance, I can see which quality alerts are open and have action required and which are simply waiting on in order to come in. It gives me a clear visual of the items I need to work on."

- Winnebago Employee

If you'd like to learn more about Intellect QMS No-Code Compliance Platform, simply click on the Demo Request button below.

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