



NOVARA

A Buyer's Guide:

Environment, Health & Safety Software

EHS software has the potential to transform your safety programs. From simplifying training with continually refreshed courses to mobile access to essential audit and inspection checklists, the right solution can proactively address, mitigate, and altogether eliminate risks that are inherent to antiquated, manual processes. Take a deep breath, and let's find out how EHS software can help you improve safety, lower risk, and save money.

What is EHS Software?

An Introduction

If you're asking this question, you're about to transform your business. Understanding Environment, Health, and Safety (EHS) software, knowing the differences between providers, and choosing the best solution can save your organization thousands of dollars every year.

More importantly, it can save lives. EHS management software is how today's leading organizations protect their workforces from falls, chemical spills, disease outbreaks, collisions, eye and face injuries, and other common but avoidable workplace incidents. When you use EHS software, you are empowering your team to not only respond to incidents quickly and effectively, but also to reduce the chance of incidents in the first place. Together that adds up to serious savings, happier and healthier workers, and peace of mind for your managers, leaders, and executives.

If you neglect EHS, you're neglecting human lives—the lives of your employees, customers, contractors, vendors, neighbors, and community members, and you're liable to face consequences.

Government authorities such as the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Department of Justice (DOJ), and state agencies require your company to follow certain workforce safety and environmental regulations and standards. You'll face major bills and legal actions if you don't. For example, the cost of a single OSHA violation can exceed \$13,000. Some incidents result in criminal charges and even jail time. To stay on the right side of the law, you need to prove you're playing by the rules.

Beyond the fact that it's the right and lawful thing to do, there's a business case for investing in an EHS program. Think about EHS as risk management or loss management. Maybe the risk is a fall from a ladder, a forklift accident, a fire, or something else. Maybe the loss is loss of life or loss of business.

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An injury, disease, death, form of pollution, or other unwanted activity in a workplace is ultimately the employer's responsibility. And such an incident can lead to massive expenses, including:

- » Workers' compensation claims
- » Employee absenteeism and turnover
- » Lost productivity
- » Lawsuits
- » Regulatory fines and penalties
- » Loss of equipment or materials
- » Negative publicity and reputational damage

If you want to avoid the above, you need to prioritize EHS—and EHS risk management software is a great place to start.

Manual Processes Leave the Door Open for Risk

For years, organizations had no choice but to manage EHS manually. Every time a worker was injured or got sick, someone had to carefully inspect the situation, assess the damage, cross-reference company policies and regulatory materials, and document the incident by hand. Paper records were stored in binders and filing cabinets. When needed, key information had to be painstakingly dug up, assuming it was even documented at all.

Manual processes can lead to an onslaught of risk for company, including:

- » Inconsistent tracking of issues, tasks, etc.
- » Variable training schedules and delivery
- » Limited visibility into incomplete tasks
- » Delays and errors in responding to incidents
- » Ad hoc knowledge transfers

And yet, some companies still do things manually, either because they think it's their only option or because they assume EHS compliance software is too expensive and not worth the cost. Unfortunately, these companies are putting their workers and their bottom lines at risk.

Today, EHS is more complicated than ever. And it's growing in complexity every day thanks to a stream of new technologies, regulations, guidelines, and realities of doing business.

Organizations that do things manually also tend to underperform their competitors. Novara and EHS Today's 2019 State of the Industry: EHS Program Trends Report found that companies with higher-than-average injury and incident rates are ones that don't prioritize their EHS programs. Poor performers frequently rely on manual EHS processes, and efforts to improve their programs receive little support from executives. As a result, their workforces experience unacceptably high numbers of injuries and illnesses.

EHS software makes it possible—even easy—to stay on top of everything.

How Can EHS Software Help Me?

EHS software standardizes, simplifies, and automates EHS activities. It brings all your EHS program data and activities into a single location, so you can see how things are going, reference regulatory information and policies, and take action in just a few clicks. This reduces gaps and errors, as well as busywork and guesswork. You don't need to spend time hunting down forms, running around checking on things constantly, or losing sleep worrying whether employees are following the rules and staying safe—you have a solution that holds up-to-the-minute, records of your entire program.

Software has been adopted across industry lines, department silos, and company populations because of the inherent benefits it brings along with it—adopting EHS software should feel like ditching your abacus for Excel.

For every \$1 spent on safety today, you save \$2 in the future. In fact you could save \$3, \$4 or even \$6 in the future per dollar spent now.

EHS Software



Saves You Money



Saves You Time



Provides Peace of Mind



Empowers Decisions with Data



Cultivates a Safety Culture



Saves You Money

From lower workers' compensation costs and fewer legal fees to lower employee turnover and reduced down time—by reducing incidents, improving compliance with regulations, and providing a safer place for your employees to work, you can **avoid these costly expenses**, and see a direct benefit to your bottom line.

For each medically consulted injury that a slow or inefficient program fails to mitigate, you're looking at an average of cost of \$32,000; which encompasses estimates of lost wages, medical expenses, administration expenses, and employer costs.

And while you may want to argue that your employees don't get hurt that often, it's been studied and proven that **for each dollar a company invests in injury prevention, they see a return between \$2 and \$6**—most recently this was discussed in an article published by Safety+Health magazine. That means investing \$10,000 in EHS software can net a return between \$20,000 and \$60,000, that's excellent news for your bottom line, customers, and executives.



Saves You Time

With EHS software, you'll improve productivity and efficiency. For one, fewer injuries mean fewer disruptions, fewer lost hours, and fewer days employees are away from work. Moreover, software eliminates unnecessary tasks, so safety and compliance professionals have more time to focus on what matters.

And if that isn't enough, software also provides built in libraries of the information you need. Regulations, SDSs, and policies – so you can ditch

your paper binders, filing cabinets, and Google because you have access to all the EHS data you need all in one place.

Together each avoided incident and each eliminated manual task results in more time for productive, strategic, or revenue generating activities.



Provides Peace of Mind

Activities such as audits and OSHA reporting can be a pain, both in terms of the time and money they require—not to mention what's on the line if something is missed or filed incorrectly. EHS software makes it easy to keep investigators and regulators happy. The documentation they need is accessible and sharable, so your compliance headache is now a few clicks from done.



Empowers Decisions with Data

Beyond its time- and error-saving capabilities, EHS software empowers better decisions. You can track what programs are making an impact and apply those successes to other programs. Plus, with comprehensive, up-to-the-minute data at your fingertips, you can also zero in on existing issues and correct them before they develop into larger problems.

With manual processes, every part of the issue tracking process takes longer and often happens in isolation. This makes it difficult, if not impossible, to spot widespread issues. With EHS software, you have the data you need to know if this incident is an individual employee who didn't complete their training or something else. If it's something else, your EHS software provides the tools to revise policies and retrain the applicable employees—then provides more data to let you know the impact.

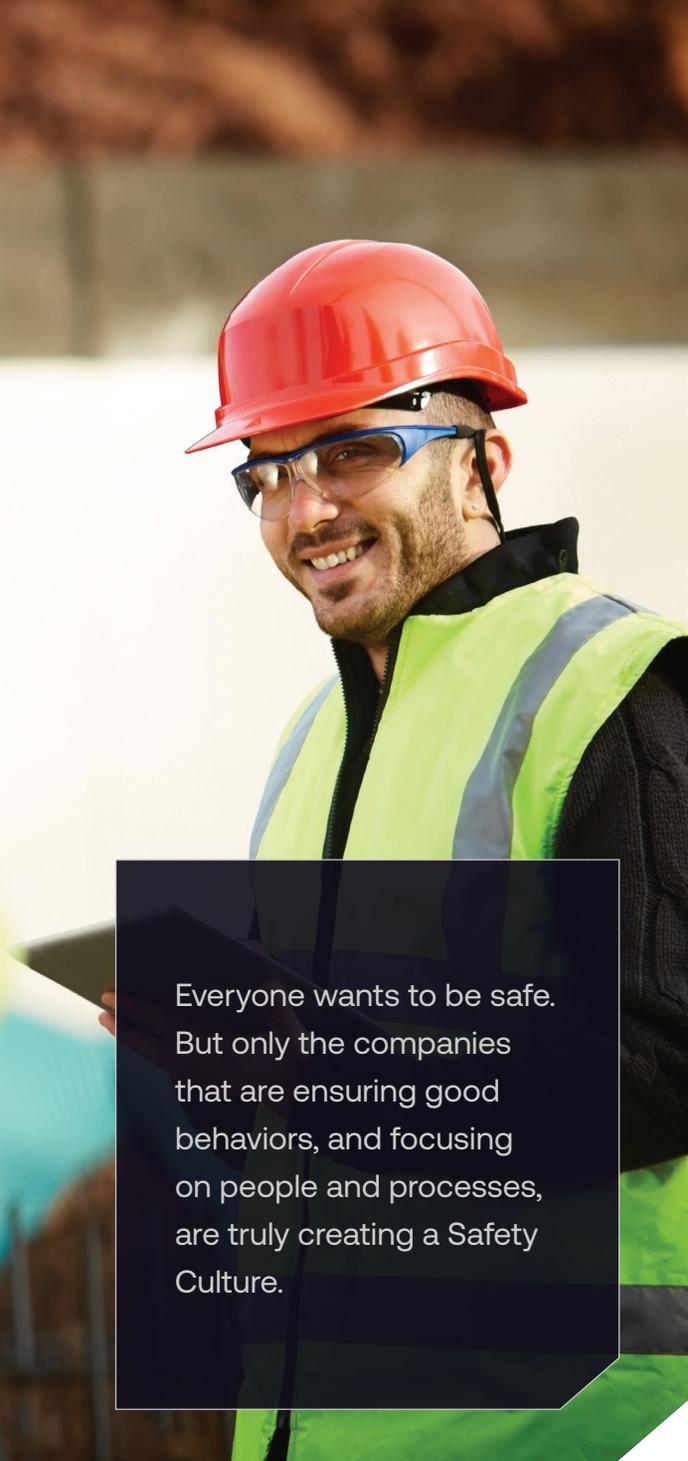


Cultivates a Safety Culture

These benefits all work together to help you create a Safety Culture. By itself, culture is defined as a collective commitment to values embedded within us. Culture is a set of behaviors that happen automatically. As safety professionals, we would all love for everyone to automatically make safe decisions—which is the point of a Safety Culture.

Safety Culture starts with the tone from the top. When leaders and executives are safety advocates, it shows. Safety concerns are top of mind, issues are visible and addressed in a timely manner, and most importantly the people we're responsible for keeping safe—are.

EHS software is an essential piece of achieving that goal. It shows a direct commitment to safety, it empowers better safety decisions through more safety data which results in safer employees. Safe, engaged employees are happier to come to work and are more productive while they are at work. Eliminating bad habits, contradictory behaviors, and cost-cutting attitudes when it comes to safety can go a long way to providing a fertile ground for a true Safety Culture.



Everyone wants to be safe. But only the companies that are ensuring good behaviors, and focusing on people and processes, are truly creating a Safety Culture.

What Should I Look For?

With so many risks and opportunities for ROI in mind, we hope we've convinced you of your need for EHS software. However, there's a world of options out there, so we'd like to help you process your options and find the best fit for your organization. Here are some key features that you should consider:



Humans err. Processes break. Regulations change. But a Safety Culture has a positive ROI.

Key Features



Audits and Inspections



Training



Corrective and Preventive Actions



Incident Management



Compliance and Recordkeeping



Document Management



Hazardous Materials Management



Key Feature #1: Audits and Inspections

The first and perhaps most important function of any EHS software solution is to tell you what's currently going on at your facilities. You need to know about existing issues and gaps in your safety and compliance program—what's working and what needs to be fixed. EHS software should facilitate this process and ensure it occurs regularly and thoroughly every time.

Questions to ask:

Will this help us perform audits and inspections?

Is using this software easier than doing them by hand?

How does the software track and store the results of regular safety observations?

Are there pre-built audit checklists included?

Can the software help us prioritize our highest areas of exposure?

Can you build your own or customize template audits and inspections?



Key Feature #2: Training

This is one area where many EHS software solutions fall short. Few solutions on the market provide comprehensive, high-quality EHS training. Many organizations are forced to use both an EHS management solution and a separate learning management system (LMS), resulting in a disjointed experience for employees.

Questions to ask:

Does this solution include training?

- If so:**
- » What topics are covered?
 - » How is the training delivered?
 - » When was the material last updated?
 - » How often is the material updated?
 - » Does the training use real-life scenarios?
 - » Is it optimized for engagement and retention?
 - » Is it available in multiple languages?

- If not:**
- » Does the software provider offer any kind of educational solution?
 - » Are there LMS solutions the software integrates with?
 - » What do those systems look like, and how much do they cost?



Key Feature #3: Corrective and Preventive Actions

After performing an audit or inspection, the next step is to assign corrective actions to fix the problems you discovered. Your selection should also empower you to take preventive actions to proactively solve potential issues before they become worse. The best EHS software solutions make this part a cinch by automating workflows, assigning people to take corrective and preventative actions, prioritizing tasks, sending reminders, and capturing the results of actions.

Questions to ask:

Can we easily assign corrective and preventive actions following an audit or inspection?

How are corrective and preventive actions assigned?

Is there a dependable and repeatable process?

How can we choose which employees will be responsible?

Will people be reminded when actions haven't been taken?

Does the software offer citation and regulatory requirements and recommendations?

Are all levels of government (federal, state, municipal) covered?

Can we track the status of corrective and preventive actions in real-time?



Key Feature #4: Incident Management

Accidents, injuries, and illnesses happen. Your EHS software should make responding to and managing those incidents quick and easy. It's essential you're able to record the information and details needed to ensure both swift action and proper reporting. The software you use should aid this process—not unnecessary steps.

Questions to ask:

How will this help us in the event of an accident or illness?

What information does the software capture?

Can employees record and manage incidents on their mobile devices, or do they need to log in to a desktop computer to use the software?

Are there any pre-built wizards or workflows that automate and standardize the process?

Can you track near-misses?



Key Feature #5: Compliance and Recordkeeping

OSHA and other regulatory agencies want to know about your audits and inspections, corrective and preventive actions, and incident response. A good EHS software solution will serve as a home for all your health and safety records and help you manage ongoing compliance, report required information, and answer regulators' questions.

Questions to ask:

Does this help us complete and file OSHA logs—Forms 301, 300, and 300A?

How about any other regulatory forms?

How can I make sure all records are complete, accurate, and up to date?

Where are records stored in the system?

Can they be pulled up quickly when necessary?

Who in our organization will have access to this information?

Does the software allow us to set different permissions for different users?

Does the system maintain records for at least five years?



Key Feature #6: Document Management

A robust EHS software solution does more than track and store incident records and audit results. It serves as a repository for all EHS materials—policies, handbooks, procedures, legal documents, the organization's written Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP), safety committee meeting minutes, and more. The software you use should help you keep your workforce informed and prepared for virtually anything.

Questions to ask:

What documents are included?

Can we upload documents of our own?

Are document templates available?

Where are documents stored?

How easy is it to update documents within the system?



Key Feature #7: Hazardous Materials Management

Speaking of documentation, hazard communication is a critical element of any EHS program. The software you use should help your employees stay informed of hazardous materials kept within your facilities and respond quickly in the event of chemical exposure. Make sure the solution includes an SDS library—your safety data sheets should all be in one place.

Questions to ask:

If an employee was exposed to a hazardous substance, would this system help us locate the relevant SDS within 5 minutes?

Are all SDSs kept within the same library?

Is the library searchable?

Does this software meet employee Right-To-Know requirements for hazardous materials?

Other Features to Consider

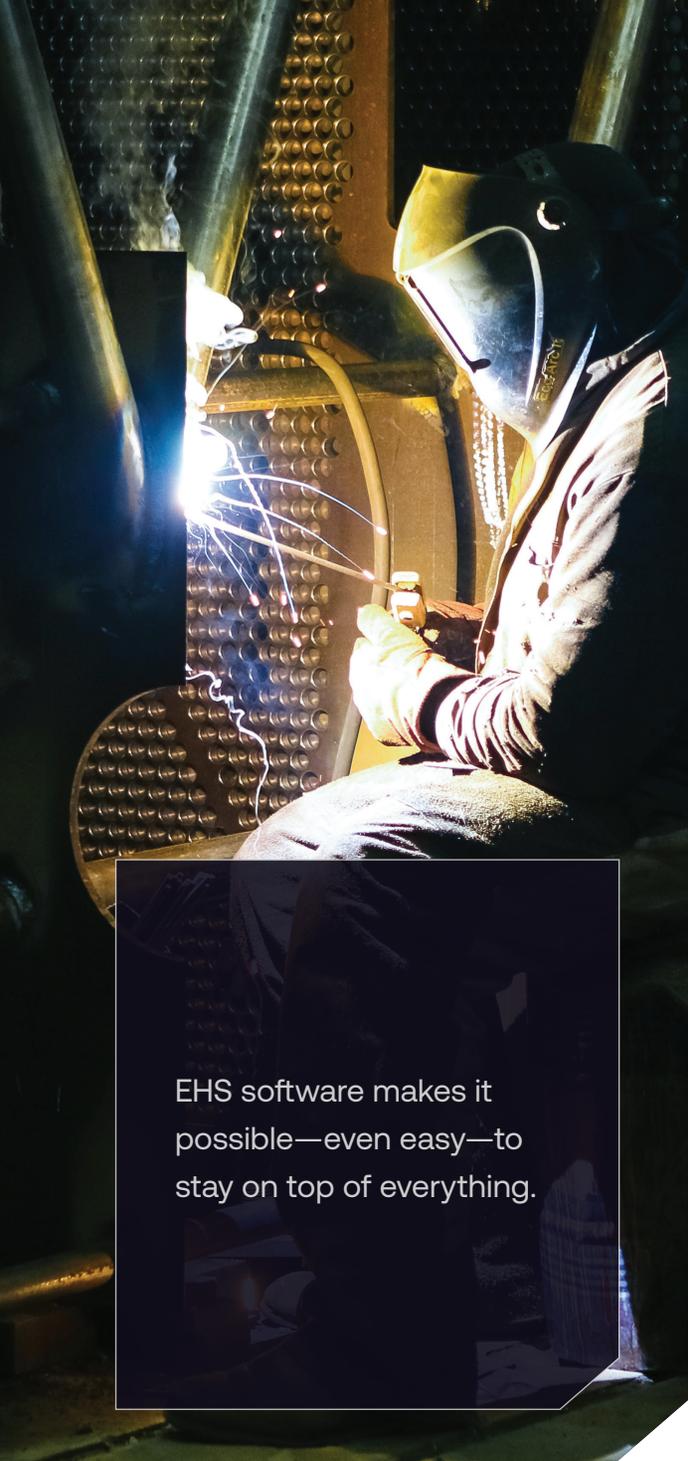
We've covered the main features that differentiate the best EHS management software from the rest, but there are many other variables to consider, including...

- » **Cost:** How much does the EHS software cost? Do you feel the cost is justified by the value the software provides?
- » **Accessibility:** What devices is the software available on? Is it downloaded/installed on computers or available via SaaS or another cloud-based application? Is there a separate mobile app?
- » **Ease of use:** Is the software simple and intuitive, or clunky and bloated? Does it provide the right features for every user? How easy is it to learn?
- » **Customizability:** Can the software be configured for different users and environments, or is it supposed to be used as it comes “out of the box”?
- » **Level of support:** Is the software provider available to answer questions and troubleshoot when needed? How do their customers/clients rate their support?
- » **Additional EHS services:** Does this company just provide software, or a combination of software and services? Well-rounded programs can benefit from a company that provides not only EHS technology but also consulting, audit and inspection services, and more delivered by a team of EHS experts with industry-specific experience.

How Do I Pick the Right Solution?

12 Steps for Finding, Selecting, and Buying EHS Software

- 1 Gather all your existing EHS information.** Figure out what you know and what you don't know, what you'll need to migrate into your software system, and what will need to be created anew.
- 2 Develop a timeline and scope.** Map out how long it will take to find and implement EHS software. Give your organization enough time—90 days is typical.
- 3 Create a team and project plan.** Appoint members of your organization to help in evaluating and implementing EHS software. You'll need at least one member of your executive team to be involved. Break things down into manageable tasks with their own deadlines and assign members of the team to lead or coordinate those tasks.
- 4 Create a list of key features.** Using the considerations outlined above (or your own set of criteria), come up with a list of must-have software features and elements.
- 5 Shop around.** While there are no Amazon listings for “EHS software,” there are plenty of sites that list different solutions and allow you to compare features, sort by rating, read user reviews, and learn more. Examples of these sites include Capterra, Software Advice, GetApp, and SourceForge.



EHS software makes it possible—even easy—to stay on top of everything.



After dealing with the Department of Environmental Quality on an inspection, it made a huge difference having Novara systems in place and safety training/record keeping.

Jiffy Lube

- 6 **Narrow your search.** Start by casting a wide net—look at as many different EHS software solutions as you can. You'll likely find a bunch you can immediately write off, some that look great, and others you're not sure about. Try to winnow things down to 5 or 10 top contenders by evaluating your various options against your list of key features.
- 7 **Do your homework.** After you've identified the best EHS software choices out there, it's time to do even more research. Check out the companies' websites. See how they describe themselves and their solutions. Read their blogs and About pages. Look at their social media presences, business listings, Glassdoor profiles—anything you can find that gives you a sense of who they are and what they stand for.
- 8 **Schedule a few demos.** Many EHS software providers (including Novara) offer free demos. Contact the companies on your shortlist and see if they'd be willing to show you how their platforms work.
- 9 **Discuss your needs.** Determine whether and to what extent each of the providers you're looking at would be able to tailor their solutions to your needs and/or offer additional services. This is your opportunity to get a sense of how easy each company is to work with.
- 10 **Present your top choice to company stakeholders and get buy-in.** When you've figured out which solution would be best for your organization, make your case to the other decision-makers on your team. Ideally, the choice of software provider should be unanimous, or as close to it as possible.
- 11 **Purchase the software.** This part's simple—hopefully.
- 12 **Work with the provider to implement the software.** You can't just pay for a system, call it "done," and assume your employees will start using it with no problems. You'll need to work alongside the software provider to ensure adoption and address issues as they arise.

When Should I Purchase EHS Software?

With EHS software, you can be confident you have taken measures to protect your employees—and in turn are protecting your company. Lawsuits, OSHA inspections, and DOJ audits are only a few of the costly liabilities that employers face when an injury, death, act of pollution, or other unwanted activity happens on your watch. Having adequate policies, training, and protocols in place is critical to reducing employers' potential exposure to these liabilities by providing accurate, audit-ready record of action taken to prevent and mitigate unsafe behavior in the first place.

However, it doesn't take a catastrophic event to find yourself writing a check of up to \$1,300 per OSHA violation—there are a host of complicated rules and regulations and understanding the interactions between them can be challenging.

Every day you go without an automated EHS and compliance management solution is another day you are putting your organization and its employees at risk. Incidents and violations can occur anytime. And in the meantime, your bottom line is suffering—at the very least, from inefficient processes, and at the worst, from fines, penalties, and legal fees.

An investment in EHS software will start paying for itself immediately, so why not start today?



“Never put off for tomorrow,
what you can do today.”

– Thomas Jefferson

Help Your Executives Prioritize EHS Software

You're convinced, right? We hope so. However, we know that convincing those of us who live and breathe EHS all day every day is a different story than convincing those that manage the budget. We've put together a few tips to help you with that conversation:

How?	Stick to the big picture
	Bring the numbers
	Ask for what you need

Stick to the Big Picture

Time is money for everyone, but this is especially true for those at the top of our organizations. It's essential to outline the key points of your proposal and stick to them. You've probably have already done (or will be doing) a ton of research into EHS software providers, feature comparisons, demos, as well as a healthy amount of general Googling—that's great, essential, but don't dump all of that into a slide deck and take it to your decision makers. Not only will it be an exhausting amount of work, it will distract and potentially derail your entire conversation.

If you're focused on what you truly want out of the conversation, they will be too. Focus on what they need to know: the costs, the benefits, and the ask. That's it. Save the details for questions and planning meetings.

Bring the Numbers

Boards, owners, and executives expect to see data. Whether they are deciding to hire a new manager or to invest in a new software solution—cold, hard calculations of costs and benefits are the best way to frame your argument so you're speaking their language.

A note of caution: too much data and data without context can be just as detrimental as showing up without any numbers. Make sure you select your numbers carefully and provide just enough context to help them understand what you want them to glean from the data.

A great way to do this is to select a single key metric that will best show the ROI of EHS software for your organization. For example, an auto service center may want to focus on absenteeism. This is the number of unproductive days an organization experiences because people are off or not able to work due to injury or illness. If the average service bay generates about \$20,000 in income every month—each day that bay isn't closed due to avoidable accidents is another day you can be bringing in that income.

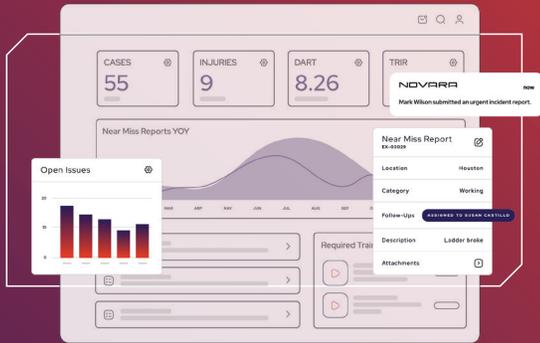
Find out how many unproductive days you're experiencing, translate that into average dollars per day, and make the case that EHS software can help mitigate many of these lost days.

Finding and communicating the metric(s) that will move your executives' hearts, minds, and checkbooks, is essential for framing this conversation.

Ask for What You Need

You absolutely do not want to leave this meeting uncertain of what you should do next. The best (and maybe only) way to do this is to wrap up by asking for exactly what you want.

Be prepared for the answer to not be the "yes" you're hoping for. But if you ask directly, it can only be, "yes", a task for you to help them get to "yes", or a definitive no. It's much better to walk away with an answer than need to come back to get one.



How Novara Helps

Novara is here to help you automate manual or ineffective processes to reduce your total cost of risk by providing you not only the software you need, but also access to our team of certified safety and compliance consulting team to help you every step of the way.

Novara offers workplace EHS initiatives to help reduce injury risk including:

- » Emergency Response Planning
- » Safe Driving
- » Hazard Communication
- » Personal Protective Equipment
- » Hazardous Waste Management
- » Workplace Violence Prevention
- » Back Injury Prevention

Novara's online and on-site training, in conjunction with consultant-led safety program development, can help an organization drive these initiatives, and our Vera Suite software delivers the tools to align your entire workforce.

Request a Demo

