SBA

SBA Communications
Gets Proactive with Contractor Safety and Insurance

As a leading independent owner and operator of wireless communications infrastructure across North, Central, and South America. Founded in 1989 and headquartered in Boca Raton, Florida, SBA generates revenue from site leasing and site development services.

Industry
Telecommunications

Profile
- Founded in 1989
- Based in Boca Raton, FL
- Leading independent owner and operator of wireless comms infrastructure across North, Central, and South America

Challenges
- Ensure 2,500 contractors meet all safety and insurance requirements
- Gain instant access to contractor information when issues arise in the field
- Proactively alert contractors of urgent issues and safety updates

Solutions
- AuditGUARD
- DocuGUARD
- InsureGUARD

Results
- Enabled rapid verification of safety and insurance requirements from any location
- Simplified contractor management with web-based platform
- Allowed system-wide alerts for urgent issues, product recalls, and more
- Save $100,000 per year in employee costs

The Challenge

With almost 30,000 cell towers globally, many in remote locations, SBA Communications subcontracts repair and upgrade services to a network of almost 2,500 independent contractors. Given the potentially dangerous working environments at the cell tower sites, SBA wanted to ensure its contractors were compliant with government safety regulations and insurance requirements. However, without a central database and search capability for contractor information, checking this data was a time-consuming manual process. "When we needed specific contractor information, such as insurance requirements or proof of OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) compliance, we had to approach it on a case-by-case basis," said Nick Wilkerson, Safety Director at SBA Communications.

After a spike in cell-tower-related injuries in 2014, SBA wanted a contractor safety and compliance solution. "We didn't have the staff to go into each contractor's file and review their safety manual's content, insurance coverage, and ensure they met all of our requirements," said Wilkerson. "Rather than hire more staff, we decided to look for an easier way to improve safety."

The Avetta Solution

After reviewing solutions from several competing vendors, SBA chose Avetta to provide their cloud-based supply chain qualification solution. "I had been a contractor in the Avetta system before coming to work at SBA, so I was familiar with their solution," said Wilkerson. "When we learned that Avetta had also worked with Sprint and Motorola, we knew they understood the challenges and issues facing telecom companies."

After completing a successful proof of concept for SBA, Avetta began to implement the solution, which included DocuGUARD, AuditGUARD, and InsureGUARD, in spring of 2015. Anxious to get all of its contractors in the system, SBA also realized that adoption could be a slow process. They were impressed with how quickly Avetta got its contractors onboard. "Our initial goal was to have 500 contractors in the system by the end of the first year. Instead, Avetta had 1,300 in the system," said Wilkerson.

DocuGUARD

DocuGUARD's prequalification and document management service ensures fast and accurate collection and verification of contractor data. Avetta's safety experts collect and verify documentation so the SBA team can direct resources toward growing their business. "DocuGUARD is flexible and configurable. We can define our own compliance criteria and quickly see which contractors are qualified, which are not, and why," said Wilkerson.

AuditGUARD

AuditGUARD, Avetta's world-class auditing service, gives SBA a first-hand view into how their contractors execute documented safety procedures. Auditing services include thorough reviews of employee manuals, training logs, and on-site implementation. The solution provides comprehensive reports with written and photographic accounts of positive safety practices, areas for improvement, and recommendations. "AuditGUARD really simplifies subcontractor management. Even in the field, we can review all subcontractor information, including their safety manual," said Wilkerson. "Avetta provides an easy-to-understand scoring system so we can determine compliance status at a glance."

InsureGUARD

InsureGUARD, Avetta's insurance verification service, includes an intuitive document management system, automatic alerting, and is easily configured for client-specific requirements. SBA's contractors can easily upload their certificates of insurance to the InsureGUARD platform. Then, Avetta insurance specialists thoroughly review all documentation for SBA so the company works only with those contractors that are adequately insured. The solution automatically notifies SBA of changes in a contractor's insurance status and when their insurance is about to expire. "Every contractor who touches our towers and equipment needs the right coverage, and InsureGUARD makes it easy to verify each contractor is adequately insured," said Wilkerson.

The Results

Through DocuGUARD, AuditGUARD, and InsureGUARD, SBA can now confidently verify contractor safety compliance and insurance, giving them significantly improved visibility of contractor accountability. With anytime, anywhere mobile access, both contractors and management can retrieve information from the field.

In addition to saving SBA approximately US$100,000 per year in employee costs, the solution helps the safety team improve efficiency and be proactive about changing safety measures. "Before working with Avetta, contractor audits or legal issues were time-consuming and often delayed work in the field," said Wilkerson. "Now, when we have issues with contractor safety information, we can be much more proactive."

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Since we started working with Avetta, we have a much greater comfort level with our contractors. The Avetta solution is a powerful tool; and, as a leader in our industry, we can use it to make the industry safer.

Nick Wilkerson, Safety Director
SBA Communications

AVETTA GLOBAL HEADQUATERS

17671 Cowan Suite # 125
Irvine, CA 92614 USA

Contact Us Today:
inquiries@avetta.com

www.avetta.com
+1-800-506-7427