Adding value to personal protective equipment

Premium products for demanding customers

When your life hangs by a thread, or more specifically a 10mm rope, you need to be sure the line will hold no matter what. DMM, a Welsh personal protective equipment (PPE) manufacturer, knows this well. It only makes the best.

As a result, DMM's carabiners, ropes, pulleys and other PPE products are sought after by outdoor enthusiasts and working-at-height firms alike.

These individuals and companies recognise the need not only to invest in premium products such as the ones provided by DMM, but also to make sure the equipment is always kept in optimum condition.

Ideally, that means keeping records of the life history of each item, including when it was bought and when it was last inspected. For many commercial users, though, this can be an onerous process. Some of DMM's customers buy upwards of 10,000 PPE items.

Logging the details of each one, and keeping track of them afterwards, is a full-time job.

For this reason, in 2014 DMM decided it would no longer be enough to give its customers market-leading PPE products; it would also have to give them a market-leading way of tracking each one: DMM iD.

Scan-able PPE improved with software

Part of the answer was obvious: by allowing each product's serial number to be scanned via an RFID tag, instead of requiring the information to be typed in by hand, DMM could easily save its customers a significant amount of time and effort.

"You're looking at saving up to 90% of your administration time during an inspection," says Robert Partridge, product manager.

But what should happen to the information once it was scanned? Partridge and his colleagues knew PPE owners had a generally poor opinion of the proprietary software systems designed by other manufacturers.

It's no wonder: any PPE manufacturer would have to invest significantly in software development and upkeep to bring an inspection management system to market.

And even then, there would be no guarantee the system would work well, since software development is very much a non-core activity within the PPE manufacturing industry.

In a nutshell, if DMM wanted to provide its own asset management system as part of its move to scan-able PPE, it risked going to market with software that might be poorly designed, expensive, or both. Fortunately, there was another option.

Working with a world-leading inspection platform developer

In 2014, one of DMM's neighbours on the Y Glyn business park in Llanberis, Gwynedd, was Papertrail, a software platform focusing on the PPE asset management sector.

The two companies shared more than a business address: both were leaders in their fields, with a reputation for quality and customer service.

DMM's management realised that partnering with Papertrail would give customers not just the best PPE equipment on the market but also one of the world's most complete and advanced records and inspection tracking systems.

The two companies began working together to make sure DMM products and Papertrail applications could be delivered as a single package.

Today, a seamless integration between the companies' back-office systems ensures customers who enter a DMM product serial number can quickly and easily import the product details to their Papertrail account, at no additional cost.

Extending the longevity of assets

Besides delivering cost savings that can be of the order of GBP£50,000 a year for a large corporate PPE consumer, the alliance between DMM and Papertrail is improving the return on investment that many companies get from their assets.

Previously, inspections and record keeping were so time-consuming that many companies chose to retire items such as carabiners when the equipment reached a certain age, such as six months, instead of inspecting them.

With faster and easier equipment management, using DMM iD and Papertrail, it is now more economical to invest in higher quality, scan-able items and inspect them than it is to retire and discharge high quantities of PPE.

This can help cut costs without having an impact on health and safety standards. At the same time, the move to scanned information and extended usage means each item can now see a longer period of active service.

This might not be a big deal for a recreational rock climber, but in a company with thousands of items the productivity gains are significant.

Swedish work-at-height training specialist C2 Vertical Safety "would shut down their centre for two weeks every year to inspect their equipment," says Partridge. "Using Papertrail, they reduced that to five days.

"Now everything is tagged, they expect to cut it down to two days."

Start improving your efficiency today

PPE suppliers and inspectors such as C2 Vertical Safety in Sweden, Xi Training in the UK, 5th Point in Australia, and many others around the globe, are using Papertrail to wave goodbye to lost administration time, errors and poor asset utilisation. What about you?

Find out how you can run a smarter, safer PPE service today with Papertrail.

Call us now on +44 1248 719270 or write to us at mail@papertrail.io.

About DMM

DMM is a company that designs, manufactures and sells high-quality equipment for use in climbing, mountaineering, tree care, working at height, rope access and rescue. DMM strives to achieve the highest levels of quality, innovation and service.

About Papertrail

Papertrail was created out of the need to find an easier way to keep accurate records and demonstrate compliance for equipment inspections and audits.

Today, industry-leading partners, SMEs to larger enterprise and public sector organisations and their staff and contractors trust Papertrail to drive business efficiencies and optimise compliance by managing equipment inspections, certification and safety records. Find out more at papertrail.io.

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papertrail
Record keeping made simple