

CASE STUDY

**Talking Rain.**  
Beverage Company

Talking Rain drastically streamlines NCR processing and expands cross-team visibility with AssurX



**AssurX**



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*AJ Colosimo,  
Senior Manager of Quality Design*

## OVERVIEW

As Talking Rain expanded its manufacturing network and product line, manual processes required time-consuming cross-checking and made it difficult to maintain consistent, up-to-date vendor and nonconformance report (NCR) data. Integrating AssurX with its Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system and Microsoft Power BI helped the company increase monthly NCR closures while saving hours per vendor update.

## THE ORGANIZATION

Talking Rain is a Washington-based beverage company known for brands like Sparkling Ice, Popwell prebiotic soda, and the company's flagship product, Talking Rain Waters.

Talking Rain works with an international network of co-manufacturers and ingredient suppliers, requiring close coordination across quality, procurement, and planning teams. The company has significantly expanded in recent years, both in terms of product volume and the complexity of the products themselves.

As a leading beverage manufacturer, Talking Rain places a high priority on supplier oversight which involves ingredient documentation, allergen information, and ensuring compliance with applicable laws and regulations. Managing that supplier data accurately and consistently is a critical component of the company's commitment to quality.

## SCALING BEYOND MANUAL QUALITY PROCESSES

As Talking Rain continued to expand its manufacturing capabilities and product portfolio, it needed a centralized QMS platform that could scale across teams and external partners. "As we grew, we needed a single system that our internal teams and external manufacturing partners could all work in together" explains AJ Colosimo, Senior Manager of Quality Design.



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“There was a lot of manual back-and-forth with suppliers and external manufacturers that resulted in a lot of time spent on difficulties with change revisions, document history, and review processes,” he says.

Although nonconformances were logged in a ticketing platform, tracking issues became increasingly difficult as supplier and external manufacturer networks expanded and product lines diversified.

“We had outgrown the capabilities of what we had been using in-house as a QMS,” says Colosimo.

Ultimately, Talking Rain decided to deploy a centralized QMS that could scale with its growth and allow external manufacturers to work directly within the same system.

### **TAKING THE QMS TO THE NEXT LEVEL**

Talking Rain implemented AssurX in 2019 and has since deployed a broad suite of solutions, including:

- Audit Management
- Complaint Management
- Corrective and Preventive Action (CAPA)
- Document Management
- Nonconformance Management
- Supplier Quality Management
- Training Management

More recently, Talking Rain has shifted its focus to integrating AssurX with the company’s ERP system, to keep supplier and vendor data synchronized across the organization.

The company has also integrated NCR data from AssurX with Microsoft Power BI, where the company does most of its business performance reporting. Here, the complexity of NCR data, including quantities, materials, instances, and costs, presented unique challenges, particularly around identifying correct backend field names.

For both integrations, Colosimo’s team leveraged AssurX training to streamline the process. He says the two factors with the biggest impact were AssurX training and using the analytics designer to rapidly prototype the new reports in Power BI.

“Those two things probably reduced our development time by half,” says Colosimo, adding that prior to training, his team had struggled with getting the NCR data into Power BI for close to a year.



“We didn’t have good visibility to that until we actually had this reporting in place.”

*AJ Colosimo,  
Senior Manager of Quality Design*

## **ENHANCED VISIBILITY DRIVES INCREASE IN MONTHLY NCR CLOSURES**

Within two to three months of onboarding AssurX Analytics, the team had usable reporting inside AssurX. Within 6 months, they were able to run multiple fully automated reports with ease.

“Once we had full visibility into this data, we saw a significant increase in the number of nonconformances we were closing each month,” Colosimo says.

Instead of the quality team manually pushing data out upon request, procurement, planning, and quality co-pack managers can now access real-time NCR dashboards independently.

“We have at least three different teams within the company who are able to pull this data and use it to manage their parts of the business, without having to reach out to us.”

## **ERP INTEGRATION HAS STRENGTHENED PROCESS CONTROL**

Integrating the ERP with AssurX has delivered significant time savings for Colosimo’s team, on the order of several hours per vendor update.

Equally important, the integration also ensures that both systems display accurate information, particularly around vendor status, and use similar naming conventions to eliminate confusion.

“Integrating with the ERP has helped us error-proof the business,” says Colosimo, noting that the quality team is now able to trust the source data in both systems.

“It’s saved a significant amount of time not having to jump back and forth between these systems to compare records and data, and then having to ask which system has the correct information,” he says.

## **NCR REPORTING UNCOVERS HIDDEN WORKFLOW INEFFICIENCY**

As Colosimo’s team built and refined reports in AssurX Analytics, they also uncovered a hidden bottleneck in their NCR approval process.

As the team built these reports, they identified opportunities to streamline how approval tasks are routed which greatly reduced administrative burden and improved NCR cycle time.

“We didn’t have good visibility to that until we actually had this reporting in place,” Colosimo explains.



“AssurX gives us a common workflow and system for people to use, rather than having to go back and forth over email or phone calls.”

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To address the issue, the team reconfigured how signature requests appear in user task lists and hotlists within AssurX. Now, employees only see signature requests when they are actionable and will advance the workflow.

“It’s prevented rework from people having to do the same step twice,” he says.

## **A CENTRALIZED SYSTEM THAT ADAPTS WITH THE COMPANY**

For Colosimo, one of the most valuable aspects of AssurX is the way it’s allowed the organization to work across teams. Quality processes at Talking Rain may touch as many as five internal teams, along with external manufacturing partners.

“AssurX gives us a common workflow and system for people to use, rather than having to go back and forth over email or phone calls,” Colosimo says.

He notes that while configuring the system requires some upfront planning, AssurX’s flexibility has been vital for a company managing a growing supplier network and evolving product lines.

“Our business processes change over time,” he explains. “AssurX is able to adapt with us as we adjust our workflows or business processes.”

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