

EASE

Customer Story

# First Brands Group Scales Quality Management Globally with EASE

A close-up, high-angle photograph of a car's wheel assembly, showing the hub, spokes, and tire. The image is in a cool, blue-toned color palette. A diagonal teal line separates the top text area from the image.

**FIRST**  
BRANDS  
GROUP™

First Brands Group uses EASE not only to standardize quality management across multiple brands, locations, and languages worldwide, but to track customer and supplier concerns as well. EASE has also helped the company increase visibility when integrating newly acquired businesses, improve employee engagement, and modernize its approach to quality control.

“It's like flying a 747 aircraft; you need a dashboard to know where you're flying and when to adjust to achieve objectives,” says Brian Csikos, Senior Director of Quality at First Brands Group. “With EASE, I have a dashboard now in which to run quality, to run the business.”

## Background

First Brands Group is a \$6 billion global automotive products manufacturer that designs, produces, and distributes a broad portfolio of well-known brands, including FRAM® filtration products, Autolite® spark plugs, and TRICO® wiper blades. It operates in over 90 locations worldwide and has expanded rapidly through acquisitions and vertical integrations.

As the company continued to grow and integrate new businesses, it faced increasing challenges in maintaining consistent quality standards across its diverse operations. Many of the acquired organizations had different quality control processes and relied on manual, pen-and-paper methods that were difficult to track and scale. These issues highlighted the urgent need for a centralized digital solution.

## Rapid Growth Increased Inefficiencies and Exposure to Risk

First Brands encountered quality management challenges that fell into a couple of key areas: lack of standardized processes, and inefficient issues tracking and resolution.



### Standardized Processes

In many cases, newly acquired businesses operated with different processes, systems, and languages, making it difficult to standardize quality management across multiple sites and regions. This created barriers to efficiency and slowed down integration efforts.

“The plants would report their numbers into an Excel sheet, and that was the extent of our visibility. We had no common quality management software,” says Csikos.




I had to go to each plant individually to get information and data — and with over 90 locations worldwide, you can imagine how inefficient and complicated that got.

And while some sites were performing layered process audits (LPAs) to varying degrees, others were not. For a company with a robust vertical integration strategy to improve efficiencies, Csikos knew standardization was necessary.

## Issues and Risk Management

With growth came the challenge of control and monitoring. Quality issues were not always consistently identified or escalated, leading to costly operational disruptions and increased rework or scrap. The absence of an integrated system also made it difficult to track and resolve supplier-related defects and customer complaints efficiently, often leading to delays and recurring issues.



From a quality standpoint, it only takes one issue to slip through, and it can have a major impact on both the customer and the cost.

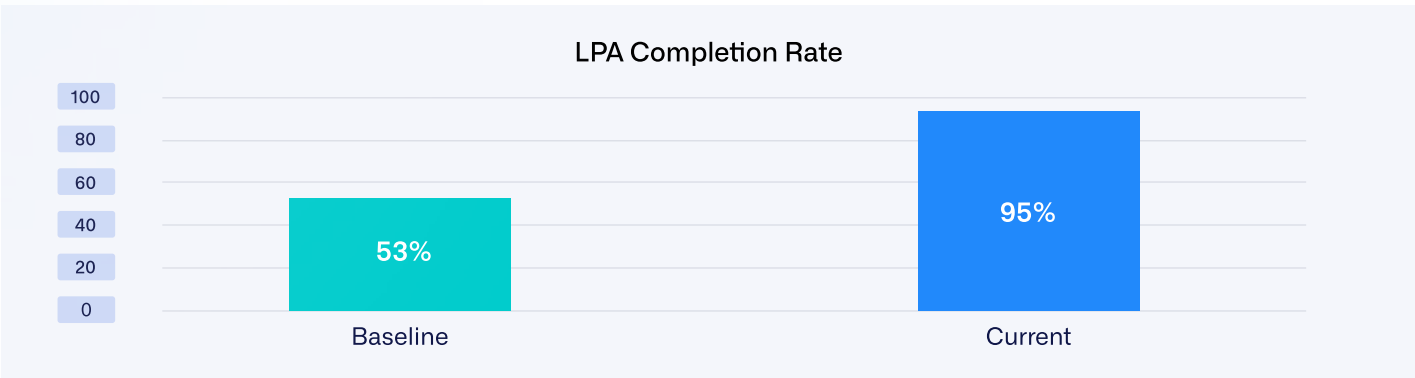
## Improving Visibility and Stakeholder Involvement

The EASE platform provided an intuitive way for operational teams to report issues, track corrective actions, and monitor progress, reducing the likelihood of errors and ensuring a proactive approach to quality management.

## Proof in Numbers: A Catalyst for Action

After implementing EASE, First Brands saw an increase in LPA completion rates (which closely correlates to improved quality) from 53% to an average of 95%.

When the LPAs reveal an issue or concern, those findings are being closed out at a higher rate as well, improving from 50% before EASE to now around 95%. Several sites, including Fram, perform over 200 audits per month.



“With the visibility of EASE, I can see which findings are open, how long they've been open, who has them open,” says Csikos. “I can reach out directly amongst all our plants and ping them and say, hey, why has this been open? Do you need help?”

“We’ve also been able to add and automate notifications for escalation, depending on severity,” he continues. “When we have findings that are critical, we can assign those as such and escalate that to, now, the vice president level.”

## Using EASE to Track Customer and Supplier Issues

Beyond LPAs, First Brands now tracks customer issues and supplier concerns using customized issue templates within EASE as well.



EASE is now a one-stop shop for us. I can see our layered process audits, supplier issues, and customer issues in one application. I don’t know anyone else who’s doing that.

This process for tracking customer and supplier issues ensures that:

- ☒ Each problem is logged (with the ability to attach evidence like photos or videos) and assigned to the appropriate person.
- ☒ The resolution process is documented, ensuring accountability and preventing repeated problems.
- ☒ Open and overdue issues are easily tracked and monitored, reducing delays in resolving customer concerns.

Since implementing EASE for issues tracking, time-to-resolution has decreased significantly, reducing costs associated with sorting, scrap, and returns, and helping plants take a more proactive approach to customer and supplier service.

First Brands Group has also begun analyzing trends in customer complaints to identify recurring quality issues and implement systemic improvements. The visibility provided by EASE allows them to prioritize critical problems, reducing the financial and reputational risks associated with product defects.



The faster we can address and close these customer issues, the less we'll spend due to poor quality.

## Standardizing Quality Management Across Acquired Companies

First Brands Group has added LPAs into its corporate standards and “House of World Class Quality,” a framework being used globally to improve quality to its customers.

As the organization grows, integrating new companies into a standardized quality system has been a priority to ensure consistent tracking and visibility across the entire organization:

- ☒ Newly acquired plants can be quickly onboarded by Ease.io’s multilingual, global implementation and customer success teams.
- ☒ Since EASE is available in 26 languages, sites in multiple countries can use the same platform, making it easier for corporate to oversee global quality programs and maintain consistency.
- ☒ Employee engagement is improved thanks to local language support, especially in Mexico and South America, allowing for more effective training, collaboration, and communication.

“We don't have to start from scratch, and that removes a huge roadblock. They feel part of the team, part of the bigger company, right away,” says Csikos.

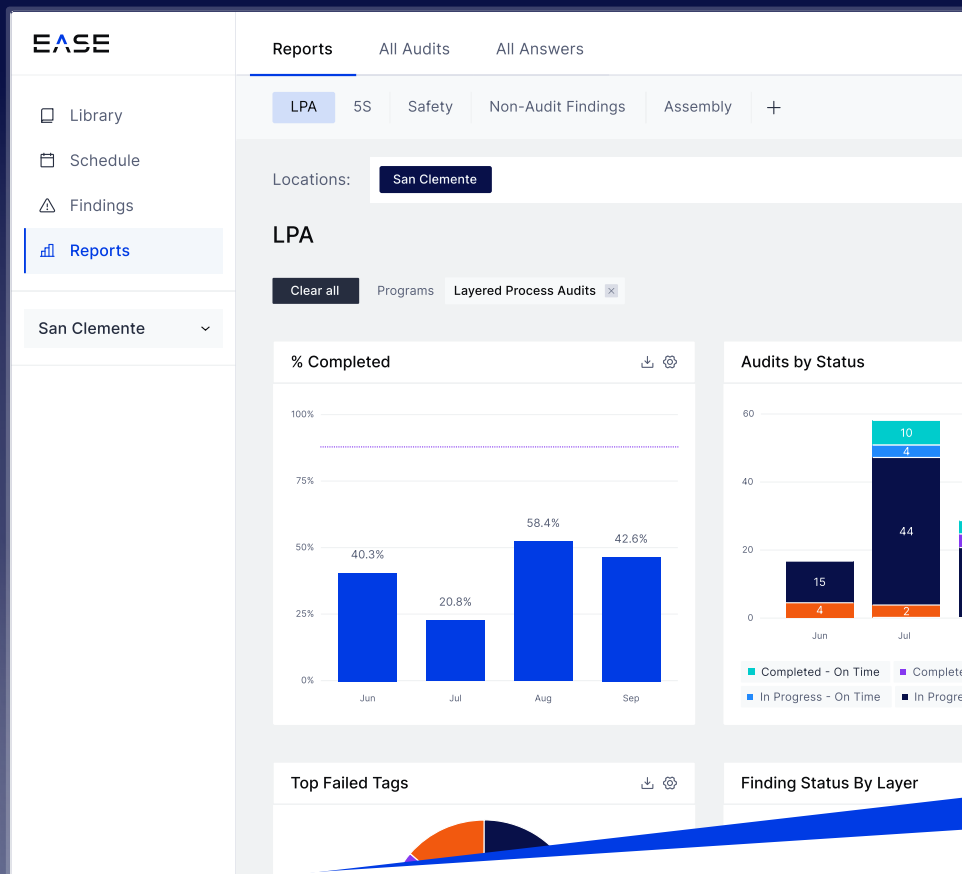
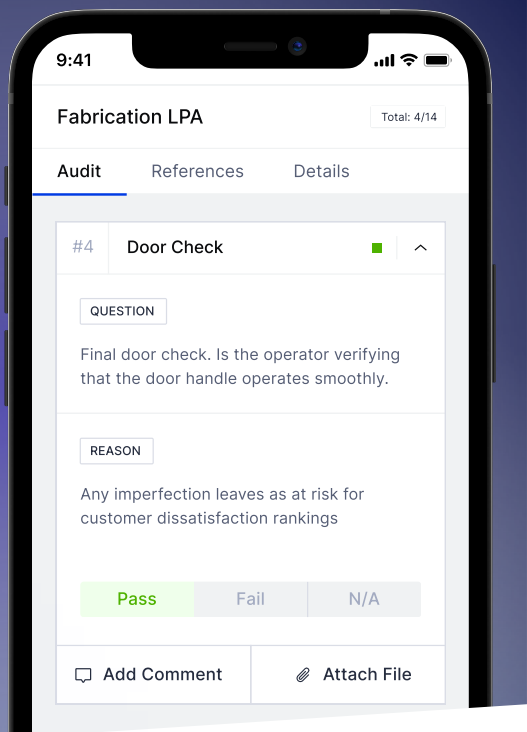


EASE has helped to bring our companies and business units together because we're tracking things the same way in the same application, in different countries.

“EASE has really helped us gel as a corporate quality team, and now that's even becoming bigger with customer issues and supplier concerns,” continues Csikos.

This approach has not only improved process standardization but also enhanced employee retention by making quality management tools more accessible, says Csikos. Additionally, younger employees who prefer digital tools over manual paper-based tracking have been more engaged and productive.

First Brands sees Ease.io as a crucial partner in its long-term quality management and digital strategy. By embedding the EASE platform into its global quality framework, the company is driving higher efficiency, improving standards, and building a strong culture of quality across its growing number of brands and sites.



## About Ease.io

Ease.io's cloud-based SaaS platform for manufacturers, EASE, digitally connects and automates critical plant floor work processes, including audits, inspections, task assignments, data collection and more. Dana, Tenneco, Eaton and other leading manufacturers in 40+ countries use EASE to drive quality, safety, productivity, and compliance. Founded in 1986, Ease.io is headquartered in San Clemente, California.

To learn more or request a demo, visit [ease.io/demo](https://ease.io/demo).