

# TOP GLOBAL VEHICLE INTERIORS SUPPLIER BOOSTS AUDIT ENGAGEMENT AND VISIBILITY WITH EASE

EASE

An Eissmann manufacturing plant in the Czech Republic implemented EASE to replace paper and Excel tracking of layered process audits (LPAs). The EASE system has helped improve engagement with audits, delivering plant-wide visibility to resolve quality issues faster while saving hours every week on audit administration.



## Background

Eissmann Group Automotive is a leading supplier of vehicle interiors for top automotive manufacturers worldwide. Headquartered in Germany, the company has 5,000 global employees and production facilities in eastern Europe, Mexico, China and the United States.

The Company first started with Kamishibai to replace lengthy 5S audits that were being performed infrequently. 5S audits were done once per month by group of around 5 auditors, who didn't have always time to perform the audit. The set of questions was fixed and didn't correspond with ongoing issues and problems to be found and fixed. The company started its layered process audit (LPA) program to meet customer-specific requirements under IATF 16949. Recognizing these high-frequency audits as a key strategy for preventing defects, Eissmann also uses LPAs to more proactively react to emerging or repeat quality issues.

### Manual Audit Processes Increase Issue Response Time

An Eissmann plant in the Czech Republic initially used paper and Excel files to manage LPA checklists. According to Marie Křížková, Integrated Management System Manager, this approach was extremely time-consuming. It also made it difficult to react flexibly to new requirements and complaints.

"The number of documents and Excel files was overwhelming," says Křížková, noting that updating a single question required changing 20 documents. Each question was supported by a photo which had to be edited to point out the issue. A green frame was used to highlight compliance and a red frame to highlight a noncompliance with company standards. Each time, she would have to open the file, change the question, replace the pictures and reformat the pages.

"The entire process would take nearly a week," Křížková says. "It was our biggest challenge."



Then she had to print the new checklist and distribute it on the production floor. This needed to be done for every single production line, each of which had its own specific questions. The result was that it was very difficult to add questions in response to new standards or requirements, or to verify new countermeasures were in place.

"The audits weren't as flexible as I needed them to be," says Křížková. "The whole thing started to lose its magic."

Reporting was another weak link in the paper-based system, with results primarily kept in each production line where issues needed to be resolved. According to Křížková, this made it harder for management to identify issues occurring across more than one production line.

**"From the standpoint of understanding the complete plant status, it really wasn't providing useful or effective feedback," she says.**

## Finding a Streamlined LPA Solution

Křížková first learned about EASE from a leading automaker onsite to evaluate her plant prior to awarding them a project. The customer's positive experience led her to conduct further research online and eventually pursue a free pilot implementation, during which time she tested two other applications.

Her main requirement was that the system enabled frequent audits and checklist updates. It also needed to be user-friendly, with the ability to include photos for easy comparison of conforming vs. non-conforming status. Finally, she wanted something that would improve reporting to better identify trends and systemic issues.

"EASE met all my criteria," says Křížková. On top of meeting all her requirements, EASE's plant-based pricing was more cost-effective than competing solutions that required monthly fees for each user. It also made more sense given that the number of employees at the plant is constantly changing.

During the pilot, the EASE team went step-by-step through the platform so she could consider the best implementation approach, giving her extra time to test the system while waiting for corporate approval. What sealed the deal, however, was finding that EASE had a Czech language option for users.

"Not all my colleagues speak English or German," says Křížková, adding that EASE was the only system she tested that allowed users to switch to Czech language.

## Leads to Greater Visibility

As Křížková rolls out the system to different areas of the plant, she has seen a big jump in user engagement with audits. This increased participation has improved reporting, providing plant-wide visibility into quality issues and overall LPA system health.

LPAs at the plant currently incorporate 5S, process quality, safety, environmental protection, data protection, and maintenance questions. Křížková can randomize and rotate questions with a few clicks, keeping checklists fresh while saving hours each week. Employees are actually happy to use the system, which Křížková considers a huge achievement.

"If people don't want to do their audits, then they don't pay attention," says Křížková. "With EASE, I can make the audits much shorter while also making checklists different every time."

The result, she says, is that people must pay attention to questions and can't rush through questions. The audit photo feature also makes audits faster by allowing auditors to:

- Use photos attached to questions to quickly identify conforming vs. non-conforming status
- Upload a photo to a failed question without having to write a lengthy description of the non-conformance
- Capture evidence of conformance with a photo

More than just helping auditors, Křížková says EASE also promotes process standardization reminding operators how to do their work.

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"It's like a training system," she says. "The production line gets that repetition and reminder about standards, requirements and procedures, which is key." Rather than treating audits as a punishment tool when there are nonconformities identified, EASE enables the plant to pursue the added value of auditing.

From a reporting standpoint, Křížková says the EASE platform has improved visibility by enabling:

- Identification of repeat findings to address and prevent recurring issues
- Creation of custom dashboards for production managers specific to their area
- Ongoing monitoring of plant-wide results to track emerging trends and quality issues

"I can see audit results immediately online, and so can every user including, most importantly, the person responsible for the audited area. I can see every day how many audits were completed," she says. EASE

helps her team maintain a 98% audit completion rate, with audit trends reported to the managing director and the management team weekly. The management team is also informed of the top issues, including any outdated or unclear standards.

In addition to improving audit engagement and reporting, Křížková says EASE has helped streamline external audits.

"If auditors have a question about a particular issue, I can immediately show them the corrective action we've taken" she says. Křížková adds that both IATF auditors and customers have been notably impressed by her plant's LPA system.

Ultimately, says Křížková, EASE has helped provide a window into quality performance across the plant, giving leaders actionable information for driving faster improvement. What's more, this initial success has given her added momentum to leverage LPAs to the fullest.

"Every day, I get a new idea or question that we can check with EASE," she says "We live the system, doing the audits because we want to — not because we have to."

### About Ease

EASE is the innovative mobile platform that helps manufacturers simplify how they administer, conduct and respond to plant floor audits and inspections. With best-in-class support for safety, layered process audits, 5S/6S and more – EASE drastically reduces labor costs and delivers insights that ensure audit programs drive real business value.

Leading automotive, aerospace and manufacturing organizations around the globe depend on EASE's enterprise scale, expertise and customer-centricity. EASE is a privately held company based in Mission Viejo, California. To learn more, please visit [www.ease.io](http://www.ease.io).



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