

Remote Inspections on the Go

Organizations are now engaging in remote inspections using mobile video technology to cut costs, improve safety and boost quality. Putting video into the hands of experts through smartphones and tablets allows them to oversee processes wherever they are.

Recording video to conduct an investigation can be helpful from a liability perspective but that same information can be more valuable when used to manage business processes in real time. Remote inspections go beyond watching employees at cash registers by driving more value

“Mobile video can be used to manage business activities in real time and include remote inspections for facilities management and critical processes.”

from video overall. Areas where remote inspections are making an impact today include facilities management, critical equipment and processes management, remote manufacturing, high-value manufacturing or high-risk employee activities.

Facility managers with large or distributed sites face a challenge in physically having their team cover all areas to keep things running smoothly. One multi-facility organization is using mobile video on iPhones. Through mobile access to roof-mounted cameras, their facilities team can monitor roof conditions, looking for storm damage or winter ice build-up. Facilities teams are typically mobile and having access to conditions in real time lets them better manage repair, upgrade status and even safety or compliance issues.

Companies working with distributed or third-party manufacturing often have challenges during specific steps of a manufacturing process that impact quality and yield. The operations team is now able to remotely check their live processes at any time. This ensures that the right process is being followed and allows leaders to help with additional training or guidance as issues are identified.

High-risk employee activities is another area where remote inspection can impact employee behavior, lower risks and reduce costs. A good example is a transportation organization seeing rising costs from accidents. Their drivers operate equipment

that doesn't require a rigorous driver certification but the equipment is large enough to cause serious accidents if used improperly. By installing in-vehicle cameras watching both the drivers and the road, they can enforce their expectations of safe driving practices. Managers (who are also mobile) can check in on drivers during their shift using mobile video on BlackBerry phones and watch live job performance as well as access recordings of a shift.

Remote inspections not only provide the peace of mind that procedures are being followed but they allow actively engaging experts to help with issues.

An energy firm extended the value of their security video infrastructure through remote inspections of critical equipment using iPads. Machinery and process experts who travel between locations can access remote facility cameras wherever they are. The person with deep knowledge is often not at the physical facility where their expertise is required. These experts can then help local personnel troubleshoot issues or perform spot inspections. Mobile video puts information in the expert's hands, allowing them to extend their reach.

Here are a few questions that can help you identify places where mobile remote inspections can be of value:

1. What business procedures require a knowledgeable worker to move around a facility to check on people or processes? Can they get the information they need visually?
2. What decisions need to be made in real time based on the condition or status of something? Is the person making that decision always in front of a computer or are they mobile?
3. What high-risk activities occur where there are problems today? Rather than someone physically standing over the process, would regular spot checks by a remote expert help with that problem?

From the answers you should be able to start formulating ideas on where mobile video remote inspections can help improve quality and cut costs.



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