SAFEGUARD PROFILER CASE STUDY

As part of our never-ending commitment to understanding and meeting the needs of our clients, we recently sat down with James Pfeifer, longtime client and friend of ACM, to discuss the ways ACM's software solution SafeGuard Profiler influences his business.

Client: James Pfeifer
Position: Independent Contractor - FS Engineer

ACM: Tell us a little about the type of work you do as an Independent Contractor – FS Engineer.

JP: My professional background started with engineering and instrumentation in the field, before moving back into the office to pursue the engineering and programming of safety systems. Over the past 24 years I have been involved in every stage of the safety cycle from automation to instrumentation controls to the design of controls and safety systems from inception to delivery and program maintenance.

ACM: How has your process environment changed over the years? And how has SafeGuard Profiler influenced this change?

Back when I started with Colt Engineering (now Worley-Parsons) all of our calculations, spreadsheets and conclusions needed to be generated individually - there was no software solution that took the complexity of what we did and facilitated it via software.

Enter SiCore (an early edition of SafeGuard Profiler), ACM's software solution; built specifically to manage the calculations required to conduct SIL assessments and verifications. It was basically a glorified calculator with built-in calculations that made larger projects easier to manage, especially multiple calculations and reworking changes. What used to take me days to calculate by hand could now be done in minutes. Use of tools such as Excel add another element that the tool can be inadvertently modified, so constant checking of the calculations and formula are required. No engineering company is in the software business. Their focus should be in delivering an Engineered product to the client. Developing software and tools to use in house is outside the core skill set, and distracts from what is important, doing the engineering.

Doing calculations is one thing - tracking it is another.

Due to the complexity and extreme detail of the work I do, documentation and tracking is crucial when timelines are tight – SafeGuard Profiler provides an easy way to perform different scenarios using the same data. Software allows you to switch seamlessly from design options and see the impact right in front of you. To do this manually, even for small modifications, could take months with client review and sorting details. Imagine doing over 300 SIL calculations for a project manually; the tracking, audit trail, revisions and changes become incredibly labour intensive and costly for the client. Jobs that are scheduled for a month and a half, end up requiring four months of work after the calculations are properly done by engineers.

Thankfully, SafeGuard Profiler software allows the user to redo things easily, in a format that can be tracked and clarified. Not only does it make it easier to produce and document what you did during design and calculations to arrive at your design conclusion – it also displays it in a comprehensive and user-friendly way, utilizing ACM's patented bowtie design. Procedures are defined along with the SRS spec explaining the what, why and how to the operators. This collection of data is easy to find, read and comprehend as part of the bowtie, making SRS solutions much easier to select and communicate to non-tech-savvy stakeholders like operators and management.

ACM: How would you describe the nature of your relationship with ACM?

JP: From the very beginning, ACM has been excellent in communicating with me via set-up and in addressing my needs with each new edition, providing an evolution of a product that addresses real industry needs. They make sure they listen to what's going on with the clients that are using it and ensure their development goals match the needs of the industries they serve.

Take SafeGuard Profiler as an example – initially designed as an internal tool exclusively, it was understood to be a test product/tool with limited uses. But over the years, collaboration between ACM and the users ensured that the features in each new edition of the software matched the required and requested uses of their clients - more uses, more features.

ACM: In your opinion, is there any area where ACM's software solutions fall short?

JP: Well, I haven't used SafeGuard Profiler directly in a LOPA or HAZOP, as my involvement in a project typically starts after this has taken place, but I have enjoyed how seamlessly the information generated by a PHA imports into SafeGuard Profiler without the need to massage it or waste time repopulating it into a workable format.

This is not the case for some of the client projects I contribute to. When clients farm out the front end EPCs to multiple contractors, who do not understand how the information they produce is even used, the results and deliverables can be confusing; often times requiring days of review just to ensure I understand the full scope of the information. But when this data is collected using the SafeGuard Profiler tool, the information can be understood and used correctly immediately.

Some of the competing offerings work for the more simple tasks - but fall short when it comes to more complex calculations. On the other hand, I always feel comfortable that ACM solutions will deliver on everything I need. They provide adjustments and fixes quickly and in response to my needs.

Now if I could just get all the clients I work with to adopt this superior product, my job would be made a heck of a lot easier.

ACM: We now provide new software subscribers with a 30-day free trial, complete with adequate training – how important do you feel this training aspect of the offering is for new users?

JP: ACM's software is really just a tool. And the tool will only ever be as good as its operator. Regardless of how user-friendly the software is, we are still working with complicated processes, and while complicated processing can be simplified it should never be shortcut.

Therefore, educating the user is very important - even those that think they know what they are talking about may not understand the full extent of the project, how the information gathered by the software is used or when clarification is required.

It is of utmost importance that FS Engineers understand the safety lifecycle and appreciate the difference between a plan that looks good on paper and a plan that can be operated and maintained in a way that meets the safety cycle goals, including maintenance and improvements. SafeGuard Profiler makes understanding this difference much easier.

But the fact remains, just because this software does what you need it to, does not mean it's the best tool for every potential user. You wouldn't give a toddler a sledgehammer, which is why ACM makes sure before they even start the training that the operator has the training foundation to operate the tool effectively.

ACM's strategy of providing free training with the 30-day trial as part of the Profiler sales process helps to ensure this tool is used properly and is explained in the context of the much larger safety lifecycle of a project.

ACM: Do you feel the SafeGuard Profiler price point is justified?

JP: The cost of the software, including yearly maintenance, is easy to justify when you consider the time and resources saved without sacrificing the integrity of the work done. Clients want data fast to keep things moving, which can only be done using this software, especially when the client makes changes along the way.

Furthermore, being responsive and getting data in front of the client to initiate changes quickly, and correctly – makes the client the winner. The only downside is that in an industry that charges and pays by the hour, I find myself charging less for the work I do. Fortunately, I prefer to do things right instead of succeeding on the back of my clients.

I believe in using the right tool for the right job - builds my reputation as a contractor as being able to do a job efficiently and effectively – if I do that, the work will come.

ACM: **All things considered, how much does SafeGuard Profiler contribute to your day-to-day business?**

JP: **All the projects I work on now require this tool. I would never go back to manual calculations, as none of my current projects would be successful. This tool ensures that the work I do remains consistent, at a high standard and in a format that I can explain easily to clients. I would confidently say it is mission critical to my success.**

Let me explain:

EPCMs want to do things a standard way - everyone the same - one piece of software, tool or procedure - this is what, how and why you are using to help guide billing and quote deliverables. International work does not pay out cost + which makes understanding the work required right from the start crucial.

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