



Food Safety and Traceability Software Buyer's Guide

Critical Questions to Consider During Your Food Safety & Traceability Software Buying Process





INTRODUCTION

You want to look further into food safety & traceability software solutions. But where should you start?

Now comes the fun: outlining your unique needs, identifying vendors, comparing features, and ultimately selecting the best solutions to meet your food safety and traceability software needs, all within your timeline and budget requirements.

Over the next few pages, we'll dive into critical questions that need to be asked and answered during your due diligence process. It's easy to overlook certain functionality or system requirements during the software buying process, and as a result, we're here to make sure you're prepared to make the best decision possible for your organization.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

4		Supplier Management
5		Document Management
6		Audit and Assessment Management
7		Quality Incident Management
8		Supply Chain Traceability
9		Recall and Withdrawal Management
10		System Security and Design
11		Implementation, Training, Support
12		Recall and Withdrawal Management
13		Conclusion

Supplier Management

How much time do you spend managing your suppliers? With new regulations like the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), supplier verification and required documentation submission practices are more important than ever. In addition, if you let these processes fall through the cracks, adverse situations like recalls or withdrawals can quickly spiral out of control. Ensure your success by creating custom approval, onboarding and instructional workflows that fit the unique needs of your supply chain – including required fields around documents, locations and products.

Ask: Does the system...

- Provide an overall summary of each supplier and their compliance with a supplier management program?
- Allow the system administrator and all suppliers to upload and edit their documentation and unique information in bulk?
- Allow the system administrator and suppliers to comment on products and locations, determine who can view comments, and notify specific parties of new comments?
- Enable ongoing, back and forth communication between suppliers and users from a centralized space?
- Allow the labeling of inactive product or locations that are not currently in use, as well as the ability to reactivate them when usage resumes?
- Provide users with a view that compiles supplier products and locations, along with configurable columns to see other details?
- Allow users to quickly filter on specific product or location details?
- Reflect changes when a supplier modifies or deletes an existing product or location?
- Guide suppliers through onboarding smoothly and efficiently while tracking progress?
- Equip suppliers with a compiled, interactive list of to-do items that allows them to quickly and efficiently provide necessary documentation, updates and affiliated details?
- Provide default and custom sets of product or location attribute fields to collect around supplier products or locations?

Document Management

How quickly can you review all required documentation, determine how many of these documents have expired, and gain a clear picture of upcoming expiration dates? Manage the key documents that make up your food safety plans and strategies for quick reference in the Cloud. Increase efficiency by ensuring maximum visibility into and control of these key pieces of information, as well as by communicating needs with supply chain partners.

Ask: Does the system...

- Have the ability to house an unlimited amount of documents including, but not limited to, audits, unique certificates, 3rd party testing and other reports?
- Accept JPEG, PDF, and other photo file types? Are the photos visible within the system?
- Allow users to export or archive documents?
- Allow users to create versions of old documents as new documents are added?
- Have the ability to associate a document to a third party audit and fill out critical information around that audit?
- Allow users to associate a document type to a location, product or business?
- Allow users to approve or request a corrective action or a change request on a supplier - provided document?
- Offer reporting for the number of documents in each status expiring documents?
- Provide an automated method for requesting and reminding suppliers of necessary documentation?



Audit and Assessment Management

Are your auditors mired in spreadsheets and burdened phone calls? Or does your team need to perform ad hoc assessments at the drop of a hat? Track the progress of your auditing team and know where your suppliers stand – complete with notifications around expiration and workflows. Customize your key audit and assessment documents, and standardize them across your entire supply chain – via a single platform – to ensure data integrity, transparent processes and consistently high food quality.

Ask: Does the system...

- Include predefined, common and custom comments associated with the questions within an audit?
- Allow audits to be completed offline with real-time uploads following audit completion?
- Allow identification of minor, major and critical violations?
- Allow system administrators to trigger corrective actions when non-conformance issues arise from an audit or assessment?
- Allow users to see previous responses on a recurring assessment?
- Design workflows that mandate the completion of specific audits and assessments on a predetermined basis?
- Provide a consolidated list of to-do tasks that streamline suppliers' initiation, completion, and update of audits and assessments?
- Allow system administrators to notify suppliers of non-conformance issues with proof of resolution and expected due dates?
- Notify users of upcoming assessments or past due assessments?
- Allow assessments to be conducted using handheld devices, offline with real-time uploads after the inspection is complete?

Quality Incident Management

How do you currently manage quality incidents and associated credit requests? Your food safety and traceability software solution should streamline these processes and reduce the time it takes to manage quality incidents. Capture quality issues anywhere across your supply chain, understand exactly where you are experiencing them and iterate to prevent future occurrences. Report issues directly to your suppliers and distributors, as well as process and track credit requests from within one centralized hub.

Ask: Does the system...

- Provide users with the ability to easily communicate quality incidents to suppliers and distributors?
- Offer templates, as well as the ability to build custom incident types?
- Allow for offline incident collection and real-time uploads upon a re-established internet connection?
- Allow photos and attachments to be associated with incidents captured in the system?
- Let users create custom incident type templates and determine the attribute fields to collect around that incident type?
- Allow the administrator to determine, edit and delete the required or optional attribute fields to collect on an incident submission?
- Allow the administrator to add conditional logic to all incidents' attribute fields for data collection and approval flows?
- Allow the administrator to create unique approval flows based on the type of issued incident?
- Notify the administrator when a new incident has been submitted?

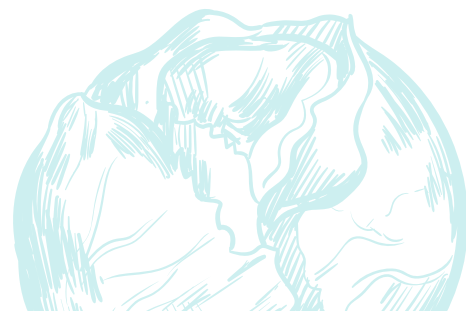


Supply Chain Traceability

Do you have full end-to-end traceability and visibility of your supply chain? Stitch together the critical tracking events of your products to get a real-time visualization of your supply chain. Get access to the data needed to take swift action when faced with a recall or outbreak.

Ask: Does the system...

- Allow data to be captured and/or uploaded to the system?
- Adhere to GS1 Global Traceability Standards?
- Allow system administrators to search and locate a specific lot of product in the supply chain?
- Allow system administrators to launch an investigation into where affected product has been shipped/received in the supply chain?
- Allow traceability event data to be imported and exported from the system for further analysis? In what formats?



Recall and Withdrawal Management

Are you ready for a major recall? Initiate a recall or stock withdrawal across all your locations simultaneously, using automated email, phone and text notifications. Create templates in advance to standardize communications across your supply chain, and institute automatic escalations if actions aren't taken within a specified period of time. Monitor responses, completed actions and resolution by location through a live dashboard as your recall unfolds.

Ask: Does the system...

- Include templates for recalls or stock withdrawals?
- Allow recall templates to be configured by an administrator within the system?
- Allow system administrators to notify the supply chain of a recall? What formats of communication are supported?
- Feature a dashboard for tracking the execution of a recall in real time?
- Allow for the export of recall or stock withdrawal results following issue resolution?
- Include the ability to perform mock recalls?
- Provide a preview of communications before the execution of a recall or stock withdrawal?
- Allow for multiple communication avenues, including the escalation of notifications during a recall?
- Enable administrators to designate contacts for recall initiation and response?
- Allow for eSignatures by recall responders?

External Data and Integration

Will the system you're evaluating create yet another data silo? Not only should it not; it doesn't have to. Whether you use a consumer-facing loyalty app, temperature monitoring sensors, inventory management platforms or grocery delivery services, your software solution should act as a centralized technology platform that connects to many complex data sources and reduces redundancies through integrations.

Ask: Does the system...

- Communicate with other external systems, such as POS systems, ERPs, project work-flow systems and other databases?
- Provide open documentation and educational resources that educate you and your team on integration intricacies, requirements and functionalities?
- Require additional tools for customer integrations?
- Allow data to be imported from existing suppliers, data and processes? What file type is needed to transfer this data?
- Support online and offline functionality?
- Offer reliable communication on integration developments and changes?



System Security and Design

The protection and integrity of your data is of utmost value. When identifying the software solution that's right for you, ensure that it safeguards Personally Identifiable Information against loss, access, use, modification, disclosure or other misuse. All reasonable steps should be taken to prevent unauthorized use or disclosure of your Personally Identifiable Information; this should be a clear priority for the organization with which you're looking to partner.

Ask: Does the system or vendor partner...

- Ensure all data is backed up, secure and safe from the public, other companies, etc.? (This might involve a firewall and tiered network architecture, for example)
- Ensure the proper steps are taken to prevent hacking, phishing, etc.?
- Ensure insurance policies are in place for security-related events?
- Ensure user accounts can be created and deleted?
- Allow 3rd party access?
- Ensure end-of-service data archiving, export, destruction, etc. to meet customer needs?
- Have an active incident response plan? What are the responsibilities of the provider versus those of the customer?
- Offer enterprise licensing and support Single Sign On (SSO)?
- Allow for multiple levels of supplier hierarchy (like parent-child relationships)?
- Allow for search capabilities across the platform?
- Retain a changelog for updates and revisions made to the system?
- Allow for supplier (or other external user) accounts?

Implementation, Training, Support

What level of customer support do you and your team need, as well as expect? Few things are more frustrating than the lack of customer enablement and training. Onboarding services should provide you with maximum knowledge and expertise when and where you need it the most – whether that be onsite or remote. Achieve the full value from your solution based on your unique needs, regardless of your organization's size.

Ask: Does the system or vendor partner...

- Require additional resources or services for successful implementation?
- Provide a standard implementation timeline? If so, what does it look like?
- Provide ongoing customer support and maintenance? What forms does this take, and to what detail?
- Provide 24/7 service hours?
- Offer ongoing, interactive training opportunities?
- Provide process and procedures for scheduled down time due to routine maintenance? If so, what does this look like?
- Provide a standard service-level agreement (SLA)? What is included in this agreement?



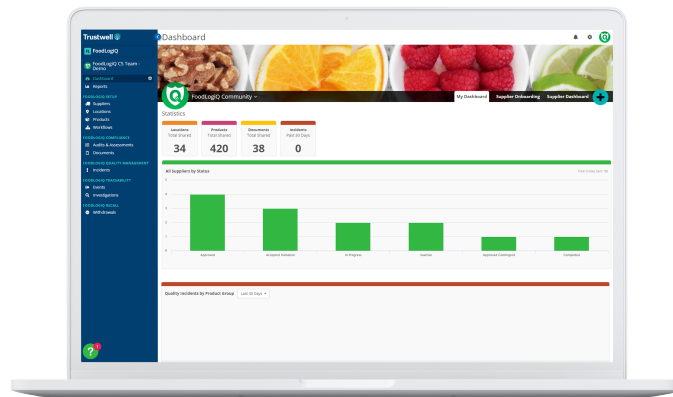
Conclusion

While the list of evaluation criteria may seem limitless, these key questions help to strategically define the priorities your business has and identify which providers match them. Keep this exhaustive list in mind as you evaluate which food safety and traceability software solution best fits you and your team's immediate needs, as well as those of your overall business.

Not only do standard features and functionality carry significant weight, but the range of capabilities a service offers, including its integrations, security standards and support, is vital to consider. It is our hope that this guide helps you answer critical questions that ultimately drive you to make an informed, optimal decision for your organization's food safety success.

Interested in Learning More About the Industry-Leading SaaS Provider of Traceability, Food Safety and Supply Chain Transparency Solutions?

Schedule a Demo Today at www.trustwell.com





Get in Touch with Us

503-585-6242

info@trustwell.com

trustwell.com

4747 Skyline Rd S #100

Salem, OR 9730

