

EXPERIENCE SUMMARIES TLG CONSULTING HISTORY

CHAPTER 20:

PRODUCT RECALLS: PLANNING, DESIGN, ANALYSIS, AND TESTING

Product recalls are possible in virtually every industry in which we work. The most debilitating recalls are those that impact consumers and become highly visible. Recalls of food, pharmaceuticals, over-the-counter medications, medical products, and consumer products, which have broad use and affect consumers of all ages and socio-economic status, pose a real and ominous threat to specific companies, sometimes to entire industries.

There are five absolutely mandatory objectives in any recall situation:

1. The product is identified and removed from the market quickly and efficiently.
2. Potential victims are informed.
3. The consumer is protected.
4. Clear, concise, and accurate records are maintained.
5. Those who need to understand the process, or are affected by it, know about it, understand it, and are comfortable.

The Lukaszewski Group applies recall experience using a hands-on approach to develop useful tools to plan for, analyze, manage, or test recall processes, and to manage the visibility implications. Our experience includes:

- Automobiles
- Consumer packaging
- Consumer products
- Contamination
- Dangerous products
- Defective products
- Federal action
- Food products
- Implants
- Manufacturing deficiencies
- Medical devices
- Over-the-counter products
- Personal hazards/public fear
- Pharmaceuticals
- Product tampering

Our Approach

When faced with the sudden and urgent task of removing a product from the marketplace, a company is judged not only by the failure of the product, but by the manner in which it

responds to the problem, takes decisive action, establishes a corrective action plan to ensure the problem doesn't happen again, and how well it communicates all of this to customers, government, or other interested or affected parties.

Our initial approach to specific recall management situations generally begins with these steps:

- Establish a useful, clear, focused, and achievable recall process and policy.
- Collect all relevant guidance from government agencies and consumer groups.
- Assess risk: identification, evaluation, and classification of complaint.
- Activate Recall Communication Action Committee.
- Define corporate/individual responsibilities: recall coordinator, Chief Executive Officer, Vice President, and manufacturing.
- Assign departmental responsibilities: quality assurance, manufacturing, public relations, and legal.
- Assign plant/regional responsibilities: quality, operations, and regional management.
- Lay out a product removal strategy: elements of the recall, implementation, and removal assessment.
- Identify who does what and how to find them: title, responsibilities, phone, fax, home phone, home fax, car phone, mobile phone, e-mail, blog, Website, assistant's name, and phone.
- Set communication policy, strategy, and timeline.
- Train spokespersons.

The public, the media, and government agencies have become accustomed to recalls that are carried out promptly and efficiently. When they are, there is usually little damage to product and company reputation. The standard is high because the public risk can be enormous. Very specific, specialized experience is required.