

**Novolyze**

# The Top 6 Reasons to Digitalize Forms in the Food Industry



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# Top 6 reasons to digitalize forms in the food industry

1. REDUCE PAPER USE: REDUCE STORAGE SPACE AND IMPROVE SUSTAINABILITY BY CONTRIBUTING TO THE REDUCTION OF PAPER PRODUCTION
2. ACCESS DATA FROM ANYWHERE VIA PHONE, TABLET OR COMPUTER
3. TRACK TRENDS AND DETECT NON-COMPLIANCE IN REAL TIME
4. PROTECT DOCUMENTS FROM GETTING LOST OR DESTROYED
5. CUT DOWN ON APPROVAL CYCLES AND STREAMLINE CRITICAL BUSINESS PROCESSES
6. BE AUDIT READY AT ALL TIMES

# How Digitizing Your Food Safety Forms Can Transform Your Plant



There's no escaping the fact that technology has pushed our lives into new frontiers on so many levels. Yet, some industries still haven't caught up to the digitized trends. It's time to change that.

One of the most significant areas of concentration for businesses is going paperless. Using paper at this point when so much data exists in the cloud is outdated and almost irresponsible.

Not only is paper production harmful to the environment—paper releases harmful chemicals into the air, wastes energy, and contributes to deforestation—but it begs the question: do we need the clutter of massive file cabinets when everything can be digitized?

**Technology is leaving paper behind everywhere; the food and beverage industry is no different. It's time to set the clipboards down and move online.**

# What Is Digitalization of Food Safety Forms?

Digitalization of food safety forms is the use of software to create, maintain and manage data collection around food safety, compliance and quality assurance. You can then easily access via tablet or computer all the data entered into these forms. This includes data such as food safety information, food labels, ingredient lists, maintenance schedules and supply chain issues, to name a few.

Form digitization automatically trends food safety data. Non-compliance with process controls is immediately evident, and corrective action can be taken at the moment. It also enables continuous improvement, efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

Additionally, by digitizing all your plant's forms, you get to create a fully paperless production system.

## What Does Going Paperless Look Like?

There are some immediate benefits to going from pen and ink to digital documents. By digitizing your forms, you will:



**Cut down on approval cycles**



**Save money and storage space**



**Protect documents from getting lost or destroyed**



**Reduce the time and cost of changing documents and forms**



**Streamline critical business processes**



**Make accessing documents and information faster**



**Improve your data security**



**Provide traceable observations with timestamping for records**

# Why Should Food Companies Digitalize Their Forms?

One of the biggest benefits of collecting data digitally is it provides context into underlying trends we may not realize on the surface. With the right system in place, you'll be able to aggregate data and assess it in myriad ways.

For instance, you can see almost immediately any non-compliance issues involving significant process controls but also sanitation and operational readiness. You'll know what's working, what isn't and when, which will allow you to address issues at the moment.

With data trending, you'll be able to make decisions for continuous improvement, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness. And you'll do so while eliminating stores of paperwork and the high risk of human error.

## Digitalization, One Click at a Time

For many in the food industry, digitizing front-line records and forms is mission-critical. Going digital is more efficient than scribbling down notes by hand, which can be misplaced, lost, or worse, misunderstood by someone else.



**You can't back up a piece of paper unless you make several copies.**  
**Digital files are automatically backed-up, which reduces the risk of loss of essential documents.**

For many food companies, the idea of digitizing forms and going paperless can seem overwhelming. But, by going digital, you aren't just freeing up time spent thumbing through stacks of documents for record review and signature. You're also freeing up physical space, which saves money on square footage usage in offices or warehouses.

Going digital takes time and can seem like an formidable task. But some processes are worth changing. Because, in the end, when dealing with precise, critical data like this, serving the material in its most practical form matters.

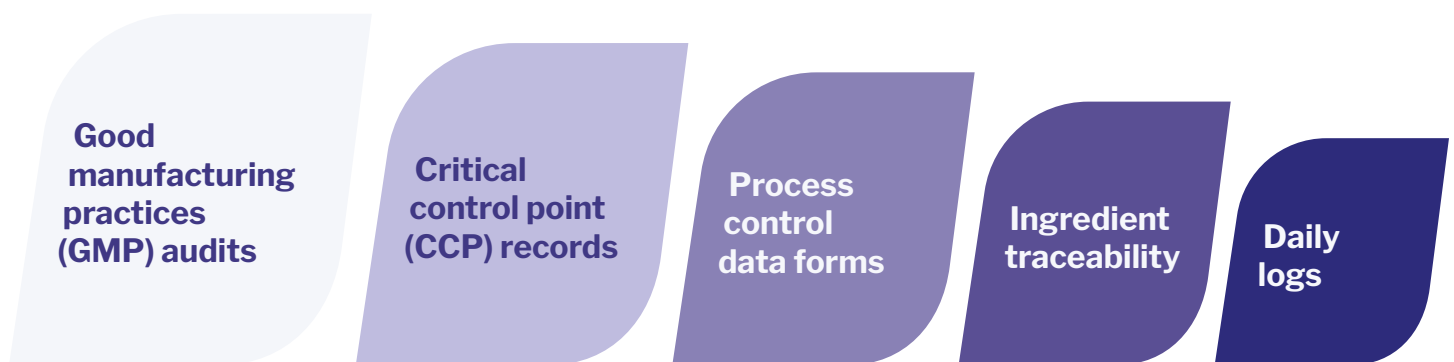
# What Forms Should Be Digitalized?

In short, everything you do on paper you can do electronically on a mobile device. This is especially true when dealing with critical process checks in the food industry.

One check can define a food safety program, and one mishap can doom an entire production. It boils down to safety and what serves the public. Any form with the public in mind will go through rigorous checks and balances to ensure there are no red flags.

When digitized, these documents help streamline day-to-day operations, making it easier to show records while providing a clear look into specific data during inspections or audits.

## Examples of forms you can digitize include:



When digitized, these forms enable you to monitor plant products in real-time, detect deviations and deliver information to you so you can make accurate, real-time decisions based upon facts. Additionally, with everything in the cloud, you'll now be able to easily show data and records to inspectors and auditors.

# How Does Digitalization Make Collecting Information in a Plant Environment Easier?

Automation has become one of the biggest technology trends for good reason: it helps eliminate time spent on strategies that can be driven by artificial intelligence. No matter the industry, companies are streamlining processes across the board.

Through the use of artificial intelligence, you can increase efficiencies by taking long, drawn-out processes and giving them to the software to handle. For instance, instead of picking up stacks of papers, getting them in order, ensuring everything is within its correct flow, and taking them down to the floor, users can pick up an iPad and get to work immediately.

Here are ways digitalization can make collecting plant safety information easier:

- **User-friendly for floor technicians:** Technicians can digitally enter data, enabling them to identify real-time discrepancies and non-compliance issues. This allows for immediate action based on the data surfaced, thus avoiding costly delays.
- **Trends surfaced immediately for more effective audits:** Instead of processing papers manually, the software can visually show trends that can help auditors do their job quicker and more efficiently.
- **Automatic calculations and parameters:** With all your paperwork digitized, you can now monitor process performance, analyze non-conformances, lessens the margin for error and helps address issues right away

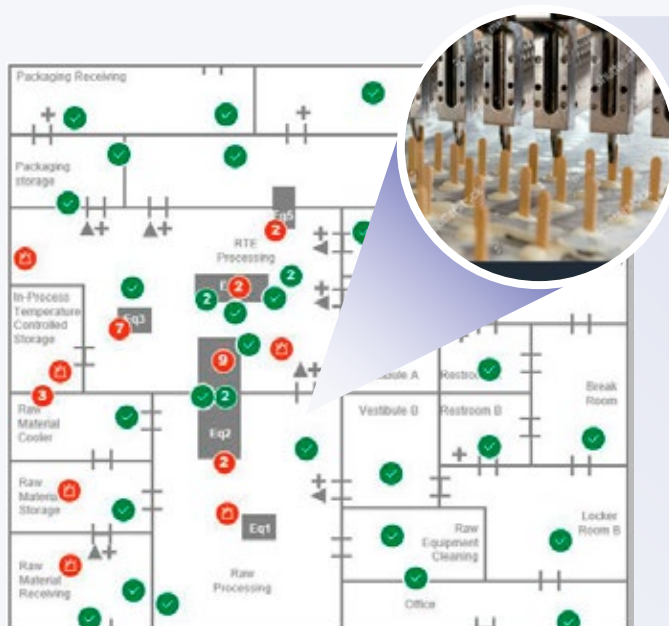
Because there's historical data to mine against, the systems will show issues or alerts that should be a cause of concern or indicate whether everything is compliant. Doing so removes human error, which shaves off time spent on the floor dealing with the mundane while allowing for faster issue resolution.



# What Types of Information Can Be Digitalized?

Whatever data can be collected, examined, and considered is worth keeping. Take photos of everything. Use barcodes and QR codes. The same with maps of the facility. Why not have a detailed breakdown of every station?

By arming your company with information, you're only painting a clearer picture for anyone new on the job.



## Examples of data you can digitize:

INDICATORS OF  
FREQUENCY OF A TASK

TRENDS

INGREDIENT LISTS

SUPPLIERS

ON-SITE USERS

SHELF-LIFE PARAMETERS

IMPORTANT DATES

PLANT INFORMATION

## Is it Hard To Go Digital?

With a user-friendly platform, forms can be accessed anywhere within the cloud. And if you use a solution that sends out consistent reporting on trends, compliance and problems, it can alert the system in case of a failure. All hands won't have to be on deck, thanks to consistently monitoring critical infrastructure.

Similarly, establishing a paperless process creates a faster, internalized system for information. Not only does this save money and time, but it also prepares for even the most difficult audits. If processes are being checked and rechecked, it's better to have data that's tangible to show compliance or a clear path to error reduction. Digitization enables you to track it all, identify trends, and inform future decisions based on data.

Yes, it will take some time to gather all current paper-based information and then get it all configured for use however the ROI pays for itself within a short amount of time.

# Form Digitalization: Going Beyond Digitizing a Paper Process to Capture Information

Transforming food data form collection from paper to digital makes capturing and using data more efficient. Consider these examples:

- **CAPTURE PRODUCT WEIGHT ON AN ELECTRONIC PLATFORM**

Trending the data immediately shows adherence to specifications and, which can be corrected to lower yield losses. Parameters set to indicate non-conformances help the end user to identify and correct any problematic issues.

- **AUTOMATE MASTER SANITATION SCHEDULES**

Set up reminders for your master sanitation schedule. These will automatically generate, eliminating the need to rely on human memory and paper calendars.

- **THINK STRATEGICALLY**

Thinking strategically allows for specific steps to be established, like data collection and understanding customer requirements. Digitization slashes above-board costs and champions traceability and recall events.

## Key Benefits of Digitizing Forms for Food Safety & Quality

Here are three key benefits of digitizing forms involving food safety and quality:

### 1. FOOD SAFETY DATA TRENDS

Data trends can show the frequency of checks done, reducing time and streamlining the process of people doing the reviews. Based on data and non-conformances, changes can be made for efficiency instead of waiting for manual checks, which arrive in a massive stack of papers.

### 2. SUPPLY CHAIN BENEFITS

Going paperless helps the supply chain. And there isn't a person involved in the business who hasn't had their world affected by the issues in a post-pandemic world. Setting up vendors and entering non-conformances when receiving products on whatever platform evaluates vendors for non-conformities. You can even set parameters to call out expiring documentation.

### 3. HELPFUL INFORMATION FOR THIRD-PARTY VENDORS

Going digital with forms can also help you work with vendors to correct any non-conformities (for example, temperature abuse and product quality). The benefits don't stop there. With internalized alerts, shipping and receiving can use a tablet to walk to the truck, taking pictures and notes referring to loads going in and out. Data can be checked to determine the failures of a supplier or a customer.

The safety team can evaluate building safety by utilizing digitalization. Alerts can be sent out for failures through the system for necessary actions. Teams can then use systemic, historical data to put out proverbial fires either literally or internally in the system.

## Getting Started

First things first. What processes are you trying to optimize?

When going digital, the crux is ensuring processes and procedures are consistent, standardized as well as streamlined. Data is always available at your fingertips, not lost in a stack of paper in the office. If that data can help be a change agent, consistent KPIs can be set by giving the company visibility of processes by trending the data.

This also celebrates a continuous improvement plan, which would aim to capture anything important regarding regulatory and customer requirements and specifications.

To start going paperless, a few things need to be kept in mind, like understanding:

- End-user capabilities
- Customer requirements
- Regulatory requirements

It cannot be said enough how imperative it is that management is involved during the process of digitization. Adopting a process like this takes time and dedicated team effort. It also requires engagement from all levels of your company to ensure accuracy and efficiency. With the right team in place and clear goals set out in advance, your move from paper to digital will be worth every step you take.



**Adopting a process like this requires engagement from all levels of your company to ensure accuracy and efficiency.**



## Use Case: Master Sanitation for a Fresh Produce Operation

Master sanitation schedules are critical to ensuring food safety across processes, departments and materials. According to FoodProcessing.com, master sanitation is “often defined as a program of sanitation cleaning activities that occur on a non-daily basis, composed of equipment and infrastructure tasks, termed periodic equipment cleaning (PEC) and periodic infrastructure cleaning (PIC).”

For master sanitation to really work, it must include data from your supply chain, warehouse and other departments. In your food safety digitization process, these other departments must be digitized to streamline the regulatory processes involved with food safety.

With a master sanitation schedule and process, every step should be digitally documented. That way, when your facility is audited, the audit data trail is right there ready to be recalled instantly. This includes recalling data points relating to questions such as:

- When was the last time maintenance was performed on a specific piece of equipment?
- What are your food production processes and are you documenting the safety precautions throughout food preparation?
- What are your warehouse safety and sanitation procedures, especially those involving shipping and receiving?
- General safety precautions, such as ground checks, field checks, fire extinguishers, and more.

Food safety forms are the basic building blocks for the data chain related to food safety analysis and audits. When you digitize forms from organizations such as the USDA and local and state governing bodies, you make them immediately accessible for master sanitation processes.

But food industry workers are steeped in the tradition of paper-based forms for master sanitation schedules. How do we bridge the gap between well-worn habits and the modern need for a digitized master sanitation system?

If we can bridge that cognitive gap between food safety workers' personal habits with their day-to-day work habits, we believe half the battle can be won.

For instance, most of us live with mobile phones in our hands most hours of the day, and often by our beds at night. If we can tie new processes to already-existent habits and combine that with daily reinforcements, we can build the scaffolding for a paperless work routine that is sustainable.





# About Novolyze

Founded in 2012, Novolyze entered the food and beverage market to help companies enhance their food safety and quality performance. Offering numerous application-driven, tech-enabled solutions, Novolyze is here to help food and beverage companies unify data, deliver actionable insights and enable real-time decision-making.

To learn more about Novolyze's IoT and cloud-computing solutions,

**Request a demo today**

**Contact Us**



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