

Ground Support

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EQUIPMENT – SERVICES – HANDLING

2024 SMS Report



2024 Ground Support Worldwide SMS Report

Data collected in the 2024 Ground Support Worldwide SMS Report highlights the industry's adoption of safety management systems and a positive impact on overall safety and company culture.

JOSH SMITH

By formalizing the way a business recognizes and reduces risk, a safety management system (SMS) allows an organization to take a detailed approach to safety policy and procedures and comprehensively address other aspects of safety – a vital priority in ground support.

Ground Support Worldwide surveyed more than 100 members of the industry about adopting and implementing SMS and the effectiveness of formalizing safety programs.

Implementing SMS

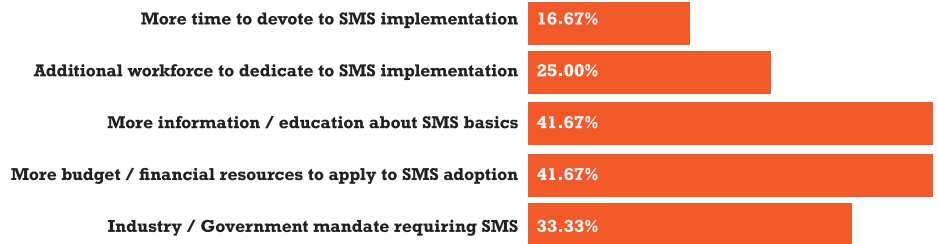
More than 60 percent of those surveyed indicated their company's SMS is fully implemented. Another 16.79 percent stated their SMS is partially implemented while another 10.69 percent noted their SMS is in the planning stages.

Industry regulations and mandates were the most-selected reason for adopting an SMS. Respondents also identified SMS as a solution for meeting internal company goals (47.31 percent) and as a way to demonstrate responsibility to customers

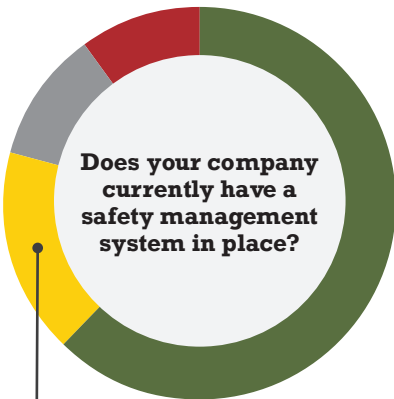
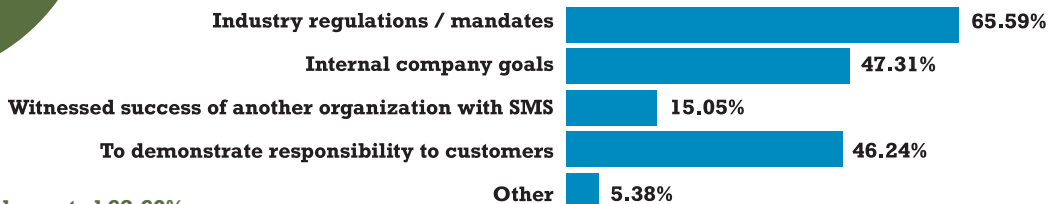
(46.24 percent). Another 15 percent of respondents witnessed the success of other organizations' SMS and elected to pursue their own safety management system.

"SMS should be a mandatory requirement for all aviation organizations such as airlines, GSR's, caterers, fuelers, airports, etc., and not a 'nice to have,'" explains Michalis Panagoulas, safety and occupational health manager and emergency director at Goldair Handling. "Organizations without SMS put themselves or their customers at risk, which in

What would persuade your company to pursue an SMS?



What prompted your organization to pursue an SMS?



Yes, an SMS is fully implemented 62.60%
 SMS is partially implemented 16.79%
 SMS is in planning stages 10.69%
 Not implemented, there are no plans to adopt SMS 9.92%

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the aviation industry should not be accepted. If there is no SMS, companies will not know their own hazards, will not have a correct safety and reporting culture and will not take measures to reduce their own risks. But I think that the obligation must come from the local civil aviation authorities (CAAs).”

Implementing SMS comes with challenges. Approximately 45 percent of survey respondents noted monitoring safety processes that were implemented was a key hurdle to overcome. Other challenges identified were training employees (39.78 percent), lack of employee engagement (39.78 percent), creating policy and an SMS manual (37.63 percent), identifying risk (34.41 percent) and leadership

support of SMS (31.18 percent).

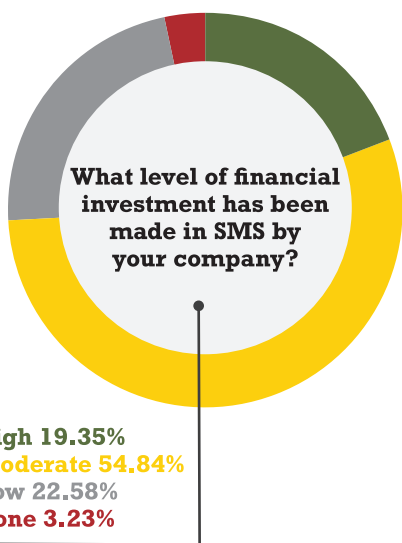
“SMS needs training and resources, but everything starts from the top level of each company. If there is no commitment from the top management, SMS cannot be implemented or successful. Top management should be committed to giving the resources for training and education and demonstrating safety culture,” says Panagoulas.

Investment in safety does come with a cost. More than 50 percent of those surveyed described their financial investment in SMS as moderate, while 22.58 percent answered low and 19.35 percent responded high.

“There is a saying that says, ‘If you think that safety is expensive, then try an accident,’” Panagoulas says. “I

suggest people and companies invest in SMS and not only on on-time performance. Companies shall train their staff, find time for training and give the necessary resources such as PPE and other tools to enhance their SMS implementation.”

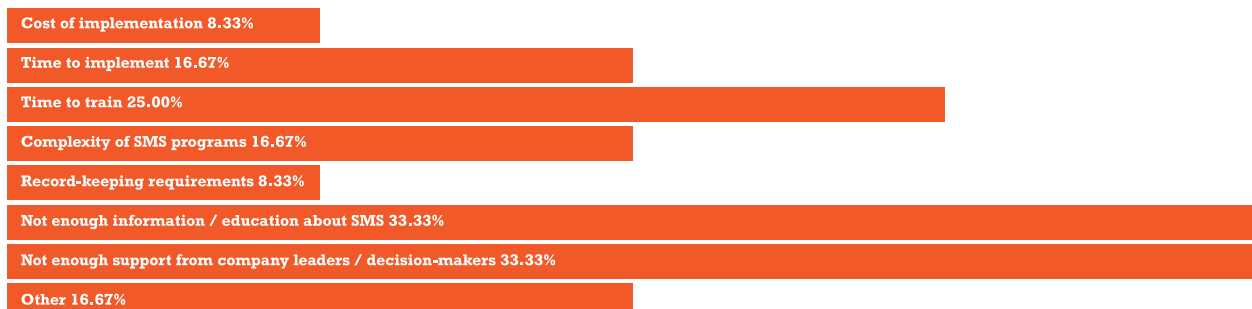
Less than 10 percent of survey participants stated they have no plans to adopt an SMS. These participants’ reasons varied. However, a need for more information about SMS and better support from company leaders were frequently selected responses. These participants also noted that more education about SMS basics and additional financial resources to apply to SMS adoption were the most likely ways to persuade their companies to pursue an SMS.



What was the most challenging part of implementing an SMS?



What factors most deter you from pursuing an SMS?



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Engaging People with SMS

According to those surveyed, the majority of those responsible for an SMS are existing team members of management who take on the added duties. In some cases, members of executive/leadership teams spearhead SMS (33.33 percent) or bring on a new hire to oversee SMS management (7.53 percent).

In-house training (61.29 percent), external professional courses (12.90 percent) and on-the-job training (10.75 percent) were the most selected answers regarding methods for training staff.

More than 60 percent of those surveyed said training takes place annually while another 19 percent conduct training quarterly. According to approximately 8 percent of respondents, SMS training takes place on a more frequent, monthly basis.

To engage employees in SMS methods, companies can utilize incentives and integrate technology solutions to make SMS practices convenient and more intuitive.

"Employees' engagement in SMS is crucial and mandatory. Without employment engagement we cannot

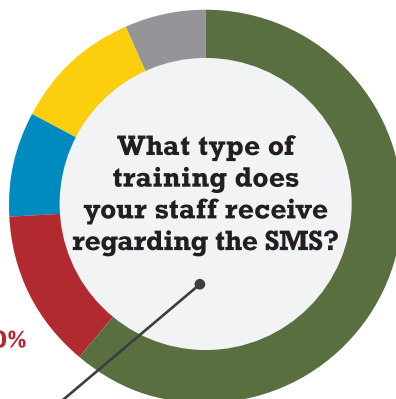
enhance SMS. But how? Through communication, meetings, feedback to the reporter, rewarding those who made an 'extra mile' on safety, we can make employees part of the SMS," Panagoulis says.

Survey respondents noted regular meetings (37.63 percent), training sessions (31.18 percent) and employee feedback systems (20.43 percent) are utilized to keep employees engaged in SMS practices.

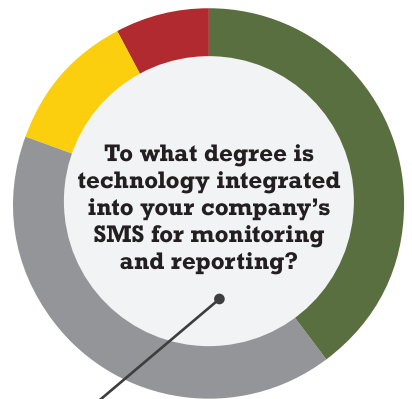
"Employees want to think and feel that they are important and that someone hears them. At Goldalr Handling, we have corrected



An existing member of your management team 54.84%
An existing member of your executive / leadership team 33.33%
A new hire tasked with SMS management 7.53%
Other 4.30%



In-house training 61.29%
External professional courses 12.90%
Online courses 8.60%
On-the-job training 10.75%
Other 6.45%



Fully integrated 39.78%
Partially integrated 40.86%
Minimal integration 11.83%
Not integrated 7.53%

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and/or implemented new procedures via our employees' recommendations, which we never thought about. We reward yearly employees who made the 'extra mile' or have reported the most hazards identified, or his/her safety performance is outstanding," Panagoulis says. "Letters to employees are given by our CEO for their safety performance and/or their engagement in safety issues."

More than 80 percent of those surveyed indicated they have either fully implemented or partially implemented technology into their SMS monitoring and reporting processes. More than two-thirds of respondents added their organizations are gradually adapting to new technology in the market that enable better SMS utilization. Another 13.98 percent of respondents say they are rapidly adapting to technology.

Chief among these options is an online reporting system which is used by 77.42 percent of respondents as well as mobile apps, which 36.56 percent of respondents said they utilize.

Rapidly adapting 13.98%
Gradually adapting 67.74%
Rarely adapting 10.75%
Not adapting 7.53%



How frequently is SMS training provided to the staff?

Never 3.23%
Monthly 8.60%
Quarterly 19.35%
Semi-annually 6.45%
Annually 62.37%



What types of incident reporting mechanisms are included in your company's SMS?



How does your organization encourage employees to actively participate in SMS?



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Evaluating SMS

According to those surveyed, the number of incidents is the most used key performance indicator (KPI) to measure the effectiveness of an SMS. Additionally, audit results and operation efficiency are regularly utilized KPIs.

A majority of those polled reported fewer incidents have occurred year-over-year since implementing an SMS. Only 11.83 percent saw an increase in incidents after an SMS was implemented.

More than 70 percent of survey respondents indicated company culture has improved while another 26

percent say it's too early to tell how SMS has impacted culture.

The overall trend reported by those who use SMS appears to be positive. Those who have not pursued an SMS yet indicated a need for more information and support from company leaders in order to pursue an SMS.

For those people, resources are available, including IATA trainings and documents, consultancies and training providers and ICAO materials, explains Panagoulas. He

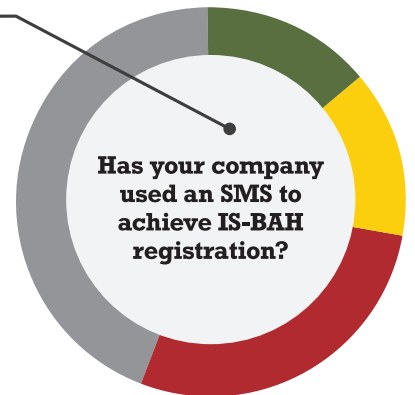
recommends that anyone interested in SMS should review the IATA Airport Handling Manual (AHM) and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Safety Management Manual (SMM) to gain a thorough understanding of the four components and 12 elements of an SMS.

"Studying these manuals makes SMS implementation easier. If someone wants to study more about SMS, he/she can go through Skybray and later on to join IATA training courses," Panagoulas says. **GSW**

Yes, fewer incidents have occurred 64.52%
The same number of incidents have occurred 23.66%
No, more incidents have occurred 11.83%



Yes 13.98%
No, but the company is working toward IS-BAH registration 13.98%
No, there are no plans to seek IS-BAH registration 27.96%
Not Applicable / Not an FBO 44.09%



Yes, our team has bought in, and safety culture has improved 70.97%
It's too early to tell how SMS has impacted company culture 26.88%
No, company culture has suffered 2.15%

What key performance indicators does your organization use to measure the effectiveness of your SMS?

