MORE THAN JUST A SOFTWARE COMPANY, WE PROVIDE A LEGALLY INFORMED CONTRACTOR MANAGEMENT SOLUTION

- Legal expertise
- In-house development
- Dedicated account management
A collaboration between LinkSafe and ContractorSAFE is transforming how organisations manage contractors – saving money, reducing compliance risk and enhancing safety.

LinkSafe is a leading provider of technology that manages contractors online, and streamlines data collection and storage. Some of Australia’s largest organisations – including facilities management operators – use LinkSafe software.

ContractorSAFE specialises in contractor management and is Australia’s most experienced legal firm in this area. Founder Sue Bottrell has been a work health + safety (WHS) professional and lawyer for more than 20 years, and specialises in legal liability for principal contractors. She was the country’s first Chartered Generalist WHS Professional through the Safety Institute of Australia.

‘The LinkSafe–ContractorSAFE alliance is unique,’ says Bottrell. ‘In addition to high-quality software, clients can access legal and professional advice on their contractor obligations and compliance risks. We provide the only end-to-end solution of its kind in this market.’

LinkSafe General Manager David Erizmann says the firm’s software, developed over the course of 15 years, has revolutionised contractor management. ‘It used to take at least a day of compliance work for firms, for each contractor used. We’ve got that down to 20 minutes. For a firm that uses 100 contractors, the cost savings are immense,’ says Erizmann.

The LinkSafe–ContractorSAFE initiative is timely. Firms across industry are outsourcing more work to contractors. The ‘gig economy’, where self-employed people work on a project basis for clients, has also boosted the number of contract workers.

Managing a large base of contractors can create operational headaches and expose organisations to legal, financial and reputational risk. Collecting and storing information from contractors, such as insurance, training, induction and business details, can be time-consuming.

Often, there is confusion about the responsibilities of the principal contractor and sub-contractors on a project, causing anxiety about WHS compliance and risk.

Worse, the firm might inadvertently increase its potential liability by getting too involved in contractor information. ‘The classic case is firms asking for more information from contractors, believing it will reduce risk,’ says Bottrell. ‘Or they take on more of the onus of verifying contractor information and unnecessarily add to compliance risk.’

The result is a convoluted, costly contractor management process. ‘There is literally billions of dollars of wasted effort in contractor management across industry,’ says Bottrell. ‘Teams of people collect unnecessary documentation, then can’t get the labour they need at short notice because contractors are running around looking for paperwork.’

Innovative solution

Bottrell says the LinkSafe–ContractorSAFE approach has several differences. The first is a highly targeted set of questions. ‘Too many organisations have poorly worded questionnaires for contractors, because they have relied on bad advice. They
ask five questions when one will do. Or they collect too much supporting documentation. The only documentation our system collects is evidence of insurance. We put the onus on the contractor to confirm they can produce the documentation if required," explains Bottrell.

Erczmann says LinkSafe software enables all contractor information to be collected online. The data is stored in the company’s secure, cloud-based servers in Sydney and Melbourne, providing a central repository for firms to maintain and access contractor data.

Demand for LinkSafe software increased in 2016 with the launch of an app in Apple’s iOS and Google’s Android systems. A project site manager can now check a contractor’s details through a mobile device. Contractors use their smartphone to scan a QR Code at the site that is linked to the firm’s contractor management information, providing live validation of their credentials.

'The company knows immediately whether the contractor is compliant,’ says Erczmann. ‘Before the contractor sets foot on a site, the company knows he or she has been pre-qualified; their insurance is intact, they have done the required safety training and completed an induction program. That reduces the risk of non-compliant contractors doing the work.’

Erczmann says LinkSafe’s knowledge of facilities management (FM) is an advantage. ‘I come from an FM background and LinkSafe’s team has decades of combined experience working with companies that use many contractors. That knowledge is reflected in the evolution of our software, which we believe is among the best of its kind in the world.’

LinkSafe’s customer service focus is another differentiator, says Erczmann. ‘Unlike other vendors in this space, we don’t just sell a piece of software. We work with clients to understand their needs, have regular workshops and help them get the best from the technology. The ability for clients to talk to Sue (at ContractorSafe) about a WHS issue adds to that service.’

LinkSafe’s customer base has expanded rapidly this decade and it has clients in Australia, New Zealand and the United States. It has 12 staff members and expects to boost numbers over the next few years to keep up with demand.

The technology is used in property, health, aged care, manufacturing, entertainment, government and other sectors. ‘This is not just software for the construction sector,’ says Erczmann. ‘Management of contractors is in every industry and our solutions apply to every industry.’

Erczmann says client feedback on the software has been exceptional. ‘Clients like the technology; it’s easy to use, efficient and secure. It cuts out hours of compliance management, reducing the cost, and speeds up the sourcing of contract labour. It reduces WHS anxiety because clients have a strong system to manage contractor information and compliance.’

Bottrell says firms can make big gains in contractor management. ‘Most firms are not up to date, mostly due to poor advice, with the shift taking place that has clarified legal liabilities with contractors. They don’t realise they can collect less information and be better protected. They don’t know they can save a lot of money through better contractor processes, including the right technology and advice. And, most of all, enhance workplace safety through streamlined contractor management.’

To learn more about these companies, visit www.linksafe.com.au or www.contractorsafe.net.au.