

## Spreadsheets and Quality - When to Automate

Many companies have tried to use desktop software to create and manage their quality programs, building everything from control charts and calibration tables to certification and traceability logs. They find that spreadsheets have low-cost appeal and appear to offer some level of flexibility. It's no secret, though, that there are limitations.

For starters spreadsheets contain errors. Lots of them. Approximately 65% percent of quality audit flags are due to inconsistencies in report data, driven by errors. KPMG recently found that there were at least 5 errors in 95% of the spreadsheets they audited.

### Real world Impact

Direct costs due to errors include the value of the scrapped parts (waste), rework, additional inspection and testing, and additional administrative expense incurred by handling returns and recalls. Indirect costs include more overtime, extra freight costs, expediting costs, complaint handling, excessive inventory, inventory shortages, additional billing and receivables costs, planning delays and customer dissatisfaction.

The cost of a failure can vary, depending on when it was detected. When detected early, a failure that is addressed before the defective product gets out the door - while it is still an "internal" issue - can increase the cost of producing that product by between four and six times the original cost.

On the other hand, if a product is already on the customer's shelf, in an assembly, on the road or inside a patient, costs can easily run up to 150 times or more of the original, and can literally cause entire business units to fail.

Spreadsheets still have low-cost appeal?

### Stranded

Spreadsheets may do well with simple one-off applications where the data or results support no other purpose, users or future needs. They create non-integrated islands of information. What happens when changes occur in the product or process that a spreadsheet was created to serve? You start over. Each change must be tracked and updated manually through every process and document affected.

What happened to the flexibility? What happens to the error rate when even more adjustments need to be made manually?

### Cut Costs, Not Corners

There is no bad time to graduate from isolated spreadsheets to something more powerful. Since spreadsheets tend to generate more costs than they cut, **creating accurate and manageable quality pays off for operations of all sizes and types.**

ASI DATAMYTE offers a number of quality applications that do things you can't do with a spreadsheet. Our [Integrated Quality Planning](#) solution, for example, drives error rates down and quality up by tracking changes and updating documents automatically.

- > Incorporate guidelines, pre-developed formats and methodology to keep you on target with quality standards such as APQP, FMEA, PPAP, QSA, and QS-9000, ISO 14001, ISO/TS 16949, 21 CFR Part 11. These tools were created and fine-tuned by experts who work closely with the standards committees and fully understand the requirements.
- > Cascade edits throughout an entire project. For example, a specification change can be set up to cascade through process flow charts, control plans, PFMEA, operator instructions, part specific documents, preliminary process flows and prototype control plans.

ASI DATAMYTE solutions can be integrated with others to squeeze more return out of your efforts. Tie downstream functions such as [Complaint](#) and [Supplier Management](#) to your planning process, creating paths for corrective action. Pull in automated [Data Collection](#) to feed real time line data to [SPC](#) programs, [Document Management](#), [Gage and Tool Management](#), and more.

These are just a few ways that our solutions can make more efficient use of the quality programs that you have in place. **To find out how to migrate your spreadsheets and other quality applications to a powerful ASI DATAMYTE platform in a cost-effective way that's right for you, contact us today.**