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With Experience and Expertise in US and International Regulations, HazMat Safety Consulting is Helping Companies Around the World Bring their Products and Innovations to the Global Market Safely



Ryan Paquet
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Interview conducted by:
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CEOCFO Magazine

CEOCFO: *Mr. Paquet, what is the idea behind HazMat Safety Consulting?*

Mr. Paquet: HazMat Safety Consulting was started by former regulators that worked for the US Department of Transportation. There are four principals who were all former regulators, working for the Office of HazMat Safety. We are trying to help companies large and small around the world, bring their innovations to the global market safely. The way we are doing that, is really understanding both the domestic US regulations and the international regulations.

We have decades of experience both with the US regulations, as well as operating at the United Nations Subcommittee For the Transport of Dangerous Good and all the global partners that ensure that goods are transported around the world safely.

CEOCFO: *Why is it so hard to do it?*

Mr. Paquet: Following the regulations is fairly simple. It can be expensive but it is fairly simple. There is a risk involved in the movement of dangerous goods or hazardous materials. It is the same thing; just internationally they are referred to as dangerous goods, but domestically they are referred to as hazardous materials. When you are transporting an explosive or a pressure vessel cylinder full of flammable gas, there is a risk involved in that. The system is set up for whatever the regulations you are using, whether they be US or international, the regulations themselves will help you decide on what the risk is and whether it is explosive, whether it is a pressure vessel, or a flammable solid. Then the regulations will guide you to what kind of packaging you can use to mitigate that risk in transport. Then, it will lead you to communicate the overall risk in transport to everybody who is going to touch this package, or merchandise responders, or whomever. There are a lot of pieces to it but those pieces are very important because there is a risk.

These products have to move. When I used to work for the US DOT, I would say that we were supporting the American dream because the American dream includes things like owning a car, putting gasoline in that car, having air conditioning, being able to weld steel or getting ore from the ground to build the roads that we love. All of these things are critical to the lives that we live today. Lithium batteries are another example; I am talking to you on my phone now and sitting in front of my laptop computer. Lithium batteries are not only in those thing but are in almost everything that we interact with these days. Those lithium batteries represent risk in transport.

CEOCFO: *Do the regulations change much over time?*

Mr. Paquet: It is about knowing how to navigate it. Personally, the regulations do change. They change internationally every two years. We participate actively in the UN model regulations or UN subcommittee on Transport of US Goods. That is important because it is bringing forward new innovations, new products, and new ways of transporting things that have

been moving a long time. We also understand how to intervene with domestic regulations, whether it is (a petition for) rule making or other means for responding to rule making. Domestically you can apply for a special permit which is a waiver from the existing regulations. Those special permits are reviewed by HazMat Safety on a regular basis.

When people are doing something new and that is why they needed a special permit because it didn't really meet their new innovation or their new way of doing businesses, didn't meet the static older regulations, so maybe we now need to take that special permit and integrate it into the regulations to freshen the regulations. When it comes to the transport of hazardous materials, the Competent Authority of the US or the regulatory body, is the Office of Hazardous Materials Safety within the Pipeline and Hazardous Material Safety Administration.

The Office of Hazardous Materials Safety is very good at bringing forward new regulations on a relatively consistent basis. Although it still takes time, a regulatory action can take two to three years, they are very good at keeping pace and making sure that if there are new innovations, that the regulations or special permits are implemented so that those innovations can still move.

CEO CFO: *Are there many specialized logistics companies for someone looking to move hazmat and do they know to look for a specialty organization such as yourself?*

Mr. Paquet: When I was a regulator, I used to say, "We don't do things; we put words on paper, we grant authorizations, we review other peoples' work," and say, "Yeah that is an equivalent level of safety." There are people out there that are doing things. They are packaging the articles or substances that we regulate. There are people putting those packages on the trucks or utilizing those packages or utilizing those commodities in a manner that is regulated.

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We support fireworks companies around the country, we support specialty gas companies, and they have to be focused on doing their work, so they don't have time to keep track of the regulatory changes or the enforcement efforts. Therefore, relying on a company like HazMat Safety Consulting, gives them the expertise of understanding how the system works, how the regulations work and interplay with either the country or state. This enables them to be focused on what they do well and we can be focused on giving them the resources they need and the understanding they need to excel at what they do.

It may be the operational stuff, moving the specialty gasses or shooting off firework shows or selling fireworks roadside. We focus on understanding the process, how the regulatory actions are completed, and they can be focused on what they do well.

CEO CFO: *Who are your customers?*

Mr. Paquet: We have customers that are widespread and global. We have customers who manufacture cell phones that are in about half the peoples' houses around the world. We also have customers who are innovators who develop new substances and new products that will bring energy to places that never had it before, and customers who didn't realize that they regularly ship and handle hazardous materials or that they have lithium batteries in all their products. We represent medical device manufacturers that are keeping people alive and saving lives on a daily basis. We represent packaging companies that build the packaging that mitigates the risk of the hazardous materials in transport and storage.

Our customers are a wide base of manufacturers and some logistic companies that are involved in moving it, but it really is the innovators who are developing these new ways of doing business, these new technologies, and we support the semiconductor industry a lot because they use a lot of specialty gasses. Quite a bit of our work is around the manufacture and transport of lithium batteries because they are so pervasive in our society.

CEO CFO: *Do the companies that should know about HazMat Safety, know about you?*

Mr. Paquet: We are constantly meeting new companies and introducing ourselves to new companies. We just hired a new employee Duane Pfund, who was the Chairman of the United Nations Committee on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and worked for the Office of Hazmat Safety at US Department of Transportation, for a long time. He is so well-known across the globe because he was the chairman of the US Subcommittee for 10 years. I still think there are a lot of companies that are finding out that they are actually shipping or transporting hazmat materials, so we want to be out there and make sure that companies understand what their requirements are, so they don't find themselves in a spot where they are not compliant with the regulations. Not being compliant can lead to some significant issues both in safety and enforcement as well as legal liability.

There are sectors of industries that we would love to be involved with including venture capitalists that are going to buy other companies and need to understand the risk involved in that company that you are purchasing. What do they manufacture and is it hazardous material, are they involved in transportation, and what does their compliance profile look like? Those are the types of spaces where we find people don't have a good grasp on what it is to regulate hazardous materials and whether or not companies are compliant.

CEOCFO: *One of the things on your site is, "We transform challenges into competitive advantages." Would you give us an example to give us an idea of how you are working with your clients?*

Mr. Paquet: It entails a few parts. First it is understanding why the regulations are developed the way they are and understanding how to use the regulations. We have customers who manufacture products that would typically be classified as an explosive but because of their form and function, and that is not the risk that they present in the transport. We work with the US DOT and give them the information they need to provide authorizations to not be shipped as explosives. We understand how the regulations work, we understand when special permits or waiver from regulations need to be requested, and how to do that.

"The people at the office of HazMat Safety are great federal employees who are there for the right reasons." Ryan Paquet

We engage with the US DOT on a regular basis on very complex topics. We pride ourselves on the fact that we can speak the language of the regulator and provide them with what they need to make a decision, and then we can translate that to our clients who are trying to move their product safely and efficiently. By having a thorough understanding of how the regulations work, how they interplay with other countries regulations, or the international regulations, then our clients can make decisions based upon the understanding that their competitors may not have, they can set up systems that utilize the regulatory construct in a manner that their competitors may not understand.

CEOCFO: *Are there newer technologies, materials or equipment that come into play as you are helping a company make decisions?*

Mr. Paquet: We deal with a lot of innovators searching for better ways of doing business. Companies have to decide who they are and understand their safety culture. Similar to the DuPont Bradley Curve, we like to say the baseline of how to operate is compliance with the regulations. The next level is fully compliant with safety regulations but poor communication of near misses and low level of improvement. Many clients that we work with operate above this level and are committed to a true safety culture and continuous improvement. Employees have ownership of safety across the organization and leadership is fully committed resources for employee protection and brand name protection.

We also have many start-up companies that are developing their culture, and some have little understanding of what compliance looks like. We work hard to bring them up to speed and get them into that baseline and then help them get to the point where they are operating far above what the baseline requires.

CEOCFO: *You mentioned insurance. Do insurance company requirements change often and do they need help to understand what their requirements should be?*

Mr. Paquet: Definitely! One of the things I didn't realize when I was a federal employee was the importance of insurance companies when it comes to the transport and storage of hazardous materials. We worked closely with a number of insurance companies, to help our clients operate in a safe manner and also translate some of the beneficial activities that the clients are using to the risk mitigation that the insurance companies care about. For example, we have some clients that have a lot of lithium batteries within the equipment of their facilities, and we pointed toward a

packaging manufacturer that manufactures packaging that mitigates the risk of thermal runaway lithium batteries. As these batteries are being taken out of the equipment, they are going into the mitigating packaging and being stored in those. We worked with their insurance carrier and proved that they are going over and above what the standards require to make sure that their batteries are safe when they are being stored and recharged. Their insurance company reduced their rate because of our intervention.

Some of these technologies and innovations like lithium batteries or energy storage devices are so cutting-edge, that educating the insurance companies on the mitigating factors being used by these insurance companies, is really important. Working with the insurance companies to tell them what they should be looking for, these are the things that can mitigate the risk involved in storage, use, or transport of hazardous materials. Getting an understanding of the biggest concerns of the insurance companies and making sure that the clients understand that. The insurance companies have been seeing these types of activities in this industry, and they want to make sure that they don't see those types of risky activities. By working with the insurance companies and the clients, you can build a better safety culture, so that when your insurance company or enforcement officer walks in, they are impressed with what they see and that means little to no penalties for clients and lower insurance rates.

CEOCFO: *Would you tell us about the 2026 Leadership Webinar Series and how it helps advance HazMat Safety Consulting?*

Mr. Paquet: We are doing regular webinars on different topics across the hazardous materials field. We recognize that companies that are in the business of innovator or shipping hazardous materials, may not have time to spend understanding what is going on globally. Maybe they have been tasked to be a trainer in their organization or in charge of other parts of the hazardous materials realm which is the global harmonized system or the OSHA regulations, so by having webinars on topics once a month, we are bringing in experts and people who understand that piece, and having conversations.

We are trying to treat these like podcasts, so it is very conversational. It is people who understand these nuanced pieces of the overall regulatory landscape or have actually done it. This month we have Barbara Lantry-Miller, who works with us and spent 30 years as a dangerous goods manager for a chemical company. Her understanding of the interplay between OSHA, EPA, and transport regulations, is unparalleled. She is able to talk and share some of her understanding of how to exist in that space and build a positive safety culture for a company.

CEOCFO: *Why is HazMat Safety Consulting important?*

Mr. Paquet: The core of our expertise is people who are former regulators or people who are operators. People who had to understand the why, the how, the what, of international and domestic hazardous materials regulations. We pride ourselves on helping companies around the globe, bring their innovations to market safely, and understand the interplay and when to intervene with either the international regulations or the domestic regulations, on how to operate, when the special permit is needed, how to get things as quickly as possible, and how to translate between industry and regulatory language.

The people at the office of HazMat Safety are great federal employees who are there for the right reasons. They are champions of safety, and they have things that they need to see to ensure that level of safety that they built throughout the years, is still met. Working with them to ensure that they are getting the information that they need to make great decisions, whether it be a special permit or future regulatory action, it is something that we do and pride ourselves on. Having individuals like our teammates Bob Richard, Mike Pagel, Duane Pfund, Ryan Paquet, Barbara Lantry-Miller and Peg Carson, Richard Tarr, Mike Roldan, Paul Stacil and Randy Walker, all of these people who have experience being a regulator, working for the Coast Guard, being an investigator, or being a manager of a regulatory industry, just brings a lot of great perspective and insight to any of our clients.