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From Scramble to Ready

How Applechem Slashed Audit Prep Time with Unifize

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Overview

When you're supplying ingredients for some of the world's most recognizable cosmetic brands, compliance isn't just a requirement—it's a constant. For Applechem staying ahead of regulatory expectations meant more than just checking boxes. It meant finding a smarter, faster, and more collaborative way to work.

But as the company grew—serving clients ranging from indie startups to multinationals like Estée Lauder and Chanel—its existing quality systems began to show their limits. Documentation was scattered. Communication was fragmented. Audit prep involved long hours spent piecing together records from file servers and inboxes. The tools they had weren't helping them move faster; they were slowing them down.

That's when Applechem began exploring alternatives. After reviewing several QMS platforms, they landed on Unifize—not because it promised to replace their processes, but because it promised to make those processes easier to run.

Unlike traditional systems that demand teams conform to rigid workflows, Unifize offered a flexible, user-friendly platform that fit the way Applechem already worked. Its strengths in document control, collaboration, and audit readiness stood out immediately. For Applechem, it was less about adopting a new system and more about finally making their existing one efficient.

About Applechem

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Applechem is a research-driven manufacturer of specialty cosmetic ingredients. With a lean, cross-functional team spanning R&D, manufacturing, warehousing, and administration, it maintains FDA 21 CFR, ICH Q7, and cGMP compliance while delivering innovation efficiently.

Industry: **Cosmetics** Location: **Parsippany, New Jersey, USA**

Challenges

“The 30-Minute Scramble” to Prove Compliance

Audit prep at Applechem wasn’t about weak documentation processes—it was about finding proof fast. Every external audit request kicked off a familiar routine: dig through file servers, chase email threads, ask “who has the latest version?”, and stitch together evidence. Pulling a single packet of documents could take ~30 minutes—and that was for one request, not the entire audit cycle.

Beyond the clock-watching, three pain points kept surfacing:

1.Scattered Records, Scattered Minds:
SOPs, batch records, supplier docs, and change logs lived in different folders and inboxes. Microsoft Windows Explorer became the de facto audit tool—and a slow one.

2. Communication in Silos:
Status updates bounced across meetings and emails, often repeating the same info. Critical context got lost, making it harder to prove who did what, when.

3.Good Processes, Bad Execution Overhead:
Applechem's QMS met ISO 9001 and FDA/ICH expectations—but executing that system was resource-intensive. The friction between "doing the work" and "documenting the work" meant compliance felt reactive, not continuous.

4. Change Control Drag:
Moving a change request or a new product concept from idea to approval took weeks, partly because different records were maintained in different systems with seemingly no links between them, resulting in looming redundancy and wasted time at every step.

In short, audit readiness was a scramble, not a state.
Applechem needed a way to keep documentation, decisions, and discussions tied together—so when an auditor asked, the answer was already assembled.

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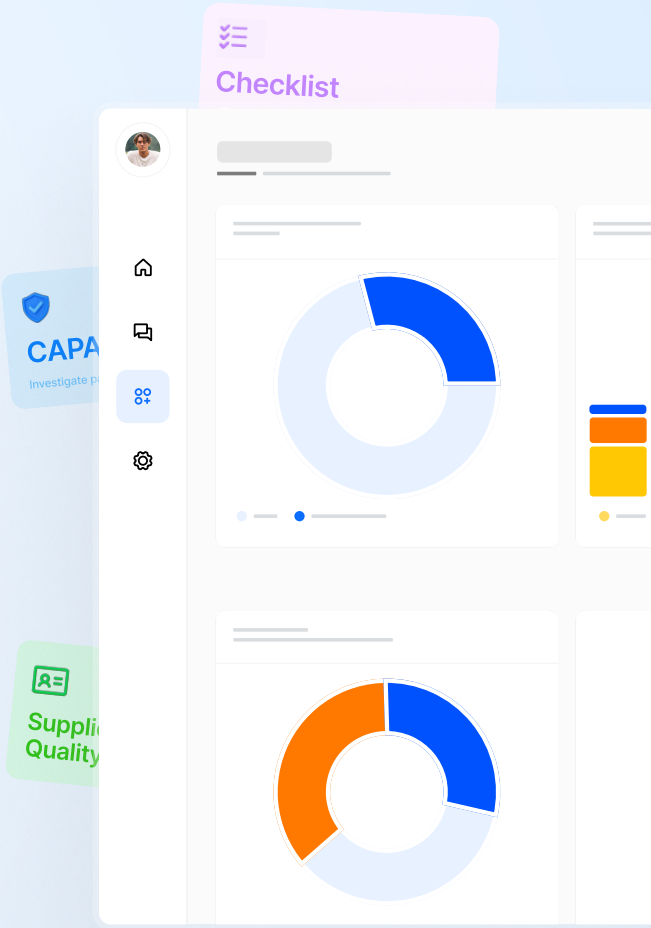
Solutions

Unifize as the Single Source of Truth

Unifize gave Applechem a single, compliant source of truth for everything an auditor could ask to see—documents, decisions, signatures, and evidence—while staying aligned with the realities of a cosmetics ingredients manufacturer.



Centralized Document Management & Control

- **One place for everything**
  SOPs, batch records, supplier CoAs, validation protocols, and change logs now live in a unified repository.
- **Versioning & e-signatures**
  Built-in electronic signatures and version control support FDA 21 CFR Part 11–style expectations and ISO 22716 (cosmetics GMP) requirements.
- **Regulatory mapping**
  Documents can be tied to relevant clauses across ISO 9001:2015, ISO 22716, and EU Cosmetics Regulation (EC No 1223/2009), making it easy to demonstrate compliance lineage during audits.

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Audit Management That Starts Before the Auditor Calls

- **Evidence in context**
  Each process record is linked to the conversations, approvals, and data that created it—so pulling proof takes minutes, not half an hour per request.
- **Structured checklists & trails**
  Pre-built (and customizable) audit checklists, robust histories, and immutable audit trails make “show me” requests trivial to satisfy.
- **Continuous readiness**
  Because teams work in Unifize daily, audit readiness becomes a way of life, not a scramble.

Collaboration Without Silos

- **Discussions-in-context**
  Instead of email chains, teams comment directly on the process record—QA, R&D, and manufacturing see the same info, at the same time.
- **Real-time visibility**
  Stakeholders know whether a supplier questionnaire was returned or a validation document approved—no need to ask (or schedule another meeting).

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Flexible Workflows, Not Rigid Templates

- **Configured to Applechem, not the other way around**
  Unifize conformed to Applechem's established SOPs—reducing the execution burden without forcing a process overhaul.
- **Rapid iteration**
  Workflows were tuned as teams adopted the system, ensuring continuous improvement rather than a one-time deployment.

Cosmetics Industry Specific Quality Modules

- **Supplier quality & ingredient specs**
  Track supplier qualifications, performance, and document status for each raw material.
- **Recipe & formulation management**
  Manage formulations, allergens, packaging, and label artwork with full traceability back to user specs.
- **Electronic Batch Records (EBR)**
  Digitally capture production data and lot releases, ensuring traceability and faster finished-good approvals (from half a day to ~10 minutes in Applechem's case).

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Implementation

From Mapping to Mastery: How Applechem Embedded Unifize

1

Process mapping and gap assessment

Applechem's team analysed existing SOPs (document management, change control, lot release, supplier qualification) and identified friction points.

2

Configuration of Unifize modules

Set up document control, change control, audit management, and supplier quality; enabled electronic signatures to meet Part 11-style expectations.

3

Data migration & cleanup

Key documents, specifications, and historical records were moved into Unifize to anchor future audits and changes.

4

Training & rollout

Cross-functional teams were onboarded with a focus on using discussions-in-situ instead of email/meetings.

5

Iterative refinement

Workflows were tweaked based on user feedback, ensuring Unifize matched Applechem's day-to-day rhythm.

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Results

Faster Audits and Leaner Operations

Audit evidence retrieval

What took ~30 minutes per auditor request now takes a few minutes—everything is already linked, indexed, and searchable in Unifize.

Meeting reduction

~90% of repeated status-update conversations were eliminated; visibility and accountability improved across the organization.

Change Control acceleration

Managing change requests and documentation dropped from weeks to days.

Faster Lot Releases

Cut from half a day to about 10 minutes by digitizing checklists and approvals.

Culture shift

Quality became part of daily work, not a once-a-year scramble before audits.

"People hate to admit it, but audit prep often becomes a last-minute scramble. With Unifize, compliance isn't something we 'get ready for'—it's baked into our everyday work. Instead of spending hours chasing documents or repeating meetings, everything's right there—visible, trackable, and already aligned to our quality processes. That's why Unifize was such a breath of fresh air." -

Wilson Lin
Regulatory Manager

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Compliance without the Crunch

Unifize didn’t replace Applechem’s quality processes—it amplified them. By removing the friction between daily work and compliance, Applechem now navigates audits and regulatory inquiries with confidence, speed, and transparency. The company proves that in the cosmetics ingredients sector, innovation and rigorous compliance can coexist—especially when everyone is collaborating around a single source of truth.

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About Unifize

Unifize helps ISO and FDA-compliant companies manage risk, drive operational efficiency, and accelerate innovation by bringing quality, operations, and product development teams into a single source of truth that's easy to implement and adapt as business needs change.

We integrate the entire process lifecycle, unifying these teams and their conversations, documents, data and workflows into one, collaborative, cloud-based platform, which enables unprecedented visibility, traceability, accountability and process efficiency.

Want To See How Unifize Can Help Your Team Move Faster — And Stay Compliant? Let's Talk.

Book a Demo