



# Ensign expands use of Wdesk from SEC to SOX

**wdesk**

**S**arbanes-Oxley (SOX) compliance, SEC reporting, and technical accounting are handled by just three people at The Ensign Group. The company, through its operating subsidiaries, provides a broad spectrum of skilled nursing, assisted living, and healthcare services at facilities across the United States.

Ensign's core financial reporting team works in Mission Viejo, Calif. An hour's drive away—north on I-5 in L.A. traffic—sits Ensign's internal auditing team from KPMG.

*“Wdesk is a great product, and the customer service absolutely sets Workiva apart from any company I have ever worked with.”*

—MIKE **FLOOD**, Vice President of Finance, *The Ensign Group*



Ensign is a longtime Workiva customer. For years, the reporting team has used Wdesk for SEC reporting. Wdesk streamlined its reporting process and saved the team time. Recently, Ensign added Wdesk for Controls Management and had the same positive results.

Adding Controls Management for SOX was fairly seamless. The Workiva Customer Success Manager (CSM) updated and uploaded Ensign's documents into Wdesk, and then handed the process off to the Ensign team. The team worked on the process narratives and linked data to the risk control matrix (RCM), testing documents, dashboards, and the audit committee presentation.

Since the team members were familiar with Wdesk, they didn't need any formal training and just called their CSM when they had questions. “It was really easy. There were no big differences between working in Wdesk for SEC and working in Wdesk for SOX,” says Lanie Mai, Director of SEC Reporting at Ensign.

Before using Wdesk for SOX compliance, Ensign's financial reporting team and its internal auditors worked

on files on their own computers using Word® and Excel®, and then emailed them back and forth for review. The process created version control problems. Emails got lost, and team members didn't have access to critical information at key times. Complex review processes sometimes required bringing internal auditors onsite, lengthening timelines and increasing costs.

Another challenge was that the internal auditors controlled the RCM, but the Ensign team maintained the narratives that fed the RCM. It was difficult to keep the narratives up to date. “Time was a problem—because I didn't have any,” says Mike Flood, Vice President of Finance. Flood estimates that simply updating the narratives consumed a full three months for one of his team members.

It's a different story now that the Ensign team is using Wdesk for its SOX compliance. “With an external team doing the internal audit, Wdesk for SOX helps us keep control of the process,” says Flood. “Now changes and updates are made in real time and not pushed to the side to be worked on later. Those changes to the narrative flow through other components of the process. When auditors go into the RCM in Wdesk, they see updated narratives, testing, and all the testing support in one place.

“Everything is being done in Wdesk going forward,” says Mai. “The narrative, the RCM, the testing templates, and the results of the testing flow through to the dashboards, and there is less time spent reconciling changes.”

*“Wdesk for SOX saves us time and keeps us more organized. I really like it, and I tell everyone they should get Wdesk.”*

—KERRIN **BAKHOS**, Senior Financial Reporting Analyst, *The Ensign Group*



The features in Wdesk, including linking, commenting, and blacklines, have improved collaboration and transparency between the Ensign team and its auditors. For example, Kerrin Bakhos, Senior Financial Reporting Analyst at Ensign, has used blacklines to improve the review process for the audit committee. “That way they don’t have to reread all the risk factors. It’s super useful,” she says.

The dashboards the Ensign team built in Wdesk are multipurpose. The team uses them to gather information for the board of directors and quarterly audit committee presentations. And the dashboards keep the team and its auditors aligned and working efficiently. “We know where we stand at all times, versus going to our internal auditors at the last minute and asking them for information,” says Mai.

Before Wdesk, some updates required a half hour meeting with five people

“Wdesk has improved our SOX process.”

—LANIE MAI, Director of SEC Reporting, The Ensign Group



in Flood’s office. He says, “That got expensive!” Now updates pop up on the dashboard as soon as they’re complete.

The cloud-based solution has perfected more than collaboration and content for Ensign. Wdesk has improved work-life balance, too. “I’ve got two young children at home, and it’s hard to run to the office,” says Flood. “Being able to get work done in Wdesk at home, rather than coming to the office, is great.”

The Ensign team agrees that Wdesk for SOX compliance and SEC reporting has transformed the process, but it’s the Workiva customer service that really impresses the group. The team cites Workiva CSMs regularly going beyond

expectations, being available even late into the night, stepping in at the last minute to help with a challenging filing, and taking initiative to help the team improve its processes, “Whether it’s SEC or SOX, our CSM is always there and knowledgeable on both sides—and she’s very timely,” says Mai.

Flood agrees wholeheartedly. “Wdesk is a great product, and the customer service absolutely sets Workiva apart from any company I’ve ever worked with.”

**Company:** The Ensign Group, Inc.

**Location:** Mission Viejo, California

**Business Profile:** The Ensign Group, through its operating subsidiaries, provides a broad spectrum of skilled nursing, assisted living, and healthcare services at facilities across the United States.

**Situation:** Ensign’s SOX reporting was split between an internal team and auditors an hour away, making collaboration difficult.

**Solution:** Controls Management for SOX

**Results:**

- Seamless collaboration with off-site auditors
- Quick, convenient ways to update, share, and review information
- Powerful dashboards provide current information at a glance
- Unparalleled customer service

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