



Case Study

# GE Appliances, a Haier Company

Growing Better With Cobalt  
& Responsible Minerals



**GE APPLIANCES**  
*a Haier company*



# About GE Appliances

GE Appliances is a household name with a rich history of innovation spanning more than a century. Known best for designing and manufacturing household appliances, GE Appliances is also an upstream supplier and a leader in the manufacturing industry.

As the regulatory landscape has become more complex, the compliance team at GE Appliances realized they could do better at managing their intricate web of suppliers. Demonstrating their commitment to being a leader in everything they do, GE Appliances

aimed to set a higher standard for responsible minerals compliance, corporate social responsibility (CSR), and environmental, social, and governance (ESG) by establishing a program to manage conflict minerals supply chain data, and then expanding to include cobalt in their CSR strategy.

## GE by the Numbers

**12,000** Employees

**\$10 Billion** USD in Annual Revenue

**1,000+** Hours Spent on Reporting

**One** Compliance Manager

## The Compliance Landscape

- ▶ 350 Suppliers
- ▶ Conflict Minerals
- ▶ Cobalt



# Introduction

For years, GE Appliances' compliance program consisted of Supplier Quality Program Senior Manager, Larry Smith, and a team of contractors sending hundreds of emails with reporting templates attached. The team would then compare supplier submissions against the Responsible Minerals Initiative list of smelters and build a report. Given the evolving nature of the regulatory landscape, Larry found it difficult to know what GE Appliances products were in scope of regulations, and whether the data suppliers were providing was accurate.

As he tried to manage the company's responsible minerals program, Larry was spending up to 60 percent of his time chasing suppliers, reviewing spreadsheets, and managing and training contractors on a topic he himself was not an expert on.

## Selecting a Supply Chain Management Solution Provider

After compliance managers from across GE met to discuss the state of their programs, Larry decided it was time to make a change. In order to streamline resources invested in maintaining GE Appliances' responsible minerals program, he needed a supply chain data management program that could:

- ▶ Automate data review and validation
- ▶ Streamline data analytics and report building

“I was passionate about doing the best I could, but sometimes it was hard to keep going.”

— Larry W. Smith, Supplier Quality Program Senior Manager, GE Appliances



- ▶ Provide the regulatory expertise he lacked and did not have time to learn
- ▶ Support ongoing supplier outreach, without constant management
- ▶ Instill confidence and credibility into GE Appliances' reports



# Why GE Appliances Chose Assent

It didn't take Larry long to decide Assent was the solution they needed, and it came down to supplier training and response, data accuracy, and the ability to tap into Assent's deep expertise. With its dedicated team of subject matter experts, the ability to conduct supplier outreach, and automate data validation, as well as a reputation for reliability, Assent provided GE Appliances' supply chain sustainability management program the credibility Larry had been looking for.

## Establishing a Responsible Minerals Program

Once Assent's solution was in place, GE Appliances' responsible minerals program began achieving the success Larry had envisioned. "In trying to set a higher standard for GE, we also discovered how much time could be saved investing in compliance. Launching products is so much faster now that we have access to this data."

### The Results

**\$400,000** Saved (\$300,000 for conflict minerals, \$100,000 for cobalt)

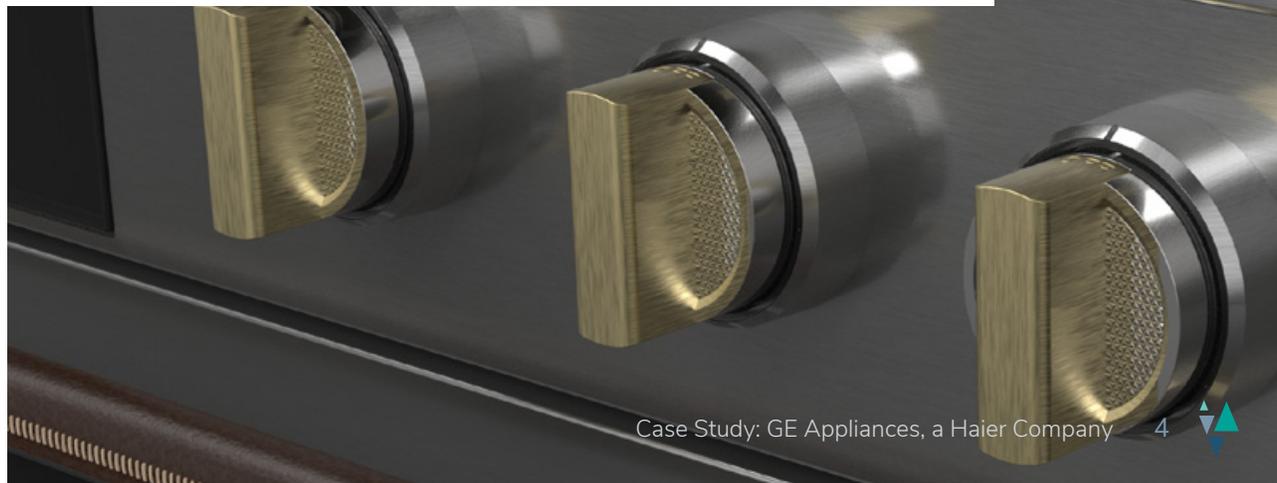
**350** Suppliers Engaged

**1,000** Working Hours Saved

Client Expectations  
**Exceeded**

There was also a financial benefit to GE Appliances' investment in supply chain sustainability. "The cost of all our efforts before was hovering around \$300,000 USD, and that didn't include any kind of expertise. Now, not only are we saving time and money, but there's an increased confidence in the accuracy of the data we're collecting."

That confidence speaks to GE Appliances' customers. The high standard Larry set using Assent has given the company a competitive advantage when bidding on contracts and has allowed them to exceed their clients' expectations.





## Expanding Into Cobalt Management

After his success with conflict minerals, Larry felt there were more opportunities to improve GE Appliances' global impact. He registered for Assent's conference, Supply Chain Insight, for inspiration and information about the future of CSR. There he attended a presentation on cobalt as a mineral of concern, and he knew where GE Appliances had to grow its responsible minerals program next.

Although cobalt is not regulated as a conflict mineral, it carries the same risks of forced labor and human rights issues. Expanding GE Appliances' CSR program to include cobalt due diligence would further secure their competitive advantage in the market, and it would allow them to grow better, grow more sustainably, and contribute more meaningfully to the global good.

“GE is a leader, not a follower. We didn't just want to check the box and be done.”

*“Our goals were simple: to obtain accurate and relevant information from our suppliers in a timely manner that would support our compliance and corporate social responsibility efforts, and save money while doing it. With Assent, we do just that.”*

— Larry W. Smith, Supplier Quality Program Senior Manager, GE Appliances



# Growing Better With Assent

GE Appliances' previous work with Assent made the decision to expand their existing program to include cobalt "a no-brainer," according to Larry. He knew he could rely on Assent's deep expertise and support to help him launch a successful program, and adding Assent's Extended Minerals Reporting Template (EMRT) solution was simple. GE Appliances' supply chain and product data were already in the system, enabling Larry to seamlessly start using the new reporting capability.

Within a few weeks, GE Appliances was collecting supply chain cobalt data and auditing its suppliers to locate supply chain risks. Larry then partnered with Assent's regulatory training team and sustainability subject matter experts to provide suppliers with training:

"Now [suppliers] give us better data and respond to us faster, because they understand the why. Not just for themselves or with GE Appliances, but globally. When these suppliers hear it from Assent, they understand that this information is real, and it's not just GE Appliances expecting them to collect more data."

## Program Results

"Running GE Appliances' supply chain sustainability management program once took 60 percent of Larry's time. Now, it takes less than five percent of his day, and those results are backed by transparency, accuracy, and credibility. "A few major customers who treat us as a supplier want our Conflict Minerals Reporting Template, and I'm able to pull it and say, 'We partner with Assent.' Assent builds credibility for our information."

In addition to the business benefits, GE Appliances has proven its status as a CSR leader that goes beyond what is required to do what's right. "We have the opportunity to save lives engaging in responsible mineral sourcing, and we're going to take it. We're going to do our best."

Contact us to learn more about how Assent can help you build an ESG foundation and start your journey to deep sustainability.

