

Occupational Hazards



Jess Kraus

Advice from a Pro

Jess Kraus, president and CEO of 3E Co. (www.3ecompany.com), Carlsbad, Calif., founded the company in 1986, practically the Stone Age of online services. In 15 years, 3E has grown from a two-person shop run out of Kraus' home to a NASA-style "Mission Control Center" with more than 175 employees. The company offers online MSDS management systems and online training, including 3E Online, online MSDS management that is usually purchased with 3E's Chemical Inventory Classification and Regulatory Disclosures services; 3Etrainer, an online EHS training package; and 3E's PHD Program, for the publishing, hosting

and distribution of MSDS.

As an "old-timer," Kraus has a unique perspective on where online EHS services have been and where they're going. "This is our 15th year of business. In the past four years, I've seen over 100 companies enter this field, and I've seen 30 companies drop out in the past year or so," he says.

Visit your potential online service providers, he counsels, take a look at their hardware, and meet their staff. In other words, do the equivalent in online services of kicking the tires. "You're awarding a \$500,000 contract, a \$1 million contract, a \$100,000 contract; the size doesn't really matter. You are choosing a company that can impact positively or negatively on your business. People are part of EHS," he adds, so make sure you meet the people who are going to provide your company with online EHS services and who are going to support those services. Kraus, along with other providers, lists 24-hour-a-day/7-day-a-week customer service and technical support as an important factor when choosing a provider.

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