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CLARION SAFETY SYSTEMS CELEBRATES 30 YEARS IN SAFETY WITH OUTLOOK ON WARNINGS LANDSCAPE

February 2020 marks 30 years in business for Clarion Safety; the company discusses the differences in the warnings landscape – and what it means for today’s manufacturers and workplaces.

Milford, PA – February 27, 2020 – Clarion Safety Systems, a leading manufacturer of [safety labels](#), [signs](#) and [tags](#), is celebrating its 30 year anniversary this month. February 28 marks three decades since the company’s incorporation. With this landmark milestone, the company is sharing its outlook on the warnings landscape – how safety has changed looking at then versus now – and what it means for today’s manufacturers and workplaces.

“Over our 30 years in business, we’ve been involved at the leadership level in the best practice ANSI and ISO standards, striving to create consistency in visual safety communication. We’re proud of that fact, and that we’re able to use that knowledge to collaborate with our customers to warn as effectively as possible,” says Ron Crawford, CEO of Clarion Safety.

“That longstanding history of standards and regulatory leadership is unprecedented for any company in our field – and it puts us in a unique position to be able to provide insight on the developments that have occurred.”

With that experience, Clarion Safety has compiled an overview, below, of the three major shifts in the warnings landscape, comparing 1990 (the year of the company’s founding) to today.

Top 3 Shifts in the Warnings Landscape

- **#1: Standardization**

“In 1990, there was a literal lack of standardization in the field of on-product warnings and visual safety communication,” says Angela Lambert, Director of Standards Compliance at Clarion Safety.

Change first came in 1991, when the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) published the ANSI Z535.4 Standard for Product Safety Signs and Labels. “For the first time, product manufacturers had a practical framework to develop the content and format of their safety labels,” Lambert says. The ANSI Z535.4 standard defines a set of components for on-product warnings that provided people with the information they needed to avoid hazards – and

provided manufacturers and U.S. courts with a legal definition for what constituted an “adequate warning.” When used correctly, labels developed to meet the standard help to reduce accidents associated with products and, if an accident does occur, they help to reduce the product manufacturer’s liability exposure should the adequacy of the warning be challenged.

A second major shift came over a decade later, with the publication of an international standard in safety labeling. In 2004, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) published ISO 3864-2 Graphical symbols – Safety colours and safety signs. The standard gave guidelines to manufacturers across industries for their product safety labels and allowed warnings to be accepted globally.

“The biggest change we’ve seen in recent years is the development of industry-specific standards,” Lambert says. “National and international standards are written on several levels: A-level, like ANSI and ISO, cover a broad range of industries and B-level are written for specific industries. There are more B-level standards now than ever before. That’s a positive shift for safety as it means that the standards are becoming more specific and practical for today’s manufacturers, while still falling under the guiding principles of the A-level standards.”

- **#2: Globalization**

Globalization – the spread of products, technology and information across national borders – has moved at an unprecedented pace since the 1990’s. This is credited to a combination of public policy changes and to communications technology innovation.

“The world was a very different place in the period before the ‘90’s and today,” Lambert says. “The impact to products and visual safety communication due to that can be thought of in waves or evolutions. The first wave was related to translations. Bi-lingual and multi-lingual warnings have become more and more essential over the years as a means to communicate effectively to an international or diverse workforce.”

The more recent evolution, according to Lambert, is related to the complexity of where end products are being shipped – and how that effects formats for product safety labels. In today’s global economy, it’s not uncommon for a product manufacturer to have little to no visibility into the end distribution of where their product may end up. “That can present challenges from a warnings perspective, where it’s critical to understand the audience in order to warn effectively, and in some cases, the country being shipped to, in order to meet any pertinent regulations. The way that has manifested in recent years is on an openness to using symbol-only formats – designs without words that are capable of communicating across any language barriers – for on-product labels.”

A sign of the times, a 2016 update to the ISO 3864-2 standard introduced a new “wordless” format that conveys risk severity. This new label format uses what ISO calls a “hazard severity

panel” but no signal word. It communicates the level of risk through color-coding of the hazard severity panel. This format option eliminates words – making translations unnecessary.

- **#3: Digitalization**

The World Wide Web first became publically available in 1991, the year after Clarion Safety was incorporated. Since the mid-1990’s, the Internet has had a revolutionary effect on culture, commerce and technology. Needless to say, product manufacturing and product liability have also been impacted.

Artificial intelligence, automation and the Internet of Things or IoT have effected product safety in varying ways – some for the better and others presenting new challenges. The results have been highly impactful on the side of safety, such as shifting dangerous tasks to robots and away from workers or being able to create a link between on-product labels and safety manuals through QR codes.

“When it comes to product liability, digitalization and new technologies are essentially forcing product manufacturers to look at their products more holistically. They need to put a strong emphasis on the “foreseeable use” of their product and its potential use and misuse over its lifecycle,” says Lambert. “For example, for certain equipment manufacturers, that may mean having a strategy for social media where they’re proactive in monitoring use and misuse examples. That way, they can document what occurred and how they responded to it. That type of information may be especially important should there be an injury and product liability issue.”

To learn more about Clarion Safety and its history in the field of visual safety communication, visit [the company’s website](#).

Clarion Safety also accepts media inquiries and speaking opportunities related to safety and risk. To submit a media inquiry, visit [the company’s “Newsroom”](#) and select the “For the Media” tab.

ABOUT CLARION SAFETY SYSTEMS

Clarion Safety Systems, LLC, is the leading designer and manufacturer of visual safety solutions that help customers in more than 180 industries worldwide to make their products and premises safer. Clarion offers a full range of standard and custom products including machinery safety labels, environmental and facility safety signs, pipe and valve identification markings, lockout/tagout products, and safety-grade photoluminescent egress path-marking escape systems. Founded in 1990, the company continues to play a leading role in the development and writing of international and national standards for safety signs, labels, and markings. Clarion is headquartered at 190 Old Milford Road in Milford, PA, 18337, and online at www.clarionsafety.com.

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