



WHAT SWITCHING LIMS ACTUALLY INVOLVES

A guide for the lab manager making the case.

Eight steps, with a checklist for each.

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People

02

Collect

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Decide

04

Data

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Build

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Train

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Parallel run

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Go live

FOUR STUDIES, AND WHAT EACH MEANS FOR A SWITCH.

LABS SWITCH WHEN SOMETHING CAN'T WAIT.

Most named trouble getting data in and out, but what tipped the decision was technology going out of support, a compliance or accreditation requirement, or more samples than the staff could handle.

Why LIMS Get Replaced

YOUR CURRENT LIMS COSTS FAR MORE THAN ITS LICENSE.

The license was 8 to 35 percent of what labs spent. Most medium and large labs also pay a full-time administrator \$60,000 to \$176,000 a year in salary, and upgrading a heavily customized system cost two labs more than \$600,000 each.

What a LIMS Really Costs

ONE DATA ERROR CAN COST MORE THAN A NEW LIMS.

Documented costs ran from a \$7,000 fine to \$1.2 billion. The further bad product traveled before someone acted, the more it cost.

What a Lab Data Error Costs

TO GET A SWITCH APPROVED, LEAD WITH THE RISK.

17 of 20 approved requests named compliance, manual data handling, an unsupported system or security. None led with ease of use.

Getting a LIMS Approved

Each study, with its method and sources: sabineindustrial.com/research

EIGHT STEPS.

- 1 People.** Analysts from every shift, the people who use your results, and IT, involved from week one.
- 2 Collect.** SOPs, methods, specs, instrument files, reports, and roles. Most of it already exists.
- 3 Decide.** The workflows you want, your warning signals, and your terms.
- 4 Data.** Get your history out early. Map it, load it in stages, and check it against the source.
- 5 Build.** Your SOPs become workflows. Your words become the dropdowns.
- 6 Train.** By role and by shift, until everyone is comfortable.
- 7 Parallel run.** One day, then changes, then a full week. Switch when you're confident.
- 8 Go live.** Cut over on a quiet day, with extra support through the first weeks.

03 • WHAT IT TAKES, AND WHAT YOU GET

Your time. We'll work with your lab on a time estimate based on how complex your switch is.

What comes with you. Your methods, specs, terminology, reports, and as much history as you choose.

The switching toolkit. Importers, mappers and automated discrepancy checks built into SI LIMS bring all of that over and show you anything that doesn't match. It's included in the subscription.

What's in the price. One subscription includes CAPA, instrument management, SQC, competency tracking, implementation, training, and support. No change orders, no upgrade projects, nothing to install, and no extra staff to run it.

What's different after. Data in from the instrument, a photo, or a COA. Data out to CSV in under a minute. The lab changes its own configuration. Rules alert the right person before a problem becomes a finding.

The next step. Send us your current reports and an SOP. We'll show them to you in SI LIMS. About an hour of your time.

GET THE RIGHT PEOPLE TO THE TABLE

Switches go wrong when someone finds out at go-live that their report changed. A working group prevents that. It should include one or two senior analysts who can speak for every shift, the person who keeps the spreadsheets, QA, IT, and the people who use your results: operations, blending, scheduling, and whoever sends COAs to customers. Ask each of them two questions: what worries you about this switch, and what do you want out of it? Their answers become the checklist for the parallel run.

CHECKLIST

- ☐ A project lead named in the lab, with time set aside
 - ☐ Working group named: analysts for every shift, the spreadsheet keeper, QA, IT, and the people who use your results
 - ☐ Worries and wants written down for each group
 - ☐ Standing meeting on the calendar
 - ☐ Bench told why the lab is switching, what changes, and when training starts
-

COLLECT WHAT YOU ALREADY HAVE

Nearly everything a new LIMS needs already exists, but it's scattered: in the old system, on SharePoint, in binders, in people's calendars, and in a few spreadsheets only one person understands. Rounding it up puts it all in one place for the first time. Start in the first week, because some of it takes a while to find.

STEP 2 • COLLECT

CHECKLIST

How the work runs

- ☐ SOPs, current versions
- ☐ Method list, with every calculation, including the ones that live in spreadsheets
- ☐ Specs by product, line, and season
- ☐ Instrument list, with calibration and maintenance records

Input files

- ☐ A real output file from every instrument, one from each unit, because software versions change the format
- ☐ Daily worksheets, third-party lab results, and a few COAs from each supplier

Output formats

- ☐ Every report, including the ones built by hand in Excel every week
- ☐ COA formats, and every export to another system

Key roles

- ☐ Users, their roles, and who reviews and approves what
- ☐ Training and qualification records

Paperwork

- ☐ Any data dictionary or field list for the old system. It's the start of the data map.
- ☐ Your company's validation requirements, if it has them

STEP 3 • DECIDE

DECIDE HOW YOU WANT THE LAB TO RUN

Design the workflow you want. Today's workflow has the old system's workarounds built in: results re-keyed into a spreadsheet to calculate cetane index, training records checked by hand, supplier COAs filed in a cabinet. Copy them into a new system and you've only moved them. For each one, ask what the step is for, keep the purpose, and drop the workaround.

SI LIMS SWITCHING TOOLKIT

Workaround check. Finds the workarounds in your process and shows which ones can come out.

STEP 3 • DECIDE

Turn each SOP into a workflow. Each workflow needs the steps, the instructions at each one, one approval or two and by whom, retests, retains, and what happens when a result is out of spec. Where an SOP and the bench disagree, settle it now. That gap is where an auditor's "you didn't follow your own SOP" comes from.

List your warning signals. Each one becomes a rule, trigger, or notification, so the right person hears about a problem while there's still time to act.

WARNING SIGNAL	WHERE THE LINE IS	WHO NEEDS TO KNOW	WHAT THEY DO
Sulfur in ULSD heading for the limit	A warning level inside the 15 ppm spec	Lab supervisor and blending	Retest and hold the tank
A supplier COA off spec	The spec for that product	Receiving and QA	Hold the product
An analyst's qualification coming due	The training due date	Lab manager	Schedule retraining
Giveaway: a batch well inside spec	A margin you set	Operations and blending	Use the room in the next blend

List your lingo. Your names for products, sample types, instrument events, and statuses become the section titles and dropdowns. In almost every demo someone says, "We don't call it that." In SI LIMS the lab changes it on the spot.

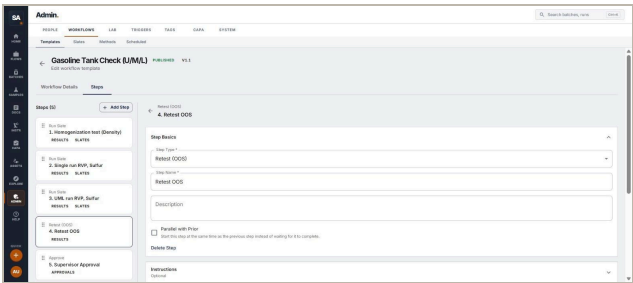


Fig. 1 · A workflow built from an SOP: test steps, a retest when a result is out of spec, and an approval

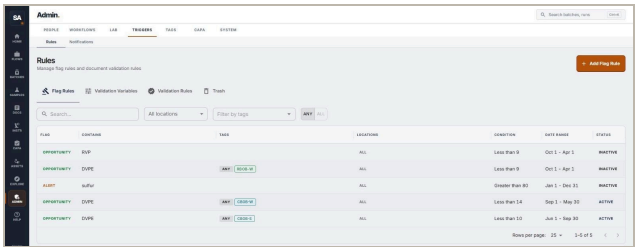


Fig. 2 · Flag rules for alerts and blending opportunities, by parameter, tag, location, and season

STEP 3 • DECIDE

CHECKLIST

- ☐ Workarounds listed, with what each one is for
 - ☐ Every SOP checked against what the bench actually does
 - ☐ Warning signals listed
 - ☐ Lingo list complete
-

STEP 4 • DATA

GET YOUR HISTORY OUT EARLY

Getting history out of an old LIMS is often the longest wait in a switch, and until it's out, you pay for two systems. In our study *[What a LIMS Really Costs](#)*, that overlap ran three to six years and cost \$191,190 to \$811,755 on top of the new system.

We've spent fifteen years working with data extracts from every major LIMS, and they go wrong in the same places: units that changed partway through the history, text results like "clear and bright," below-detection values like "<1," and retests that show up as extra results. Ask your vendor for a small sample first, and check it for those before you order the full export.

SI LIMS SWITCHING TOOLKIT

Importers, mappers and discrepancy checks. Importers bring history in from an export, from the system itself, or from your existing reports. Mappers carry every field and test code across, with your old field names if you want them. Every file is previewed before it loads, and anything unmapped is reported. Automated discrepancy checks flag each of these problems, and you decide how each one comes across. A side-by-side analysis tracks every open item until it's cleared.

STEP 4 • DATA

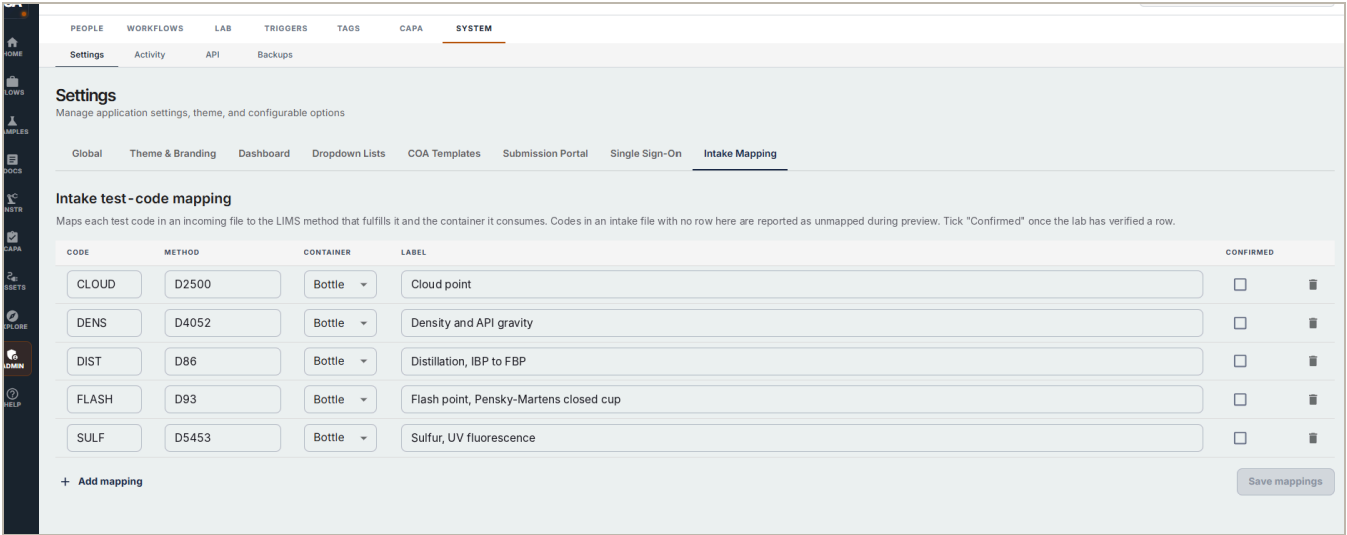


Fig. 3 · Intake Mapping: test codes from an incoming file mapped to the methods that run them, each row confirmed by the lab

CHECKLIST

- ☐ Export requested from your current vendor in the first week: format, cost, and timing
- ☐ Sample export checked: one product, one month
- ☐ How much history comes over, decided
- ☐ Data map reviewed: product codes, units, text results like "clear and bright," below-detection values, and retests
- ☐ Test load checked: counts by product and month match, and samples traced end to end
- ☐ Full history signed off by a senior analyst
- ☐ Catch-up load scheduled for just before the parallel run

BUILD IT IN YOUR WORDS

We build the first version of your configuration from what you collected and decided, then review it with the working group: methods and calculations (starting from the preloaded ASTM methods), specs, workflows, terms, roles, reports, and warning signals. Changes that come up in review get made in the session, so by go-live someone in the lab already knows how to make them.

SI LIMS SWITCHING TOOLKIT

SOP match and output mappers. Your SOPs can come in as PDFs or CSVs. Each becomes a workflow, and SI LIMS reports when the workflow matches the SOP. Output mappers carry your reports and exports across.

Then come the connections, each tested with the files you collected: instruments by file drop or direct feed, supplier COAs checked against spec on arrival, and every place your results go out, from a CSV report to a data lake or a historian such as PI or IP.21.

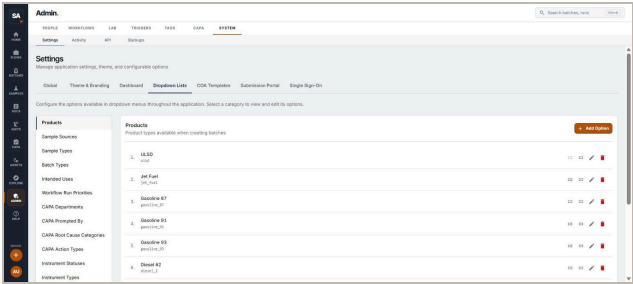


Fig. 4 • Dropdown lists the lab edits itself, from products to instrument types

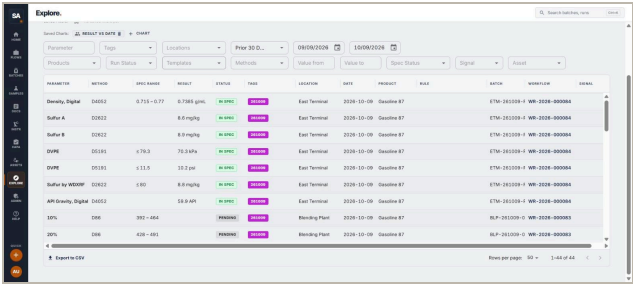


Fig. 5 • Results filtered by parameter, product, location, method, or spec status, then out to CSV

CHECKLIST

- ☐ Every calculation checked against a known result
- ☐ Every workflow walked through by the people who run it
- ☐ Every report, COA format, and export compared with the old output
- ☐ Every warning signal tested
- ☐ Every instrument import tested with a real file

TRAIN UNTIL EVERYONE IS COMFORTABLE

A switch has worked when the bench would rather use the new system than the old one. Training is remote and by role, shaped to your labs and shifts. Schedule it close to the parallel run so it's fresh. It's included in the price, and an extensive self-service library covers refreshers and new hires.

USER	ASTM D2622 - Sulfur by XRF	ASTM D5191 - Vapor Pressure (RVP)	ASTM D86 - Distillation	GC-2030 Gas Chromatograph Operation	General Lab Orientation	Lab Safety & PPE	Monthly Balance Calibration Verification	SOP-101 Sample Receipt & Chain of Custody
Amy Cheng	■	□	□	■	□	□	□	□
David Williams	□	□	■	■	□	□	□	□
Jessica Martinez	■ A	■	■	□	■	□	□	□
Karen Brown	□	□	□	□	□	□	■ A	□

Fig. 6 · Qualification matrix: who is qualified on which method, with problems flagged in red

CHECKLIST

- ☐ Training plan by role and shift
- ☐ A super user named on every shift
- ☐ Everyone trained before the parallel run

RUN BOTH SYSTEMS UNTIL YOU'RE CONFIDENT

Before you start, write down what has to match: results, in-spec and out-of-spec calls, calculations, reports, COAs, and alerts. Then the decision to switch comes down to a checklist. If your company validates software, that list is your protocol.

Run one day in both systems, fix what it turns up, then run a full week. One week is usually enough. Pick a week clear of turnarounds, audits, and seasonal changeovers, because entering everything twice is real work.

SI LIMS SWITCHING TOOLKIT

Daily comparison. Through the parallel run, SI LIMS compares old and new every day and reports what matched and what didn't.

When the systems disagree, don't assume the old one is right. Old systems carry old mistakes, like a rounding rule or a spec nobody updated.

CHECKLIST

- ☐ What "confident" means, written down and agreed
- ☐ Day one run, compared, and changes made
- ☐ Full week run
- ☐ Results, in-spec and out-of-spec calls, and calculations match, or every difference is explained
- ☐ Reports and COAs accepted by the people who use them
- ☐ Every worry from Step 1 checked off

SWITCH OVER, WITH EXTRA SUPPORT

Pick a cutover day away from month-end and shipping peaks, stop entering results in the old system, and tell everyone who to call. We plan extra support around the first data load, the first parallel day, cutover, and the first weeks live.

From there, the lab makes its own configuration changes, and they're never billed. With more than one lab, we start with one site and roll out to the rest.

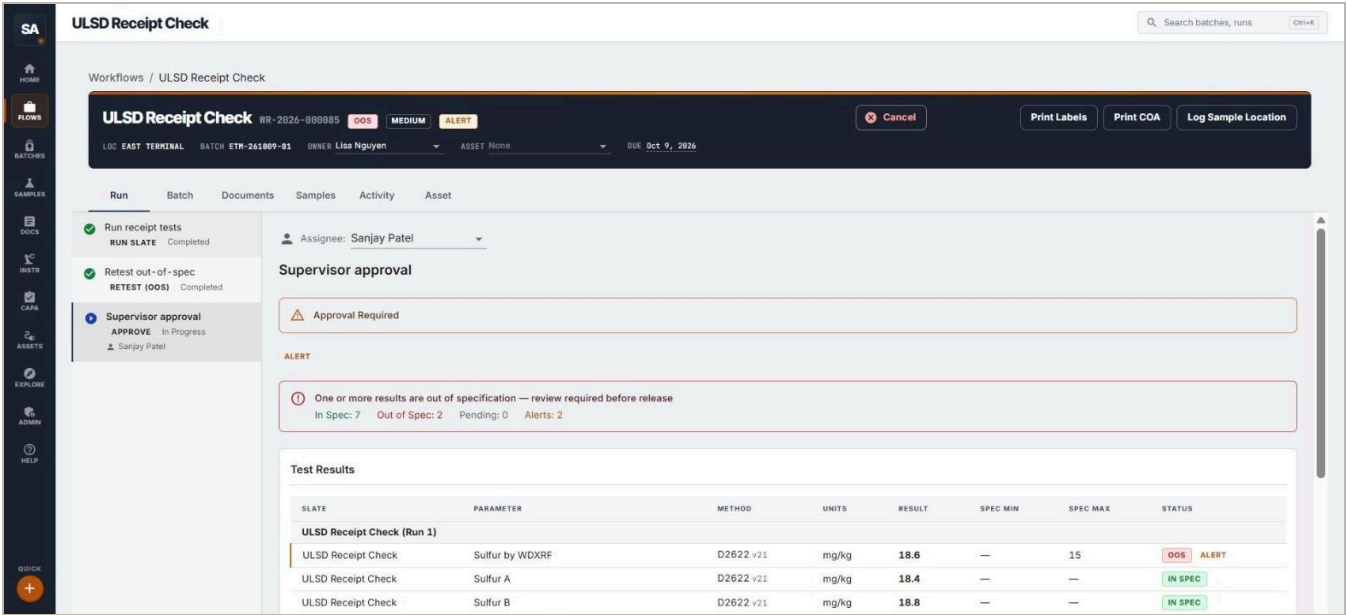


Fig. 7 · An alert on an out-of-spec sulfur result, retested and waiting on supervisor approval

CHECKLIST

- ☐ Cutover day chosen
- ☐ Old system closed to new results
- ☐ Everyone told the date and who to call

MAKING THE CASE INSIDE YOUR COMPANY

The lab manager who recommends a switch is the one who answers for it. Here are the questions we would want answered before signing with any vendor, with our answers. For what gets the request approved, see our study [*Getting a LIMS Approved*](#).

QUESTION	OUR ANSWER
What is in the price, and what triggers a change order?	One subscription. Implementation, training, and support are included. Nothing you configure is a change order.
What happens to our history?	Imported with tools built into SI LIMS, from an export, the system itself, or your existing reports. Automated checks flag every discrepancy, and you sign off when they're cleared.
Is data migration extra?	No. The switching toolkit is built into SI LIMS and included in the subscription.
How much training do we get?	By role and by shift, until each role is comfortable, plus a self-service library.
What support do we get when we switch?	Extra support at the key transition points: the first data load, the parallel run, cutover, and the first weeks live.
What about security and Part 11?	SSO, MFA, role-based access, encryption, US data centers, and a 21 CFR Part 11 audit trail.
Do you provide validation documentation?	Yes. A validation package is available on request, and the parallel run can be documented as your performance qualification.

On timing. If a renewal or a version upgrade is coming, compare before you commit. An upgrade is a project with its own bill, and a renewal commits you to another term. Bring us in early, and we'll work out how long your switch will take before that date arrives.

WHO WE ARE

Sabine Industrial builds SI LIMS for fuel, energy, utility and chemical quality labs. Our team has spent fifteen years working with data extracts from every major LIMS and listening to labs complain about those systems. After the twentieth time, we built one. SI LIMS works the way the lab does: the SOP becomes the workflow, not a PDF on a shelf. We also developed the statistical quality control software that ASTM International acquired in 2025 and now sells as InsightSQC.

The next step. Send us your current reports and an SOP. We'll bring them into SI LIMS with the switching toolkit and walk you through them there. About an hour of your time.

