



How BSI helps Orbik meet its commitment to customers

“BSI certification and BSI Kitemarks™ are part of our quality ethos. They reflect our corporate values. They’re a sign of good business practice — and they make good business sense.”

Philip Elwell,
Orbik founder and managing director

Orbik in brief

Orbik has been designing and making emergency lighting and control systems for more than 30 years, and works closely with specialist contractors and consultants. The company puts quality and reliability first; BSI certification and BSI Kitemarks have been important to the business since its early days.

BSI: The business benefits

Orbik believes that BSI certification and BSI Kitemark schemes:

- Provide peace of mind — reassurance products won't fail the customer
- Help win business overseas
- Demonstrate commitment to best practice and continuous improvement
- Reflect corporate values of quality and reliability
- Provide effective, external monitoring of internal quality management systems



BSI Case Study: Orbik

Company background

Orbik is a private manufacturing company specialising in emergency lighting and control systems. Founded in the West Midlands in 1982, it currently employs 130 people and turns over around £10m a year.

The company has a purpose-built manufacturing plant in Aldridge, near Walsall, with satellite sites for high-precision metal engineering and powder coatings nearby. It designs and makes both 'off the shelf' and customised lighting products and systems, and also sells fire detection and fire safety products.

The company supplies electrical wholesalers and works for — and in partnership with — specialist consultants and contractors at home and overseas. High-profile capital projects include the Rotterdam railway tunnel, the City of Manchester Stadium (also known as the Etihad Stadium), the Salam Tunnel in Abu Dhabi and the Dubai Metro.

Committed to continuous improvement, the company sits on the Industry Committee for Emergency Lighting (ICEL) and the technical committees of the Lighting Industry Association and BSI, and offers specialist training to contractors and consultants responsible for the installation and maintenance of emergency lighting and safety systems.

Why BSI certification?

BSI certification is aligned with the founding principles and values of the company. "I've always been very pro-quality approval," says founder and managing director Philip Elwell, who helped write and develop the industry standard for ICEL. "We have a very strong quality ethos. And BSI certification reflects that."

Kitemark schemes make good commercial sense for the company. "I want the peace of mind of knowing I'm selling quality products," Philip Elwell continues. "BSI Kitemarked products are fully tested and certified to the right standards, and they don't fail the customer. The percentage returned by the customer is very, very small."

BSI certificates, featured in the company's catalogues and promotional literature, have been key to the growth and development of the business — especially overseas. In the Middle East, where Orbik does more than 50 per cent of its business, the Kitemark is a statutory requirement in every country except Jordan. The Civil Defence certificates required for work there are almost impossible to achieve without the BSI Kitemark.

"They really, really care about quality in the Middle East," Philip Elwell says, "and the British Kitemark is a powerful symbol there."

He also adds that quality marks and third-party certification are very important in Germany, the company's biggest European market outside the UK

Working with BSI

Orbik has been certified by BSI to ISO 9001, the international standard for quality management systems, since the late 1980s, and held the Kitemarks for control gear and emergency lighting for the past 20 years.

"I can't fault the technical team at BSI for the way they communicate with us," Philip Elwell says. "There's a new standard for LEDs, for example, and the testing lab liaises closely with us — making sure both of us have interpreted the specifications in the same way."

Regular return visits by inspectors who share the company's commitment to quality and high standards mean customers know the business is being run to the right standards and has developed the right quality control systems. "It's the same with the quality inspectors. We're audited every six months or so as part of ongoing BSI monitoring and surveillance, and I can't fault them for their professionalism."

The future

Contractors and consultants concerned about quality and overall maintenance costs form an increasingly important part of Orbik's business, and the company remains 100 per cent committed to putting quality and reliability first.

More than 300 Orbik products currently have the BSI Kitemark, and the range is expanding.

"Certification takes time and money, of course, but it's very much part of that quality ethos," Philip Elwell says. "We think about the total life cost of our products, not just the initial price. Making top-quality, reliable products that last — that's what matters to us."

Contact us to find out how the BSI Kitemark™ can help your business make excellence a habit.

To speak to an advisor call:

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