

Introducing standards



Alicia Roberts is sales director of Island Steel, a family-run steel-processing company based in Newport in South Wales. The business, which was formed in 1994 and now employs almost 50 people, is accredited to both ISO 9001 and ISO 14001. Alicia reveals what introducing both of these standards involved for her company

“In 2000, when the company had been in business for around five years, we decided we could benefit from ISO 9001-accreditation.

A lot of our customers come from the automotive industry. For obvious reasons, customers within this sector are often very exacting about the steel they buy. For this reason, all of the steel we use complies with relevant British standards. As well as having our own rigorous tests, standards help to ensure that the quality of the steel we buy helps us to meet our customers’ needs.

When a business establishes a quality-management system that complies with ISO 9001, the business has an audit trail that shows where a part came from and where it went. This makes that part traceable should anything go wrong.

When we bought ISO 9001 we considered implementing the standard ourselves, but in the end we decided that, as a small company, it would be better to bring in a consultant to work alongside us.

When the hard copy of both standards arrived, our in-house systems administrator David Anderson was put in charge of reading through them to establish what needed to be

done. All of our directors and staff became familiar with the standards – right down to the finest detail – and how they affected individuals and the company as a whole.

Although the consultant helped with the implementation of both standards, we didn’t make the mistake that some firms do – which is to sit back and let them do all the work. We put in a lot of effort ourselves.

When we were reading through each standard we bought a few books that helped us to gain a better understanding. We also looked on the Internet for additional information. With ISO 14001, there was lots of information available. The Environment Agency, for example, has excellent information on its website, while BSI was very helpful too.

Once David Anderson identified what we, as a company, had to do, he set about writing quality-management policies and procedures. He was given a framework to follow by our consultant, but all of the information that went into it was relevant to Island Steel – which made it specific to our needs.

For further information about Island Steel visit www.islandsteel.co.uk



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What are ISO 9001 and ISO 14001?

ISO 9001 provides a framework against which businesses can develop their own quality-management system. Environmental-management system ISO 14001 enables a business to establish processes that limit the harmful effect that it has on the environment.