



BSI Professional Services
Case Study

Brewing Research International

The **cost** and **reputational risk** of compliance failure is high. Yet even as organizations master the detail of fast-changing **regulatory requirements**, they must also **operationalize** compliance: business-as-usual, not a knee-jerk response. And compliance across **multiple geographies** adds a further dimension of difficulty – prompting Brewing Research International to call on BSI Professional Services to **develop** and **update** a **compliance database**.

With a **long track record** of researching and analysing compliance requirements, BSI leveraged its **international network** to **open doors** across the globe. Designing a database that **complemented existing systems**, BSI stripped out unproductive complexity to deliver up-to-the-minute compliance at an **optimal cost**.

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Faced with the growing difficulty of complying with the diverse labelling and packaging requirements in force in their export markets, Brewing Research International, the technical service provider for the brewing industry worldwide, called in BSI. The challenge: locate the requisite stipulations – often buried in widely varying legislation, written in a foreign language – in Asia, South America, Eastern Europe and the EU, and then codify them within an online compliance database.

Walk into a bar almost anywhere in the world, and chances are you'll be greeted by the sight of familiar beers and lagers. Iconic brands such as Guinness, Carlsberg and Heineken, certainly, but also a growing number of 'niche' beers that have been exported to slake the thirst of appreciative drinkers overseas – beers such as Old Peculier, Old Speckled Hen and Bombardier.

Consumer affairs legislation, food safety, weights and measures legislation, import-export requirements, product integrity standards: in each country, all needed searching in order to identify exactly what was required.

While brewers aren't complaining, they are faced with the problem of complying with the requisite packaging and labelling requirements that are in force in each country or market. These differ widely – typically far more so than comparable legislation governing food labelling,

says Denise Baxter, regulatory affairs director of brewing industry members' group Brewing Research International. "Alcohol content, ingredients, volume, additives, allergens: in all, there are 25 or so labelling requirements that can be specified – and that's before getting into the complexities of language," she says.

Compliance unlocks growing export markets

For the brewing industry, compliance was of course an obvious imperative for understanding these requirements: a clear understanding of what was required would help export sales grow smoothly and without disruption caused by inadvertent non-compliance. Just as importantly, a clear understanding of requirements would help minimize what might otherwise become an unnecessary proliferation of printed labelling and other packaging materials, while simultaneously assisting brewers in managing their beer inventories efficiently.



But gaining that clear understanding was fraught with practical difficulties. “While the requirements are specified, they are specified in a wide range of legislation and standards,” notes Dr Baxter. What might be stipulated in consumer affairs legislation in one country, for example, might be laid down in food safety laws in another – even if the underlying requirements were identical. Weights and measures legislation, import-export laws, product integrity standards: all needed searching to identify exactly what was required, and what wasn’t.

For the industry, some kind of collaborative research project clearly beckoned. For while the larger brewers within the industry could identify the requirements on their own – albeit with varying degrees of cost-effectiveness – the need to research obscure laws written in foreign languages effectively barred smaller brewers from some markets. So, tasked by its members with undertaking a collaborative research project to identify labelling requirements, in early 2003 Brewing Research International turned to BSI.

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“We were particularly impressed with BSI’s ability to field experts who combined both language skills and research skills,” recalls Dr Baxter. “Going back to the original source documentation in its original language was vitally important – and BSI displayed a proven competence at identifying what that document was, and what it said.”

Global research brings clarity

By October 2003, just six months later, the first stage of the project was complete, with full details of the requirements that were specified by ten Eastern European countries being drawn up. Asia came next, completed in March 2004, bringing clarity to what was required for Thailand, South Korea, Vietnam and China. “When you consider the range of languages involved, you can see the need for a strong research partner,” stresses Dr Baxter.



Project management and facilitation skills also played a vital part, she adds. “Pinning down the precise requirements for each country was very much an iterative process: on occasion, the strict literal translation wouldn’t always make sense within a brewing context, and we’d have to dig deeper to identify exactly what was needed.”

Recognising that legislation is always in a state of flux, BSI provides three-monthly online updates to the requirements, for BRI member companies.

And strangely, despite moves towards harmonization within the Europe Union, researching the labelling requirements for 14 European countries highlighted that disparities still existed, she adds – disparities that could otherwise trip up the unwary brewer. A further stage, covering nine South American countries, was completed in March 2005.

Recognizing that legislation is always in a state of flux, though, a fifth stage to the project saw BSI contracted to provide three-monthly updates to the requirements, making them available online to Brewing Research International member companies. “We’re delighted – and so are our member companies,” concludes Dr Baxter. “As export markets grow, we’re always getting feedback telling us how useful it is.”



BSI Professional Services helps businesses, governments and non-governmental organizations deploy standardization as a means to proactively engage with the strategic and operational challenges they face. With a portfolio of proven solutions and services, we assist clients to leverage standardization to engage, influence and deliver value.

How to find out more about BSI Professional Services

For more information on BSI Professional Services, please contact us on **020 8996 7173**, email value@bsi-global.com.

raising standards worldwide™

BSI Group headquarters

389 Chiswick High Road
London W4 4AL
United Kingdom

Tel +44 (0)20 8996 9001
Fax +44 (0)20 8996 7001
www.bsi-global.com/pss