



Quality assurance, clarity and improved customer service – what the new BSI Kitemark™ for vehicle repair means to Baldwins group

"It's not just about the importance of technical skills and standards. The criteria for BS 10125 are helping us position ourselves as a business that puts customers first."

Peter Randhawa,
Group General Manager,
Baldwins Repair Group

Baldwins in brief

Baldwins is a 30-year-old private company, running regional vehicle repair centres in Buckinghamshire, Warwickshire, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and London. Approved by Ford, Mitsubishi, Suzuki and MG, and by insurers such as e-sure and Allianz, it applied for PAS 125 certification not long after the specification was introduced by BSI in 2007. All five of its centres have now qualified for the full BS 10125 standard.

BS 10125: the benefits for the business

- Clearer and more efficient HR processes and systems
- Stronger relationships with manufacturers and insurers
- Working to manufacturers' specifications on repairs
- Clearer customer complaints procedures
- Better customer service



Company background

Baldwins Repair Group started life as a family business in Aylesbury in the early 1980s. More than 30 years and four sites later, it is a rapidly growing company employing around 120 people in the Midlands and South East. Sold to current managing director Steve Warner in 2003, when its founder retired, it turns over approximately £8.5m a year. The original bodyshop in Buckinghamshire remains — but in a new, improved and extended form. “The site is currently under development — as company HQ,” Peter Randhawa, group general manager, says.

Reasons for certification

If Baldwins has changed over the past 30 years, so, too, has the vehicle repair business. “Steve often says that to succeed these days, you need the appearance of a small hotel, the admin of a small government and the logistics of DHL,” Randhawa continues. “You need state-of-the-art receptions and a multi-disciplined workforce — you need technical skills, staff to manage car collections and deliveries, support staff, customer-facing staff. Expectations in today’s environment are different; customer expectations far exceed the expectations of customers in the 1980s and 90s.”

BSI certification is helping Baldwins fulfil these new expectations — and continue to succeed in today’s market. As well as demonstrating to insurers and manufacturers that the company ‘goes the extra mile’ and takes quality control and safety standards very seriously, it ‘professionalizes’ a business and improves efficiency.

When the company applied for PAS 125, the forerunner for the new, full BSI standard 10125, several years ago, it did so mainly to meet the quality-assurance requirements of work providers. “By about 2007, PAS 125 was becoming almost mandatory,” Randhawa recalls. “There was a clear mandate from e-sure, which was the first insurer to support the standard, for example.”

BSI Case Study: Baldwins Repair Group

External pressure was not the only motivation, however. The company saw the opportunity to improve internal ‘infrastructure’ and processes. “We believed in the BSI Kitemark cause,” Randhawa continues. “It was an investment, a cost to the business, but we knew there’d be operational and efficiency improvements. The certification process means we’ve developed support systems and mechanisms — written processes — that add a lot of clarity to what we do.”

HR benefits

Some of the biggest benefits have been in the field of HR management. “People now know and understand their job role and how they fit in with the rest of the organization better. We’ve become more efficient. We can identify staff training and development needs more easily.”

The ability to anticipate ‘competency gaps’ is vital in an industry where specifications and technologies regularly change. Randhawa cites the example of automotive air conditioning. “This field has seen significant development,” he says. “To keep pace with vehicle manufacturers’ ‘current refrigeration of choice’ requires training. Thanks partly to BSI certification, we now have a way of identifying when specialists need to re-train. Certification has been a CPD tool for staff, really.”

The transition to BS 10125

Changing from PAS 125, which has now been withdrawn, to the full BSI standard 10125, introduced in 2014, was an obvious move for Baldwins. “When BSI published the new criteria, we knew we had to do it. We didn’t want to lose pace with the market,” says Randhawa.

It wasn’t just about keeping up with the competition and the demands of manufacturers and insurers, though. The new requirements dovetailed well with new internal developments. “The FCA [Financial Conduct Authority] has also made changes to complaints, which require resources and

processes, and this recently encouraged us to appoint a customer service executive to interact with customers, deal with customer complaints. This was all incorporated under the new BSI system, giving us greater clarity in handling complaints and procedures.”

The role of BSI

BSI carried out an audit or ‘gap analysis’ to help Baldwins identify the changes it would have to make to qualify for 10125 — and from there the transition went smoothly. BSI inspectors will return every six months to make sure the business still complies with the requirements. “I can’t fault the inspectors for their passion and professionalism,” says Randhawa.

The future

All five Baldwins sites — in Aylesbury, Corby, Leicester, London and Stratford — now have the 10125 accreditation. “It’s helped cement and embed the professionalism we want,” says Randhawa. “For us, the biggest area of interest, biggest change, in the new standard was the new emphasis on customer focus and customer complaints procedures. It’s great to think that, in the future, bodyshops will be recognized for excellence in customer service in the same way as the big names in retail. It’s a fast-paced and evolving industry where every bodyshop is trying to do something better and different: work providers are looking for us to deliver that extra mile to capture the customer. However, we should not forget what we are experts in, and that is to repair cars.”

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0345 0765 606

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