ISO 14001 – Environmental Management & **ISO 9001** – Quality Management

CASE STUDY
APS GROUP

Summary

Needs

- To create alliances with 'best in class' suppliers
- To sustain and improve customer service levels
- To address environmental issues
- To increase stakeholder confidence
- To gain confidence in risk reduction

Benefits

- Competitive advantage
- Improved business performance and reduced business risk
- Enhanced brand reputation and removal of barriers to trade
- Streamlined internal communication
- Improved relationships with customers, suppliers and stakeholders

Background

APS Group is a leading print management company which is operating in an increasingly competitive sector. Core activities include creative design and artworking services, litho and digital print, storage and distribution. Business success for APS is about being quick to identify and apply emerging technologies and business-enhancing processes to increase savings for customers, year on year. The ability to manage data more effectively – and cost efficiently – will be an important factor for the company's future growth and prosperity. Since gaining certification to the environmental management system, ISO 14001, APS has gone on to gain certification to the quality management system ISO 9001.

APS is aware that many of its clients expect their suppliers to take on environmentally friendly practices, and often specify ISO 14001 certification as a licence to operate. "The environment presents a huge opportunity for smart companies to reduce costs and increase profits" says Stephen Goodall, APS Group Production Director. "For this reason, certification to the environmental management system ISO 14001 was imperative". APS Group is committed to seeking to continually improve the quality of its products and services and strives to exceed customer expectations. Following the evident benefits of implementing an environmental management system, APS decided to formalise its existing quality systems and gain ISO 9001 certification.

"The implementation of ISO 9001 has enabled our business to function in a more disciplined way. While quality has always been our number one priority, we now have a more systematic approach to the way it is managed," Stephen Goodall explains.

Benefits

Since gaining certification to ISO 14001 in 2006 it has been of great importance to APS to continually grow the business without having a negative impact on the environment. Last year it increased annual turnover by 30% but not at the expense of the environment. As a result, its environmental performance for last year equates to the avoidance of at least 70 tonnes of CO2. It improved the amount of raw materials used during the last year by 4.1%, and waste to landfill has improved by 22% proportionately against growth.

There have been a number of ways in which APS has benefited from the implementation of ISO 14001, including:

• Cost savings resulting from reduction in energy usage and other resources

• Revenue streams from the by-products

• Reduced cost of waste management

• Improved corporate image among regulators, customers and the public

• Framework for continual improvement of environmental performance

By implementing ISO 9001 APS has introduced consistent and repeatable processes, along with a corporate system that is understood throughout the business. Stephen Goodall says that the certification has protected APS's 'licence to trade'. "As a result, we are finding our tender process much easier and are continually securing new business because of our certification."

Other benefits to the business include:

• Competitive advantage

• Improved business performance and reduced business risk

• Enhanced brand reputation and removal of barriers to trade

• Streamlined operations and reduced waste

• Improved internal communication

• Increased customer satisfaction

APS is committed to delivering advanced print solutions that will add value, drive revenue, inform customers and build the brand. The next step in the development of the company is to gain the information security management system standard ISO 27001 and business continuity management system BS 25999. Gap analysis is being undertaken. "In these challenging times customers want to be assured that we have vigorous procedures in place so that if the unthinkable happens we are able to respond in a planned way," says Stephen Goodall.

BSI's Role

APS chose to work with BSI due to the ease of doing business with the company. APS Managing Director Nick Snelson says: "It is apparent that the team had the right experience to help us throughout every step of the journey." BSI auditors recently spent six days auditing the systems and processes for ISO 9001 at APS's head office in Cheadle Heath and the National Distribution Centre, a day at Manchester city centre, and a day in Edinburgh. APS Group feels it is important to have the backing of BSI certification and also values the support of the working relationship that has been developed.

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