



Ei Electronics holds multiple BSI certifications, including BSI Kitemarks, to prove its commitment to best practice and quality products

“Our multiple BSI certifications have proved to be an excellent marketing tool in the field, with many tenders requiring suppliers to demonstrate such qualities. They have been a key factor in securing business in the face of strong competition.”

Dr. Michael (Mike) Byrne
 Engineering Director, Ei Electronics

Ei Electronics at a glance

Ireland's Ei Electronics is a leading manufacturer in high quality smoke and carbon monoxide alarms. Over many years, the company has achieved and maintained certification by BSI to a range of internationally recognized management system standards, as well as several BSI Kitemarks for its products.

Safety and reliability are the most important aspects of the company's products. BSI certification to ISO 9001 (Quality), ISO 14001 (Environmental Management) and OHSAS 18001 (Health & Safety), combined with CE marks and BSI Kitemarks, provide external verification that the company is committed to best practice in manufacturing and to offering quality products that have been rigorously tested. The standards put Ei Electronics ahead of rivals, driving business growth.

Certification by BSI:

- Provides proof of product performance in terms of quality, safety and reliability, through the BSI Kitemark
- To ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and OHSAS 18001 demonstrates robust systems for quality, environmental management and health & safety
- Highlights commitment to best practice
- Meets tender requirements, through third-party certification
- Provides differentiation and competitive advantage
- Boosts profitable business growth

Business background

Ei Electronics, a 100% Irish-owned private company, was established in March 1988 following a management buyout from US-based multinational General Electric (GE). The business has been involved in the design and manufacture of smoke alarms for over 40 years, and it is also a leader in carbon monoxide alarms.

Ei Electronics employs more than 700 people at its campus in Shannon, County Clare, with additional sales and marketing offices in the UK (through its wholly-owned subsidiary, Aico), Germany, France and the US.

The company has achieved continuous growth through the development of innovative new products, manufactured through state-of-the-art process technology and delivered to the highest customer service standards. As Engineering Director, Mike Byrne, explains, "Product development has always been at the heart of the company, enabling us to keep pace with changing customer requirements."

Mike, a driving force behind the business since the 1970s and a member of the team involved in the buyout from GE, says products are conceptualized and realized by a dedicated team of professionals, using modern tools and techniques to deliver fast prototype development and rapid product release to the market place. "They are tested and approved according to stringent European test standards. Our goal is to produce the most reliable early warning devices of their kind," he says.

Why certification?

Ei Electronics' rigorous operating standards and unique proprietary test equipment, developed by a team of in-house test engineers, ensure each and every product is robust. "Sensors, which form the heart of our products, are individually calibrated in real gas, heat or smoke," says Mike. "Each product is subjected to a comprehensive list of tests before leaving the factory and can be traced back to its starting point in the manufacturing process."

For Mike, certification by BSI to key management systems and product standards is essential, underpinning the company's drive for quality and reliability. Its design and manufacturing processes comply with ISO 9001:2015 (Quality), and the company

Multiple BSI certifications

holds ISO 14001:2015 (Environmental Management) and OHSAS 18001:2007 (Health & Safety). In addition, the company holds numerous BSI Kitemark certifications for smoke alarms (BS EN 14604), carbon monoxide alarms (BS EN 50291-1) and heat alarms (BS 5446-2).

The decision to secure ISO 9001 certification goes back to shortly after the buyout, when the standard was still known as BS 5750. Mike describes two distinct drivers. First, at that time, the business centred on the manufacture and sale of the smoke alarm, and it was important to establish a quality mark to differentiate it from competitors' alarms. "The only obvious mark available was the BSI Kitemark," he says. "In order to achieve Kitemark certification, it was necessary to have our manufacturing processes operating to a recognized quality management standard and, again, the obvious choice was BS 5750 (now ISO 9001)."

Secondly, he continues, "As a newly launched independent company seeking business, we needed to demonstrate excellence in design and manufacturing processes. Achieving BSI certification ensures this."

Implementation

Ei Electronics' senior management championed the certification cause, ensuring that all the necessary resources, time and commitment were made available to achieve speedy conformance with the standards. "As the quality system evolved into ISO 9001, our design and manufacturing processes evolved as well," says Mike. "We embraced a Kaizen methodology and continuous improvement mentality to create a world class manufacturing and design facility. Over the years our changes and improvements have mirrored and complemented developments to ISO 9001."

BSI has been a major partner throughout. Mike describes the long and successful relationship with BSI as "very collaborative", which was what led to the expansion of the management systems to include certification to ISO 14001 and OHSAS 18001, and to further BSI Kitemarks.

Benefits

By using BSI as its certification partner Ei Electronics can combine Type Testing and

Factory Production Control Requirements for ISO 9001 with similar requirements in terms of factory audits and annual sample testing for BSI Kitemarks. BSI is able to combine all the elements needed into just two site visits per year, along with periodic requests for representative production samples. By providing the company with a complete service, BSI enables it to benefit from lower administration fees and fewer employee hours needed to support multiple site visits for assessments and audits. "It's a great example of the synergy in the business relationship between us," says Mike.

While such internal efficiency is important, the external value of Ei Electronics' multiple certifications is even more essential. "They have proved to be an excellent marketing tool in the field, with many tenders requiring suppliers to demonstrate such qualities," says Mike. He cites the example of Ei Electronics' significant sales to residential social landlords in the UK: "This involves competing to secure the business tenders. The ability to demonstrate management systems for quality, environment and health & safety is a key benefit over our competitors."

Looking ahead

The quality and reliability of its alarms, the ability to innovate and develop new products, and a world class manufacturing process, all combine to ensure that Ei Electronics will continue to grow and expand its business into the future.

Its multiple BSI certifications underpin this framework, demonstrating the company's ongoing commitment to product quality and reliability, the sustainability of the environment, and the health and safety of all stakeholders. "We'll continue to partner with BSI to ensure we remain best in class in delivering high quality products with minimal adverse impacts," says Mike.

He concludes, "Obtaining BSI certification has been a key factor in securing tenders and has helped us to retain business in the face of strong competition."

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