



How BSI helps Thorlux achieve its business goals

"Is BSI certification worth it?"

Definitely. The Kitemark generates business in difficult market conditions and it provides assurance for customers that our products and systems are made to the highest standards and certified by a globally recognised third party. What's more, BSI assessments promote discipline throughout our internal procedures."

Mark Laishley,
Quality Assurance Manager, Thorlux

Thorlux in brief

A designer and manufacturer of professional, specification lighting systems, Thorlux is based in the West Midlands of the UK. Founded 80 years ago, it employs nearly 400 people and turns over more than £50m a year. The company has worked with BSI since 1976, when its first Kitemarked products were made, and is certified by BSI to the European standard for safety, manufacturing and testing, and to international standards for quality management systems and environmental management.

BSI: The business benefits

For Thorlux, BSI certification:

- Helps win business in the Middle East
- Provides an effective third-party product verification and surveillance system
- Reflects corporate values of professionalism, quality and trust
- Promotes consistency and high standards — across the company
- Supports a corporate culture of continuous improvement.



BSI Case Study: Thorlux Lighting

Company background

Thorlux is the biggest company in the F. W. Thorpe Group, a designer and manufacturer of professional lighting systems listed on the Alternative Investment Market. The company was founded by Frederick William Thorpe in 1936 and is now based at a 16,882 sq metre site in Redditch, Worcestershire. It has approximately 400 employees, and, in 2015, turned over £57m.

Thorlux's biggest export markets are Germany and Ireland, but it also conducts business in the Middle East. In the UK, clients include major automotive and manufacturing plants, major transport networks, local education authorities and the NHS.

To help customers minimise their carbon footprint and save on energy costs, the company has developed a range of energy-efficient products and controls. The Thorlux Smart System monitors ambient light levels and detects presence, controlling output and ensuring areas are only lit when occupied.

The Smart System is part of a wider strategy to reduce the environmental impact of Thorlux's manufacturing processes and products, and, in 2009, the company launched an ambitious carbon-offsetting programme. Certified to the standards of the Woodland Carbon Code, the programme involves the planting of trees on Thorlux land in Monmouthshire, Wales.

Some 70,000 trees have been planted to date, forming a 'carbon sink' to compensate for the CO₂ emissions that — no matter how responsible its approach — inevitably result from the company's activities.

Thorlux has held the Kitemark for General Luminaires since 1976 and been certified to the European safety standard ENEC 34290 by BSI for around 20 years. It is also audited by BSI for management systems, holding certificates for ISO 9001, the international standard for QMS, since 1990, and for ISO 14001, the international environmental management standard, since 2008.

The Kitemark and corporate values

Though no longer a small business, Thorlux retains the feel of a family-run company, and staff turnover is low. "The group chairman [Andrew Thorpe, grandson of the founder] knows your name, he knows your children's names," says Mark Laishley, Thorlux Quality Assurance Manager. "Everyone is made to feel they matter here ... that they're not just a number."

That 'everyone matters' culture has helped the company pursue its goals and maintain standards. "Quality is central to everything we do here, from the bottom up," Laishley says. "Everyone is aware that quality means something for their roles, whatever they're doing. Everyone has to be involved."

This emphasis on quality has made the BSI Kitemark and certification an obvious choice for the company, providing a route to export in a number of challenging markets. "The Kitemark certifies our products to recognised standards in major markets, and supports our commitment to design, develop and manufacture highly efficient products," Laishley continues. "As a specification lighting manufacturer, what we design and make is our biggest marketing tool. Our products benefit not only from the latest technology but also from our traditional manufacturing values — we're about traditional, good quality, well-engineered products that are reliable, dependable and made to last."

BSI certification is aligned with the corporate values of the company — and it has helped it develop and grow. In the Middle East, where F. W. Thorpe has a regional office, it is very hard to win contracts if you don't have third-party certification or Kitemarked products.

"The Middle East is an important market for us, and so we'll continue to Kitemark the products that have historically sold well there," Laishley adds.

Working with BSI

The company has regular contact with BSI auditors and certification managers. "On

average, across the certification schemes, we get a visit every two to three months," Laishley explains.

For Thorlux, BSI audits are opportunities for continuous improvement. "We stress to the inspectors and the client managers that we want to be challenged, stretched," Laishley continues. "They have a lot of experience and insight. They can spot potential problems — and they give very good advice."

The company points to the rigorous, comprehensive approach taken by BSI. "They make sure every process complies with the relevant standards," says Laishley. "The Kitemark client manager, who comes every six months, audits luminaire production at the point of assembly, then traces it all back — right through to inward inspection of goods."

Future investment

Thorlux's range of Kitemarked products is changing and expanding, with plans for a new generation of Kitemarked LED luminaires.

"BSI certification takes time and money, of course, but it's definitely worth it," Laishley says. "The Kitemark generates business in difficult market conditions and differentiates us from our competitors."

"The inspectors are an important external resource for us. The relationship works very well. They know the business and the industry — but they're on the outside looking in."

"BSI challenges the company to maintain discipline and helps us continue to achieve the standards we strive for. It keeps us all focused."

Contact us to find out how the BSI Kitemark™ can help your business make excellence a habit.

To speak to an advisor call:

0345 0765 606

visit our website: bsigroup.com

or email us at:

product.certification@bsigroup.com