



BSGA Guidance Note 2015.06.02: Considerations for improving standards within your business particularly with regards to ISO 9001 and ISO 14001

Although it is not a compulsory requirement of Membership of the BSGA, it is encouraging for our Members to aspire to achieve ISO accreditation or at least operate along similar lines. To give you reasons why it is such a positive step in the growth of your business, we list below some comments as to the benefits of achieving this. The following are given to us by companies who have already achieved accreditation so these are from the shop floor not a BSGA “message”.

One of the comments made regarding the ISO system is that it requires internal cultural change with good leadership and adequate resources such as trained internal auditors. The goal is for quality and standards to improve while having a system that helps you retain those accomplishments. If though you continue to produce sub-standard work, you will have a system that states as much.

ISO 9001 is a certified quality management system (QMS) for organisations who want to prove their ability to consistently provide products and services that meet the needs of their customers and other relevant stakeholders.

- Improves consistency of production and product quality
- Provides a competitive pressure on non accredited companies
- Enhances the current working practices and internal systems
- Is an excellent marketing tool
- Provides external recognition of a manufacturers Quality Management System (QMS)
- Provides a tool for recognising customer feedback both good and bad which results in opportunities for improvement
- It provides a tool for controlling suppliers and sub-contractors
- Helps complete Pre-Qualification Questionnaires (PQQ)
- Differentiates you from your competitors
- Provides a basis for other management systems e.g. 14001 (environmental management), 18001 (Occupational Health and Safety standard), 27001 (Information Security Management standard) and 23001 (Common encryption in ISO base media file format files)
- Provides a tool for controlling processes, equipment
- Identifies training needs

ISO 14001 covers Environmental Management standard i.e. using, storing and disposal of materials

- Most of the above under ISO 9001
- Puts in place controls to ensure compliance with relevant environmental standards
- Provides controls to minimise a company's impact on the environment
- Reduce the likelihood of a prosecution by the Environment Agency
- Reduces overheads to a company by reducing waste and for getting materials recycled.

In General, benefits include:

- Cost savings – International Standards help optimise operations and therefore improve the bottom line
- Enhanced customer satisfaction – International Standards help improve quality, customer satisfaction and increase sales
- Access to new markets – International Standards help prevent trade barriers and open up markets (including global ones)
- Increased market share – International Standards help increase productivity and competitive advantage
- Environmental benefits – International Standards help reduce the negative impact on the environment when all sorts of materials are being used in fabrication.

In summary

- Suits all types of businesses, large or small
- Reduces waste and cost through environmental commitment
- Proven to help win and retain business.
- It is important to note that attaining certification is not simply a paper exercise led by an external consultant whom may not have any understanding of the signage and graphic industry.
- The ISO system requires internal cultural change with good leadership and adequate resources such as trained internal auditors. Responsibility should be shared so that a clear vision is attained at all levels of management, assembly and Installation throughout the business with the overriding focus on customer satisfaction and quality of product.
- Non Conformances highlighted need to be documented learned from, followed through. Tool box talks at regular intervals will assist in spreading knowledge and reduce remakes. It all takes time and can be inefficient unless long term improvements can be justified. Legal registers will be an important part of the system which do need to be continually updated.
- Overall, a company can benefit from the system but it does not guarantee any additional order book as price point does sometimes remain the buyers' target. Your task is to overcome this and to establish value for money with your customer.

As has been stated, achieving these accreditations is not a compulsory requirement for Membership of the BSGA however it is interesting to note that those businesses that have taken either full accreditation or the principles of the working practice on board, are more successful in the market.

BSGA Members are kept informed of the legislation and other requirements necessary to help keep them and their clients from falling foul of their obligations.

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