

THE VALUE OF ISO9001

Companies often delay implementing formal Quality Management Systems that meet the requirements of ISO9001:2008 due to the perceived cost, but there is a great deal of value to be derived from a well-implemented system, as Jodie Read explains.

In the January edition, we examined NHSS18 and the fact that it is a mandatory requirement for companies providing landscaping or ecology services on Highways Agency roads. For anyone not operating in this arena, however, the requirement for formal certification to standards is purely voluntary.

WHY BOTHER?

If there is no legal requirement to implement a quality system, why bother? You already know that you provide a quality service, and you can provide glossy photographs showcasing your quality workmanship of beautifully finished landscaping projects. You may even have some fantastic customer testimonials. But are you on a level playing field with your competitors when you submit a tender?

COMMERCIAL

When we ask companies to describe their main motivation for working towards ISO9001, the truth is that they are normally looking to start gaining more points in the tender evaluation process. There's no need to spell out just how difficult the current economic climate is. Things are tough. So if you've taken the time and trouble to submit a tender response with the aim of demonstrating that you can provide a superior landscaping service at a price that will be attractive to the client, you need to know that it's going to be considered seriously.

But if your competitors have certification to ISO9001 (and maybe other standards such as ISO14001 and OHSAS18001) and you don't, they could instantly have a head start. In other words, not being able to demonstrate that your system that has been independently

THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF ISO9001

- Improved credibility when going for tenders
- More efficient systems
- Elimination of repetitive problems
- Reduced costs
- Increased productivity

assessed by a United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) accredited Certification Body could be costing you money.

Of course, just because you have ISO9001, it doesn't mean you're guaranteed to win every tender that you go for – but it is certainly likely to help. When deciding on whether you can afford to implement a system, it is therefore worth considering how much business you might be losing as a result of not having it.

IMPROVED BUSINESS PROCESSES

ISO9001 should not be regarded as being 'just a badge'. Indeed, treat it like that, and you will fail to

ABOUT JODIE READ



Jodie Read is Managing Director of Penarth Management Limited, which specialises in the provision of compliance consultancy and training for quality, environmental, and health and safety management. She and her colleagues help companies implement and maintain management systems, such as ISO9001 (Quality), ISO14001 (Environmental)



derive maximum value from it. Implemented effectively, ISO9001 will provide a structured system that will help you to introduce operational efficiencies and to identify genuine future improvement opportunities within your business.

The Standard makes you focus on how you 'Plan-Do-Check-Act'. It provides a useful framework from which to develop systematic processes – but it does not call for perfection. Indeed, the Standard recognises that things can (and do) go wrong. It encourages the use of fact-based information derived from a company's own to set targets for future improvements.

Having worked with numerous organisations to help them implement Quality Management Systems over the years, we've observed the following benefits for companies that have implemented ISO9001 and embraced the concept of continual improvement: a well implemented and effectively maintained system can help to eradicate repeat problems, save money, increase productivity, and increase customer satisfaction.

All of these things seem to make perfect sense for any business; so the question is, can you afford not to have ISO9001?

and OHSAS18001 (Health and Safety).

The company is an affiliate member of the British Association of Landscape Industries (BALI) and Jodie is one of only a few approved ROLO health and safety trainers in the country.

If readers have any queries regarding ISO9001 and how to derive real value from the Standard, please contact Jodie at jodie@penarth.co.uk or telephone 029 2070 3328.