

impact

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Tweaking the system



B2 Business Systems Ltd. understood that they would have to go through some significant changes in the way the company is run and the way it works in order to stay competitive.

Established for 20 years, B2 Business Systems Ltd. (B2) started out as a door to door Xerox Photocopier reseller. As things developed and evolved, and copiers also became printers, B2 realised, during installation, they were also doing a lot of work with their clients' IT networks. Gradually B2 employed more and more specialised IT staff, until eventually they formed their own IT department selling IT solutions. On the back of selling the photocopiers and printers, they also began selling paper and stationery and subsequently another branch of the business was developed, selling office supplies. B2 successfully trade in these three different areas.

In recent years Xerox has announced that the days of selling photocopiers is coming to an end and the market is now shifting to a fully 'managed print service', which is streamlining management and minimising the costs associated with printing and imaging.

It is thought that, in a couple of years, smaller companies selling photocopiers and office supplies alone will cease to

exist. With the focus moving to managed services, installing multiple machines right across the board and reducing costs will mean bigger projects and accounts. Ian Challinor, Implementation Manager explains, "As part of this shift forward, B2 looked at ISO and ISO has now become our way of saying to our customers 'we are one step above the competition, we have done that little bit more and we have now got a quality process in place which is ISO 9001.

"Externally, we are singing from the rooftops! It goes out in all our literature and it's a great thing to talk about."

We are a quality company and everything is carried out in a very structured way.' It's a model that works." B2 has also achieved ISO 14001 Environmental Management finding that it "ties in nicely with ISO 9001". B2 is also currently working towards ISO 27001 Information and Data Security.

Internally the ISO's have "absolutely helped" B2 with their processes. There

was nothing implemented that they weren't already doing. Mr. Challinor continues, "It's just tweaks here and there and the tweaks we have made have really improved the systems. We have found ourselves creating things and changing processes in ways that we would never have thought of without the ISO guidelines in place. It has definitely made B2 a better company.

Mr. Challinor comments on his experience with IMSM, "Our IMSM Assessor was absolutely fantastic; they knew exactly what they were doing. They came in and had a chat with us initially, then came back in and did the assessment with us. They then presented us with the manual, which was extremely satisfying! Our Assessor was brilliant throughout the whole process and we received superb after support whenever we had a query. It has been hugely beneficial, in terms of the support we have received from IMSM."

Mr. Challinor concludes, "The ISO was quite an easy thing to get; I think it's keeping it that is going to be the real challenge."

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A powerful marketing tool to draw the larger client

Having a certified quality management system was the obvious next step for growing company GE Tools, which wanted to attract larger customers.

GE Tools was set up by Gordon Evans, as an engineers' merchant. He was joined by co-owner Neil Coleclough.

GE Tools has two trade counters for trades people and private customers, at its bases in Rhyd and Deeside. But it is bigger business that it is increasingly attracting and the addition of ISO 9001, with its quality management certification, has been helping to draw them in.

Neil heard about ISO 9001 when he took a management training course through the University of Bangor. "It was from the first master class seminar I attended that it became apparent that ISO 9001 would greatly help our business, as a marketing tool."

Neil chose to work with IMSM, "We were impressed by what they had to offer and the way they went about working with us."

IMSM's Auditor then spent time with GE Tools looking at all the procedures and paperwork which were used.

The Auditor then worked closely with IMSM to ensure all areas of the business were compliant with ISO 9001, making changes and introductions where necessary.

Neil said, "What pleased us was that most of what we needed was already in place, but just needed tweaking. Two introductions we had to make were a formal staff appraisal system and a vendor rating system.

"Overall, we have been delighted with the certification and the service provided by IMSM. Having ISO 9001 is definitely having an affect on our trade in a very positive way."

A cost effective certification



A2B Plastics, a firm making plastic injection moulding, had certification with BSI for a number of years, but they found the cost of continuing was prohibitive and so gave it up. "When business began to recover we thought about certification again," said Cath Brooksbank, Quality Manager. "We heard about ISO 9001 from information sent to us by IMSM; we could be certified once again, but at about half the cost.

"I think the annual cost of BSI was about £2,000. With IMSM there is no on-going fee, other than a small fee for the annual audit." Cath continues, "What I really liked about IMSM was that they worked with the processes we already had in place, rather than having to start all over again. Everything fitted around us, which made the whole process a lot easier.

"They also provided us with training, to ensure we can remain compliant and are ready for our annual audit." For A2B Plastics, ISO 9001 demonstrates their commitment to quality management. Cath concludes, "We want to show our customers and suppliers our commitment to quality. More importantly, some of our customers will only deal with companies which have certification, which ISO 9001 provides."

Making ISO work for you

ISO 9001 proved so invaluable for Evans Utilities, specialising in mapping the assets for three types of clients in particular: utility companies, environmental businesses and local government, they are now planning to apply for ISO 14001 Environmental Management.

"When we apply for tenders for business I am sure having ISO 9001 has given us the edge in many cases," said Eryl Evans, Managing Director.

Eryl's previous experience with ISO found the company was working for the benefit of ISO 9001, rather than having ISO 9001 work for us."

Eryl decided to give ISO another chance and he selected IMSM because they could fit the ISO around them.

"This time around, I have been very pleased with the outcome. IMSM made it very manageable.

"I have no doubt that having ISO impresses potential clients and it is also the right thing to do for our company."