

ISO 9001/ISO 14001 Case Study

Remco Graffix ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 Implementation

During 2000, Remco Graffix was born and began life as an Essex based screen printer with a reputation for high standards of workmanship. It has not stopped there, with the company becoming members of the Guild of Master-craftsmen. The company has now become a leading print business specialist dealing with public and private sector clients. It operates from its Southend-on-sea premises, employing a team of dedicated staff. The company provides a range of services including screen process printing, digital process printing and graphic design activities for the Medical, Theatrical, Retail, P.O.S, Manufacturing sectors and also provides a vast range of uniforms, clothing and associated products. Even when the economy was at its lowest, Remco Graffix improved the management team, invested money in new machinery and created more staff opportunities. This programme in continual improvement has carried on up to the present time.

Experience is the key factor...

In 2009, Remco Graffix decided to develop a strategy for ISO 9001 and 14001 certification. Within this process it was realised that the company needed external assistance. It evaluated several potential partners to initiate and implement the quality & environmental system; finally choosing Blackmores as their preferred associate. A key part of this process was that they needed a company that had experience in understanding the finer intricacies of printing. Blackmores were able to provide a consultant with over 40 years experience in the printing sector.

Reviewing the gaps...

The initial stage was for Blackmores to hold a detailed gap analysis against the requirements of ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 which took into account Remco Graffix current systems, including design activities and at a later stage a new market area of uniforms, clothing and associated products.

Embracing the integrated approach...

The purpose was to develop a system based on the generic principles of quality and environmental management, embracing the processes required to provide an effective service, from brief to delivery, including service analysis; and to assess performance by periodically reviewing, evaluating, documenting and implementing for the continuous improvement of the company. For further enhancement, tools such as Kaizen and 5S were also used to support these requirements.

An Integrated Management System (IMS) Manual was developed between interactions with Remco Graffix and the Blackmores consultant in such a way to ensure that it met with the company's requirements and operating methods. At all stages the client was consulted and feedback actively sought. The PAS 99:2006 standard was used as a structure and the method for implementing BS EN ISO 9001:2008 and BS EN ISO 14001:2004 requirements.

Under the guidance of the Blackmores consultant, associated operational procedures and documentation were developed to meet the requirements of ISO 9001 and ISO 14001. This covered areas such as legal and other requirements, identification of environmental aspects & impacts, environmental and quality objectives, emergency preparedness and response.

A series of internal quality and environmental audits were conducted to prove the system's robustness and soundness. From this process further improvements were made to associated operational procedures. The company's personnel were heavily involved in this and many points of operational improvement were made to the print floor activities. These included taking elements of 5S to '**Sort**' eliminate the clutter, '**Set**' the physical locations and limits around operational activities, '**Shine/Sweep**' the workplace.

A management review meeting was held against the requirements of ISO 9001:2008 and ISO 14001:2004. From this meeting a wide range of actions were agreed. For example, improvements to the operational processes, a review of alternative ink systems and an analysis of the air flow of screen printing benches. Other areas included the implementation of housekeeping controls and the development of regular production meetings to review performance. From these meetings the introduction of a Management Information System was agreed. It was also agreed that Customer and Supplier survey questionnaires would be sent out. Another initiative was to produce a chart of European Waste Codes so that when waste collection takes place personnel have an understanding of what they are signing for.

The Remco Graffix Integrated Management System and processes were validated by audits carried out by the certification body, with no non conformities raised at either Stage 1 or Stage 2 Assessments. The company was then duly recommended for certification to BS EN ISO 9001:2008 and BS EN ISO 14001:2004. This was a fantastic result making the company's hard work very worthwhile.

The company was clearly able to demonstrate how it monitored many key elements of its operations; which they had not been able to manage successfully previously.

Substantial benefits...

The many substantial benefits to the company included:-

- Helping to retain customer loyalty by making improvements to the company's tendering activities.
- New office development for sales and marketing activities.
- Management Information System to manage the workflow.
- Improved definition of Graphic Design process procedures.

- Flow chart procedures developed for production planning and print related processes.
- Flow chart procedure developed for uniforms, clothing and associated products.
- Ventilation & ducting system installed to improve air flow of screen printing benches.
- Print floor line marking to define equipment locations and storage limits.
- Control improvements made to ink and chemical storage.
- Regular production meetings held to discuss customer, production and environmental requirements.
- The convergence of top down management and print floor management.

Colin Maynard – Managing (IMS) Director explains;

“We are proud of the service and customer care we provide. We also care about reducing our environmental impacts. Our valued customers recognise that we produce printed products to high standards of quality and environmental control.

Process improvements are not only being embedded in our work systems, but also in our peoples' minds. This is what can be achieved when using an Integrated Management System (IMS) approach.

Blackmores have not only shown us that ISO 9001 & ISO 14001 really are interactive standards for continual improvement; but they also have the tools we needed to achieve compliance.”