

## ISO 9001 Case Study

### Middlesex Hose and Fittings ISO 9001 Implementation

Established in 1987, Middlesex Hose and Fittings has become one of the fastest growing companies in the marketplace providing hydraulic and pneumatic services and components.

In order to improve its operational position the company decided to implement a quality management system. The obvious choice was certification to the internationally recognised quality standard, ISO 9001.

Realising that they needed external assistance, Middlesex Hose and Fittings evaluated several potential partners to initiate and implement the system, finally choosing Blackmores as the preferred associate.

The initial stage was a detailed gap analysis against the requirements of ISO 9001 which took into account current systems and potential areas for improvement. A report was prepared from this analysis which identified areas of strengths and weakness. In turn, an action plan was generated with responsibilities and target dates defined. Resources were allocated between Blackmores and Middlesex Hose to effectively implement the Quality Management System within the agreed timescales. This plan was co-operatively produced and was regularly reviewed and updated as the project progressed.

A bespoke Quality Management System was created to establish, develop and document Middlesex Hose and Fittings operating methods. At all stages the client was consulted and feedback actively sought, and as a result a user-friendly and simplistic system with minimal documentation was created.

Once the system was emplaced, it was communicated within the firm and a series of internal audits were conducted to demonstrate the system's robustness and soundness. Opportunities for improvement were noted such as better area labelling which made it easier to locate items.

A management review meeting was held prior to the certifying body conducting a pre-assessment to ensure the system was embedded within the company. Following this, a further assessment was made and the company was then successfully recommended for certification.

The process from initial go ahead to certification took only four months. The project was delivered relatively painlessly, and in a timely and organised manner.

The benefits to the company are clearly very tangible, some of which include:-

- Ability to clearly monitor key elements of operations which the company had not been able to manage successfully prior to the project.
- Reduce costs and add value to processes.
- Sales and marketing opportunities have been realised as a result of the certification.
- Opened up potential new market areas in such industries as rail and transport, as well as helping retain customer loyalty.