

## ISO 9001 Case Study

### Vistair ISO 9001 Implementation

Vistair, at its Northolt distribution centre, undertakes amendment and distribution of technical documents to clients' aircraft at airports throughout Britain. Their full technical publications facility obviates the necessity for clients to retain such functions in-house.

Established in June 1999 the Northolt distribution centre handles annually:

- Around 33 million individual sheets of printed A5 paper
- 650,000 en-route charts
- 120,000 flight guide supplements
- Maintenance of 7500 individual airline manuals

In order to improve its operational position the company decided to implement a simplistic and user-friendly quality management system. It was also a key criteria of Vistair's main client that they be certified to the internationally recognised quality standard ISO 9001.

Realising that they needed external assistance, Vistair evaluated several potential partners to initiate and implement the system, finally choosing Blackmores as their preferred associate. The initial stage was a detailed gap analysis against the requirements of ISO 9001 which took into account Vistair's current systems and potential areas of improvement.

A report was prepared from this analysis which identified various strengths and weaknesses. In turn, an action plan was generated with responsibilities and target dates defined. Some of the actions were allocated to Blackmores staff and some had to be conducted by Vistair. This plan was co-operatively produced and was regularly reviewed and updated as the project progressed.

The Quality Management system was jointly developed between Vistair and Blackmores in such a way that it was simplistic and user-friendly. The system was bespoke to Vistair's requirements and operating methods. At all stages the client was consulted and feedback actively sought.

Once the system was emplaced a series of internal audits were conducted to prove the system's robustness and soundness. Again, Vistair's staff were heavily involved and many points of improvement were noted such as better area labelling which made it easier to locate items. Once a series of audits had been completed and a management review held the certifying body conducted a pre-assessment. With this successfully completed, a further assessment lasting 2 and a half days was made and the company was recommended for certification.

The process from initial go-ahead to certification took five months. The process was relatively pain-free although a significant amount of work was required from all involved.

The benefits to the company are very tangible. The company is able to clearly monitor many key elements of its operations which they had not been able to manage successfully previously. This has helped in controlling costs and ensuring they know where money is being spent unnecessarily. As the Operations Director said "The process of ISO 9001 has opened our eyes". In addition to internal systems, the certification has opened up potential new market areas as well as helping retain customer loyalty.

Blackmores guided the company in the management system implementation and certification process. The procedures and documentation were simplified. The measurement systems set up were easy to manage and gave instant feedback allowing cost control and improvements to be made.