

Cleaner future for Wyndeham

Wyndeham is pushing for ISO 14001 across all its operations, a task which has uncovered a range of benefits.

While cynics may see ISO 14001 as a means to keep hold of customers who need to have all the boxes on their job tender form ticked, the rewards from using it to drive the adoption of sustainable working practices go far beyond this.

For printers in some sectors it is already essential or will become so in the very near future. Companies which have a direct relationship with members of the public, especially in industries associated with energy, transport, banking and retail, are leading the way in insisting that suppliers prove their environmental worthiness in order to present a green face to the public. Likewise government, charities and other public bodies are keen to prove that their impact on the environment is kept to a minimum and set targets for private sector suppliers.

Magazine publishers, already looking over their shoulders towards electronic media, are equally sensitive about environmental performance. The PPA has long had an environmental committee setting standards and being seen to be active, partly to prevent outside intervention from government or other authorities. And insisting that their suppliers have a clean environmental record fits neatly with this. Which is fine for publishers, but can mean a whole lot of additional work for magazine printers.

Fortunately Wyndeham has always had a conscience in this way, aware that sustainability is crucial to the industry. It has been a big supporter of PrintIT to find a new generation of employees and has taken willingly to the requirements of ISO 14001. One of its operations, Wyndeham Gait, can claim to be in the vanguard, having received its certificate early in 2005. Its customer base includes the government and public bodies which

But the company wanted to be ahead of the game and like many pioneers this provided lessons for those that followed. Gait's path to ISO 14001 had taken two years of hard work. It was not going to be a model for the rest of the group to pursue.

Instead Wyndeham approached the BPIF who in turn recommended a consultancy company called Strategic Safety Systems, which had helped many print companies achieve the standard. Phil Chambers, who runs SSS, says: "Consulting on environmental standards is really just part of the business, but these days it's almost all of it."

On Wyndeham's side the task of managing the project fell to group commercial director Eddie Fear. He admits that customer considerations were an inspiration, but there was more. "It was our desire to improve environmental performance of the business. We know that in the future for us to increase market shares we will need to have the certificates as more and more companies go down that route," he says. "We anticipate that customers will eventually only work with companies that have ISO 14001 because it is the most recognised standard out there."

The first step was understanding where Wyndeham's operations stood, what the current impacts were and so on. Chambers says: "I worked closely with Wyndeham from the outset. The first step was to set up systems to find out what they did and to understand the impacts of what they did. At the start there was great variation between the sites, Heron has the problems of scale and Grange has the fact that it is split across two buildings for instance. What Wyndeham wanted to do was to achieve a separate certificate for each site rather than gain a single certificate for the entire group. This would have been possible and would mean that those sites that were not quite as good could hide behind the good sites. Wyndeham didn't want to do this."

Nevertheless, it did not want to repeat the uncomfortable process that Gait had undergone to achieve its ISO 14001 and it also wanted to drive the process through the group at the same time and also to add in the ISO 9001 and OHSAS 18001 certificates. The achievement is that it has managed to do this at a time of internal reorganisation and emerged with the set of standards. Says Chambers: "Working with a sympathetic certification body is important. You need somebody who is on your side - and someone accredited by UKAS."

SSS also provided a straightforward way to manage the process, based around a software program called INTACT (Integrated Action Management) that Chambers had developed. The work to identify the baseline was used to develop a set of procedures which could be applied across the different businesses so that all waste products could be segregated and dealt with in the same way, from plates and chemicals which are picked up by J&G Environmental to paper, plastics and the disposal of old IT equipment. "Everything is disposed of in the same responsible manner," says Fear. "We were already doing most of the obvious stuff, but Phil Chambers took us further. As we looked further all sorts of things began to turn up.



were among the first to set performance criteria for suppliers.



OHAS 18001 and ISO 14001 have had an impact inside Heron's plant

We now have special packaging to put old fluorescent lighting tubes in for instance."

Segregation has also meant that the company can achieve higher prices for the by-products of the printing process which become the raw materials for another business.

Each site has its own manager responsible for ensuring that the guidelines are adhered to and that the correct records are kept. This is where the INTACT software proves its worth. It reduces the burden of filling in paper forms to record every movement and it ensures that everything is up to date and is available to all. When the auditors come around every six months, everything is in order.

"We don't have masses of forms that need to be filled in," Chambers says. "This means that the system becomes so much easier to run and it makes everything more professional."

It also means that the cost is manageable. The management system manual which sets out the processes is just 10mm thick. Chambers points out that prices to help companies through the process can vary wildly from one consultancy to another. If the price is huge, the chances are that the system that is implemented will be so complex that it is unworkable, he says.

As the company is also looking to reduce its carbon footprint transport has been a big consideration. A partnership with DHL seeks to cut down on the number of journeys made, especially from Heron where the size of the operation means it shifts more paper and magazines than the other companies. Across the group, company cars are now diesel powered.

This has not prompted protests. Indeed, says Fear, "everybody has thrown themselves into it across the group. Everybody has been involved and it's been a worthwhile exercise in this way."

As well as the environmental certificate, Wyndeham chose to strive for ISO 9001 and OHAS 18001 at the same time. The same methodical approach to record keeping and audit trails is

required of the different certificates and there is a definite link between ISO 14001 and the 18001 health and safety award. This requires training for all staff, recorded properly, and objectives for the next period to be set. For example, part of environmental management is understanding what to do when chemicals are spilled. Any leakage into the drainage system can mean hefty fines. Part of the job has been to ensure Wyndeham has the right spill kits and that its staff are trained in the correct way to use the kits.

"It has taken us about two years to go through the whole process. There is effort required: it does need management resources and commitment, you do need to record your intents and your actions," says Fear.

The process began in October 2005 with Wyndeham Direct receiving the certificate in May 2006. Heron and Grange received theirs later in the year. Managing several companies simultaneously as well as going for all three certificates has lengthened the process, which Chambers says would normally take six months for a typical printer. With effort this can come down to three months, he says.

For Wyndeham, there is no stopping now. Fear is working to achieve certification for the prepress, packaging and print management operations. As these are IT based there is less instant benefit than for the printing companies. The process should be complete by the end of this year. By then the print companies will have their FSC and PEFC Chain of Custody qualifications in place, while ideas about reducing the carbon footprint are being considered.

Around the Heron factory a sure indication that the company has 18001 are the signs which say "walk, don't run". The company needs no such warning. It is striding forward confident that its performance is as it should be.

