



The building trade is under pressure to deal with environmental issues, but British Gypsum is taking their response even further.

BUILDING A SOLID FOUNDATION

While most organizations are trying to minimize their impact on the environment, whether streamlining the business or improving corporate reputation, the building trade is under significant pressure to clean up its act from the ground up.

It's not surprising, given the numbers: production of building materials alone represents 10 per cent of the country's CO₂ emissions and the building trade is one of the biggest consumers of materials in general. And this doesn't take into account things like heating and lighting homes, which represents upwards of 50 per cent of emissions. By comparison, air travel contributed 6.3 per cent of the UK's carbon emissions in 2007, while passenger cars contributed 15 per cent.

Initiatives such as the UK government's Code for Sustainable Homes, alongside things like *The Green Guide to Specification* from Building Research Establishment (BRE) Ltd, seek to address the issue, but they're only part of the jigsaw. The Code for Sustainable Homes,

for example, was launched by the UK government in 2006 as an environmental impact rating system for housing, focusing on energy efficiency and sustainability. Initially a voluntary standard for new buildings, it became mandatory in May 2008 for all new homes to be rated against the Code.

The Green Guide series was launched in 1996 to provide a simple "green guide" to the environmental impacts of building materials, as part of BREEAM (BRE Environmental Assessment Method), an accredited environmental rating scheme for buildings. These initiatives, as well as contributing to customer and professional awareness on the subject, are pushing the sector to act quickly and decisively on environmental issues.

For British Gypsum, one of the largest producers of plaster and plasterboard to the building trade, the decision was straightforward.

"There has been growing pressure to demonstrate an effective environmental management system within the business,

to give customers the confidence to choose British Gypsum," says Allen Gorringer, environment manager for British Gypsum. "As a consequence, we pursued and achieved certification to ISO 14001 in our manufacturing and mining operations in 2008, with a target to get the whole of British Gypsum certified by June 2009."

Using the Entropy Software™ solution from BSI, British Gypsum achieved initial certification two months earlier than planned. In addition, the software has allowed information to be shared quickly and enabled demonstration of that sharing to the auditors, making the process "quick and less painful" according to Gorringer. The next stage is to achieve certification to ISO 14001 across all of the non-operational parts of British Gypsum by June 2009.

THE NEXT STEP

Certification to ISO 14001 was only the first step for British Gypsum: "Management systems

integration is our ultimate objective,” he says. “We want to have an integrated system at the heart of everything we do. The business is already benefiting from an integrated management system (IMS) on one site, based on PAS 99 [the world’s first integrated management system requirements specification]. Ideally, we would have created the IMS side by side with certification to ISO 14001, but we had to work on the environmental system first. The good thing is that this has given us a very good model to work with for other management systems.”

British Gypsum introduced a programme called “Policy Deployment” in 2007, which encompasses the vision, mission, values and objectives of the company as a whole.

“Policy Deployment is steering the company towards its business goals, set around a number of specific strategic drivers” says Gorringer. “Having an IMS is part of that process. The business objective is to have a common, consistent management system across the entire company by 2012.”

COMPLIANCE IS KEY

In order for any IMS to work at British Gypsum, it would have to accommodate the compliance requirements that are at the heart of every business in the building sector.

For example, British Gypsum runs a programme called “World Class Manufacturing (WCM)” that cuts across Saint-Gobain Gyproc – British Gypsum is part of the global Saint-Gobain Group. WCM strives for continuous improvement, with better productivity and quality of products, with good yield and no breakdowns, and ensuring things are available on time. Compliance underpins the whole process and the management systems in place have to support these goals.

“Compliance is fundamental to what we do,” says Gorringer. “We use the Entropy Software™ audit tool as well as balanced scorecards for compliance evaluation, so we can see trends in our performance. For instance, are there problems with waste? Does this problem relate to any specific legislation, such as Duty of Care?”

“Entropy Software™ allows us to focus our efforts and resources on compliance issues when necessary. Any areas of concern can be targeted, rather than taking an ad hoc approach. We compare performance at different sites and share the findings with our Executive, benchmarking site against site, in order to get better and better.”

This is a big step for the organization, Gorringer points out, as in the past most of the sites were competing against each other. “Now we want to share best practice faster and to be more consistent in what we do,” he explains. “We’re putting in place a system that is quite easy to replicate from site to site and, through WCM, we want to promote and share best practice. Entropy Software™ allows us to share information quickly, so that when we learn the best way to do something, we can get that information to all other sites and it can be implemented straight away.”

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

It’s all well and good to implement programmes and establish a common management system, but for most organizations, results are what really matters. Is it working at British Gypsum?

“We’re already seeing some efficiencies in business processes, for example in the way that audits are undertaken,” he says. “We do fully integrated internal audits on the sites and the results are tracked and trends identified using Entropy Software™. This already saves around eight man days per annum of auditing.”

The organization is also implementing more widespread use of balanced scorecards, with Entropy supporting the effort.

“We want to ensure there’s a full scorecard of KPIs, not just environment or quality or safety, but a full scorecard for any given site,” Gorringer explains. “This will bring all objectives and targets into one place.”

“There’s still some way to go, but the biggest change is not about systems, it’s about behaviours.”

“For example, we’re trying to encourage our people to be more autonomous, to change their behaviour about things like spotting safety hazards. They must Recognize there’s a hazard, Remove it, Record and Report it, otherwise known as 4R. And they must do this autonomously. An effective IMS and auditing tools like those offered by Entropy Software™ can contribute to this process.” ■

Finding the right solution

“When I was interviewed for my current role just over three years ago, I was asked what I thought about Entropy Software™. At the time, I said I wouldn’t touch it with a barge pole,” laughs Gorringer. “That’s because, in my previous roles, I had the resources available to build bespoke systems. IT support could develop systems exactly as I wanted them, to do exactly what I wanted them to do. But when I did that, the result was set in stone; it couldn’t be developed.”

“By using Entropy, however, I discovered that it offers flexible management systems capability and covers everything we need. There may be other systems that cover incident management, auditing or procedures individually, but Entropy covers everything.”

“It’s also continually being improved and our input is taken seriously. It’s like having a conversation with Bill Gates and telling him how Microsoft Windows doesn’t quite do what you want it to do, and asking him to go and fix it – and he does. We’ve seen improvements that we’ve specifically asked for incorporated in subsequent releases. It really delivers.”



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