



USING MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The concept of sustainable development is gaining recognition. However, it is still a new idea for many organisations and for most, the concept remains abstract and theoretical. Protecting an organisation's bottom line is a well-accepted business principle yet many organisations fail to extend this notion to the world's natural and human resources or fully understand the benefits of implementing a sustainable development strategy.

Many people see sustainability as protecting the planet but it is far more than just "being green". Sustainable development means taking into account the social and economic impacts of business activities as well as the environmental impacts, not only for present but also for future generations. Although many business leaders have already started to consider taking a "greener" approach, they often fail to realise the significant social impact their business can have both in the UK and globally. Taking sustainability seriously means that business leaders need to be responsive to the needs of a wide range of stakeholders and communities, some of which may have competing interests.

The key to sustainable development is to integrate the delivery of economic development, social progress and environmental quality – in other words a balanced approach to managing profit, people and planet.

For example you may be considering cutting your training budget. However untrained staff are more likely to make mistakes and have accidents which can lead to lower productivity and higher operational costs. Or, you may be looking to reduce your energy bill by 10%, however you still need sufficient heating and lighting to ensure a comfortable working environment and of course sufficient power to run your machines.

TACKLING THE GREEN ISSUE BUT REMAINING COMPETITIVE

BSI aims to generate a greater

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awareness of how standards can help businesses become more sustainable. Standards are not just bureaucratic or designed to simply satisfy customer demand, but offer a real solution to ensuring an organisation can continue to prosper. BSI offers a comprehensive portfolio of products and services aimed at helping organisations better understand the social, economic and environmental impacts of business activities. The range will appeal to any organisation, regardless of size or sector which has an interest in corporate social responsibility.

For example assessment and certification to management system standards, such as BS EN 16001 (energy management) and ISO 14001 (environmental management), shows organisations that sustainable thinking and practices have to be built into the way the business is managed and reflected in the way decisions are made.

BENEFITS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Organisations can derive substantial benefits from the implementation of sustainable development. These include significant energy and materials savings; First Group, the leading transport operator in the UK and North America reported savings of £240,000 through energy reduction initiatives and a further £70,000 in waste minimisation schemes following implementation of ISO 14001. Other benefits of sustainable development include; robust risk management, fewer work related injuries and deaths and avoidance of the costs of regulatory infringements; and reputation and brand enhancement leading to investor, customer and staff loyalty.

Tackling sustainability head on will undoubtedly enhance the competitive stance and environmental credibility of an organisation. Customers, employees and



stakeholders are increasingly demanding transparent business practices, both regarding workplace standards and the wider impact the business has on society, climate change and the environment. They want evidence of changing practices that demonstrate an organisation's sustainability credentials; it's not just about "talking the talk" it's about "walking the walk". Regulatory and competitive pressures combined with growing stakeholder expectations demand transparent, robust and objective reporting – this is where management systems play a key role.

HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE?

More and more sustainably aware organisations are turning to BSI for best practice standards and to deliver certification programmes that prove their ability to comply with these standards. BSI is a global independent business services organisation delivering standards-based solutions to help organisations improve their performance, better manage risk and make their operations more sustainable. www.bsigroup.co.uk