



ISO 14001 – Environmental Management Systems

CASE STUDY NIMLOK

Summary

Needs

- To raise environmental awareness within the industry
- To challenge the 'build and dispose' philosophy that has dominated the majority of traditional display and exhibit construction companies
- To maximise recycled content of exhibits
- To reduce environmental footprint

Benefits

- 95% of materials now recyclable due to reconfigurable exhibits and solutions
- Significant cost savings in the first year on power, materials and waste disposal – volume of waste destined for landfill reduced by over 15 tons
- Legislative compliance
- Top 20 placing in the Sunday Times Best Green Company awards

Background

Nimlok is a market leading exhibition and display company that celebrates its 40th anniversary this year. It is part of the P3 Group, an international display services group, with sister companies based in the USA and Canada. The P3 Group specialises in manufacturing, product sourcing and supply of 'best of breed' products. Collectively the group represents one of the largest manufacturing and distribution groups in the display and exhibition market worldwide.



nimlok

exhibitions • event environments • permanent solutions

Customer Needs

Nimlok realised that it is not good enough to be the best in your industry if that success comes at the detriment of the environment. Nimlok wanted to demonstrate that it had a clear 'eco conscience', and as a result embarked upon implementing the Environmental Management System Standard, ISO 14001, across all sites.

ISO 14001 enables businesses to identify areas that impact on the environment and understand the environmental laws that are applicable to the business. Nimlok chose to implement ISO 14001 so it could put in place a framework for continual improvement.

Operations director Keith Richardson explains, "Going green is more than just a trend; it's a commitment to a philosophy that is at the core of everything we do. It is a way of life, thinking, speaking and acting. It continually evolves and changes which means that it must be evaluated often. As our knowledge of the environmental issues change, we make a commitment for continual improvement and ISO 14001 provides third party endorsement to this claim."

Benefits

Richardson goes on to say that, "The principal driver for this environmental initiative is Nimlok's desire to reduce the overall environmental impact of the company. We wish to be seen as a leader within the exhibition industry – an industry which has traditionally been very wasteful with natural resources. Our decision to use a formal management system is based on having seen the benefit for over 10 years of

the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle in ISO 9001, specifically in setting standards for improvement and controlling the achievement of them.

"The entire programme has been cost neutral; savings in the first year on power, materials and waste disposal have been significant. Customers are not necessarily using ISO 14001 as the reason for choosing Nimlok, but for most it is a key factor in their decision making. Probably the most significant benefit relates to the original goal of raising environmental awareness across the industry as a whole. The sustainable events standard BS 8901 has also been enthusiastically endorsed by the events industry.

"The most significant challenge we found was understanding the complexity of environmental legislation. The BSI Training courses were of great benefit in helping us to decipher this and to identify the relevance to our industry. I think it would be fair to say that most companies in the industry do not know the weight of law that they are required to comply with.

"Reaction of staff to the implementation of a management system has been tremendous, it was fully embraced by the whole workforce, a factor that was significant when achieving a top 20 placing in the Sunday Times Best Green Company awards.

"We have always believed passionately that there is a better way than the 'build and trash' philosophy that has dominated the majority of traditional display and exhibit construction. Our new designs specifically include components that are produced using easily and commonly recycled materials including aluminium and cardboard and on average, 95% of the

materials in our new designs, based on the total exhibit weight, can be recycled.

"We also have initiated a trade show exhibit recycling programme, designed to keep old exhibits out of landfill sites. At the end of an exhibit's life, our clients are invited to return it to Nimlok. We will then sort the components by content and direct them to the recycle stream, at no additional cost to our clients."

BSI's Role

"This certificate builds upon the common elements of ISO 9001 which we have had with BSI since 1997 and also integrates with our BS 8901, sustainable events management system," explains Richardson. "We have had a long standing relationship with BSI and are confident that BSI has a much clearer understanding of both the legal requirements and economic impacts of a sustainable environmental management system than many of its competitors. We will continue to work with BSI as we explore ISO 14001 and the IEMA approved advanced EMS auditor course."

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