



THE STANDARD

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EDITORIAL

QUALITY

2/3

Optilan - Quality Telecommunications Systems

Vallourec & Mannesmann's Tailor-made Audits

Welcome to the latest issue of The Standard.

In this issue, we have updates on certification from Leeds Metropolitan University - the first university in England to certify to environmental standard ISO 14001. Optilan, the telecommunications specialists, give their insight on how certification has helped their business. And on page 4, we can see how npower is delivering a continuously improved service to their retail customers.

As ever, I would like to thank all our contributors for taking the time to share their certification experience.

ENVIRONMENT

4/5

Leeds Metropolitan Gets Green Light

npower Retail Green from Top to Bottom

This issue also features developments in our Far East offices. We are in the process of establishing an Asian hub based in Taiwan. The aim is to further streamline our certification processes and offer even better services to our customers in the region. The article on page 7 focuses on the specifics of the Taiwanese market. We also look at the Asian automotive market as a whole in this issue.

HEALTH & SAFETY

6

OHSAS 18001 Certification - Improving the Health of your Business

Finally, we are pleased to announce the acquisition of the Electricity Training Association on page 8. This exciting development perfectly complements existing AFAQ-EAQA certification services and training and provides our customers with even more specialised training opportunities.

I hope you find this issue of interest. Don't forget that we are always interested in your comments and feedback. Please feel free to contact us with your thoughts.

Trevor Wilmer
Managing Director

FOCUS ON ASIA

7

New Set-up for AFAQ-EAQA in Asia

Automotive Certification in Asia

GENERAL

8

Did you know?

ETA Courses Congratulations





www.optilan.com

Optilan - Telecommunication Systems with Built-In Quality

Alison Kitching, Marketing Manager at Optilan, explains how certification to the new ISO 9001:2000 standard has helped the business.

In 2002, Optilan was awarded ISO 9001:2000 certification by AFAQ-EAQA.

The awarding of this quality standard was the culmination of a period of intensive analysis and restructuring of our quality culture to ensure we had a system that would not become outmoded by ongoing and sustained growth in the company.

Optilan was founded, literally, in a back bedroom, by three young engineers who remain working Directors of the company. From day one, Optilan's customers were big names with the highest expectations in terms of quality - companies like Marconi Communications, Honeywell and the BBC. Optilan was able to meet and exceed those expectations consistently - growing in reputation and customer

base. Optilan first achieved EAQA certification in 1996.

In approaching the adoption of the new standard, the Directors' first decision was to quite literally tear up and throw away all previous ISO 9001 documentation. Led by Quality Director Richard Buckland, the company started again from fundamentals, with no preconceptions or preconditions.

Each of the 17 different departments at Optilan analysed and documented its own procedures, backed by work instructions. Through investing time and energy 'up-front' in this personal, in-depth approach, the full commitment to the process of every individual was assured.

A system of continuous improvement now operates throughout the organisation. Each department is self-monitoring and is continuously assessed by its internal and external customers. Departmental feedback via QA



representatives is reviewed regularly by the QA Management Team and fed through to the Board of Directors at regular Management Review meetings. Optilan in turn fully monitors the standards of its external suppliers, actively promoting ISO 9001:2000 certification throughout the supply chain.

It is almost impossible to imagine Optilan functioning as it does today without ISO certification. We work in process driven industries in some of the world's most hazardous environments - on oil and gas rigs, on Underground Rail systems, alongside power cables. Our quality standards are as rigorous as those of our customers, and ISO 9001:2000 certification helps ensure that we are all talking the same language.

As an internationally recognised standard, certification benefits us throughout the world. All our current overseas work on the Azeri Oilfields in the Caspian Sea, on pipelines in Tanzania and Russia, on light rail systems in Germany and Portugal, relies on global recognition not just of Optilan, but also of AFAQ-EAQA. Whilst in the UK, infrastructures like the Channel Tunnel Rail Link rely on our quality standards, and those of AFAQ-EAQA.



Tailor-made audits make for an innovative quality system

Jean-Luc Daudon, Quality Manager at Vallourec & Mannesman Tubes discusses his experience of certification audits with AFAQ in France and Germany

You were one of the first companies to receive certification from AFAQ. Why?

VALLOUREC & MANNESMANN TUBES is a worldwide leader in the production of hot-rolled seamless tubes. We deliver our products to all four corners of the earth and the majority of our turnover is achieved from exports. Quality is one of our principle management values, which is why our factories were among the first to receive ISO 9001 or ISO 9002 certification from AFAQ.

Your quality system is somewhat unusual, can you explain how it came into existence?

Our quality system is underpinned by two key notions: our working groups and a strong culture of evaluation. It is these notions that help control our main processes: the assessment culture enables structured working groups to supervise processes. The role of these groups, which involve the entire company, is fundamental since they identify the most relevant features, evaluate them and develop objectives in line with those of the company. Furthermore, they are extremely agile, and are often able to react before problems arise. Thus they form assessment networks which act as "score cards" and are very useful to the production processes. This demanding organisation presents the same advantages as those which are in the pipeline. In a multi-cultural

environment like ours, it lets us naturally channel the skills of the company towards a single goal: client satisfaction.

The entire VALLOUREC & MANNESMANN TUBES Group was certified ISO 9001:2000 in 2002. To achieve this, you changed the scope of certification. Why?

We had already seen that certification audits performed one factory at a time did not cover all the processes of the group, in particular the "macro-processes" which involve different factories or external support activities. We decided to change our scope of certification to encompass all our activities, including those of our Franco-German sales teams. We chose AFAQ to support us in the reorganisation of our audits, since it had a good understanding of our factories and our different lines of business, and because it is reputed in Germany thanks to its partnership with DQS, one of the principal German certifying bodies.

The ISO audits form an integral part of your quality system. Is this because of the new version of the ISO 9001 standard?

The new version of the ISO 9001 standard emphasises process management and relaxes the rules on internal audits. We saw the opportunity to use certification audits in our drive for ongoing improvement, so we adapted the audits to our own needs. For example, we wanted the audits to reflect an overall consistent vision of our activities, which could become more explicit with time. This is

why AFAQ assigned us the same team of auditors for 3 years and planned the subsequent transfer of feedback.

We also asked the auditors for an additional service. Beyond their usual assignment, they audit certain elements of our quality system using our own standards. This additional audit, which of course has no impact on the certification, is particularly appreciated for the quality of the observations made.

What's your assessment of the certification process?

Today certification has been proven to be an essential management tool. The external audits performed are a particularly good match for our culture of assessment and results. They are among the most important tools we have implemented to define and develop our management system.

www.vmtubes.com

VALLOUREC & MANNESMANN TUBES
Subsidiary of the VALLOUREC Group
A world leader in the production of hot-rolled seamless tubes.
Annual production: 2.8 million tonnes
Employees: 13,300 worldwide.
Turnover: €2 billion



Leeds Metropolitan gets the 'Green' Light

Leeds Metropolitan University is one of the largest universities in the country, with 37,000 students and 3,000 staff. Their Facilities Management and Purchasing divisions have just achieved ISO 14001 environmental certification through AFAQ-EAQA, making Leeds Metropolitan the first university in England to be awarded the standard. Mark Warner, Environmental Project Manager, explains the process and underlines the key role played by staff members.



Leeds Met's Senior Management are presented with their certificate by Trevor Wilmer

In 2002, Facilities Management (FM) and Purchasing made a commitment to achieve the international environmental standard ISO 14001 in order to gain recognition for the good work that has already been carried out over the last three years.

After a great deal of hard work from everyone in FM and Purchasing, the two

divisions achieved certification in August 2003. This makes us the first University in England to achieve this

environmental standard, and is a strong public statement of our commitment to the environment.

In order to gain certification, over 200 FM and Purchasing staff attended environmental workshops and 10 members of staff attended a one-day training course to be environmental coordinators. We also developed a new environmental policy, set specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and targeted objectives, developed a register of environmental legislation and put new procedures in place.

The results of this work have so far included a new pay-by-weight waste and recycling contract with Shanks; the Woodland Management Programme at Beckett Park; inclusion of energy

efficiency measures as part of refurbishments; the recycling and green purchasing guide, and an agreement with Roseville Enterprises to recycle all our redundant IT equipment.

Further improvements will incorporate; the inclusion of six environmental factors in all purchasing decisions, specific environmental training for staff with purchasing responsibilities, a biodiversity study at Beckett Park, a 5% reduction in energy use (with at least 30% of our energy being from renewable sources), seven strands of the transport strategy being implemented, and a host of other initiatives.

There are many advantages to having an externally certified Environmental Management System. These include;

reduced costs, increased efficiencies, joined-up thinking and better communication between departments. We now also have more management information and improved monitoring of performance against targets. This will enable us to stay ahead of new environmental legislation and of course to enhance our reputation with our stakeholders.

So what's next? The plan is to include all the other faculties and divisions in Leeds Met to become the first University in the UK to be fully certified to ISO 14001. This is incredibly important as savings in energy, for example, cannot be achieved unless everyone in the University is aware of how much energy they use and what they can do to save it.

npower retail - green from top to bottom

The power sector encompasses a wide range of services from generation to supply. Below, one of the country's leading suppliers, npower, discusses how certification is helping them to deliver a better retail service to their customers.

With around 6 million customers and 8,000 employees npower is one of the country's top three gas and electricity suppliers.

npower has developed a company-wide environmental management system and is aiming for full certification of the business in November which will be audited by AFAQ-EAQA. Parts of the business have an environmental management system already certified to ISO 14001, namely the metering and data services area and some specified offices, as well as areas of our parent

company RWE Innogy plc.

The scope has now been extended to cover the whole of the npower business. npower has identified its environmental aspects as having a number of focus areas including general office and kitchen waste, energy use, water use, plastics use, plastic cup waste, waste heat and energy (customers), and transport (for personnel and our metering fleet). We are also looking at our supply chain and their environmental credentials. We have set out environmental management programmes and procedures accordingly.

npower is also developing energy efficiency advice and products (for instance, cavity wall and loft insulation, low energy lamps and energy efficient boilers). It also runs or participates in several schemes designed to improve

energy efficiency in vulnerable households such as the Government's Warm Zones initiative and npower's Health Through Warmth (HTW) scheme. HTW is a £10m campaign that trains nurses and other health visitors to spot signs of damp and poor insulation and refer the householders to sources of grant aid.

npower also offers a green clean electricity product, npower Juice, in partnership with Greenpeace, and provides energy management software for business customers.

Donna Rawlins - npower's Environmental Co-ordinator said: 'Having an environmental management system has allowed us to set concrete targets to improve our performance and comply with environmental legislation. The environmental management system is

crucial in underpinning our credentials as an environmentally responsible company, something which is rightly expected of us by our customers, and by our own employees.'

In light of recent forthcoming EC legislation regarding fuel-labelling, we are discussing with industry and Government level, the issue of providing customers with information about the fuel sources for our electricity. The Electricity Directive comes into force next July, when implementation will start in a UK context.

The EMS complements the range of other environmental initiatives across npower and is helping the company and its customers look forward to a greener future.



OHSAS 18001 Certification

Improving the health of your business

Management of health and safety issues in the workplace covers a broad range of issues; from minimising sick days to compliance with legislation. Managing these issues means taking account not only of legal requirements, but also the well-being of your personnel in their working environment. Here, we look at the general background and reasons for certifying.

Lost working days cost companies dear. The Health and Safety Executive estimates that skin diseases alone account for 132,000 lost days every year, amounting to £20 million. Exposure at work to substances such as soaps and detergents can lead to dermatitis and eczema complaints, among others. This year's European

Week for Health and Safety at Work (13-18 October) focused on the area of dangerous substances in the workplace, in particular those causing asthma, skin diseases and cancer. The Health and Safety Executive is organising a number of activities to promote awareness of the issue (www.hse.gov.uk).

The signs are that the importance and profile of health and safety will continue to increase in the coming years. An effective health and safety management system can help to address these questions in the work environment.

Why develop a health and safety system?

There are usually several reasons:

- To comply with legislation, such as the Health and Safety at Work etc, Act 1974
- To implement a health and safety policy
- To continually improve the policy in order to reflect the reality of the workplace

An effective OH&S policy is a means of managing risk, by ensuring that operations are properly documented and controlled, and that everyone is aware of their own responsibilities. When properly implemented, an OH&S system will automatically lead to improvement. If you already have a system in place, certifying to standards such as OHSAS 18001 enables you to identify any gaps, clarify your existing procedures and implement a structured approach.

Many organisations already have a system in place; why take the extra step of certification?

Certifying your system means subjecting your processes to scrutiny by independent third party assessors. Using their in-depth industry knowledge and experience, our auditors address the

health and safety issues that are unique to every organisation. They help you to identify areas for improvement and potential synergies with your other management systems, such as quality.

What are the basic requirements?

Every organisation is different and will consequently have its own set of procedures. In order to achieve health and safety certification (or quality or environment, for that matter), a company must be able to demonstrate its ability to:

- Set performance standards
- Measure its achievements
- Take corrective action
- Identify areas for improvement on a continual basis

What about integrated systems?

Using three separate management systems within one organisation is clearly time-consuming, expensive and inefficient. By integrating your management systems, you can align your objectives, saving both time and money.

OHSAS 18001 is not yet recognised as an accredited international standard (e.g. ISO 9001:2000). However, OHSAS 18001 has been formulated so that it can be integrated with international standards ISO 9001:2000 (quality) and ISO 14001 (environment) as all three follow a process-based approach. As such, AFAQ-EAQA can offer combined audits and certification for any or all three of these major areas of certification.

For more information on this or other certification issues, please contact us via email or using the form at the back of the magazine.

New Set-up for AFAQ-EAQA in Asia

We have recently established an Asian hub from our Taiwan office. We have of course had offices worldwide for many years, both through AFAQ and our own AFAQ-EAQA network. The Taiwanese office of EAQA/BestCERT is already well established in the region. However, establishing a hub takes things one step further. The Asian hub will provide a regional AFAQ-EAQA service to our local offices in Taiwan, mainland China and Thailand. Resources and marketing functions will be coordinated for an approach that is both more integrated, but which also serves the market conditions and needs of local offices.

Taiwan will act as a decision-making centre, and has the authority to issue AFAQ-EAQA certificates locally on behalf of

AFAQ-EAQA. A Certification Manager has already been appointed. Ben Tsai will be based in Taiwan to review the AFAQ-EAQA audit reports. Debbie Hsieh acts as coordinator and liaison between AFAQ-EAQA and BestCERT.

The overall aim of the Asian hub is to provide a streamlined service to our customers in the region. We hope to further extend our certification services throughout the whole of Asia in the coming years. As ever, AFAQ-EAQA clients can expect the same high level of service wherever they are seeking certification; in France, UK or China.

For more information on our services in the region, please contact Debbie on debbie@bestcert.com.tw.

Automotive certification in Asia

Our parent organisation, AFAQ, provides certification to ISO/TS 16949 for the automotive industry. Paul Gilain and Ludovic Martin of AFAQ discuss the increasing demand in Asia and announce the first companies in China and South Korea to be certified to the 2002 version.

The AFAQ Group is one of the largest automotive registrars in Asia today. The acquisition of EAQA UK Ltd and its extensive network in 2001 laid the groundwork for this presence. Since we started working together in this geographical area, demand for automotive certification has increased enormously. AFAQ is the only company in the Group that is accredited to deliver QS-9000/98 and ISO/TS 16949:1999 and 2002 certification. Within the Group, Asian automotive customers account for around 15% of the total automotive certified companies, a substantial position.

Most of these are certified to the QS-9000 standard, due to the strong links between Asia and the North American automotive industry. However, the European presence is growing stronger every day.

Worldwide recognition of the ISO/TS 16949:2002 standard is increasing on a daily basis, and more and more Asian companies are implementing it together with their ISO 9001:2000 transition. ISO/TS 16949:2002 now represents up to 10% of the requests for new automotive certification.

We are delighted to announce the first two customers in the region to certify to ISO/TS 16949:2002.

In China, the first company to be certified was the Shanghai Alleward Spring Co., Ltd on 13 June 2003, and in South Korea, the first company was Lee Ku Industrial Co., Ltd on 29 August 2003.

In Asia this is the first step towards a single automotive standard, as ISO/TS 16949 will be the only standard recognised by the IATF by the end of 2006.



Did you know?

Did you know that you can include the AFAQ-EAQA logo and UKAS mark on your website and in your advertisements? The UKAS (United Kingdom Accreditation Service) mark indicates that you have been certificated with an accredited, reputable certification body. As such, the mark adds value to communications with your prospective and existing customers.

UKAS marks for either quality or environmental certification (or both) can feature in printed ads and websites in addition to your office stationery. Do be aware however, that there are certain instances where UKAS marks cannot be used - on vehicles, for example. It's a complex area, so we've developed new guidelines for our clients. Please contact Carolyn Harris with any questions, or to receive a copy of the guidelines, on 020 7922 1628 or carolyn.harris@eaqa.co.uk.



The Standard is published twice a year and is the newsletter of AFAQ-EAQA. It covers the latest news from our partners in the UK and worldwide.



Part of the AFAQ Group, one of the five largest certification bodies in the world, AFAQ-EAQA provides independent, third party certification to internationally recognised standards. As the world's leading certification body for the power sector, we understand the specific needs and challenges facing the industry.

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Electricity Training Association Courses

Many of our customers will already be familiar with the Electricity Training Association. Formed in 1990 by the UK electricity companies, ETA provides professional support activities for the training and development function in the sector, including a variety of distance learning courses. Its members are the main electricity generation, distribution and transmission companies in the UK, together with an increasing number of smaller independent companies. We have recently decided to establish closer links between the two organisations, to broaden the scope of our training programmes offered. Enquiries about ETA courses can be directed through AFAQ-EAQA, or to the following number 020 7963 5917.



Congratulations

Congratulations to our Managing Director, Trevor Wilmer, who married Tina on 6 September. Very enjoyable celebrations were followed by a honeymoon in St Kitts, which we are reliably informed was 'very hot'...



Information Request

Complete the below for more information:

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Nature of business

Please send me information on the following:

- ISO 9001:2000 Quality Management Systems
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- OHSAS 18001 Occupational Health and Safety
- Product Certification
- Aerospace Quality Assurance
- TickIT
- Training
- Other (please give details)

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