

Agilent Technologies UK Limited

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- ***Savings associated with 40 inspector roles have been made***
- ***Sales division are frequently asked for copies of the certificate***

The Company

Agilent Technologies' site in West Lothian, Scotland employs ca.400-500 people, where it designs, develops, commissions and implements telecommunications monitoring, management and test systems solutions, including the design, development and integration of custom software.

Its customers are the major telecommunication companies, such as BT and its equivalents worldwide. Approximately 80% of Agilent Technologies' business is export.

Agilent Technologies obtained ISO 9000 registration in 1990.

The Issues

The main driver for the company seeking ISO 9000 registration was that it had always had a quality management system, to be able to supply military customers. However, this standard was about to either become obsolete or be superseded, and so a replacement was necessary.

Agilent Technologies also needed a system that was recognised around the world, in line with its global business.

The Benefits

Since obtaining ISO 9000 the quality performance of the business has strengthened considerably, e.g., customer failures have decreased by a factor of 10.

A number of inspection levels have been removed from production as a result of becoming more process oriented, resulting in the need to employ 20 fewer

BSI Case Study on the Benefits of ISO 9000 Registration

inspectors, thus saving all the associated costs. In addition, factoring in the growth of the business, a savings related to 40 inspector roles has effectively been made. Peter Anderson, the Quality System Manager, believes having ISO 9001 is a differentiator, and the sales division are frequently asked for copies of the certificate.

The ISO 9000 audits have resulted in the identification of areas for improvement, particularly in the area of the R&D processes, leading, in turn, to an increase in efficiency.

BSI's Role

BSI was chosen as the body to register with because it is recognised worldwide and has a reputation that will stand up to the closest scrutiny.

During registration, BSI personnel were very helpful and approachable, answering questions and concerns without ambiguity. There has always been a good relationship with the Client Manager at BSI. They are interested in the success of Agilent Technologies' business, understand it, and are very supportive.

The approach adopted by BSI auditors has helped demystify ISO 9000 for Agilent Technologies' employees, and put a human face to it. The auditors have always been very professional and pitched their questions and comments at a level to help employees see the relationship and benefits of ISO 9000 to the business.

About the System

Agilent Technologies' quality management system is now an electronic web-based version. When this was first proposed the paper documents were transferred onto the intranet, but a system has been pioneered that has involved re-designing all the documents to be tailored for web use.

There is a top-level process diagram with relationships to the rest of the documents, involving hyperlinks to get to lower level processes and written work procedures. It is also linked to training requirements and records, and includes a search facility.

All business, *e.g.*, buying, travel, *etc.* can be conducted on the electronic system, which can automatically route requests and forms to the correct people or veto them as necessary.