

Glasgow City Council Land Services

- ***As a result of achieving ISO 9000 registration, Grounds Maintenance contracts worth over £15m/year were won and subsequently retained***
- ***A formalised training review system to identify training requirements of operatives was introduced, resulting in increased flexibility, reduction of operational risk, use of an increased range of equipment and improved levels of task achievement***
- ***A year after registration, up to 37% of staff thought there were improvements in right first time, service, training, efficiency and paperwork***
- ***Client defects dropped by 87% from 102 to 13 over 2 years***

The Company

Glasgow City Council Land Services is a very diverse, multi-functional organisation employing 3,000 people. Its services include parks management and grounds maintenance, and one of its key customers is Glasgow City Council. The Grounds Maintenance Division, which employs 1500 people, achieved BS5750 registration in 1993 and ISO 9000 registration in 1995.

The Issues

The driver for seeking ISO 9000 registration was that the key client, Glasgow City Council, specified it as a condition of contract for the provision of services under the Government's Compulsory Competitive Tendering legislation. As an internal service provider, Land Services Grounds Maintenance Division is a separate identity, and needed to have ISO 9000 registration to be able to win and retain contracts with Glasgow City Council.

The Benefits

As a result of achieving ISO 9000 registration, Grounds Maintenance contracts worth over £15m/year were won and subsequently retained. Today, many clients continue to specify a quality management system. Land Services' work is mainly for the Council but includes work for the Scottish Executive and for a range of other local clients. ISO 9000 is, therefore, still a key element of the organisation's management approach.

There has been a major improvement in the way operational training has been arranged and organised, with a built in formalised training review system to identify the training requirements of operatives. This allows local managers far greater flexibility with respect to the resources available, the range of equipment and the tasks that need to be carried out. Timing of the training is also synchronised to the seasonal requirements of the Grounds Maintenance Division, *e.g.*, in July, requirements are reviewed, training is identified by October and conducted on a supply and demand basis the following year between January and March.

A system exists whereby a monthly financial penalty is incurred if there is a defect, non-conformance against the contract requirements or an accident. In 1992, before BS5750 registration, there were 102 client defects, dropping to 83 in 1993 and to 13 in 1994, with some zero penalty periods occurring after the introduction of ISO 9000 in 1995.

A year after ISO 9000 was introduced, a staff survey on whether it had made a difference achieved a response rate of ca.30% and the following responses:

- 37% believed there was an improvement in training
- 31% believed there was an improvement in efficiency
- 29% believed there was an improvement in right first time
- 24% believed there was an improvement in service
- 22% believed there was an improvement in the amount of paperwork
- 20% believed there was an improvement in accidents
- 20% believed there was an improvement in the number of complaints
- 17% believed there was an improvement in the quality of supply
- 14% believed there was an improvement in communications
- 13% believed there was an improvement in the number of unimportant checks
- 9% believed there was an improvement in morale

Responses were analysed in detail, and the message was clearly already starting to reach, and impact on, front line staff.

BSI's Role

BSI was chosen as the registration body because Glasgow City Council Land Services needed advice on how to approach ISO 9000, but didn't want to use external consultants, preferring to develop the skills and experience in-house. BSI was chosen because of its high visibility and recognition, locally and across the UK.

A BSI team supported the registration process and, after registration, some of this initial team have continued to visit Land Services. After 2-3 years, the Client Manager and Assessors developed a detailed knowledge and understanding of the organisation's system and business. Their feedback and input has become more useful as a result. The visits are now themed, to look at specific issues such as training and communications.

BSI has also facilitated standardising levels of performance over the years, and Land Services' staff have become more comfortable with the BSI visits, gaining confidence and maintaining performance standards as a result. This is also due to the fact that BSI personnel have handled changes that have occurred within Land Services well and diplomatically.

About the System

Glasgow City Council Land Services' Grounds Maintenance Division's quality management system is diverse and includes a number of Review Groups with specific remits, e.g., supplier evaluation, training, personal protective equipment and clothing, vehicles and machinery, and they consider issues and submit recommendations to the Management Review every 4 weeks.

It is a very efficient decision-making process across the organisation - 66% of recommendations from Review Groups are agreed first time, others needing more work or information before a decision can be reached. In addition, everyone affected by the recommendation receives the output within 2 days.

The system also includes a database of non-conformances, where data is imported from other systems for discussion at these Management Reviews. The systems developed "in-house" to handle the management and administration of the system have been replaced with QMS software and the recent introduction of electronic document distribution.

Land Services as a whole, which includes Roads and Transportation Services, Vehicle Maintenance Services and Civil Engineering, as well as the Parks Management and Grounds Maintenance Divisions, is aiming to have a totally integrated management system, incorporating ISO 14000, Health & Safety and any other relevant standard/protocol. Part of this development will be to apply the approaches developed within the Grounds Maintenance Division across the whole organisation, introducing regular Management Reviews, Activity Managers, Process Owners and a Process Review System.