

Hardies Chartered Surveyors

- ***£500,000 worth of business with the Ministry of Defence maintained by becoming ISO 9000 registered***
- ***A further £500,000 business maintained since due to Building Societies' requirements to have a QA system***
- ***Separate offices starting to think and act as one unit, leading to more effective and efficient operations, and, in turn, more satisfied senior managers***
- ***Staff are adhering to a professional standard and delivering a quality service to customers***

The Company

Hardies Chartered Surveyors is based in 6 offices across eastern Scotland and employs 46 staff. Its core business, for which it has had ISO 9000 registration since 1998, is project management, valuation and quantity surveying. Its customers come from a range of market sectors, including businesses in the public and private sectors, individuals, local and central government.

The Issues

The primary driver behind the company seeking ISO 9000 registration was to be able to tender for work for the Ministry of Defence (MOD), and thereby secure more business and success.

In addition, it was felt that other key customers, such as the Building Societies, would soon also be requiring their suppliers to have a quality assurance system. In 2000, this did become the case to be able to conduct valuation surveys for Building Societies, and so Hardies Chartered Surveyors, having achieved registration in 1998, were well prepared.

The Benefits

As a result of obtaining ISO 9000 registration, Hardies Chartered Surveyors was able to tender for MOD work, and keep its existing clients and volume of business, valued at ca.£500,000.

In addition, when the Building Societies put quality on their agenda, Hardies Chartered Surveyors was able to maintain another £500, 000 of business due to already having registered to ISO 9000.

BSI Case Study on the Benefits of ISO 9000 Registration

ISO 9000 has supported formalising, documenting and stream-lining many procedures and also provided a control of operations that was not present before. The 6 offices have started to think and act as one unit, particularly in the area of administration, which, in turn, is leading to more effective operation of the business as a whole.

ISO 9000 helped raise staff's awareness of customer satisfaction, and, although not formally measured, there is a perception that it has increased and that the business is now more professional. Clients can now see that they are getting a quality product, that has been checked and double-checked, and that the business is more efficient.

BSI's Role

BSI was chosen as the registering body because Hardies Chartered Surveyors was aware of BSI's existence through speaking with other construction consultants in similar business, and everyone they spoke to was satisfied with BSI.

The relationship that developed between Hardies Chartered Surveyors and its BSI Client Manager is a close and excellent one. There had been a perception amongst the company's partners that ISO 9000 was a paper shuffling exercise, but through BSI's patience, persistence and expertise, they were convinced otherwise. To quote partner and QA Manager, Derek Ferrier, "I couldn't have done it without him" about his BSI Client Manager and obtaining ISO 9000 registration. BSI pointed out deficiencies, particularly in the first year, and supported Hardies Chartered Surveyors in changing its procedures to become less cumbersome.

Having obtained registration, BSI's support in convincing the partners of the benefits of internal audits was invaluable, attending a partners' meeting and explaining the meaning and value of such audits. The outcome was that all 10 partners attended an auditing course, were converted, and now routinely carry out internal audits in offices other than the one they are based at.

In addition, since registration in 1998, there has been a fundamental change in the staff's approach to ISO 9000, again due BSI instrumental role in explaining what was being achieved and the benefits of registration. The staff are now all signed up to it and think of it as theirs.

About the System

A unique feature of the quality management system at Hardies Chartered Surveyors is that it has been produced in a user-friendly A5 slim-line loose-leaf ring folder, which is easy to carry around and update.

In addition, each member of staff has a personalised copy with their name printed on the front to emphasise the ownership aspect.