



...without fear,
or favour...

CASE STUDY

ARCHITECTURE PLB

“Externally, it means we can tick the ‘Quality Assurance box’ when bidding. Internally, it has helped us to consider and improve how and why we do things.”

Nick Mirchandani, Director of architecture plb



architecture plb are a Winchester and London based practice with an extensive portfolio of major projects in the housing, educational and private sectors. Their aim is “to create buildings full of light and space, variety and delight”.

architecture plb were voted a top five UK architect in the 2010 Building Good Employer Guide, and have successfully maintained ISO 9001 certification with the British Assessment Bureau (BAB) since 2008, demonstrating their commitment to understanding and meeting their customer’s requirements.

WHY ISO CERTIFICATION?

Nick Mirchandani, Director, responsible for overseeing implementation of the ISO 9001 standard, explains the importance of maintaining a formal quality management system in their industry;

“ Quality assurance is a standard question in completing Pre-Qualification Questionnaires (PQQ) when bidding for projects. It is not generally essential to be ISO certified but evidencing good practice is difficult, time-consuming and risks being marked down in evaluation. Certification therefore helps to make our bid process more efficient and effective. ”

A Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) is a questionnaire that suppliers or contractors must complete when bidding for work, applying for an approved supplier list, or when applying for an accreditation scheme. They are very common in the public sector, but also sometimes used for private sector tenders too.

ISO 9001 certification, in particular, enables an organisation to meet the 'Quality' requirements stipulated by PQQs, thus saving valuable time and resources in proving quality credentials and omitting duplication in repeat submissions. In fact, almost a third (30%) of BAB's ISO 9001 clients stated tenders as a primary motivator in seeking the certification, and a further 40% found that they won new business as a direct result of achieving certification.

CERTIFICATION PROCESS

Once an organisation decides to proceed with their certification, they are assigned a Lead Assessor who remains the principal contact throughout the registration process and beyond. Prior to a formal Audit, the Lead Assessor visits to explain the standard and undertakes a conformity assessment of the organisation's current arrangements. The organisation then receives a detailed report including all required actions and together with their Lead Assessor, determines an appropriate timetable for the Audit Assessment. Nick tells us how he found the implementation process;

“ I found implementing the standard pretty straightforward. We had done a fair bit of homework but we needed someone who understood the process and requirements and could help us get certified in the most efficient manner. ”

Once an organisation is ready for a formal Audit Assessment, a Lead Assessor will make the required arrangements for the Audit to take place. Nick says;

“ Audits have been straightforward and efficient. Discussions and actions arising have helped us to improve our systems and their implementation. ”

“ BAB de-mystified the process for us and helped us through its subtleties. ”

WHY BAB?

BAB has over 40 years experience in the assessment industry and is UKAS accredited. Their reputation was established in 1969 as a specialist in certification scheme management. In 1997, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry approved the use of the word 'British' in their corporate title in recognition of their pre-eminent status. BAB is committed to the highest levels of customer service, and this is reflected in findings from their 2011 Client Satisfaction Survey, where 99% of respondents said they would recommend BAB to others. Having researched the competition, Nick tells us why he favoured BAB;

“ We considered and interviewed a number of assessors. Having developed our quality management systems for some years, but never having quite got it ready for ISO certification, we were looking for an external body to assist us in getting 'past the post'. We felt that BAB had the kind of people we could work with and who would assist us in the process. ”

BENEFITS OF IMPLEMENTATION

Successful organisations recognise that their quality and its assurance are most credible when validated by a respected third party. The benefits include a more motivated workforce, less costly re-work and increased client satisfaction. Being certified can also help you to gain external finance, qualify for tenders and set you apart from your competitors. In fact, 40% of BAB's clients see an increase in new orders as a direct result of achieving ISO certification; according to findings from the 2011 client satisfaction survey. Nick says;

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THE BRITISH ASSESSMENT BUREAU

Our reputation was established in 1969 as a specialist in certification scheme management. In 1997, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry approved the use of the word 'British' in our corporate title in recognition of our pre-eminent status.



Today, we certify organisations to recognised standards like ISO 9001 (quality management) and ISO 14001 (environmental management) and provide a range of associated training. Outside of ISO standards, we design and manage bespoke assessment schemes. Such schemes are based on the establishment of standards, which can be developed to be recognised company-wide, industry-wide, nationally or internationally.

We are active in the area of setting national standards and are expert contributors to the influential British Standards

QS/01 and AUS/01 committees. These committees have the responsibility for representing the UK in quality management and audit standards issues, as an ISO (International Organization for Standardization) member.

Above all else, we believe it essential to work with our clients as true partners. To this end we are committed to being recognised as the most customer focused certification body in our industry. In independent client satisfaction surveys, 99% of our clients said they would recommend us. We are also proud to be a customer service award winner and have been a recognised Investor in People since 1999.

UKAS

The United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) is the sole National Accreditation Body recognised by Government to assess organisations that provide certification services to internationally agreed (ISO) standards.

Because we are UKAS accredited, our clients can be assured that they are receiving the most appropriate service for their needs. Engaging a UKAS accredited certification body is often a stipulation for public sector tenders and large-scale private sector supply chain work. It also facilitates access to international markets since the UKAS name is recognised throughout the world.

Our maxim 'without fear or favour' typifies our ethical approach. We will never allow the fear of consequences or the promise of favour to influence our professional judgement. In addition, as a UKAS accredited certification body, we are overseen by a powerful Impartiality Committee that ensures our objectivity and independence.



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON
CERTIFICATION AND HOW YOU COULD
BENEFIT CALL US ON **0800 404 7007**
OR EMAIL **help@british-assessment.co.uk**

www.british-assessment.co.uk

