



*...without fear,
or favour...*

CASE STUDY NICOLL CURTIN TECHNOLOGY

“Achieving the certifications has definitely improved our business. Our supplier processes are much improved and we have seen efficiency improve in general.”

Lisa Collins, Nicoll Curtin Technology



Nicoll Curtin Technology recruits IT professionals for investment banks, hedge funds, asset managers, financial software companies and energy trading companies across the UK, Europe, North America and Asia Pacific on a contract and permanent basis.

WHY ISO CERTIFICATION?

Currently in a period of substantial growth, Nicoll Curtin Technology wanted to ensure that, structurally, the company was well equipped to grow according to its rapid expansion plans. Lawrence Hargreaves, Managing Director of Nicoll Curtin Technology, recognised that certification to the internationally recognised ISO 9001 quality and ISO 14001 environmental management standards would help.

“We’re looking to grow quite substantially over the next few years and we wanted to ensure that our organisation could cope with that growth, by ensuring the right processes were in place.”



Lawrence also wanted to ensure that Nicoll Curtin Technology was able to consistently deliver the high quality service that its clients expect.

“Banks and large companies require huge amounts of compliance, so we’ve had to organise our business structurally to meet these stringent requirements. The ISO framework has helped us to develop a process driven approach to move our business forward.”

“Our clients put great value on ISO certifications – in all of our tenders now there is a requirement for ISO certification and some quite specifically ask for ISO 9001.”

With mounting pressure on both the private and public sector to show responsibility towards the environment, ISO 14001 offers a process based solution that focuses on establishing internal policies, procedures, objectives and targets. Here’s why Nicoll Curtin Technology chose to implement ISO 14001 alongside their ISO 9001 certification.

“As an SME it’s easy to be naïve to your environmental responsibilities – even if you want to improve. ISO 14001 sets the procedures in place to measure your environmental impact, and has provided a framework for us to develop greener practices going forward.”

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 the corporate title in recognition of their pre-eminent status.

After an initial search, Lawrence short listed a number of certification bodies to present to the management team. Lawrence tells us why he favoured BAB over the competition.

“It really came down to a ‘gut feeling’; we were confident in BAB’s ability to take us through ISO 9001 and 14001 and to achieve these first time around, in the shortest possible time. When we discussed the step-by-step detail of how to achieve the certifications, BAB’s methods seemed to be the most comprehensive – it came down to a confidence factor.”

CERTIFICATION PROCESS

Once an organisation decides to go ahead 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.

Lisa Collins, Group Operations Manager, responsible for managing the implementation process of both ISO 9001 and 14001, ensured that Nicoll Curtin Technology was compliant with the two standards, by setting aside around an hour each day. Here Lisa tells us of her experience.

“My role was to collate and write the Quality Manual. I started by reviewing current practices, breaking these down into separate processes for each area. It was hard going, but it worked and having the processes in place is a great advantage for us now.”

“ The support from my Lead Assessor was invaluable. I spoke to Nick about any queries as I went along, and he clarified any areas I was unsure about. In our initial meeting he was able to demystify the Standards and apply them to our business, and he was available by phone or email throughout the process. ”

“ There is a great sense of achievement when you pass – especially on the first go. The excellent feedback from the Auditor on our forms and general high standards was fantastic – it made all the hard work worthwhile. When I got the email to say we had passed there were a lot of 'high fives' going on! ”

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, 1 in 5 of BAB's clients see an increase in new orders as a direct result of achieving ISO certification; according to findings from the 2010 client satisfaction survey.

Lawrence and Lisa tell us of the benefits they have seen so far, 4 months after successful implementation, Lawrence says:

“ As we have only been certified for a short while, the real benefits are still to come. As we grow, it is crucial for us to remain process-orientated, so that when we bring in new staff, they can pick up our way of working quickly so that the service to our client and candidate base remains consistent – that's the main reason why we sought certification. Although we'd had quality systems in place, there is always room for improvement. ISO 9001, in particular, has allowed us to really develop our existing processes and as a result we are much more organised and ready for our planned growth. ”

“ ISO certification has also helped us to secure our place on the public sector's national procurement portal – Buying Solutions. We wouldn't have been considered without it. ”

Lisa comments on improvements:

“ Achieving the certifications has definitely improved our business. Our supplier processes are much improved and we have seen efficiency improve in general. ”

AND FINALLY...

Lawrence gives some sage advice for those about to embark on the ISO journey.

“ Just do it... regardless of the time you think it will take. Although it is a lot of hard work, it really will improve your business and ways of working. If your business is in a period of growth it will make that growth so much easier to navigate because you have a solid, process driven foundation to build on. ”



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**
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