

News Release



17 March 2011

Mapping the rapid route to a properly green business

With the help of Business Link and its partners, the long-established Exeter-based company that pioneered digital printing in the South West is now using a new way of cutting the cost and time involved in gaining certification to the ISO 14001 environmental management standard.

According to Ronnie Halden, Marketing and Creative Services Director of Peninsular OneSource, this was a critical issue for the business. "It usually takes around a year and £10,000 for a business like ours to gain 14001 certification," he says.

"But we wanted to move much faster than that, because so many public sector and large private businesses are increasingly not considering potential suppliers who don't have a certified environmental management system (EMS). In fact, we had not been considered for two projects with the NHS because we had no formal EMS in place – this was a business-critical issue."

Ronnie and his colleagues have long understood the importance of sound environmental management, just as they were the region's first business to fully appreciate the significance of the digital 'revolution' and invest in digital print technology. Now, based on this foresight, Peninsular OneSource provides a complete marketing, design and digital production resource.



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Ronnie believes that the company can emulate its pioneering approach to technology in its environmental strategy too. It was one of the first businesses to qualify for Exeter City Council's Green Accord in 2009, and the team had spent time deeply considering how it could reduce its environmental impact.

“When we came to looking at what needed to be done for ISO14001 certification, we actually found that we'd already instinctively put much of what was necessary in place,” he continues. “What we had not done was document the system, which is the key to gaining 14001.”

In the spring of 2010 he approached Fiona Harding of environmental charity Global Action Plan South West, which has now become Zero2050, to discuss the certification challenge and the opportunity for using the innovative EMS Easy approach to simplify the certification process. He also talked to Exeter University about the possibility of taking on a graduate student for a four-month secondment to document the system. As a result, recent Environmental Studies graduate Alice Coles joined the team.

Ronnie also contacted the Business Link 'Improve Your Resource Efficiency' (IYRE) team, which is delivered across the South West by Peninsula Enterprise, a partner of both Zero2050 and the University.

Business Link's Liz Rushton takes up the story: “Our role is simply to help companies save money and reduce their impact on the environment by making better use of their resources,” she says. “In the case of Peninsular OneSource, we first carried out a site inspection to ensure that what they were seeking to achieve was appropriate, which it was. The next step was to help the company pay for the assistance they needed. We helped Ronnie fill in all the necessary documents in time for the next IYRE assessment panel, who awarded the company a Development Voucher to cover the full cost of Fiona's consultancy work and half the cost of the ISO audit itself.”

Fiona worked closely with Alice for five half-days to bring her up to speed with the documentation required for ISO14001 using the EMS Easy toolkit. Over a period of three months Alice implemented the toolkit within the business, which she completed by mid-November – around a quarter of the time taken by most businesses. “What's more,” Ronnie continues, “the university covered 100% of her pay for the first two months and 30% for the remainder of the contract. The Business Link voucher covered the rest.”

As soon as Alice's work was completed, an ISO auditor came into the company to provide advice on any changes that would be necessary before the full audit on 6 December. "He told us that we needed to make no changes at all," Ronnie remembers. "Sure enough, on 6 December we passed first time."

Ronnie describes the whole experience as a win-win situation. "Alice has some fantastic experience on her CV, and we've got a first class EMS in place, at a fraction of the usual cost and time involved," he says. "The business is already gaining – we've stronger relationships than ever with big public clients like the Met Office and the university. And we're tendering for NHS contracts with much greater confidence of success."

For further information on IYRE and the other Business Link services that Peninsula Enterprise delivers in the South West, call 0845 600 9966 or visit www.businesslink.gov.uk/southwest.

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Photo Caption:

Ronnie Halden, Marketing and Creative Services Director of Peninsular OneSource.

Notes to Editor:

Business Link

Business Link is a Government funded service to help people start, run and grow businesses. The service provides free information, advice and support through a combination of a local telephone enquiry service, an extensive regional website, www.businesslink.gov.uk/southwest and experienced business advisers. It is the primary single 'access point' to link businesses to the local and national business support network. The Business Link service is delivered by Peninsula Enterprise throughout Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, Devon and Somerset, and has supported well over 50,000 people starting or running businesses in the region over the past year, achieving a satisfaction rating that approaches 90% and is continuing to climb. For more information, call 0845 600 9966 or visit www.businesslink.gov.uk/southwest.

