

CASE STUDY

ROCIALLE GAINS COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AFTER COMPLETING SA8000® CERTIFICATION WITH SGS UNITED KINGDOM LTD

ISSUED – NOVEMBER 2014

The SA8000 standard, established by Social Accountability International and one of the world's pre-eminent social standards, is a tool for implementing international labour standards to protect workers along each step of the supply chain. It can be applied to any organisation, of any size, worldwide.

The standard addresses issues including forced and child labour, occupational health and safety, freedom of association and collective bargaining, discrimination, disciplinary practices, working hours, compensation and management systems.

Adopting SA8000 certification requires an organisation to consider the social impact of its operations in addition to the conditions under which its employees, partners and suppliers operate.

For more information on SA8000, go to www.sgs.co.uk/sa8000.

ROCIALLE

Rociale is the UK market leading supplier of operating theatre procedure packs, medical instruments and devices, and medical consumables. It is part of the Berendsen plc group of companies, a FTSE 250 company that has 15,000 employees across 15 countries throughout Europe.



For over 30 years, Rociale has supplied healthcare providers with sterile and non-sterile consumable items vital to patient care.

Products are sourced from a carefully selected range of suppliers around the world, and delivered to the company's facility at Mountain Ash, Wales. There they are stored in the warehouse,

picked, repacked in one of Europe's largest 'clean rooms' before being sterilised where required, and then dispatched to customers.

Rociale is a major supplier to the National Health Service (NHS), providing a range of items including bespoke operating theatre procedure packs for individual surgeons for each operation.

SGS

WHY ROCIALLE CHOSE SGS

SGS is the global leader in SA8000 certification. Its people have the expertise and experience to work closely with clients to ensure the auditing process runs as smoothly and efficiently as possible.

Rociale selected SGS to undertake the audit because of its expertise in SA8000, and the strong relationship that the two companies had established via Rociale's ISO 9001 and 14001 management system certification processes. SGS has also certified Rociale to ISO 13485, the medical devices standard.

"We have worked with SGS for many years and have always found that they understand our business and are always very clear about what is required," says Liam Keene, Quality Manager at Rociale.

THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

SGS conducted a pre-audit (gap analysis) in March 2014 over two days. This involved an assessment of Rociale's production facility and nearby warehouse and providing a written report setting out where non-compliances with the SA8000 standard would be likely to be raised were the audit to be conducted at that time.

In Rociale's case, its NHS Labour Standards Assurance Scheme (LSAS) Level 2 certification provided a strong platform and the pre-audit identified only some procedural changes that needed to be addressed.

Just a week after the pre-audit, Charles Townsend, SA8000 Product Manager for SGS, conducted an eight-day on-site audit of the factory and warehouse facilities at the site in Mountain Ash, South Wales. He spent 30% of his time talking confidentially to employees – selecting freely across the production staff from all shifts as well as sub-contractors working on site – in groups and individually, asking them

about a wide range of issues, including employment contracts, working hours, overtime, their pay and general working conditions. These confidential worker interviews form the core of the audit process.

The audit also included a comprehensive site tour, focused on the physical working conditions and a wide range of health and safety criteria, in particular fire safety measures.

Mr Townsend also reviewed the company's SA8000 management system documentation, including internal audit records and procedures and records of how Rociale selects and monitors its suppliers for compliance with SA8000 requirements. He also cross-checked payroll and HR records to corroborate the verbal and visual evidence he had gathered.

At the end of the eight day inspection, a number of non-conformances were identified, which meant a follow-up audit was needed – which was scheduled for three months later. Rociale rose to the challenge of addressing the issues raised at the certification audit, including improving worker/management

communications, by setting up a system for a small group of elected worker representatives to act as the conduit for worker concerns to be raised with senior management.

With all the other significant issues having been addressed, Rociale was awarded certification in August 2014.

Mr Townsend says: "Rociale demonstrated real commitment to making the step up from LSAS Level 2, which they understand well and which provides a sound basis for any company in the healthcare sector embarking on SA8000 certification."

"The company has plenty of internal experience of implementing management systems, being certified to both ISO 9001 and 14001, and has a history of good labour relations and is also regarded as a model employer by the local community and across the region. It also now has a well-developed social accountability and ethical procurement policy," he explains. "Rociale is engaging effectively with all its suppliers and is working with them to promote the benefits of SA8000 through the supply chain."



BENEFITS OF CERTIFICATION

Mr. Keene confirms the commercial benefits of SA8000 certification. "Achieving Social Accountability certification such as SA8000 pushes us up the league table when we are tendering for new business. In the past, the emphasis was on certification for quality management systems and then on environmental practices. Now auditing and reporting on labour practices and social issues – both internally and at our suppliers – is becoming a requirement in more and more tender documents."

Other benefits of SA8000 certification include improved accident performance, better staff retention, reduced absenteeism, higher productivity, better quality performance, improved community relations and an enhanced reputation in the sector and the wider business community.

These benefits arise directly from improved relationships between the management and the rest of the workforce. The organisation benefits from better trained and more committed staff whose personal goals are aligned with those of the company; better absenteeism rates and lower staff turnover; and improvements in both productivity and product quality. Small incremental gains in each of these areas adds up to a significant overall gain for the business.

An organisation that is certified by SGS against SA8000 has a powerful tool to enable it to manage the development and improvement of social accountability performance across its operations and in its supply chains.

Specific benefits of SA8000 certification include:

- Independent, third party proof of its commitment to social accountability and to treating its employees ethically and in compliance with the most rigorous global standards
- Improved management and performance of its supply chain
- Significantly reduced risk of reputational damage arising from social issues emerging in its supply chain
- Support provided for its corporate vision
- Builds and reinforces the loyalty of its employees, customers, suppliers and other stakeholders
- The organisation is able to demonstrate proper social accountability when bidding for new business, both locally and internationally

ADVICE TO OTHERS PLANNING SA8000 CERTIFICATION

The decision to work towards SA8000 certification requires a strong commitment from senior management to fully engage with their workers at all levels and to enrol the workforce in the process of improving the social performance of the business.

For most European businesses there are few really serious challenges to achieving SA8000 certification. In many cases it is simply a question of developing a documented management system around what the company is already doing and thereby formalising those activities, and then monitoring and reporting on them on a regular basis.

The SA8000 standard looks at eight key areas within the context of a management system designed to ensure consistent performance improvement over time.

The five key areas that are reviewed at an SA8000 audit are:

- Child labour and forced labour
- Health and safety with an emphasis on fire safety measures
- The role of trade unions and/or worker representatives
- Discrimination and the management of disciplinary situations
- Working hours and remuneration

ABOUT SGS

SGS is the world's leading inspection, verification, testing and certification company with more than 80,000 employees operating in a network of 1,650 offices and laboratories around the world.

Its core services of inspection, testing, certification and verification are carried out with state of the art equipment and facilities by the most highly trained and knowledgeable experts in the world.

Established in 1878, SGS transformed grain trading in Europe by offering innovative agricultural inspection services. The company was registered in Geneva as Société Générale de Surveillance in 1919.

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WHEN YOU NEED TO BE SURE

