



# WORKPLACE SUPPLIES FIRM ACHIEVES TWO ISO STANDARDS DURING PANDEMIC

## CASE STUDY

## BE THE BENCHMARK

Caswells is a workspace supplies specialist based in Billingham, Teesside, servicing customers around the UK. Established in 1972 as a general engineering supplies business.

The company has experienced steady growth and several physical moves to where, today, it employs around 70 members of staff and has an annual turnover of approximately £15 million. A family-owned business, Caswells also employs multiple members of the same families throughout the company, some of whom have been with the company for almost 40 years. Caswells' main market sector is petrochemicals, but a wider range of other industries are also supported.

Today, the company's product range includes personal protective equipment, janitorial and personal hygiene products and equipment, workplace safety and storage equipment, hand and power tools, lubricants and lubrication equipment, signage,

hoses and hydraulic fittings, and welding consumables and equipment. It also offers a range of in house associated services such as fire extinguisher testing, hose pressure testing and workwear embroidery. The company is a British Safety Federation Registered Safety Supplier.

Managing Director, Peter Caswell's vision and drive, coupled with the tireless efforts of the workforce during the difficult months of the Covid-19 epidemic, have resulted in a number of substantial achievements, including a significant increase in turnover, new products and services, construction of two new buildings on the Billingham site, a new vehicle fleet, new ERP computer system, additional staff recruitment and promotion.

The company has also achieved certification to two additional ISO standards over the period.



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## WHY CASWELLS GROUP SOUGHT CERTIFICATION

The company had been certified to ISO 9001 since 2006, when it wanted it to provide customers with reassurance that they were benefitting from high standards that were independently assessed.

However, there was also a long-held desire to achieve ISO 14001 (environmental management) and ISO 45001 (occupational health and safety). Always considering itself a responsible company in both areas, the need was being further driven by customer demand. Business Management Consultant Paula Willoughby explains: "Our customer base is increasing and there's a tendency towards large contracts, driving the need to prove certification.

## WHY SGS?

Caswells had used SGS for its original ISO 9001 audit in 2006 but engaged another partner for a subsequent assessment. Paula Willoughby recalls: "We went back to SGS because the other body didn't give us the level of service we required. They had also wanted us to do nine-monthly as opposed to SGS's 12-monthly visits ... that just hadn't been appropriate with our number of staff and operational processes."

**"THE LEVEL OF SERVICE SGS PROVIDES IS SECOND-TO-NONE"**

## IMPLEMENTING ISO 14001 AND 45001: THE PROCESS

The journey to certification to the additional standards was led by the senior management team and gained the buy-in of the entire workforce.

ISO 14001 was awarded in June 2020, and work on ISO 45001 began immediately, with a recommendation for approval received in January 2021.

Paula Willoughby explains: “We readily provided SGS with all the information required and the fact that everybody got behind it really helped the process. Also, the fact that we already had a robust ISO 9001 system in place really helped with the documentation, as there’s a lot of commonality.

“One unique challenge was that the assessor wasn’t allowed to come to the site owing to Covid-19 restrictions. But fortunately, they were familiar with our operation and processes from previous visits which definitely helped.”

Both audits were passed with zero non-conformances, which is testament to the hard work and dedication put in by the team.

Commenting on the experience of working with SGS, Paula Willoughby commented: “The level of service SGS provides is second-to-none. A major part of that is the relationship the assessors have with their clients. They’re positive and proactive and work in partnership with the client to improve the business.”

## HOW THE CERTIFICATIONS HAVE BENEFITTED THE BUSINESS

Caswells has realised multiple benefits from ISO certification and the journey to achieving it.

Certification provides formal, independently audited recognition, both internally and up and down the supply chain, of standards, culture, and expectations on all stakeholders.

It has also meant an understanding – from senior management downwards – of individuals own roles and the importance of their respective contribution. Not unusually, this is accompanied by an increased sense of pride in the business and their own jobs.

Processes have also been scrutinised and, in many cases, strengthened. For example, fire extinguisher and alarm maintenance and sump checking were previously separate processes; now they appear on the same register for greater efficiency and traceability.

Paula Willoughby offered advice for other companies seeking multiple ISO certification: “Focus on ISO 9001 first, as it is the foundation for the other standards, which effectively are a bolt-on. Make sure you introduce the different standards in a systematic approach, to make it manageable and more achievable.”

## ABOUT SGS

SGS is the world’s leading inspection, verification, testing and certification company with more than 89,000 employees operating in a network of 2,600 offices and laboratories around the world.





## ISO 9001 IMPLEMENTATION

Implementing ISO 9001 enables continuous improvement of your organization's quality management systems and processes. In turn, this improves the ability of your operations to meet customer requirements and expectations.

Certification enables you to demonstrate high levels of service quality when bidding for contracts and compliance with the internationally-recognized quality management principles of customer focus, leadership, involvement of people, process approach, system approach, continual improvement, fact-based decision making and mutually-beneficial supplier relationships.

## ISO 14001 IMPLEMENTATION

ISO 14001 enables your organization to set up an environmental management system to help you reduce waste, improve resource efficiency and waste management costs.

ISO 14001 will:

- Help in identifying your environmental issues and resolve issues before they become critical, hence reducing the cost involved in corrective action
- Assist in ensuring you have identified and taken into account the requirements of all applicable environmental legislation, in doing so promoting improvement and preventing non-compliance and the associated penalties
- As a standalone system, it will help your senior management to focus on their critical environmental issues, enabling an organization-wide focus on what really matters.

## ISO 45001 IMPLEMENTATION

ISO 45001 enables your organization to put in place an occupational health and safety management system. This in turn will help you manage your risks and improve your occupational health and safety performance by developing and implementing effective policies and objectives.

Key potential benefits include:

- Reduction of workplace incidents
- Reduced absenteeism and staff turnover, leading to increased productivity
- Creation of a health and safety culture, whereby employees are encouraged to take an active role in their own occupational health and safety
- Reinforced leadership commitment to proactively improve occupational health and safety performance
- Ability to meet legal and regulatory requirements

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