



ISO 45001 enables organizations to put in place an occupational health and safety management system.

SGS HELPS MANUFACTURING COMPANY MEET INCREASED H&S EXPECTATIONS FROM ITS CUSTOMERS

CASE STUDY

BE THE BENCHMARK

Ahlstrom-Munksjö is a global leader in the manufacture and supply of innovative and sustainable fibre solutions. Its products include décor paper, filter media, release liners, abrasive backings, nonwovens, electrotechnical paper, glass fibre materials, food packaging and labelling, tapes, medical fibre materials and solutions for diagnostics. It gained certification to the ISO 45001 occupational health and safety standard in 2019, one of the first larger businesses in Scotland to achieve this. The audit was conducted by SGS.

Headquartered in Helsinki and listed on both the Nasdaq Helsinki and Stockholm, Ahlstrom-Munksjö employs over 8,000 people and has a total of 45 production and converting sites in 14 countries. These include Chirnside, Berwickshire and Radcliffe, Manchester, both of which gained the new certification.

The company had already achieved ISO 9001:2015 and ISO 14001:2015 for its Chirnside site in May 2018, also audited by SGS. The process had gone smoothly, but involved more work than expected, not least owing to a change in personnel.

WHY AHLSTROM-MUNKSJÖ SOUGHT CERTIFICATION

Certification to the global occupational health and safety standard was sought as a result of a group-wide requirement for global commonality. UK HSE Manager Paula Dixon's team had been working to the Plan, Do, Check, Act approach of the HSG65 guidance.

WHY SGS?

SGS' reputation as the world's leading inspection, verification, testing and certification company gave Ahlstrom-Munksjö the confidence that they were working with the best. With affiliates worldwide, covering 2,600 locations, they were sure that SGS had the resources and reach to handle all of Ahlstrom-Munksjö's requirements. SGS is Ahlstrom-Munksjö's contracted auditing partner worldwide.

IMPLEMENTING ISO 45001:2018: THE PROCESS

Graham Nisbet admits that, as was the case with ISO 9001 and 14001, preparing for ISO 45001 was a more complex and time-consuming task than some colleagues had anticipated. Like the other standards, the most difficult element was understanding Section 4 (context of the organization) and Section 5 (leadership). In addition, the company had not held OHSAS 18001 certification, compliance with which demonstrates that a system is in place for occupational health and safety.

Overall, however, the previous certifications made preparation easier as the standards and forms have a common format, and good document control was already in place. Paula Dixon, UK HSE Manager, dedicated many hours to coordinating the whole ISO 45001 introduction across both plants in the lead up to the extensive audit schedule.

Nisbet comments: "We have always had an excellent safety culture, with very good systems in place and an excellent workplace safety record. But in preparing for the audit, you find gaps and places for improvement."

The three-day Stage 1 audit at the end of November 2018 revealed a number of housekeeping issues and identified the appropriate remedial actions. The Stage 2 audit comprised four days at Chirnside and a day at Radcliffe, carried out by three SGS auditors whom Nisbet describes as being "fair and helpful".

He does admit to being surprised at the time at the amount of time required, but it is a sizeable business with 180 people employed across both facilities. SGS had offered an example checklist, which was found to be very useful.



"HAVING ISO 45001:2018 PROVIDES ROBUST, AUDITED EVIDENCE OF THIS, ENABLES AUDIT TRAILS AND REDUCES THE TIME AND COST ASSOCIATED WITH CUSTOMERS' OWN AUDITS"

HOW THE CERTIFICATION HAS BENEFITED THE BUSINESS

The UK Ahlstrom-Munksjö business is now finding an increased expectation from customers that it has adequate health and safety procedures in place. Having ISO 45001:2018 provides robust, audited evidence of this, enables audit trails and reduces the time and cost associated with customers' own audits.

All employees went through a dedicated IOSH (Institution of Occupational Safety and Health) training programme in the months preceding the audit, further embedding the health and safety culture throughout the business and highlighting the fact that it is everybody's responsibility. The learning process is ongoing.

Graham Nisbet advises other companies looking to gain certification to the standard to plan well in advance to gain total familiarity with its requirements before even making the initial application.

DO NOT BE PUT OFF BY THE FACT THAT ALL CERTIFICATIONS COST A LOT OF MONEY," HE SAYS, "THEY PAY FOR THEMSELVES IN THE LONGER TERM.

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
- Reduced cost of insurance premiums
- 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
- Enhanced reputation
- Improved staff morale

ABOUT SGS

SGS is the world's leading inspection, verification, testing and certification company. SGS is recognised as the global benchmark for quality and integrity. With more than 97,000 employees, SGS operates a network of over 2,600 offices and laboratories around the world.

We provide competitive advantage, drive sustainability and deliver trust. At SGS, we are continually pushing ourselves to deliver innovative services and solutions that help our customers move their businesses forward.

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WHEN YOU NEED TO BE SURE

