



LEADING WOOD FLOORING FIRM GAINS MULTIPLE BENEFITS FROM FSC® AND PEFC™ CERTIFICATION

CASE STUDY

BE THE BENCHMARK

SGS

Havwoods, one of the foremost wood flooring companies in the UK, also has operations around the world via sales and operations branches in mainland Europe, North America and Australia, as well as partners in a number of other regions.

Established in 1976 and headquartered in Carnforth, Lancashire, UK, the company is still owned and managed by the same family. In the UK, Havwoods offers a carefully curated selection of over 400 wood flooring and cladding products including environmentally friendly composite decking and cladding. A large proportion carry environmental certifications, with suppliers undergoing regular audits. Many lines are available for next day delivery.

Globally, Havwoods endeavours to offer the same level of service and quality of products.

WHY HAVWOODS SOUGHT CERTIFICATION

Global extension to operations in the late 2000s was, essentially, the key driver to seeking FSC and PEFC certification, with both being internationally recognized programmes. Both in the UK and abroad, sustainability certification is an essential requirement stipulated by most customers and it also avoids the requirement for individual audits.

It is also closely aligned with Havwoods' strong culture of sustainability and social responsibility.

"TO ENABLE HAVWOODS TO GROW WE NEED SUPPLIERS TO SEE OUR POTENTIAL, OFFER SUPPORT AND GROW WITH US. SGS DO THAT WITHOUT COMPROMISE."



WHY SGS?

The decision to partner with SGS United Kingdom Ltd was made early in the development of Havwoods' FSC and PEFC systems and processes.

Some team members, including Product Compliance Officer Darren Mayes, had already enjoyed a positive experience of SGS with certification to both programmes previously.

Darren recalls: "From the start SGS demonstrated knowledge and experience of the industry we work in and understood our needs."

"SGS WAS THE ONLY SERVICE PROVIDER THAT COULD OFFER THE SAME CONSISTENCY GLOBALLY. AND AS THE COMPANY HAS GROWN, SO HAVE OUR SYSTEM CAPABILITIES AND STAFF KNOWLEDGE."

THE PROCESS

A small team was assembled within Havwoods to build a system that facilitated alignment of FSC and PEFC certification with existing internal platforms. This process of review and integration was conducted over several weeks prior to SGS' qualification audit, with staff being kept fully engaged about the requirements and processes which needed to be in place.

Darren Mayes recalls: "The challenges included not only the integration of a system that allowed the company to 'breathe' normally but also to bring in rules and regulations that changed people's habits in the workplace."

"Propelling the business to global status – but also trying to incorporate the same systems and procedures in different platforms – was also quite a challenge, but the key demand came from our clients and finding the right product that also carried the required certification."

To the credit of Darren and the Havwoods team, the audit ran smoothly, with just a handful of minor adjustments stipulated prior to certification, which was granted in 2010.

Havwoods has a five-year contract with SGS. Head Office audits take place annually with the mainland Europe, North America and Australia site audits taking place every two years. The audits themselves take approximately eight hours.

HOW CERTIFICATION HAS BENEFITTED THE BUSINESS

Havwoods already closely followed the ethics laid down by its stakeholders to become more aware of its surroundings and how business is carried out in relation to sustainable and responsible sourcing. However, certification to FSC and PEFC has rubber-stamped its commitment and adherence to global best practice.

Darren Mayes adds: "When we first achieved certification, we began to leverage it as a marketing tool for certain product ranges in our portfolio. More recently, however, the market has changed somewhat, with certified timber now being a standard requirement."

On working with SGS, Darren continues to be impressed with the company's consistent professionalism both in the UK and around the world, including always offering the most suitable options, such as knowing when to deliver and when to allow his team to do things themselves. He also mentioned the regular industry and programme updates provided by SGS, as well as its excellent training packages.

"The relationship with SGS has enabled us to keep ahead of the marketplace. Auditing has always been fair but strict, training is clear and concise and other certification options are always available with administration being easy and fluent.

"We have worked together for almost 12 years and during this time SGS has understood how Havwoods operates and how we need to move forward. They offer the global support, training and certification needed to succeed in such a demanding industry."

The relationship between Havwoods and SGS continues to grow globally.



FSC CERTIFICATION

FSC runs a global forest certification system with the two key components of Forest Management and Chain of Custody.

The FSC system allows businesses and consumers to identify, purchase and use wood, paper and other forest products made with materials from well-managed forests and/or recycled sources.

FSC's 'tick tree' logo is used to indicate that products are certified under the FSC system. When a customer sees the FSC logo on a label, they can buy forest products with confidence that they are helping to ensure our forests are alive for generations to come.

PEFC CERTIFICATION

As an umbrella organization, PEFC endorses national forest certification systems that have been developed through multi-stakeholder processes and tailored to local priorities and conditions. PEFC cares for forests globally and locally. It works to protect our forests by promoting sustainable forest management through certification. This means that everybody can benefit from the many products that forests provide now, while ensuring these forests will be around for generations to come.

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 89,000 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.

Efficiency and cost-optimization are no longer the sole drivers in business development strategies. Successful businesses recognize the importance of offering their workforce continuous development and training. Motivated and effective teams create industry leaders.

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WHEN YOU NEED TO BE SURE

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