

# RAPESCO RENEWS ISO 9001 AND ISO 14001 CERTIFICATIONS WITH SGS UNITED KINGDOM LTD

ISSUED – 4 JANUARY 2013

In December 2012 Rapesco Office Products plc successfully renewed its ISO 9001 Quality Management and ISO 14001 Environmental Management certifications with SGS United Kingdom Ltd.

Founded in 1957, Rapesco has become one of Europe's leading office products manufacturers, offering high-tech design and performance stapling and punching products and desktop and document management.

Rapesco's relentless search for extra value, backed by design and manufacturing innovation and investment in the very latest CAD software, progressive tooling and working with leading edge technology, ensures they continue to push the design possibilities to the limit. Today, millions of people rely on their products in more than 100 countries, worldwide.

### A HISTORY OF QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Rapesco's certification journey began in December 1993 with BS5750 Quality Assurance. This was in response to customers asking if they had achieved the certification.

"We worked right through BS5750 and when it evolved into ISO 9001 we automatically went through that process too. It's a continually evolving process," says Managing Director Adrian Frost.

"In 2008 we saw many customers were looking at ISO 14001 as an important process, and we were successful in our certification for that in June 2008," says Frost.

"We have a number of government contracts and as they were driving a lot of the new standards, it was essential we had them if we wanted to tender for

their business. Now the public sector represents up to 20% of our business, and we would have excluded ourselves from that if we hadn't got involved," adds Frost.

### TARGETS SET AND ACHIEVED

From the start, Rapesco was keen to implement the standards throughout the business and to push the standards further down the supply chain into their factories.

"We source a lot of our products from factories in China and Taiwan," says Frost.

"So we rely on factory visits to continually update our processes. We meet with them and continue a high-level dialogue with the owner of the business and senior management. The standards are taken very seriously."

"We keep objectives registers and targets on waste management. 10% of our range must be eco-friendly and we set ourselves targets against these objectives. It's all in writing and all within the ISO standards, and these are reviewed by SGS every 6 months."

### REVIEWING SYSTEMS FOR ISO 9001 AND ISO 14001

To ensure smooth certification renewals, Rapesco continually strives to simplify processes and drive unnecessary procedures out of the business.

"We used to rely on complicated flowcharts to explain quality management procedures to staff."

"Of course, we need to check and verify the quality of the manufacture and design of our products made in China, but new staff found the flowcharts too complicated to take on board. So we



simplified the written procedures and made changes in the manual that suited the way we work while conforming to the ISO standards.

"These simpler processes save time and money. Now when new staff come in, they find it easy to get involved. There are no complicated processes to master. It's an easy learning curve that has been the key to our success – particularly over the last five years," says Frost.

"The renewal for our ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 certifications went through in December. We have been through a lot of these in the last 20 years and found the audit was straightforward. We've got a lot of experience, we know we can call on SGS for advice and we have a number of people here who've worked through the standards before," says Frost.

Rapesco relies on a project team, with customer service managers, IT managers, warehouse managers, sourcing managers and heads of department all involved with input.

"We like it to be a very open system – not just a higher management responsibility. There's a lot of involvement throughout the business."

## THE BENEFITS OF WORKING WITH SGS

"Since first working with SGS in 1993, we've had an excellent relationship. Many auditors have come here and we've worked with them for 3-4 years and there have often been 5-6 visits and then they've switched around but our long-term relationship has gone from strength to strength."

"Our consultant is ex-SGS and he advises SGS clients on pre-audits. He comes in regularly, every other month, and carries out all of our internal audits in preparation for the 6-monthly external audit by SGS. He also brings a lot of experience from other businesses."

"SGS is a highly respected international body and most of our Chinese factories have already worked with SGS. They've been audited by SGS, so they know what is required. It's a logical fit."

## WHAT VALUE HAS CERTIFICATION BROUGHT TO RAPESCO OVER THE LAST 20 YEARS?

"You can't put a value in sterling on it," says Frost. "But its intrinsic value has been enormous. The business is not recognisable from where it is today. We were very much a UK-led business. We were market-led, consumer-led, but today we're a global business with global standards."

"Our factories work to international standards. Even though they're based in China, they have to conform to European directives – anything from the handling of chemicals through to quality audits."

"As part of our contract award we invite customers to independently audit our

factories, receiving many comments on our high standards. We simply couldn't have grown our business into an international one without the standardisation and certification," says Frost.

"We are a growing medium-sized business, with 40 employees and we're often perceived to be much bigger. We're easy to do business with and flexible with no layers of structure, which is a big advantage. We've grown some important long-term, personal relationships with our customers," adds Frost.

## LONG-TERM BENEFITS OF CERTIFICATION

"If SGS feel there is another standard to look at then we are interested. SGS knows our business and we would feel confident that if SGS is supporting us with our consultant, then we would be well-positioned to take advantage. It's not on our agenda now, but we will be brainstorming in 2013. We recognise that change has to happen, we're not cast in stone."

## FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Rapesco's long history of certifications has led it to develop a new sustainable range of products. The company has now brought a unique range of biodegradable and recyclable eco products to market – and is in the vanguard selling the range into Eastern Europe, a far less advanced and environmentally conscious market than the West.

"I found the Rapesco management system to be very well managed," says



SGS auditor David Glenister.

"It is well-organised and applicable to the business requirements of the day. It is obvious that their certification has moved with the times, which is impressive. They have outsourced a lot of the manufacturing and the controls that were in place to ensure the quality and environmental considerations of their products, which was well under control."

"Rapesco have also kept abreast of their clients' needs. For example, their clients were asking for close communication in the ordering process. So Rapesco have been looking at automating the entire process from the order through to picking and despatch."

"The management system is keeping abreast of the changing needs and requirements of the business, too. They've tailored it to be more applicable to a service-based company as opposed to a manufacturing-based one, and they ensure the high standards in the supply chain standards remain. In fact, Rapesco has enhanced them by setting up supplier agreements and approvals and by continuously monitoring the standards going forward," says Glenister.

## NOTES FOR EDITORS:

Rapesco is one of Europe's leading office products manufacturers offering high-tech design and performance stapling and punching products and desktop and document management.

Founded in 1957, Rapesco products now sell in more than 100 countries worldwide.

For more information, contact:  
Customer Service Team  
Tel: 0800 900 094

**SGS IS THE WORLD'S LEADING INSPECTION, VERIFICATION, TESTING AND CERTIFICATION COMPANY. SGS IS RECOGNIZED AS THE GLOBAL BENCHMARK FOR QUALITY AND INTEGRITY. WITH MORE THAN 75 000 EMPLOYEES, SGS OPERATES A NETWORK OF OVER 1 500 OFFICES AND LABORATORIES AROUND THE WORLD.**

WHEN YOU NEED TO BE SURE

SGS