

DELIA QUIGLEY - BUSINESS CONSULTANT

Supporting Business In A Time Of Environmental Change

FACT SHEET 4 – WHY HAVE AN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM?

An Environmental Management System (EMS) sets out how a business manages its relationship with the natural world. It details and measures how the business, its activities and products impact on nature and people. It looks at the life-cycle of products from raw material to final disposal.

Writing an EMS out in detail can take a long time and be quite complicated – but any size of business can think about these things and produce a general summary. There are costs involved but there are also benefits.

Costs are mainly time and staff costs - on research, examining documents already on hand, thinking things through, making reports, meeting and discussing. But remember, help is at hand.

Benefits include:

- keeping within the law and avoiding fines
- pleasing customers and avoiding loss of business
- identifying ways of saving money (reducing costs on energy and waste)
- identifying new business opportunities (new products and markets)
- improving public relations
- improving staff relations
- potentially increasing market share

The EMS process can be accredited to national or international standards at various levels and costs. Achieving a recognised standard means the business gains additional credibility for its environmental awareness and efforts, and can display the logo - using it on their marketing material and for PR purposes.

The key 'drivers' towards an EMS are:

- Legislation and regulation – legal requirements such as COSHH, Packaging (Essential Requirements) Regulations 2003, the Water Resources Act 1991, and others and the relationship that a business has with its regulators (such as The Environment Agency)
- Suppliers and Customers – achieving and maintaining preferred supplier status may depend on having a robust EMS, your suppliers may want to know how you handle and dispose of their products
- Competitors – do they have an EMS, if they do and you don't they may have an advantage over you
- Employees – staff may be concerned about the environmental impact of the business, you can raise morale by recognising their concerns and developing an EMS
- Investors – investors are increasingly reluctant to invest in business that isn't seen to care for the environment
- Neighbours and the general public – are they complaining about your environmental impact?

For more information, to discuss your needs, or to arrange a consultation... contact:

info@deliaquigley.co.uk call or fax 01492 547401

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