

# An ISO 9001 quality management system streamlined processes and improved business efficiency



“Our staff welcomed the implementation of a consistent and documented approach and it is evident that the management system has added value to our daily operation. ISO 9001 continues to give us improvements and we are able to conduct our business in a more effective and efficient way”

**Suzanne Ralton**  
Managing Director, Agua Fabrics Ltd

## Customer needs

- Streamlined processes
- Enhanced business performance
- Improved business efficiency
- Independent assurance of reliability and efficiency

## Customer benefits

- New business opportunities
- Increased profits
- Client peace of mind
- Improved customer relations
- Simplified processes
- Enhanced productivity
- Increased staff motivation
- Reduction in debtor days

## Why certification?

Agua Fabrics is a privately owned company based in London. The company has built its reputation in the healthcare, education, leisure and custodial markets by providing quality products and excellent service to customers for over 70 years.

The origins of the company date back to the 1930's, supplying linens, textiles and uniforms to the health service. As the linens and textile market became more commodity orientated, the company began to develop a branded portfolio of products. In 2002 the Agua brand was created to encompass a collection of waterproof upholstery fabrics.

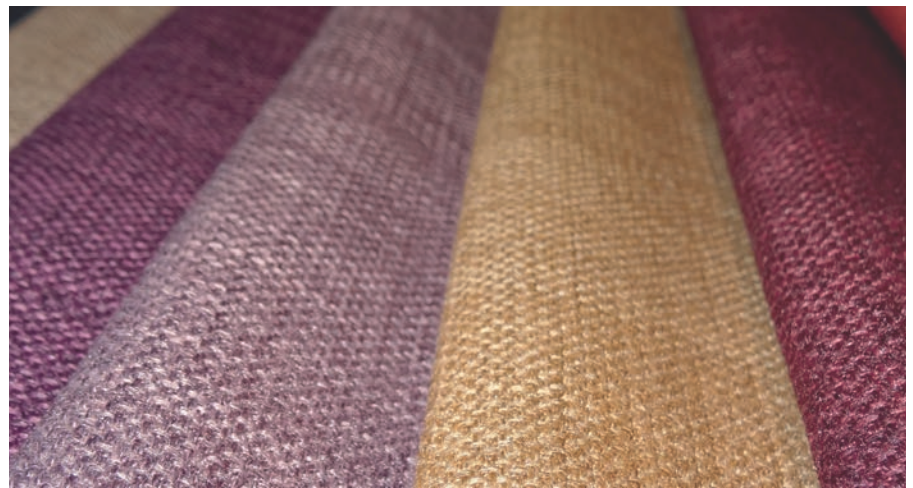
The company chose to implement ISO 9001 because it is the world's most established quality framework. ISO 9001 seemed an appropriate means to demonstrate that Agua Fabrics had processes in place to monitor and improve performance in the purchase and supply of textile products in their expanding product portfolio. ISO 9001 certification also provided independent assurance of reliability to customers.

Agua Fabrics selected BSI as its certification partner due to the reassurance that BSI's market-leading position and brand reputation would give to its customers.

## Implementation

Agua Fabrics made initial investigations at the end of 2007 with the process getting underway at the start of 2008. The first certification was achieved in September 2008 and then extended in January 2009 and February 2011 upon review.

Agua Fabrics acknowledges that changes to internal systems and processes were initially met with some resistance. Staff had concerns about the potential increase in administrative duties. However, benefits soon became apparent once the new



systems were implemented which assisted with staff buy-in.

Involving staff in the development and implementation also helped.

## Benefits

ISO 9001 certification is becoming a pre-requisite for many customers. Certification therefore meant new business opportunities and increased profits for Agua Fabrics.

Adhering to the ISO 9001 framework enabled the company to simplify some internal processes and improve efficiency. For example, the retrieval of data needed to follow up customer queries was made easier and quicker leading to improved customer relationships. Regular reporting on debtors reduced debtor days by five, which also impacted positively on cash flow.

By introducing the practice of minute keeping business meetings became formalized which kept the management team focused on their objectives and helped with supplier negotiations. Highlighting the significance of key performance indicators also boosted internal motivation to achieve and improve results.

## The future

Agua Fabrics continues to use the system to focus on customers and drive continual improvement in its internal processes. It welcomes the external audits from BSI, which continue to add value to its business and are keen to work with BSI again. Kerry Garratt, Product Marketing Manager at BSI said " we are delighted that Agua Fabrics continue to derive customer and business benefits from ISO 9001 and that they value the continuing relationship with BSI"

## Next steps

ISO 9001 is a quality management system standard designed to help an organization focus on customers and drive continual improvement in its internal processes. Almost 900,000 organizations are certified as being compliant to the standard in 170 countries worldwide.

**Find out how BSI can help your business make excellence a habit – visit [bsigroup.com](http://bsigroup.com)**

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