



## How the ISO revisions helped Overbury to focus on continual improvement, achieve operational efficiencies and ensure client satisfaction

“Our business is really customer focused. We’re never totally satisfied. We’re inquisitive, we look for feedback and opportunities to improve. The new standards help us do that, they really fit the culture of how we do things; a continual improvement loop.”

**Paul Brazier,**  
Commercial Director, Overbury

### Overbury's Objectives:

- To be one of the first organizations to achieve ISO 9001:2015 and ISO 14001:2015 certification
- Gain a visible advantage in a competitive market
- To deliver excellent customer service

### How Overbury benefitted:

- Ensure high levels of customer satisfaction are achieved
- Streamlined management systems making efficiencies
- Embedded a culture of continual improvement

## Introduction

Overbury, part of Morgan Sindall Group plc, is one of the UK's leading fit out and refurbishment specialists. The organization employs over 500 people, is headquartered in London and has offices in Bracknell, Manchester, Birmingham and Leeds. Recent examples of projects that Overbury has worked on include the fit out of ITV offices in Media City, Salford, the PWC offices at More Place, London, and the iconic BBC Broadcasting House in London.

Every project is different, but one thing each refurbishment has in common is Overbury's focus on continual improvement and the customer's needs.

This commitment to continual improvement and delivering excellence was one of the key factors that made Overbury focus on becoming one of the first organizations in the UK to achieve certification to the newly revised versions of ISO 9001 and ISO 14001.

## Client background

Overbury was originally certified to BS 5750, the first quality management system standard and subsequently moved to ISO 9001. It was also an early adopter of ISO 14001 environmental management systems.

Although it felt that ISO 9001 was written with manufacturers in mind, it achieved certification due to customer demand. When the standard underwent a revision in 2000 Overbury saw that it became more relevant to the business. Paul Brazier, Commercial Director at Overbury explains that "the 2000 version of ISO 9001 matched what the Overbury business actually did much more as it was designed with service organizations in mind and it helped them to focus on the customer."

ISO 14001 certification initially helped the business remain legally compliant and deliver efficiencies such as minimizing waste and other environmental impacts. The new standard helped Overbury focus on risks and opportunities, leadership, and context of the organization as it was much more aligned with the way Overbury works.



Liz Collett, Environmental Manager at Overbury saw this as "a real improvement from the older version."

## Why adopt the new standards

**Flexible standards that can help drive efficiencies and deliver a better customer experience**

When Overbury learnt that ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 were due to be updated it wanted to identify how this could help improve business. It wasn't long before it became apparent to Neil Pike, Head of Business Improvement at Overbury, that the revisions were "in total alignment with our business philosophy" and "they were likely to support our focus on achieving complete client satisfaction." Having both ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 there was an opportunity to align the management systems, tackle the transition together and make efficiencies in the business. Neil goes on to say that Overbury's decision to tackle the transition to the new standards in an integrated way "has been fundamental in helping us drive efficiencies".

## Preparation and implementation

Overbury decided early on that it wanted to be one of the first organizations to achieve certification to the new version of ISO 9001 and ISO 14001. As soon as it was aware of the changes to the standards, Neil and his team presented them to the main board.

Neil and Liz kept up to date with the changes to the standards by reading the draft versions to gain an early insight as to what they might contain. Members of the Overbury teams also attended BSI revision events to hear from experts, share their own experiences and to understand what other organizations' first impressions of the new standard were. They also made BSI aware that they wanted to make the transition early.

At Overbury the teams involved in quality and environmental management saw the new standards as an opportunity to work together to align these management systems where possible. As the two new standards are both based on the new high level structure (Annex SL) it made sense to have a common approach rather than treating each management system standard separately. This made the transition to the new standards more straightforward.

Overbury achieved certification to ISO 9001:2015 and ISO 14001:2015 in September 2015. The critical work involved in getting the business ready to transfer to the new standard took about six months. The "readiness reviews" carried out by BSI at Overbury prior to the final assessments were considered invaluable as they highlighted any potential weaknesses in its systems and helped Overbury to make sure it was on track with their transition plans.

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## The readiness review will give a balanced view of where you are and where you need to focus

And when it came to the assessments carried out by BSI, the team at Overbury was pleased to see that the focus was on establishing whether it had met the requirements in the key new areas of the standards including "context of the organization," managing risks and opportunities, and leadership.

### The challenges

One of the first challenges that Overbury encountered was that some of the terminology in the new standards were different to the previous versions. It needed to check its interpretation of the new standard to ensure it kept on track. "Throughout this process we liaised closely with BSI" said Liz. Documenting the environmental management system (EMS) is also a new requirement of ISO 14001:2015, and initially it was a challenge to ensure that it was done as the standard intended. However this did result in reducing the amount of documentation, which was a pleasant and unexpected benefit.

### The benefits

One of the biggest advantages the new standards have brought is the increased use of risk-based thinking. Liz explains that "when it came to looking at our 'interested parties' and the risks and opportunities associated with them, we identified that our supply chain was potentially a risk

## ISO 9001:2015 brings benefits that you may not even foresee

but also an opportunity. If we were able to upskill them we would be in a strong position to win more work'. This meant that by discovering an unexpected opportunity, Overbury has discovered a new potential competitive edge that could help it grow the business.

### Top tips for other organizations

Now that Overbury has successfully made the transition to ISO 9001:2015 and ISO 14001:2015 it believes this puts the company in a strong position to start to reap the business benefits. It also enables the team to look ahead and focus on making further improvements to the quality and environmental management systems, manage risk, and focus on opportunities.

## Take a look at the standard and see how it fits what you already do

Organizations that make the transition to the new standard will start to realize benefits earlier, enabling them to focus on other areas of the business. So what would Overbury say to other organizations thinking about upgrading to the new standards? "Don't be afraid" says Paul. "By achieving this new standard it will improve your business". Neil goes on to say "it really does give you the freedom to embrace effective management, focus on what your organization's outputs should be and bring efficiencies across all areas of the business."

Start your transition to the new standards and find out how BSI can help your business make excellence a habit.

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