



Hands-on Management

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ISO 14000 Compliance Demanded by Ford & GM

You knew it was coming! Are you surprised by how fast or by how slowly environmental management systems (EMS) are making a direct impact on your life? Are you also just waiting for the day that finishers get paid by the pound for the paperwork it takes to stay in business? Let's try to keep the blood pressure under control and take a look at what is really happening.

What GM is Saying . . .

A spokesperson for General Motors (GM)—Harold R. Kutner, group vice president of Worldwide Purchasing and North American Production Control & Logistics—said, “Working together with our suppliers, we can accomplish much more to improve the environment than GM can alone. It is our intent that all suppliers to General Motors implement an environmental management system by December 31, 2002. We know our suppliers share the same concerns and will work with us on this effort, as they have in the past, to improve quality, service, technology and value.”¹

Suppliers, with a significant environmental obligation, must certify to the implementation of an environmental management system that meets the ISO 14000 standard, or the

European Union Eco-Audit and Management Scheme (EMAS). Confirmation by a third party is preferred, but GM will also accept an affidavit from a responsible corporate official.

What Ford is Saying . . .

Ford Motor Company is compelling suppliers to bring at least one manufacturing site, affirmed by a third party, to the ISO 14000 standard by December 31, 2001. If there are other manufacturing sites that ship products to Ford, they must be certified compliant by July 1, 2003. Approximately 5,000 of Ford's suppliers with manufacturing facilities are affected. “This requirement reinforces Ford's commitment to the environment,” Carlos Mazzorin, group vice president of purchasing and Ford of Mexico said. “We have extended that commitment to thousands of other companies,” he continued, “exponentially increasing the benefits of this rigorous environmental certification.”²

Ford and GM are *the* movers and shakers of the industrialized world. So, what's gotten them shaken so badly that they are promoting—no, heartily *embracing*—environmental stewardship? Public opinion is the power behind the movement. Both big government and big business can easily be rendered powerless and brought to their knees by a strong change of public opinion. The motor guys are burning rubber to avoid a bad public image.

Let's look at a real-life case history, for example. At a recent AESF Philadelphia Branch meeting, Ted Mooney, P.E., spoke on the topic

of the future of finishing in the new millennium. He commented on how quickly things can change as a result of concerns over public perception of a problem. Remember during the 1980s when the ozone layer had a “hole” in it over the South Pole? U.S. industry as a whole was asked to give up ozone-depleting chemicals/ processes for alternative chemicals/ processes that wouldn't harm the

** Columnist's Note: I didn't want to lessen the impact of the point I was making by mentioning the icing on the cake for the automakers: ISO 14000 should, in their minds at least, result in cost savings because of reduced waste and improved environmental compliance.*

ozone layer. Industry's answer was that it would take years to find the new processes. To which the regulators responded that they understood completely but, just to humor them, we were to place this label on our fine products: *This product was manufactured using ozone-depleting chemicals*. I never saw one of those labels on any product ... did you? Instant change—and you know why.

The U.S. EPA has demonstrated increasing interest in EMSs by inviting local governments to apply for assistance grants in order to develop their own environmental management systems. The program provides for training and technical assistance supplied by a consultant. The development of these systems has resulted in EMSs finding their way into more of the settlement agreements that the EPA and state regulators have made during enforcement actions.

On the upside, EMS law recently enacted in Connecticut should help companies that meet that state's criteria as follows:

- Expedited permit review
- Reduced fees
- Less frequent reporting
- Public recognition of the achievement.

The benefits offered by states will also amplify other sound business reasons for developing an EMS, such as meeting customer expectations.

Pressures generated by the public's environmental concerns may be the single-largest threat to the finishing industry. Chances are the finishing shop that looks today the same way it did in the 1950s will not be around 10 years from now.

In his talk, Ted Mooney made several great points. First, get the water off of the floor. Second, use

more light to brighten the shop, making sure to cast light into all of the dark corners. In other words, the shop should pass a white-glove test.

Where to Go for Help

Need some help with ISO 14000? If you missed AESF Week last month, be sure to order the proceedings from the AESF Bookstore (800/334-2052). SUR/FIN® 2000 in Chicago will also have a great speaker, Milt Stevenson, Jr., who will be addressing both ISO 9000 and ISO 14000 at the same time. Don't miss it. You can also obtain the ISO 14000 standard for \$38.50 through the Milwaukee-based American Society for Quality (800/248-1946). P&SF

References

1. *Industry News*, "Quality Magazine," December 1999.
2. Lycos E-Wire press release, September 21, 1999.

2000 Aerospace/Airline Plating Exhibition

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