

GOODE INTERNATIONAL

Implementing an integrated quality system based on the principles of EFQM Excellence Model® has brought tremendous benefits to Goode International and contributed to a two-fold increase in net profit.

OBJECTIVES

Goode International provides a full range of marketing services including public relations, media buying, design and new media design. The company specialises in the technology and IT sectors within PR services, with a broader client base in media buying, design and new media including food, charities, construction and education.

In implementing an integrated quality system, Goode International's senior management team sought to enhance efficiency following the company's rapid growth in recent years. There was also a need to ensure a consistent decision making approach throughout the organisation.

SOLUTION

The implementation process of the integrated quality system consisted of several steps. The starting point was the development of the high-level business process. The next step was to carve out written procedures with each of the departments within the business. This information formed the basis of the 'Goode Guide' as the integrated quality system is now called. It includes all forms and procedures throughout the organisation and is accessible through hyperlinked Word® documents.

"In an environment focused on results, each department needs to be aware of what another department's processes are so they can maximise their own time and not reinvent the wheel!" says Rebecca Russell, Business Systems Director of Goode International.

The principles of the EFQM Excellence Model® have been used to develop the business plan and focus the company towards a more strategic approach, particularly with regard to defining processes, personnel, health and safety, environmental and corporate responsibility issues. The 'Goode Guide' has been well received throughout the organisation and it is seen as a long-term investment in maintaining and further progressing the integrated quality system. Current efforts are geared towards developing flowcharts for the entire system. As a small company, expenditure of effort on the system cannot detract

Best practice in:
Integrated Quality System

Sector:
Marketing and PR

Size of firm:
16 employees

Location:
Oxfordshire

Website:
www.goode.co.uk



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REBECCA RUSSELL – BUSINESS SYSTEMS DIRECTOR

from the core business. The implementation of the system started in 2002, and the manpower expended to achieve the system and maintain and develop it in the future is budgeted at six days per month. In man-days, it is considered a small price to pay for the results that are starting to be realised.

RESULTS


It is felt that having a quality system is a fairly rare feature for a small marketing company. “In an environment where creativity and deadlines mean results, it is important to have the confidence to know that people will make the right decisions quickly and with confidence. That’s where the ‘Goode Guide’ is really proving essential,” says Rebecca Russell.

The IT sector slumped following 9/11 and as a result marketing activities dropped as companies struggled to remain financially viable. The introduction of the quality system coincided with the down-turn in the industry. Through a combination of ensuring motivated and receptive staff, and a more structured approach to the way business was carried out, Goode International came through the down-turn with more clients, greater and more focused productivity and profitability. Between 2001 and 2004 the client list has gone from 26 to 54 – an increase of 105%. Whilst turn-over has remained stable, a two-fold increase in net profit has been realised.

As part of its review process Goode International has conducted two employee satisfaction surveys in recent years. The survey covered work vs lifestyle balance, communication, training, management and company culture. Overall, the results of the survey were high, with improved communication being seen as one of the key contributors to staff satisfaction.

As a consequence of having transparent and well-defined processes, coupled with an improved knowledge of these and the objectives of the company, external, as well as internal communication has improved. Marketing companies provide the link between customers and suppliers, and clearly defined processes are essential to ensure good communication where deadlines must be met on time and in a cost-effective manner. The Marketing Manager at Unipalm, one of Goode International’s clients, says: “Goode... consistently deliver to, or exceed our expectations. They have maximised the value of our advertising and generate the best coverage of our company and the key people within it. This is a very successful partnership.”






Through regular audits, areas for improvement are identified to advance the system on a continual basis. For example, the auditing process itself includes brainstorming with staff from the whole department taking part in the review. Staff have the opportunity to step out of the pressured day-to-day routines for a couple of hours and in addition to reviewing the procedures, have the opportunity to raise issues that can be resolved by consensus. For example, having up-to-date contact information on journalists is essential. For years Goode International has maintained an in-house database that has been dependent on staff keeping it up to date. Following one such brainstorming session, commercially updated databases were reviewed and they now buy-in that data, saving time, staff effort and the risk of holding incorrect information.

Taking a more structured approach to the business means that not only are the financial results considered at the end of the year, staff results and customer results are also analysed. Analysing business leads identified that 80% of Goode International's business comes from referrals through customers and other third parties. This has concentrated future new business growth on the development of existing customer partnerships and contacts.

Goode International's head office is near Reading with a satellite office in Richmond. Knowledge sharing and good company-wide communication was identified as key to maintaining team co-operation and improved morale. This led to the introduction of internal training sessions to improve knowledge sharing throughout the company. A company meeting is held once a month, which is minuted to ensure that everyone is included in the communication process. In addition, the company holds a breakfast training session once a month when a member of staff presents on a topic in which they have expertise to share, key points to share from a training course they have attended or show-case a recent project they have been working on. Notes, illustrations and slides from the presentation are posted on the main computer server for any member of staff to read and a copy is retained in the library for future reference.

CHALLENGES

There were several challenges that the business encountered in introducing the integrated quality system. These challenges stem from the small size of the company and a commercial environment that is defined by deadlines – from copy-deadlines in the media and product launch dates from clients to suppliers such as printers or web-hosting companies, and their capacity and reliability.



In the beginning, people were resistant due to the perceived workload and the fear that defined systems would stifle creativity. Having a system and written procedures in place ensures that ongoing projects are traceable, contacts are defined and processes are understood. It means that new employees or temporary staff brought in to cover a role have something to work with, to ensure they maintain the ethos of the company.

THE LAST WORD

“Implementing any quality system requires determination, the strength to take the knock-backs and the appreciation that results are achieved through stealth and not quick fixes. Getting senior management and staff to appreciate this is half the battle!” says Rebecca Russell.

The key benefits to implementing an integrated system at Goode International have been the focus on the business needs of the organisation as a whole. Whilst profitability is always the bottom-line in ensuring the future of the company, highly-skilled and well-motivated staff, good customer and supplier relationships and community relations impact on this bottom-line. An integrated quality system has focused attention on the business as a whole and ensured that this is communicated to staff and customers alike.

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