

Case study



Dexion Commercial (NZ) Ltd

In less than a year, commercial furniture supplier Dexion Commercial (NZ) Ltd (Precision) went from having no environmental certification to being Enviro-Mark Gold certified, realising plenty of benefits along the way. Quality Environment Manager, John Best discussed their progress with Enviro-Mark Membership Manager, Kristin Flanagan.

Why did you decide to focus on environmental management?

Environmental management is our corporate responsibility. We are part of a global company with a strong emphasis on delivering on our responsibilities. Also we knew that meeting a recognised standard of environmental management would give our business an essential point of difference in our competitive market. The Enviro-Mark programme is a well known, independently assessed programme that provided a manageable stepped platform to achieve this.

What has been the most challenging aspect of this?

Initially the company struggled to get traction with the programme with existing resource. So I was employed as Quality Environment Manager. Staff acceptance of change is always a challenge. Many were cautious of these management systems and felt they were created to hinder rather than assist. We recognised that ongoing education of staff is the best way to ensure they understand the purpose behind the system.

What has been the most rewarding aspect of your environmental programme?

Achieving our goal ahead of schedule and meeting the demands of our customers. We worked very hard to get this right the first time and achieved this. Our staff have been very supportive of the programme and we have found some real passion in our team. It has been rewarding to be able to truly "walk the talk" after a long process. Our bottom line has been aided by a number of small things right through to large initiatives. This is an ongoing process and the team is always looking for new cost effective ways to achieve outcomes.



(from left) John Best - Quality Environment Manager; Katie Peryer - Sales Support; and Neil McGowan - Product Development Manager

Enviro-Mark®NZ Gold:

Continual improvement and the foundations of an effective EMS

Enviro-Mark®NZ Gold certification means that your organisation:

- Has developed, implemented and tested an environmental emergency plan;
- Has formalised the roles and responsibilities for people working for and on behalf of the organisation;
- Has set objectives and targets for driving continual improvement and has programmes detailed to meet those targets;
- Has identified and evaluated the significant environmental aspects and impacts of its activities, products and services;
- Has produced an environmental policy statement.
- Is fully compliant with New Zealand's most common and widely applicable health and safety and environmental legislation.

"Our Gold certification is a clear statement to our industry that we are committed to our responsibilities and highly value the importance of good environmental practices..."

What are some of your EMS achievements?

Much of our achievement has been through systems that have existed but are now formalised alongside some other very innovative initiatives:

- Carbon Footprint: Analysis of data that we already collect has enabled the business to understand our carbon footprint. We have used this information to target certain practices in the business and look for alternatives to lessen the impact.
- Data Analysis: We now ensure we collect relevant data for analysis and review to ensure we can measure our performance against our KPI's.
- Wood waste cost reduction: Through a chipping process we have dramatically reduced the volume of waste wood generated by our wooden furniture factory and shipped to landfill.
- Wood waste reduction: Through the re-design of products and constant improvements to our process we are reducing the amount of raw material consumption.
- Oil recovery from steel during the powder-coating process. The oil is washed from the steel and then separated from the water. We then re-sell the oil to a chainsaw manufacturer.
- Product Stewardship: In 2009 we implemented a thorough Product Stewardship scheme that looks at how we design and produce products, and how we dispose of them at the end of their life. We offer all customers a credit for recycling any product responsibly.
- Staff Awareness: We have run a number of staff awareness presentations to ensure that our team understand the importance and ensure the integrity of our EMS is upheld.

What advice would you give to other companies thinking of implementing an EMS?

It is essential from the beginning of the process that there is 'buy in' from all key stakeholders. Without this it will remain the crusade of a few lone voices and nearly impossible to achieve success. Resource needs to be considered very carefully. You need people with the skill but most importantly the time to dedicate to the programme implementation.

The eMission programme (a Greater Wellington Regional Council initiative) was a great support for our team. You can never have enough good advice and it will help you avoid making the same mistakes or having to re-invent the wheel. Most companies are proud of their achievements and are more than happy to share their experiences. Above all else you need to 'do it'. The hardest step is often making the decision to get started.

How has the Enviro-Mark programme assisted you?

Enviro-Mark has been a great support throughout. The forming of the eMission programme in early 2009 gave us a support network to work alongside and share ideas, access to a knowledge base and industry support. Having the Greater Wellington Regional Council 'Take Charge' Audit aided our identification of gaps. It has been great learning from other companies' experiences and having dedicated support that gave us focus and critiqued our procedures and processes prior to audits.

What value does Enviro-Mark certification have for your organisation?

Our Gold certification is a clear statement to our industry that we are committed to our responsibilities and highly value the importance of good environmental practices in manufacturing. We are now 'walking the talk' and are also supporting this with product accreditations through Environmental Choice which has been made easier with our certification. We are also using this certification to apply pressure on our suppliers to deliver a more considered environmental service to our business. It has become a key criterion in our supplier assessments.

Enviro-Mark certification ensures that our business maintains a high standard in our practices not only in legal compliance, but also ensuring we make educated environmental decisions for our staff, community and customers.

For further information:

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