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Dealing with Product Recall

The recent headlines about Toyota’s recall of some of its cars, highlights the need for all organisations to be able to deal with product recalls.

A European Directive 85/347/EEC imposes strict liability on producers for harm caused by defective products. This was transposed into UK law in Part 1 of the Consumer Protection Act 1987. The key thing to notice here is ‘strict liability’; this means that people who are injured by defective products can sue for compensation without having to prove the producer negligent. Although they do have to prove that the product was defective and that the defect in the product caused the injury.

Another EC Directive, Directive 2001/95/EC is implemented in the UK through the General Product Safety Regulations (2005). These Regulations maintain the general duty placed on producers and distributors to sell products that are safe in reasonable or reasonably foreseeable use.

These and other legislation means that organisations must be ready to take actions if any of their products are found to be unsafe. These actions may well be embedded in a quality management system. Indeed, the quality management system may well ensure that the organisation has the information it needs to organise these recalls e.g. traceability.

In the case of safety critical products e.g. food manufacturing, electrical goods etc. it may be appropriate to establish procedures in the event of a product recall being necessary. Not only is this good preplanning (hopefully unnecessary) but also because it can possibly lead to a reduction in the insurance premium.

A guide to such a product recall procedure could be:

- i) Circulate a note to key members of the company, including the Managing Director, indicating the situation and proposing the following action.
- ii) Establish the seriousness of the problem, where possible the likely effect on health and safety, fit and function, aesthetics etc.
- iii) Establish the extent of the problem, how many items are affected and how the items affected are to be identified (date of manufacture, serial number etc.).
- iv) Determine the most appropriate corrective action; recall, rectification, check etc.
- v) Determine the most appropriate method for notifying customers or users of the suspect items and the action they should take (e.g. return item to factory for replacement). For example, hazard or advisory notices to all customers either by letter or in the form of a press release.
- vi) Determine the most appropriate method of monitoring the effectiveness of the corrective action. Also a method for monitoring the success with which the customers affected have been contacted and items affected have been located.

Further information on Product Recalls can be found from the BIS at <http://www.berr.gov.uk/whatwedo/consumers/Safety/products/recall/index.html>

ISO/IEC 31010:2009

ISO have recently published a new standard ISO/IEC 31010:2009 Risk management – Risk assessment techniques that have been developed jointly by ISO and its partner IEC (International Electrotechnical Commission). This new standard will help organisations in implementing the risk management principles and guidelines.

Risk assessment is an integral part of risk management as it provides a structured process for organizations to identify how their objectives may

be affected. It is used to analyse risks in terms of consequences and probabilities before the organization decides if further action is required.

The new standard deals with:

- Risk assessment concepts
- Risk assessment process
- Selection of risk assessment techniques

Eric Mahy, Project leader for the Standard comments, "ISO/IEC 31010 has been developed for application by both the risk management novice and the seasoned risk professional. It forms part of an integrated set of risk management standards developed with a view to providing a 'best practice' approach." For more information please visit www.iso.org

Food Safety Hazards

ISO technical specification **ISO/TS 22002-1:2009, Prerequisite programmes on food safety – Part 1: Food manufacturing** sets out requirements for conditions needed for producing safe products and provide food that is safe for human consumption. It is intended to be used in conjunction with, and to support, ISO 22000:2005 which gives requirements for a food safety management system.

The new technical specification applies to all organizations involved in the manufacturing step of the food chain, regardless of their size.

ISO/TS 22002-1 will help food manufacturers to control:

- The likelihood of introducing food safety hazards to the product through the work environment
- Biological, chemical and physical contamination of the product, including cross contamination between products
- Food safety hazard levels in the product and product processing environment.

Jacob Faergemand, Chair of the subcommittee which is responsible for the ISO 22000 series, comments: "As the introduction of food safety hazards can occur at the manufacturing stage of the food supply chain, a hygienic environment is essential. That is why this ISO technical specification is very useful to reduce the likelihood that products will be exposed to hazards, that they will be contaminated, and that hazards will proliferate." For more information please visit www.iso.org

Draft ISO 26000

The Goal of the ISO Social Responsibility standard is to encourage organizations around the world to improve their performance on key indicators of sustainable development. By reducing environmental damage caused by their operations, and improving the living conditions and health of their workers, organizations have the ability to improve the quality of life for the communities in which they operate.

The leadership of the ISO Working Group on Social Responsibility (ISO/WG SR) is now in the process of analyzing the results of a positive vote on the Draft International Standard (DIS) version of **ISO 26000, Guidance on social responsibility**, before taking a decision on whether or not the document should now progress to the status of Final Draft International Standard (FDIS).

ISO 26000 will provide harmonized, globally relevant guidance based on international consensus among expert representatives of the main stakeholder groups and so encourage the implementation of best practice in social responsibility worldwide. The guidance in ISO 26000 draws on best practice developed by existing public and private sector SR initiatives. For more information please visit www.iso.org

ISO 17367:2009

The importance of being able to trace products throughout the supply chain has strongly increased in the recent years. The new standard, ISO 17367:2009 will help manufacturers and distributors to track products and to manage their traceability using radio frequency identification (RFID) technology, at each stage of a chain of production, processing, distribution, and selling.

ISO 17367:2009, Supply chain applications of RFID – Product tagging, defines the basic features of RFID for use in the supply chain when applied to product tagging. It makes the following recommendations for:

Encoded identification of the product

- Additional information about the product for inclusion on the RFID tag
- Semantics and data syntax
- The data protocol to be used to interface with business applications and the RFID system



- The air interface standards between the RFID interrogator and RFID tag.

ISO 17367:2009 is appropriate to a wide range of industries with four other International Standards under the general title: *Supply chain applications of RFID*. International Standards within this suite are:

- ISO 17363:2007, *Supply chain applications of RFID – Freight containers*
- ISO 17364:2009, *Supply chain applications of RFID – Returnable transport items (RTIs)*
- ISO 17365:2009, *Supply chain applications of RFID – Transport units*
- ISO 17366:2009, *Supply chain applications of RFID – Product packaging*.

For more information please visit www.iso.org

PAS 2020

BSI has recently launched a new voluntary industry code, PAS 2020 Direct Marketing Environmental Performance assessment and certification scheme, aimed at reducing the environmental impact of junk mail, unwanted direct mail and increase the recycling of direct mail and waste paper. The scheme is designed to help organisations involved in marketing take a more sustainable approach to their activities and reduce the amount of paper that ends up in landfill.

Currently, the UK disposes of 11.55 million tonnes of biodegradable municipal waste in landfill sites. The EU Landfill Directive requires this figure to be reduced to 11.2m tonnes by 2010; 7.5 million tonnes by 2013 and 5.2 million tonnes by 2020. About 5.4 billion

items of direct mail and promotional materials are sent out every year – much of which ends up in landfills. The Direct Marketing Association (DMA), which represents about 900 members involved in the direct mail and promotions industry, signed a voluntary producer responsibility agreement with the Government in July 2003 to raise recycling levels to 30 per cent by the end of 2005, 55 per cent by the end of 2009 and 70 per cent by the end of 2012. Victoria Barron, Product Marketing Manager for Sustainability at BSI explains, “Failure to meet these targets could result in millions of pounds of punitive fines by the EU. For more information please visit www.bsi-uk.com

International standard for energy efficiency and renewable energy sources

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) will be developing this new standard, *Energy efficiency and renewable energy sources – Common terminology*.

The International Standard will identify and define terms used in the field of energy efficiency and renewable energy sources. It will support the metrics, calculation and assessment methods, methodologies and best practice, needed by policy makers, industry, standards writers and many other stakeholders.

This Standard is expected to support and facilitate global understanding of energy efficiency and renewable energy sources and contribute to:

- Clarification of regional and national regulations
- Clarification of relations between providers and clients
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For more information please visit www.iso.org