

News from

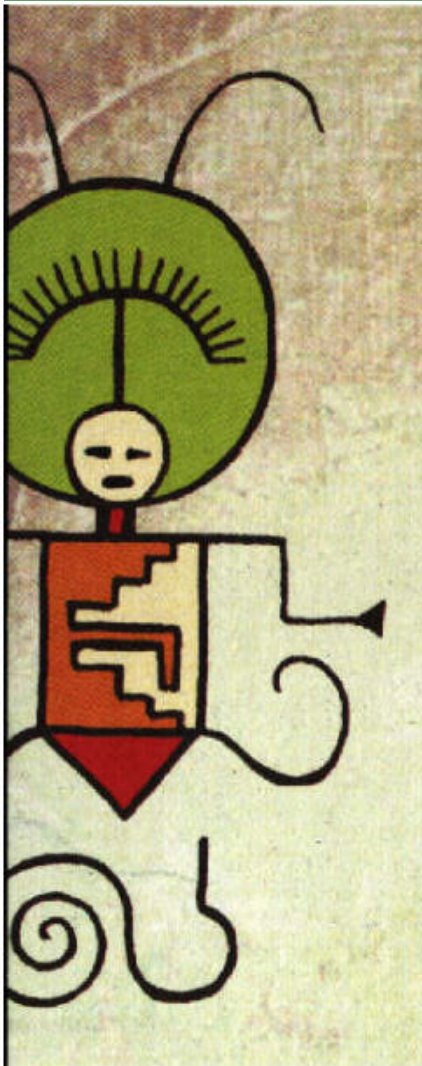


New Year 2004

From EMS to Sustainability and Beyond



Consultants for Continual Improvement



A Happy New Year!

from

All of us at EMAG

We'd like to take this opportunity to send season's greetings to all recipients of this newsletter. We hope you find these snippets of news useful and continue to do so in 2004.

A Sustainable Christmas?

The New Year is traditionally the time for resolutions, and with the excessive consumption of Christmas fresh in our minds, perhaps we should all be resolving to aim for a more sustainable Christmas next year. It is much easier to consider sustainability and Christmas in the cold light of January

than in the dark days of December, when any question about what it is all for prompts comparisons with Scrooge.

As a start, we have finally phased out our previous practice of sending Christmas cards. We hope you find this e-newsletter a more thought-provoking and environmentally responsible alternative.

Virtual Reporting

A surf around some of the leading companies' websites reveals a trend away from the production of paper-based environmental and social or sustainability reports. Increasingly companies will only print an Executive Summary. Many reports still take the form of a traditional physical report: usually a pdf document that can be downloaded from the web site. However, others are supplementing this with web pages covering the same subject matter, but including more information and data and providing links to other relevant web pages. The advantages include the ability simply and cheaply to make more information available; the disadvantages include increased difficulty navigating through it. Also, more information doesn't always mean better information. The move away from physical reports may help

focus more attention on content than appearance, and may have environmental advantages but this depends on how many readers resist the temptation to print out their downloaded copies.

Reporting - are you in the minority?

A recent survey by Salter Baxter and Context (Trends in CSR Reporting 2002-03) reveals that more than half of the Top 250 FTSE listed companies now report on their environmental performance and many also report on their social performance. In most sectors, it is the minority who don't report. If your organisation currently does not report on its environmental or social performance and would like help in starting to do so, then perhaps we could help. See our contact details to the left and overleaf.

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Measuring Eco-efficiency

Eco-efficiency is a term coined and defined by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development. In essence, it is about organisations delivering more value, in terms of meeting people's needs for their products or services, with less demand on the Earth's resources, either to provide raw materials or to absorb wastes. In simple terms it is measured by:

$$\frac{\text{Product or service value}}{\text{Environmental influence}}$$

It is concerned with meeting three basic objectives:

- Reducing the consumption of resources
- Reducing the impact on nature
- Increasing product or service value

The WBCSD has provided guidance on how these three elements can be measured and reported, and many companies now report on their performance in eco-efficiency terms, or, more often, the reciprocal measure:

$$\frac{\text{Environmental influence}}{\text{Number of products manufactured}}$$

However, very often the focus of these

data is the organisation's own activities. To truly measure the eco-efficiency of a product or service, it is necessary to consider the environmental influence of the product or service along its entire life cycle (otherwise outsourcing would be a simple way to improve eco-efficiency).

In addition, measures of product or service value tend to focus on numbers of products or economic value of sales, rather than the more difficult measure of needs met. Grappling with this concept naturally leads to a consideration of the function of the product and the service it provides, which can be an important first step in opening the mind to alternatives. For example, a more sustainable future will not be achieved simply by designing and making cars with less environmental impact along the life cycle, but by rethinking how our needs for personal mobility could be met, perhaps by a transport-on-demand service.

Many of these concepts will be familiar to those with experience of life cycle assessment. This is a tool for assessing the environmental influence of a product (or service) along the whole life cycle, and a key element, fundamental

to ensuring like-for-like comparisons, is the definition of the functional unit, which describes the unit of service being provided by the product under study, so, for example, when comparing wall paints it would be necessary to consider the amount of paint needed to give the same coverage and finish to the wall (the service being provided by the paint).

Life cycle assessment has not always had the best image, but it can be a useful tool if its limitations are recognised and it is used with common sense. The use of the underpinning concepts (life cycle thinking, life cycle management), as well as the associated tools and data are likely to find increasing use both in the context of eco-efficiency as well as in response to the shift in emphasis among government policy makers and legislators from industrial operations towards products (for example, the European Commission's Integrated Product Policy).

If you would like to know more about measuring eco-efficiency, or about how life cycle assessment could help you, then please contact us.

News clip:

From ISO 14001: 1996 to ISO DIS 14001:2003 – Business as usual?

There has been a great deal of debate about the forthcoming revisions to ISO 14001. The message from press reports has been "no change, business as normal", but that's not really the whole picture. For some companies, where their management system currently only includes manufacturing activities, it could mean major changes, as they may not have considered 'products and services' at all. Some of the main differences in the new draft international standard are highlighted below.

Scoping: The organisation is now required to define the scope of its EMS; the scope links the EMS with the organisation's activities, products and services.

Policy: The policy has to be consistent with the scope of the EMS and it cannot be wider than the actual scope of the EMS. Interested parties can therefore now gain information about what is and what is not included in the EMS

Environmental Aspects Identification: "or" has been replaced with "and", but within the scope of the organisation's EMS. Those aspects over which the organisation can have an influence are now clearer and aspects associated with projects now form part of the standard
Legal and other requirements: Now specified as "environmental legal requirements", so just because COMAH is not part of the EPA does not mean that it should not be included.

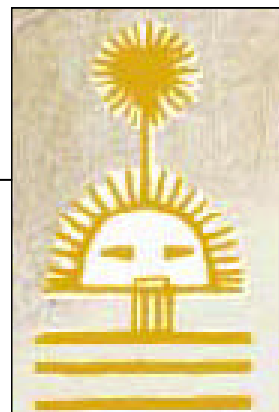
Competence and Training: there is a new term here – "persons working for or on behalf of the organisation". This clarifies

who needs to have sufficient competence and training.

Legal compliance: More importance has been attached to "periodic evaluation of legal compliance" and results of this evaluation need to be recorded.

Preventive Action: There are now two distinct cases of preventive action – one to prevent reoccurrence and one to prevent potential non-conformities.

Documented procedures: Loss of the requirement for documented procedures excluding those relating to operational control. Organisations still need to establish and maintain procedures to implement and manage their EMS.



This newsletter highlights some of our latest work and ideas. If you would like to know more, go to our web-site, or telephone us on:

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