



Westland Helicopters

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AS/EN 9100 Registration for Global Leader

- ***Competitive and first-mover advantage***
- ***Increased flexibility of the workforce***
- ***Improved customer focus***

The Company

Westland Helicopters Limited (WHL) is a subsidiary of the AgustaWestland Group, the global leader in the rotorcraft industry. WHL operates in the global aerospace arena, providing a range of advanced-technology civil and military helicopters. WHL is also involved in a number of international collaborative projects.

WHL employs 3800 people, primarily at its Yeovil site, and first obtained certification to AS/EN 9100 in July 2002. AS/EN 9100 is the aerospace industry-specific variant of ISO 9001:2000.

The scope of WHL's registration covers the design, development, manufacture, marketing and support of helicopters and helicopter systems.

The Issue

Two key drivers were responsible for the company seeking AS/EN 9100 registration:

- **Business Need** – TS 157 Issue 4, the UK Aerospace Sector Certification Scheme mandates the use of AS/EN 9100. The Society of British Aerospace Companies maintain TS 157 Issue 4.
- **Customer Requirement** – In addition to being an end-line helicopter producer, WHL also manufactures helicopter parts for other companies. These customers and companies currently mandate the demonstration of compliance to ISO 9001. WHL envisage that, AS/EN 9100 will also be mandated in the future.

The Benefits

WHL has become the one of the first primes in the UK to become registered to the 2001 version of AS/EN 9100. This has given WHL a competitive and first-mover advantage over its competitors.

The new 'process model' approach used in AS/EN 9100 and ISO 9001:2000 suited the business structure and process much better than the previous procedure based standard.

Top management gave their full support to the drive for AS/EN 9100 registration. WHL Top Management has been impressed with the changes that have been made as a result of the standard implementation, especially the requirements for Management Review. WHL Top Management now formally present on quality issues, an area previously seen as just a Quality Department issue. In addition, the management review meetings are used to assess opportunities for improvement, with Top Management taking responsibility for implementing any improvements.

WHL now have a greater understanding of their customer requirements. Customers are asked to give extensive feedback, both negative, in order to address any issues, and positive, to gain and establish best practice.

WHL have a 2000 company-strong supplier base. AS/EN 9100 has been used by WHL to produce QRS01 (Quality Requirements for Suppliers). This new document will be used to extend the requirements of AS/EN 9100 down their supply chain. It is important for WHL to have confidence in the systems and quality of their suppliers and this can be achieved without individual, costly and time-consuming audits by WHL employees.

BSI's Involvement

BSI was chosen due to its assessors' first-rate knowledge of the aerospace industry, ability to work to WHL's timescales and familiarity with AS/EN 9100. Initially BSI spent time on the WHL site in order to gain a better understanding of the business and its specific processes and procedures.

Kevin Hopwood, team leader for customer support and business infrastructure, states '**WHL's relationship with BSI is a partnership where, by working together, continual improvements are made. Identification of non-value adding activities has led to a significantly more efficient use of our resources.**'

WHL describe the BSI assessors as both credible and professional, providing positive as well as negative feedback. The team approach used by assessors has been welcomed by WHL, and the constructive relationship extends to WHL Top Management who gave very positive feedback to the Quality Department following the assessment. The BSI assessors interviewed members of Top Management.

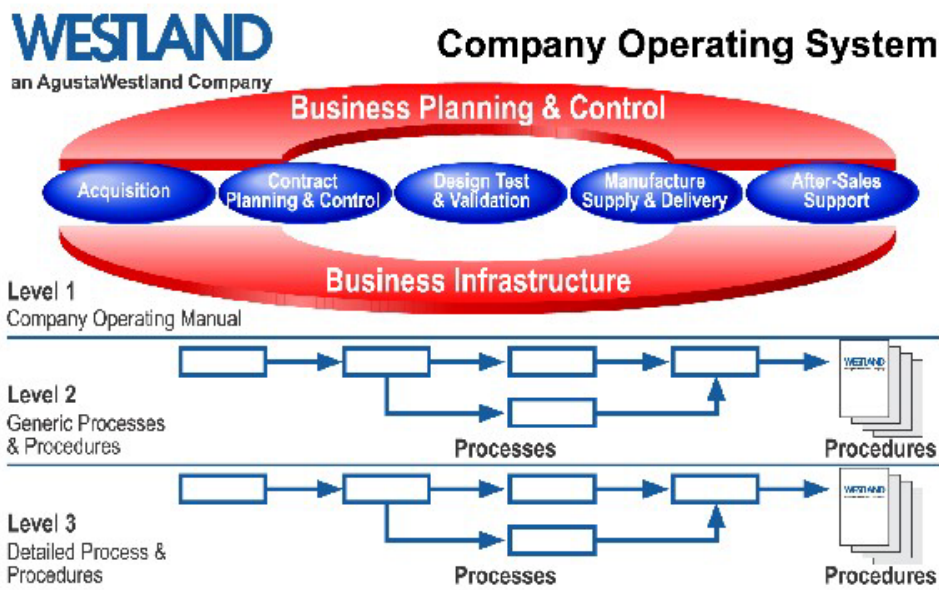
BSI Case Study on the Benefits of AS/EN 9100 Registration

WHL have also commended the post-registration support from BSI. The assessors have continued the forward thinking proactive partnership and a further collaboration has occurred with regard to publicising the registration and standard as a whole.

The System

Organisational changes within WHL have aligned the company much more with AS/EN 9100. A functional approach has replaced a product approach. WHL envisage the overall number of processes across WHL will be significantly reduced.

The functional approach structure of WHL that has enabled it to deliver such benefits of greater alignment across lines, a simplified QMS and flexibility of workforce is best represented with the following:



The QMS has been placed on a company Intranet, which is easily accessible to all the staff. Previously this wasn't the case, extensive measurement analysis can now be carried out to ascertain QMS usage. The use of flowcharting in the QMS makes it simple and easy to understand.

The Company Quality Manual has been reduced from 120 pages to 28 pages and there are now just 10 hard copies of the QMS maintained for off site use – this is down from 135 copies in 2001.

The process approach has enabled a reduction in the QMS 'paper mountain', has simplified the QMS and led to £6,000 / year cost savings on printing alone.