

Myyryläinen, T. 2013. *Environmental management system planning and implementation: Case Eritoimi Oy* (adapted). Bachelor's thesis. JAMK University of Applied Sciences, School of Technology, Degree Programme in Logistics Engineering.

10 Conclusions

10.1 Research Results

The research questions presented in Chapter 2 created a solid base for the research. The online survey together with the supporting literature revealed, in the case of Eritoimi Oy, that there is a demand for an EMS and that it is relevant for successful business operations presently at Eritoimi and will possibly be even more so in the future. The system will not only increase the company's environmental performance, but can also save money in terms of time and recycling costs. When properly executed, the system will also enable the company to follow the mandatory legislative requirements, which is essential in any company's operations. Proper processes for waste management will also increase the tidiness of the facilities, which is an improvement for employee health and safety. As the facilities also function as an office and exhibition space for visiting customers, a better public image will be presented to them and more value will be created for the business in that sense, too.

The requirements for an effective EMS were presented in Chapter 6.3, and finding the significant environmental aspects of Eritoimi's operations will help to achieve good results from the system. The ISO14001 standard also specifies the requirements for an EMS, and by following this standard the requirements should be properly met. Eritoimi has also released resources for the environmental organization so that the cycle of continuous improvement can be achieved. The scalability of the standard allows for every organization to define its own level of performance concerning environmental issues, so in that sense the system itself can be implemented in companies of all sizes to meet their specific criteria.

People's level of commitment was more dependent on employees'

personalities than on the efforts of leadership. Communication was started early, which alleviated some of the resistance, but there were differences in the behavior of individuals in their attitude towards change: some helped in the process while others did not see the small tasks included in the system as being worthwhile. On the other hand, most of the communication was done by me instead of top management, which may have left some room for improvement.

10.2 Research Critique

10.2.1 Survey

A survey was done to map the environmental attitudes of the company's current partners, who represent companies of all sizes, types and industries. This allowed for good variation in the population, but by limiting the population to existing partners the validity of the research results may be compromised, and at the same time limited in two ways:

1. The respondents are already in cooperation with Eritoimi, so they had already formed an opinion about the company; this may have caused a response bias such that the respondents answered in the way in which they thought the interviewer wanted them to, or in the way they thought was most socially desirable. (Paulhus 1991, 17.)
2. Some of the company's representatives did not know about environmental systems, while others already had the systems in operation. This might have affected their responses even though the basics of environmental management were explained in the survey.

The questionnaire, however, is repeatable and as a tool for research it gave reliable information even though there were minor threats to its validity. If it were to be repeated after a period of two years, the progress in the environmental attitudes of the partners could be compared to the results of this survey.

If there would have been a need for results concerning the generalization of attitudes towards management systems, the survey ought to have been done

by an unbiased party so that the threat of response bias would have been smaller. On the other hand, environmental values have emerged as more and more socially appealing, so the results for such a survey might have still been more or less biased in any case.

10.2.2 Research Purpose

Implementing management systems is not a new field of study and there are already many papers available on environmental management system implementations. In this paper, however, the requirements for an EMS and the connection between the EMS and the success of the company's strategy, together with the effects on the company's image, are under closer study.

This paper also lacks a study of any arguments against environmental management, since the research scope was set only to find the benefits.

The author's effort to ensure the company's staff how small the effect of implementing the system in their daily work was going to be might have influenced their attitudes towards disregarding the entire project. In this sense, communicating more about the positive impacts that might be realized for a relatively small effort on the part of the staff might have been a better strategy and led to better commitment and assistance.

10.3 Reflections on the Research

I found the research work to be very rewarding, because the desk study and especially the survey revealed an actual need for the EMS implementation. This is why my motivation was rather high during the process. The project itself was not very rewarding in terms of creating something original because there was the standard to be followed, but still I had to figure ways to handle all of the required information by myself.

In hindsight, creating a proper project plan with the schedule, resources and responsibilities would have probably helped during the process and especially in the communication between myself and the company's staff.

During the project I gained a lot of new information regarding environmental

issues, and in that sense increased my skill level. The project required persistence and increased my skills and motivation to take more responsibility and initiative, and to develop company processes towards consistency and cost-effectiveness.