

Jactone proves product performance with multiple BSI Kitemarks™

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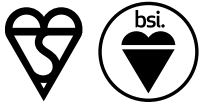
Craig Halford
Managing Director, Jactone

Jactone at a glance

As a company dedicated to fire prevention, safety and reliability are the most important aspects of Jactone's products. Its portfolio of multiple BSI Kitemarks, combined with quality management standard ISO 9001, provide external verification that it is committed to providing rigorously tested, quality products to its customers. The standards help Jactone differentiate itself from its rivals and break into new markets.

Certification benefits:

- Shows proof of product performance in terms of safety, quality and reliability
- Meets industry requirements, through third-party certification
- Assists global brand recognition and entry into new markets
- Demonstrates commitment to best practice
- Provides competitive advantage
- Offers quicker and easier routes to market



Customer background

Jactone is a family business – the current managing director, Craig Halford, is the son of its original founders. It employs around 40 people at its purpose-built factory in the heart of the West Midlands. It was established as a sewing business in 1977, rapidly expanded into fire blankets in the early 1980s, while 1996 marked the introduction of signage solutions for a wide range of customers in the fire, health & safety, and construction sectors. This was followed by a transition into fire extinguisher manufacturing in 2000, and more recently it has developed a reputation as a leading manufacturer of sophisticated fire protection systems.

In addition to holding certification to quality management standard ISO 9001, Jactone holds three BSI Kitemarks for its range of fire extinguishers (BS EN3), its aerosol fire extinguishers (BS6165), and fire blankets (BS EN1869).

Why certification?

For Halford, certification has always been at the heart of the company's ethos. He explains: "Originally, you couldn't really enter the fire extinguisher market without a certified product, so we've always had a longstanding connection with BSI, and going for BSI Kitemark certification was an obvious choice. It's such an identifiable symbol, everyone knows it, it has international recognition, and that's what we want."

Like many SMEs operating in niche sectors, Jactone is looking to expand into markets further afield than Europe, and it is here that Halford can see the win-win impact of a BSI Kitemark. "In certain markets such as the Middle East, it takes a while to get any traction," he says. "We have to play a long game, but for British-made, correctly licensed products, there's a real opportunity."

He cites fire extinguishers as an example. "You know the demand is there, but there are myriad registrations to go through," he says. A huge part of that process involves providing background certification information to the authorities so they will approve the product.

BSI Case Study: Jactone Products Ltd

Certification: Multiple Kitemarks and ISO 9001

"BSI Kitemark status is a necessity," he says. "It's a ticket to reach new clients, from a body that is recognized by the authorities in our target countries. Certification is a key part of our ability to enter new markets and get our products registered."

Implementation

Although certification requires Jactone to meet certain requirements on an ongoing basis, this is seen as a positive task, not an arduous one. "It means we have to operate with a consistency of approach," says Halford. "But that's no bad thing. By meeting the requirements of audits and undergoing testing on a regular basis, we're reinforcing the quality of our products all the time."

Knowledge and understanding is key to the Kitemark process, as he explains further: "If you do your homework, and really understand the requirements of the standard, then you will save yourself time and hassle when it comes to developing your product." As far as Jactone is concerned, products are designed with the objective of achieving certification, sometimes via some ad hoc testing along the way. For example, Jactone is the only UK manufacturer of advanced 'deep draw' pressure vessels for fire extinguishers and, by building certification requirements and simplicity of design into its products in this way, there is less likelihood of having to go back and repeat the process later on.

Benefits

For all the homework involved in understanding standards, Jactone needs no convincing of the benefits that accrue from having BSI Kitemarks for its products. "I can't quantify the benefits in terms of additional sales," says Halford, "but it's as stark as this – if you don't have certification in this sector, you don't sell anything."

Of course, there are also the benefits from building in the requirements of standards from the outset, not least the avoidance of subsequent rework, and all the added costs associated with it.

And from a marketing/PR aspect, brand recognition can go a long way to helping

companies seal the deal. Halford explains: "The BSI brand is so well known globally, and in some of the markets we're looking at, there's a real appetite for British-made products. BSI Kitemark accreditation helps us reinforce that growing trend towards 'getting back to British!'"

As for ISO 9001, having certification to this iconic quality management standard has been a huge benefit for Jactone, forcing it to maintain an efficient framework. "It's an external way of imposing disciplines on your business, which is especially important for SMEs like us. It focuses our mind on doing things correctly and that ultimately saves us money."

BSI's role

Jactone has forged strong links with BSI over the years, including Halford's involvement in specialist committees for the fire protection sector, so the level of communication and cooperation between the two organisations has always been high. As he says, "I'll always have a heads-up on any developments in standards that are likely to impact the sector."

He sees the future as one of opportunity, not least in developing a constructive dialogue with BSI to explore avenues for creating new standards for very bespoke applications. This is an important goal for Jactone, as it pursues new markets with innovative fire suppression products.

Halford concludes: "We're going to use every tool in the box to beat the competition, and that means moving forward with our standards, and with BSI's valued support."

Contact us to find out how the BSI Kitemark™ can help your business make excellence a habit.

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