

Total Service Solutions motto reflects culture

GJK's IMS minimises clients' risk exposure

By Keith Watts

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF an Integrated Management System (IMS) has quickly paid dividends for Melbourne-based GJK Facility Services with the company achieving impressive results across the board Golden Service Awards results, as well as driving down workers' compensation and public liability imposts.

During the past five years, under the guidance of chief executive officer Mario Vella-West and director George Stamas, GJK has instituted a number of important strategic initiatives. The IMS has been a key driver in changing the organisation's culture, which has then been reflected in the public domain with

appropriate marketing activities.

"We made a decision to target the corporate arena and to diversify and in order to do that we had to establish a business plan and re-brand the company," explains Vella-West.

"We wanted to position ourselves as being innovative with competitive and sustainable points of difference without losing focus on our core business. I believe we are one of the first organisations of our kind to implement an IMS that is based on three factors: Quality Management System (ISO 9001); Occupational Health & Safety Accreditation (under Australian Standards 4801 and AS 14001); and Environ-



Stamas and Vella-West (right)

mental Management System.

"All these came together in recognition of clients now requiring service providers to possess complete management systems that minimise clients' risks and exposure."

And Stamas adds, "Customers are getting more sophisticated now. They want a one-stop shop and they also want to deal with a good governance company. We're trying to get away from the sub-contractor mentality. We're more in the vein of a facility manager now rather than just a cleaning company. We're aiming at customers who understand things like KPIs, benchmarking and true reporting."

Efforts rewarded with GSAs

"Implementation of the IMS has already paid off for GJK," Vella-West emphasises. "It has had an impact on our workcover and public liability premiums. There has also been an excellent uplifting of the skills of our people and it has helped us achieve two Golden Service Awards in 2004.

"Our first attempt in 2003 was more of an introduction to the Awards' requirements for the GJK management team but by the second time we understood the process. We won awards in the Commercial Offices (5,000 to 40,000 square metres category) for the Raymond Priestly building and in the Commercial Offices (5,000 square metres category) for our work at the AAMI Customer Service Centre in Moorabbin. We also received distinctions in other categories in education, manufacturing, venues and retail."

Established in 1985, GJK now has 450 employees and an annual turnover of \$10 million. The company has enjoyed a 30 percent per annum growth concurrent over the last four years. "This could only have been achieved and maintained with the excellent customer focus by all our operators and staff," points out Stamas.

"We started with small to medium sized contracts, mostly in the educational area, but we are now diversifying. Current clients include City of Port Philip,

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Huntsman Chemicals, Australian Capital University, University of Melbourne and the Office of Housing. In fact, GJK is the first contract cleaning company in Australia to participate with the Victorian State Government Office of Housing pilot project, which involves long term unemployed government housing tenants as part of its work force."

SAG takes GJK onto the national stage

An important strategic initiative is the 'Service Alliance Group' (SAG), of which GJK was an instigator. "Although our business has been Victorian based we have now developed affiliations with a broad spectrum of property organisations on a national basis," Vella-West says.

"We can now offer a full range of services to our customers and manage multi-faceted contracts Australia-wide. SAG is a tremendous vehicle for us to develop our business. It's given us access to markets we might not necessarily have had."

In order to service its growth and development, GJK has invested heavily in staff through selection and training. "We utilised a training scheme offered

by Southern Edge Training and also tapped Ballarat University. That's complemented with provision of regular on the job training in products and legislation.

"All training is monitored, validated and evaluated as part of our Quality Assurance programs. Additional training is provided in first-aid, leadership, OH&S and customer relations. Constant performance appraisal is scheduled and carried out on all sites as part of our ISO 9002 Quality Management System," Vella-West says.

"We are now well skilled in complex security systems, new laws governing workcare and OH&S and environmental regulations. We advise on waste management, sanitation and hygiene - including supply of toilet consumables - and also advise on security document shredding."

Environmental policy

As part of its accreditation process, GJK has developed an environmentally friendly policy. "We will now only use chemical companies whose products meet environmentally friendly standards in the composi-



As part of its ISO/AS accreditation in Environmental & OH&S (IMS), GJK has introduced vacuuming equipment that meets the standard criteria. The criteria incorporates benchmark manufacturing standards in performance and operator use, certification in electromagnetically safe operation and compliance to HEPA standard 99.995% and 0.3 microns for 'Enviro Pro'.

tion of their chemicals. Our policy is such that where appropriate we will minimise the use of chemicals in preference to the usage of micro fibre cloths. The advantage is our cleaning teams can use water instead of chemicals and achieve as good results.

"Naturally, we are also conscious of ensuring that we establish high hygiene standards for the prevention of cross infections. Risk management is a key element in our processes and we are engaging specialists in this area to support us," notes Vella-West

Recognising growing IAQ issues, GJK has become selective in relation to the way it uses machinery in order to minimise adverse affects on air quality in the areas that it cleans. For instance, it pays particular attention to vacuum cleaner filtration systems.

The company also implements extensive training in waste water disposal in order to comply with site requirements and EPA regulations.

"All of this involves a demanding re-focus from all our people. We are very involved with a central committee for OH&S, which is held every three months at various key sites. It involves management as well as site representatives.

It's very much a situation where the GJK management feels it's okay to 'talk the talk' but the only way we can 'walk the walk' is by getting close to our people in the field and reinforcing through our managers and supervisors that this is the way that GJK wants to do business.

"We have a caring culture for our people. It's what keeps the key people here," stresses Stamas. "We are looking to grow the business each year, but not through acquisitions. And we want to be one of the best Victorian corporate players."

Patently, the significant investment in non-cleaning activities - IMS, QA and IAQ - is paying off.

"We have managed to raise recognition of GJK Facility Services in government circles and medium sized clients and we are now making headway in the corporate area," reveals Vella-West.

"Our motto is 'Total Service Solutions'. We're not offering the cheapest solution but what we consider to be the best. Our strategy is working because whereas in the past we had to seek out opportunities we are now getting invitations to tender. We are now considered a key player in the Victorian marketplace with a national profile."



The use of enviro friendly microfibre cloths has provided benefits in areas of bacteria minimisation. Microfibre cloths are now part of GJK's 'tools of trade'