



Q-Safe



Q-Base

AP1 Metrology

AP1 Metrology increases turnover with Q-Base and Q-Safe from Telarc

“I started seeing the benefits in the business from everyone understanding the need for these quality systems and how it all fitted in. I then began to see how it improves your business and basically your bottom line.” *Bruce Ellison.*

- AP1 Metrology is New Zealand’s leading weighing and measuring calibration company
- Bruce Ellison built the business over 17 years, operating largely as a sole trader
- Realising that someone should be reviewing what he was doing, several years ago he selected the Telarc Q-Base quality management system
- Since then, AP1 Metrology’s turnover has doubled. Bruce now employs two staff and retirement is on the horizon
- By stepping up to Q-Safe, Bruce has clearly documented and critically reviewed his business process; he also has confidence in the health and safety aspects of his operation.



AP1 METROLOGY

Background

Metrology is the science of weighing and measuring, and AP1 Metrology Ltd is New Zealand's leading weighing and measuring calibration company. AP1 Metrology Ltd is accredited by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs Measurement and Product Safety Services, and is accredited to test the largest scope of measuring systems and equipment in New Zealand. Their weighing certification service includes anything from precision balances and counter scales to the largest truck weighbridges. Their measuring certification service covers length, volume and flow measurement. Apart from liquid and gas flow they provide New Zealand's only certification for cryogenic flow for the likes of liquid oxygen, nitrogen and argon.

The challenges

Bruce Ellison became the first private individual to receive accreditation from the Government. His certificate was numbered AP1. After operating as a sole trader for seven years, Bruce became increasingly insistent on an independent government audit of his operations. They eventually agreed, but Bruce could see this was not going to be easy to arrange in the future. By now he was arguably New Zealand's leading authority on legal metrology.

"I just felt that I needed someone looking at what I was doing. I knew that ongoing improvement could only come from critical examination of my own processes and procedures, rather than complacently comparing myself to competitors", explains Bruce. In addition, demand for AP1 Metrology's services was growing. Bruce realised he would need to employ new staff and could also see retirement on the horizon. "I remember someone telling me that sooner or later I was going to have to suck all that accumulated knowledge and experience out of my brain", says Bruce.

The solution

While still a sole trader, Bruce signed up for the Q-Base quality management system from Telarc. Based on ISO 9001 quality management systems, Q-Base provides a practical alternative for small and medium businesses like AP1 Metrology. "I paid a couple of guys to help me set up certain procedures, because I didn't have the time to do them myself", explains Bruce. "And then we simply added to them from there."

The business continued to grow, so Bruce hired an office manager and a second metrologist capable of learning the business. "Q-Base provided the vehicle I needed to start capturing all the knowledge that was in my head. It also enabled the sort of critical examination I knew we would need in order to stay at the top of our game," says Bruce.

With the benefits of Q-Base clearly delivering what Bruce and the business required, it was a natural step to move on to Q-Safe. Recognised by the Department of Labour, Q-Safe extends the quality management systems of Q-Base to include essential health & safety management procedures.

AP1 Metrology has operated without an accident for 19 years. Their ACC premiums are very low as a result. The procedures Bruce developed were designed to keep him and his customers safe. Whether you're measuring cryogenic flow or calibrating a weighbridge with one tonne weights, you need to know how to work safely.

"My safety procedures had become like second nature. I had to be confident that I knew what I was doing. However, there are real benefits in documenting, reviewing and auditing your procedures", explains Bruce. "Firstly, you allow others to review and improve what you're doing. For example, in one routine audit our office manager found I was non-compliant because I was driving a front end loader without a licence. Secondly, you create a valuable employee training manual that's going to help keep everyone safe and enhance the reputation of your business."

The outcome

Bruce realised it would be essential to involve his staff from the outset. Telarc auditor Richard Saul visited five times to ensure everyone was onboard. After the second visit, the staff began to believe - things clicked into place and they started to run with it.

Since signing up with Telarc, AP1 Metrology has doubled its turnover and shows no signs of slowing down.

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For more information on AP1 Metrology click the link below
<http://www.ap1.co.nz/>