



# Case Study

## Bidvest

Certification:  
**ISO 9001**: Quality  
Management Systems  
**HACCP**: Hazard Analysis  
Critical Control Point  
Systems



we  
give you  
the  
world 



# Quality Assurance Underpins Growth at Bidvest

**“Our quality assurance program is integral to our business operations”**

**Barry Bird**

Bidvest Manager of Quality and Risk



As a provider of a range of products and services to the Australian food service market with more than 2000 employees, Bidvest plays a critical role in the country's food supply chain. The main focus of their business is centred around providing a total wholesale supply solution to the food service and hospitality industry in Australia. In recent times the company has been faced with a number of challenges from integrating acquired businesses to managing the impact of flu pandemics. To support its business and meet these challenges, Bidvest operates a fully integrated quality assurance system, which includes independent third party certification through NCS International to ISO 9001:2008 and HACCP. The company's Quality Assurance (QA) system is providing a vital business tool, which assists in training of employees and the smooth integration of acquired assets.

According to Bidvest's Manager of Quality and Risk, Barry Bird: “Our quality assurance program is integral to our business operations. As well as covering our daily business operations our system has underpinned and supported our growth strategy. When we acquired the Manettas Group in 1995, we were a relatively small company. Today, we have grown to more than ten times the size and the QA manual was key during this period of growth as it helped to embed the Bidvest culture into the organisations we acquired. Having a single QA manual for the group enabled us to develop a consistent approach to business across the country.”

By its nature the food service market can be a very challenging environment to operate in, with the safety of the product and employees paramount to a business's success. As with many service organisations, effectively dealing with health and safety challenges such as flu pandemics is vital. With a career in quality and risk management, Barry joined Bidvest in 1995 following the acquisition of Manettas Ltd and worked hard to build a system, which could handle everything from infectious outbreaks to routine environmental, health and safety procedures.

According to Barry: “One of my first jobs when I started at Bidvest was to continue the development of our QA manual, which was initially developed in response to a Queensland government requirement that all suppliers had to have an independently audited quality management system in place. This was a useful exercise, which would ultimately prepare the business for a wide range of challenges.”

“The improvements we made to the system included changing the terminology we used to convey a more positive message. Today, we track all the corrective actions or WINs (Work Improvement Notes) but when I arrived corrective actions were termed SINs or System Improvement Notes. Clearly, this was not creating the right impression of the system and its role within the business,” said Barry.

“We also worked to rationalise the QA manual and meet the continuous improvement requirements of ISO 9001:2000. Having installed a more

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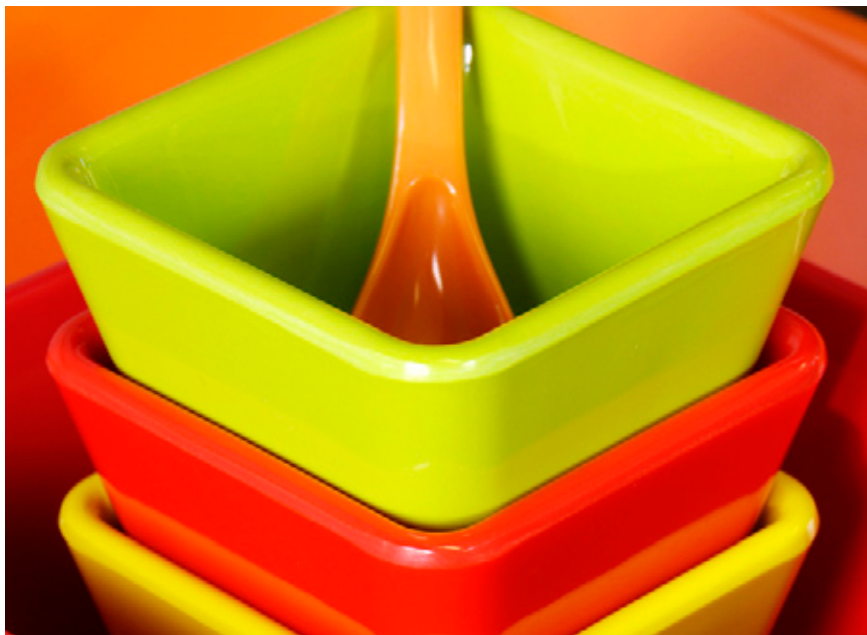


positive culture of improvement, rationalised the QA manual to be more efficient and effective and upgraded the quality system to meet the requirements of ISO 9001: 2000, we then extended the manual to incorporate culturally sensitive food requirements.”

Today, Bidvest’s QA manual incorporates requirements for a range of standards and regulations including occupational health and safety and environment. To manage the various requirements, Bidvest has employed a colour coding system throughout its QA manual. **“We are using a colour coding system, with dark blue representing quality and best business practices. The coding system used throughout the QA manual helps us manage and meet both regulatory and Standards requirements,”** said Barry.

At the heart of any effective quality system is a good team and Bidvest works hard to ensure its staff are focussed on success when it comes to the company’s management system. **“To recognise and reward our people who are inherently fundamental to the system’s continued success; we run a competition where high performing sites can be rewarded for their effort.”**

It is clear the Bidvest team has a real commitment to quality, which has been maintained for many years. NCS International first audited Bidvest’s quality system more than 10 years ago and they have consistently demonstrated an organisational culture focussed on quality and safety ever since. One of the most visual demonstrations of its commitment to quality and improvement can be seen through the Bidvest Academy. According to Barry: **“The QA manual is a useful training tool for the Academy. The Academy is accredited through a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) in Launceston and trains our more than 2000 strong workforce in programs dealing with wholesale distribution and management, logistics, IT and finance.”**



As with all well run businesses, Bidvest is focussed on continuously improving its performance. This includes the effective management of

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the costs directly associated with the program. According to Barry: “To effectively manage the direct costs of the program, we have a trusted quality team, with quality coordinators embedded in each of the 36 branches who maintain the corrective actions.”

Bidvest’s most recent project has been to develop an Intranet site to host the company’s procedures. For Barry, continuous improvement and project development is very much a case of business as usual. “As the system develops, we continue to make improvements and enhancements. **One such improvement was moving the system to an electronic format to make it readily available to everyone through the Intranet. Where possible we have been connecting our forms electronically and working to integrate our quality system with our IT systems.**”

Bidvest has an effective and well-integrated QA system in place, and through its relationship with NCSI for third party management systems’ certification, the business continues to grow and prevail over a range of challenges. Bidvest’s QA manual is a tribute to its management and its culture of quality and improvement. With a single integrated system that can address quality, risk, environmental and health and safety management requirements, Bidvest is well positioned to remain a leader in the food industry.



**Useful Information:**

To find more information about Bidvest Australia visit:

<http://www.bidvest.com.au>

For more information on ISO 9001 Quality Management Systems Certification visit:

[http://www.ncsi.com.au/ISO\\_9001.html](http://www.ncsi.com.au/ISO_9001.html)

For more information on how NCS International can assist you with your certification or provide you with a quote please visit **www.ncsi.com.au** or call **1300 856 554**.