

Certification: A Step Above the Competition

COX & PALMER

Fall 2013

In this issue

ISO STANDARDS

CSA CERTIFICATION

DNV CERTIFICATION

LLOYD'S REGISTER

CWB CERTIFICATION

ASME CERTIFICATION & ACCREDITATION

ABS

For many businesses, competing for - and winning - contracts is crucial for success. In an increasingly competitive marketplace, obtaining and complying with internationally recognized certifications can be an effective way to help a company stand out from their competition. Certifications confirm that your business, products, or employees meet a certain standard of efficiency, quality control, or competency.

Many large companies demand that their contractors, sub-contractors, and suppliers hold certain certifications - and may even seek out contractors and sub-contractors on that basis alone. This article provides an overview of some of the most recognized certifications and a few of the organizations that can assist with the certification process.

ISO STANDARDS

The International Organization for Standardization ("ISO") is an independent organization that develops standards which ensure products and services are safe, reliable and of good quality. ISO also assists businesses in reducing costs and increasing productivity. ISO has published more than 19,500 International Standards covering a vast range of technologies and businesses. These documents outline requirements, specifications, guidelines or characteristics that can be used to ensure that materials, products, processes and services are suitable. ISO standards are used and recognized worldwide.

While ISO publishes standards, it is not involved in the certification process. Thus, while a company may be certified to an ISO standard, ISO does not conduct the actual certification. The ISO website provides a link to national accreditation bodies performing ISO certifications in Canada. To access further information on ISO standards, visit: <http://www.iso.org>.

CSA CERTIFICATION

The Canadian Standards Association ("CSA") tests and certifies many different kinds of products for compliance with national standards for safety and performance. The CSA website touts wide acceptance of its certification marks among Canadian, U.S. and worldwide retailers, manufacturers, distributors and regulators. The CSA has marks for a wide range of commercial and industrial products including electrical and structural products and building materials. To learn more about whether the CSA tests and certifies the types of products offered by your company visit the Testing and Certification section of their website: <http://www.csa-international.org/>.

DNV CERTIFICATION

Det Norske Veritas ("DNV") is an independent foundation that, broadly stated, helps companies identify and manage risk. One of its core services is certification. As an example, DNV assesses and certifies companies' management systems for compliance with a broad spectrum of standards, such as those for energy management, environment, health and safety, information security, and quality.

DNV does not develop standards itself; rather, it certifies companies based on third party standards such as ISO. Beyond providing certifications, DNV also helps companies identify their certification needs and to achieve compliance. To learn more, visit: <http://www.dnv.com/>.

LLOYD'S REGISTER

Lloyd's Register assists its clients - primarily companies operating high-risk, capital-intensive assets in the energy and transport sectors - assess and reduce risk, and meet relevant standards. Its wide range of services includes certification for many different quality standards. Lloyd's Register is another company that does not develop its own standards but administers third party standards and attests to a company's compliance. More information can be found on their website: <http://www.lr.org/>.

CWB CERTIFICATION

The Canadian Welding Bureau ("CWB") administers various qualifications and certifications that are relevant to the welding industry. For example, the CWB provides CSA certification services for welding companies, professionals, procedures, and products. The CWB also provides other types of certifications and qualifications for welding professionals and companies, such as ISO certification and stud base qualifications.

Like DNV and Lloyd's Register certifications, a CWB Certification means a welding company, professional, procedure or product has been certified by the CWB as meeting a particular standard. To learn more about getting certified through the CWB, visit their website at: <http://eng.cwbgroup.org/>.

ASME CERTIFICATION & ACCREDITATION

The American Society of Mechanical Engineers ("ASME") develops codes and standards for mechanical engineers, mechanical engineering companies, and related products and professions. It also provides a wide range of testing, certification, and accreditation services.

For example, the ASME conducts testing, certification, and accreditation for:

- Professional competency in various mechanical engineering specialties;
- Suppliers of materials for and manufacturers of pressure relief valves and other equipment within the Boiler & Pressure Vessel Code;
- Bioprocessing equipment;
- Inspectors of certified pressure equipment companies; and
- Elevator inspectors.

According to the ASME website, confidence in and acceptance of ASME standards is evident throughout the U.S., Canada and beyond. Those who may be interested in getting ASME certified or accredited can visit the Standards section of the ASME website at: <http://www.asme.org/kb/standards>.

ABS

The American Bureau of Shipping ("ABS") is a U.S.-based company that provides a variety of services to companies operating in the marine and offshore classification industry. One of its services is certification of companies for various standards, including:

- ISM (where a company meets the requirements of the International Management Code for the Safe Operation of Ships and for Pollution Prevention);
- ISPS (where a company meets the requirements of the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code);
- MLC (where a company meets the requirements of the Maritime Labour Convention, which establishes minimum design standards for the accommodation and work areas onboard ships); and
- SOLAS (where a vessel is built and equipped to the requirements of the SOLAS Convention).

Beyond certification, the ABS also helps companies meet the requirements to become certified. If your company operates in marine and offshore classification, visit the Services section of the ABS website:

<http://www.eagle.org/>.

This article provides a snapshot of a few of the certifications and certifiers available to businesses, but there are many others. There are also many factors for businesses to consider when contemplating becoming certified. Each process takes considerable time and expense which might not outweigh the benefits. However, thanks to the development and proliferation of nationally and internationally recognized standards, businesses can increase their chances of being awarded lucrative international contracts by obtaining certifications for the business, their products, services or employees that allow competition on a global scale.

Contact

Please direct questions or suggestions to:

David A Reid, Partner

902.491.4131

dreid@coxandpalmer.com

Thomas P. Donovan, Partner

920.491.4213

tdonovan@coxandpalmer.com

This Cox & Palmer publication is intended to provide information of a general nature only and not legal advice.