

# IGNITION FIRES UP FOR ISO 20121 SUCCESS

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## IGNITION – LEADER IN THE EXHIBITION SECTOR

Ignition is an exhibition design and management agency based in Bristol, UK established in 2006. The UK has seen a rapid adoption of ISO 20121 by key players of all sizes and Ignition are a leader in their sector with their ISO 20121 certification. Ignition have operations in the UK and the USA, and with 40 employees, describe themselves as "small and mighty". They work with all sizes of companies and ISO 20121 has really been a talking point and a real selling point. Ignition have nearly doubled in size in the last two years and they aimed for ISO 20121 to support further growth as they position themselves as a key supplier for sustainable exhibitions in the world of sustainable events.

## CERTIFICATION FROM THE LEADING ISO 20121 CERTIFICATION BODY

SGS is the leader in certification against ISO 20121. Ignition approached SGS to provide ISO 20121 certification services based on the experience of SGS certifying leading organisations in the events sector. Ignition aimed to show leadership by being the sector first.

## TENDERS ASK FOR ISO 20121

A number of clients are asking for sustainability considerations in tenders and proposals. Public bodies and commercial operators are starting to use screening on sustainability in their questionnaires at the pre-qualification stage. Ignition wanted to demonstrate they were leaders on sustainability in the events sector. Ignition also wanted to be challenged by the standard in order to drive continuous improvement, they wanted to be stretched by the standard.

## ISO 20121 BRINGS WELCOME SCRUTINY AND TANGIBLE BENEFITS

The team at Ignition gained from the scrutiny which comes with SGS certification services for ISO 20121. Through a series of stages the discipline of following ISO 20121 ensured that the entire Ignition team were aligned to the standard and what was required. The project managers had to document clearly sustainability issues and impacts. This focused the minds of the team. Through conversations the issue of sustainability really has become part of the natural conversation now that sustainability is embedded as the way of doing business. For Ignition, ISO 20121 is now a point of difference in their service offering for clients. They bring a value that drives sustainability for their clients. It means that they have a deep understanding of sustainability issues and how to address them in a way that can bring value to their client.

By securing ISO 20121, Ignition also have really understood the event management lifecycle from a sustainability viewpoint and this has really influenced their thinking and business activities. By undertaking a full analysis the company were able to consider the risks and opportunities across their management systems.

As well as operating more effectively and considering their impacts, the team have also been able to use ISO 20121 to drive their innovation of services and products so that they can, in turn, support the sustainability ambitions of their clients.



## BUILDING ON PREVIOUS 14001 CERTIFICATION

SGS undertook a thorough examination of the Ignition business in relation to the ISO 20121 Standard.

Ignition had already achieved ISO 14001 and held this accolade for four years and wanted to build on this by being certified against ISO 20121 which is designed for events businesses. A key driver for Ignition is that they think that there is a great deal of waste in the exhibition industry and they wanted to play a part by re-using and minimising consumption. The company had followed sustainable events for some time and adopting ISO 20121 was a clear way of demonstrating commitment. Claire Menzies, Executive Chairman of Ignition was on the Steering Group for BS8901, the forerunner of ISO 20121. To really challenge the team at Ignition the scope of the ISO 20121 certification also covered the operations in the US, where Ignition wanted to leverage sustainable events to support their differentiation strategy.

## CHOOSING SGS

Ignition chose SGS because of the experience SGS has in certifying organisations in the events sector and because SGS is a global leader in certification of management standards. The auditors are rigorous and stretch the companies to challenge them to strive for continuous improvement.

## THE FUTURE IS SUSTAINABLE

The team at Ignition certainly see that ISO 20121 is going to grow in importance in future. To further challenge their suppliers, they will be able to ask them if they are also aligned to their sustainability goals by pushing them to be certified to ISO 20121 too.

For Ignition the future is about balancing the demands for greater sustainability through practical implementation of systems that drive a sustainable business. It will help them secure contracts, it will help them grow year on year through full engagement of their team through their range of activities.

The future is about creating a minimal impact on the environment whilst creating a memorable experience for the attendees of the exhibitions they help create. Above all it is about creating a mindset of sustainability.

## THE IGNITION ISO 20121 CERTIFICATION TEAM SHARE THEIR VIEWS

"Gaining ISO 20121 is rewarding. To gain certification there is some work to do, and the SGS audits certainly aim to test that you are doing what you say you are doing. A management system standard like ISO 20121 provides discipline and structure and really is an education in itself. ISO 20121 really is not a tick box exercise."

*Samantha Rowe, Ignition*



"We wanted to show our clients that we meant business on sustainability. We are leaders in this and we are advocates for sustainability. Now we have ISO 20121 we will keep up momentum and use it to influence our stakeholders."

*Samantha Rowe, Ignition*

"Whilst we had the systems and ambitions in place already, it was still a positive challenge. The audit really helped reinforce the foundations. The standard helped to translate and crystallise our approach so that we could become even more systematic in our approach to sustainable events management."

*Rebecca Thomas, Ignition*

"We were already doing this, as we are committed to it and we wanted proof to show our clients. Gaining ISO 20121 certification from SGS demonstrates that we take this seriously and in every sales presentation we always discuss sustainability. We were cementing work that had already been done."

*Samantha Rowe, Ignition*

"We are able to sell the benefits of sustainable exhibitions to our clients. They are increasingly buying into this way of working. Tenders from suppliers are starting to ask for a sustainability event management system e.g. 20121."

*Rebecca Thomas, Ignition*

"I liked their approach to sustainability. Be it their raising money for good causes through employee votes to their drive to create sustainable jobs by building a solid company to understanding their impact on society, to influencing their supply chain to do the right thing for the right reasons."

*Becky Toal, Lead Auditor, SGS*

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