

Princess Yachts recognised for its Excellence in the Environmental Business

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Plymouth-based luxury boat builder and PMG member, Princess Yachts has been recognised for its excellence in the environmental management of its business. The company has just been awarded ISO 14001, making it the first major European-based boat builder to gain this stringent international standard.

The ISO 14001 standard measures the environmental impact of a company both internally and in the local community. Princess carried out a company-wide investigation into every aspect of its manufacturing activities, products and services, with every department within the company's manufacturing sites and offices assessing all processes that had an environmental impact. The process included analysing the use of materials, noise, emissions, and waste. Areas of particular scrutiny included the lamination process, extraction of dust in the GRP manufacturing areas, the paint process, and carpentry workshops.

Energy management and usage throughout all Princess factories was also subject to a rigorous survey. By identifying where the energy use was highest, the company installed inverter controllers to help reduce usage, thus reducing the company's overall carbon footprint.

Externally, Princess worked with suppliers to reduce waste generated from externally supplied goods and products. Internally systems have been implemented to ensure waste is better segregated for recycling and a programme of noise reducing measures was introduced, designed to benefit employees and the local community alike. The company philosophy for improving efficiencies is certainly nothing new, particularly within the yachts themselves. Weight reduction programmes to improve vessel performance and consumption have resulted in significant advances in this area over the years – in fact, some of the latest production technology employed has benefitted both the product and much of the ISO 14001 standard's criteria.

Resin infusion manufacturing massively reduces emissions and odour while significantly reducing the final product weight.

Achieving compliance with the ISO 14001 standard is not just about meeting these stringent targets but is about demonstrating continuous improvement and Princess Yachts remains committed to reviewing all areas looking for further advancements. Continuous initiatives, such as instruction and awareness training ensuring adoption of new processes and the use of new technology, have already ensured a company-wide acceptance of the environmental management system.

Chris Gates, Managing Director says, "Achieving this high level international standard has set Princess into a class of its own in terms of minimising the effect we have on the environment. Our customers can be satisfied that their yachts have been produced in an environmentally acceptable way, our employees benefit from the latest cutting edge standards in manufacturing, and we are supporting our local community with the minimum of noise, waste and emissions."

He continues, "The entire process took over 12 months to complete, but has ensured Princess Yachts starts 2010 with a significant competitive and environmental advantage. Achieving this standard has enhanced environmental awareness throughout the company, and has resulted in cost savings and reduction in use of resources. We have achieved this through a combined company effort, and we are really proud of the way our employees and partners have helped us gain this level of excellence. It puts Princess into a unique position as one of the very few major European boat manufacturers to be working to such a stringent environmental standard."