

# ISO 14001 Environmental Management Certification for AXA PPP healthcare via e-Learning



## **Introduction**

AXA PPP healthcare has been helping people to access healthcare services since 1940. Today it forms the UK healthcare arm of AXA and provides healthcare cover for individuals and employers, with around two million customers. It employs around 2,000 staff who work across six sites in Tunbridge Wells and an office in Leicester.

Over the past few years AXA PPP healthcare has seen a significant rise in interest from prospective clients on its approach to corporate responsibility and, in particular, its environmental policies.

Despite implementing a range of environmentally friendly initiatives (including drives to reduce energy consumption, installing solar panels for lighting and increasing recycled paper use), AXA PPP did not hold any formal, externally recognised accreditation prior to 2008 that would enable it to more robustly demonstrate to enquirers and prospective clients its environmental credentials which, to maintain its competitive edge, needed addressing.

Winner of the silver award in the *Meeting the needs of compliance for an external regulator or an internal workforce* category at the e-learning awards 2009, this case study describes how the health insurer successfully secured compliance with the leading internationally recognised standard for managing and reducing the impact of activities on the environment – ISO14001.

## **Background to ISO 14001**

ISO 14001 is an internationally accepted standard that sets out how organisations can go about putting in place an effective Environmental Management System (EMS). The standard is designed to address the delicate balance between maintaining profitability and reducing environmental impact.

In 2008 AXA PPP healthcare undertook the task of applying for accreditation to ISO 14001. It had no previous environmentally-related training in place and, to comply with the accreditation requirements, needed to ensure that that all its employees received comprehensive training on environmental management.



## **What was the training requirement?**

The training solution needed to fit the following business requirements:

**Scope:** Accessible to AXA PPP's working population.

### ***Project requirement:***

- Training solution to have the lowest environmental impact as possible
- Full training to take no longer than 30 minutes (including validation) in order to minimise business impact
- Minimum impact on customer facing employees
- Mandatory validation
- Course to be marked as complete when validation has been completed
- 80% of population to have been marked as completed by target date

### ***Needs of the learner:***

- The training should have the lowest impact on individuals
  - Travel time
  - Time away from normal work / serving customers
- Content should be relevant to their role
- Opportunity for employee feedback on course and content

And, of course, to achieve certification, the training had to meet the International Standard (ISO) set.

### ***Desired learning outcomes:***

- Employees follow the procedures, as applicable, as directed by ISO14001.
- Employees know where to locate the environmental practice manual and have familiarity with key aspects, procedures and legislation applicable to their role.
- Employees answer the 6 key questions for assessment, namely:
  1. What is ISO14001?
  2. What is an EMS (Environmental Management System)?
  3. What are the environmental impacts associated with your everyday work activities?
  4. What legislation applies to your everyday role?
  5. What procedures do you follow to minimise your impact on the environment at work?
  6. Are you aware of any of the green initiatives run at work?
- Employees know who to contact when reporting breach of procedures and/or environmental incidents.
- Employees are aware of the benefits to the company of achieving ISO14001 accreditation.

## **... And the solution?**

A blended training approach was chosen revolving around a core e-Learning module to ensure minimal cost and service impact on the business. e-Learning offered the following advantages:

### ***Reduced Environmental Impact***

- **Zero travel costs** – the course was accessed via the intranet, so no special travel needed
- **Zero training accommodation** – e-Learning requires no group sessions
- **Zero initial printing costs** – all training material (including the validation process) was hosted online removing reliance on paper, ink and packaging

### ***Business Advantages***

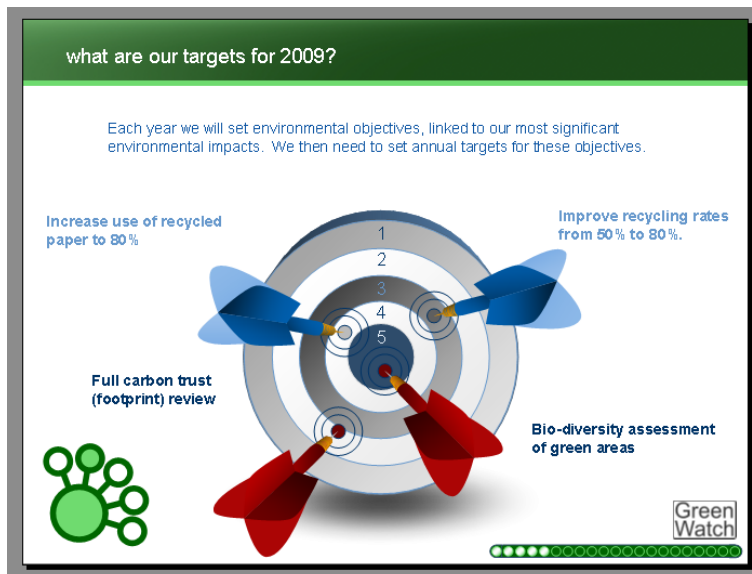
- **Increased flexibility** – training time was managed according to team priorities. Increased independence – individuals could arrange their training at their own convenience
- **Automated validating** – the validation was marked instantly with employees' learning records updated instantaneously
- **Automated feedback** – online feedback questionnaires were distributed immediately after course completion
- **Automated reporting** – weekly reports were produced on training course completion and employee feedback

### ***Engagement and adoption***

To set the scene for employees (both prior to – and during – the availability of the e-Learning course) AXA PPP issued regular updates to employees on its environmental aims and held management and director briefings to ensure buy-in.

The e-Learning module was composed of two core elements: awareness (a 25 minute section) and validation to check participants' understanding (taking a further 5 minutes).

The awareness section covered the nature of ISO 14001; why employees should care; how the company was intending to achieve accreditation and what the company expects in the future.



Example screen

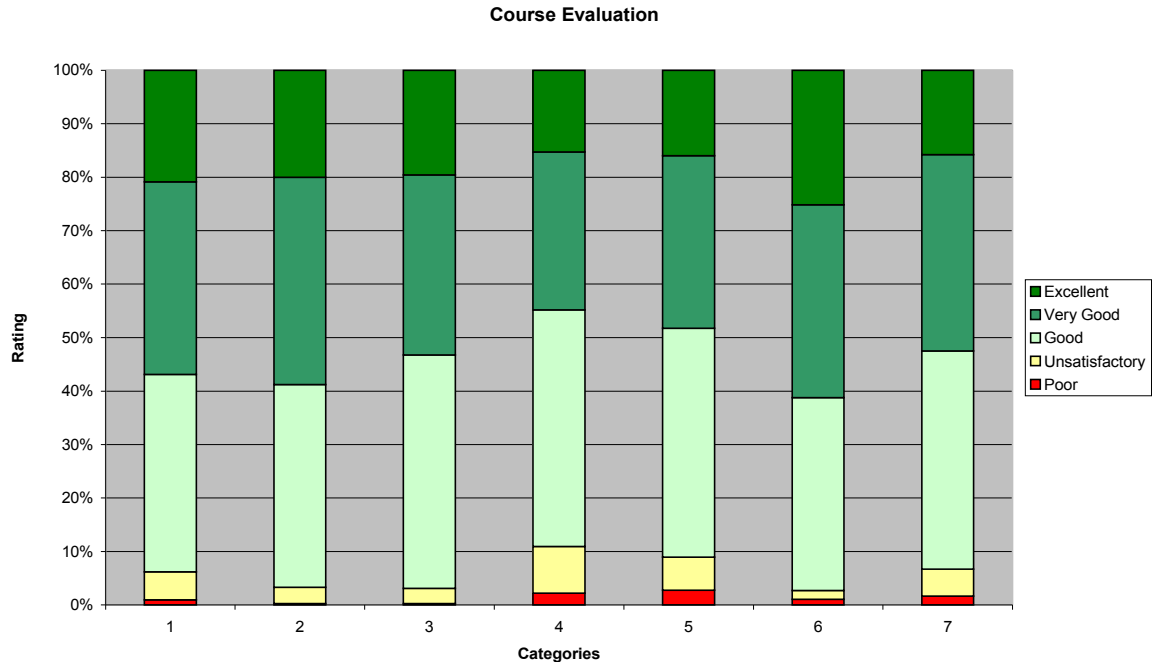
The validation centred on the key principles of knowledge arising from the 6 key questions for assessment (listed above); it also provided the accreditors with robust Management Information on completion and performance targets, question response and general feedback.

**e-Learning participants’ feedback**

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <i>“All GLMS courses should be like this!”</i> L.C, sales support  | <i>“This was good - wasn’t familiar with ISO 14001 but I am now.”</i> D.W, personal assistant                     | <i>“Gave me a good understanding - feel confident in the subject matter.”</i> C.H, human resources               |
| <i>“Very well presented.”</i> J.W, compliance  | <b><i>“Example comments”</i></b>  | <i>“The best on line training I have done.”</i> S.S, sales   |
| <i>“It is good that AXA are taking a social responsibility role in environmental matters.”</i> – M.L, business development | <i>“Made me aware of all issues and made you think more about what I should be doing.”</i> J.M, property services | <i>“It definitely made my ideas about changing the ways renewals are processed valid.”</i> R.H, customer service |

The course was rated by the participants in seven categories: navigation (1); presentation (2); duration and pace (3); interactivity (4); support material (5); against

objectives (6) and overall course rating (7), with their responses for each of the seven categories numbered the chart below.



The average validation score for this course was 86.49%.

### **Measuring success**

The target was for 80 per cent of the employee population to have completed the e-Learning course in three months but the business secured its target by week ten. And, 94.6 per cent completion rate was achieved within the three month period.

| Cost Comparison               | FSA course<br>Traditional Approach | ISO 14001<br>eLearning Solution        | Saving                |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| Design and development        | £7,700                             | £4,400                                 | £3,300<br>43%         |
| Delivery                      | £40,500<br><i>group sessions</i>   | £12,900<br><i>individual eLearning</i> | £27,600<br>68%        |
| Validation, Sundries & Travel | £11,800<br><i>manual</i>           | £0<br><i>online</i>                    | £11,800<br>100%       |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                  | <b>£60,000</b>                     | <b>£17,300</b>                         | <b>£42,700</b><br>71% |

The ISO 14001 certification has encouraged AXA PPP to test itself further and, in 2009, it entered The Sunday Times *Best Green Companies* awards, achieving a listing of 43<sup>rd</sup> place. In 2010 it improved further, ranking 35<sup>th</sup> place.

AXA PPP healthcare's success in gaining certification in ISO 14001 has made a valuable contribution to obtaining and retaining business – especially in the highly competitive market bought about by the current economic climate.

Commenting on the ISO 14001 achievement, **Keith Gibbs, AXA PPP healthcare's chief executive**, said:

*"We've made great strides to improve our environmental performance and I am proud of the way our employees have responded so positively to this challenge."*

In its assessment report of AXA PPP healthcare, the British Standards Institute, who certified the health insurer's environmental management system, said:

*"The take up for training shows that there is a genuine interest in the system & that the efforts of the environmental team have been successful in making people aware."*

**Top tips from this case study:**

- Ensure compliance with new environmental legislation to emphasise your green credentials and remain competitive.
- Ensure the solution has the lowest impact on the environment and learner time.
- Develop a coherent communications plan to keep everyone fully informed.
- Realise real cost savings by practically eliminating all validation, printing and travel costs using e-Learning.