



COMPANY:
KIMCO Corp.

HEADQUARTERS:
Norridge, IL

EMPLOYEES:
6,000



CIMS Offers BSC A Blueprint for Management Excellence

For Amy Polakow, director of public relations and part owner of family-owned KIMCO Corporation, the ISSA Cleaning Industry Management Standard (CIMS) and certification program was exactly what she has been looking for. She had long wanted to roll up her sleeves and examine, streamline and update her company's policies and procedures, but she could never find the time to do it.

"I was the CIMS coordinator," she says. "When I saw the CIMS materials, I couldn't believe it. It was like somebody dropped a blueprint into my lap for doing what I had wanted to do for years. I saw CIMS as a golden opportunity to take our processes and really go through all departments – human resources, IT, administration, operations, and make sure our processes were consistent, sound and complete."

John Barrett, KIMCO's CEO was also behind the effort from the start. "The CIMS certification process is a wake-up call. We toil in our businesses with an eye to the future, often assuming that the foundations of our companies require no maintenance. Unfortunately, this just isn't the case."

Dana Bertogli, KIMCO's comptroller and director of best practices notes that CIMS gave them the license to put their company under a microscope.

"In any business, you don't always have what you think you have," he says. "That's where CIMS comes in. Normally, in the course of a busy workday, who has the time to do this? Nobody. CIMS forced us to take the time to do it."

As Polakow immersed herself in the Standard and the CIMS certification process, she quickly identified opportunities or improvement in several areas, including consistency of procedures between far-flung offices. She cites as an example KIMCO's new-employee orientation.

"In the Chicago Corporate office, we follow a standard procedure. New employees and their paperwork are taken through the various departments of the office, and oriented to their new environment"

It was assumed by KIMCO management that the same procedure was being followed in offices all over the country. Through CIMS, however, Polakow discovered that new employee orientation was not consistent. "It's not that what they were doing was wrong or inadequate; it was just different," she explains. "We all need to be on the same page."

Polakow also cites her discovery that the use of various forms in HR and other departments was not consistent. "We've updated forms four and five times, but some offices were still using the old forms. They didn't know we had new forms."

As Polakow notes, it's all well and good to give offices new forms and updated procedures, but what's to prevent time and distance from causing divergent procedures to crop up again? The CIMS process served as an accelerator for the implementation of something she had been wanting for years — a corporate intranet.

"KIMCO's IT department created a nationwide Internet portal that links all of our offices, and makes it easy to disseminate consistent information, which we needed for the CIMS process," she explains. "On this site, people can find updated forms, updated documents, news, email, information about procedures that have changed. It's a better way to communicate and

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~Dana Bertogli,
Comptroller, KIMCO Corp.

**BEST TIP
FOR COMPANIES
THINKING ABOUT
CERTIFICATION:**

You need buy-in from the top of the organization. If the leaders aren't behind certification, it will be extremely difficult to achieve.

keep in touch with our people, making sure everyone is on the same page.”

Dana Bertogli notes how CIMS has also triggered improvements in the quality of KIMCO's existing training programs. “Training is off-the-charts important to us and we want to be continuously improving in that area,” he says. “Through CIMS, we found the need to have our training materials printed in languages other than English and Spanish. We've got a lot of native Polish speakers. Those training materials needed to be available in the language that each worker feels most comfortable using.”

The question then became, how best to accomplish such a task? The solution is a new software program that translates existing materials into many different languages. “It has the potential to make our workplaces safer as a result,” he says.

Bertogli also notes that he appreciates the fact that the CIMS process allowed KIMCO to identify and correct problems in a non-prescriptive fashion. “There was none of ‘buy this certain software program and you'll be certified,’” he says. “We were free to implement the solutions that worked best for us.”

Kevin Weber, of Jones, Lang, LaSalle Americas, who manages the buildings at Spalding University in Louisville, KY, is a KIMCO client who participated in the assessment process. Weber hosted a site visit from the CIMS assessor, taking him on a tour of the campus.

“I got a letter from KIMCO asking if I would agree to be a part of this, and I was delighted to do it,” Weber says. “I was on board with anything that would help our facility. I knew that KIMCO striving to improve and document its policies and procedures would only be a positive thing for our facility.”

Weber explains that he saw the CIMS process as a way to take a fresh look at areas of business that might not always get a great deal of attention. “Often, in the course of the workday, little things can get forgotten,” he says. “Things like proper labeling on containers or the organization of cleaning closets. Any time you can give those little things some eye-time, some focus, it's a positive.”

What's next after achieving CIMS certification? Amy Polakow looks upon the certification as the beginning of the process, not the end. “To me, the work started when we got certified,” she says. “The challenge now is to maintain and improve, making sure everyone understands what they're supposed to be doing, and that they're doing it.”

Because of CIMS, Polakow says her own job description has changed. “I estimate that fifty percent of my job is going to be CIMS maintenance, forever. I'll be the one making sure we maintain consistency, professionalism, and accountability. And that's a good thing because I love this type of work.”

Dana Bertogli sees the CIMS certification as a way to stand out from competitors.

“CIMS sets us apart. CIMS gives us a credential that actually means something when you see it at the bottom of a business card. The CIMS certification really has substance.”

Barrett agrees that CIMS will help KIMCO validate its commitment to management and operational excellence.

“ISSA is defining what it means to be a trade association in our industry. CIMS is simply the latest in a series of innovations born of good governance and true industry leadership. I hardly have a conversation anymore that does not reference CIMS, the differentiator, and as the Standard gains momentum and recognition we expect our status as a CIMS certified organization will serve to define us in the market place. . . truly the best of the best.” 

About CIMS:

CIMS is the first comprehensive management and operations standard for cleaning organizations. Administered by ISSA and the American Institute for Cleaning Sciences, CIMS is a standard of excellence designed to help building service contractors and in-house service providers develop quality, customer-centered organizations.

The CIMS framework is built around five quality principles that have proven to be the hallmarks of well-managed, successful cleaning operations:

- Quality Systems
- Service Delivery
- Human Resources
- Health, Safety & Environmental Stewardship
- Management Commitment

Why should a company certify to CIMS? Daniel Wagner, director of CIMS for ISSA, explains: “Implementation of the Standard's elements affords an organization a tremendous opportunity to validate its management systems and processes. Professional, customer-centered cleaning organizations finally have a touchstone resource, a common rallying point around which all members of the industry can gather and work toward achieving an unprecedented level of professionalism and excellence.”

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The Worldwide Cleaning Industry Association

For more information contact
800-225-4772 or visit
www.issa.com/standard.