



Standards

help Acma diversify into international markets

Every day Standards and standardisation make a difference in the lives of New Zealanders. Standards solutions help to keep our homes, buildings, playgrounds, and health services safe. They can also be used to protect our environment and to improve the quality of goods and services.

Standards are important because they set out clearly what the requirements are

John Bowmar, Managing Director, Acma Industries Ltd

Upper Hutt based Acma Industries Ltd is a leading maker of polyurethane foam moulding parts for international markets in the transport, furniture, bathware, health, and recreation industries. Managing Director John Bowmar says the most valuable Standards to his business are flammability Standards.

‘Standards are important because they set out clearly what the requirements are.

‘When we quote for a foam project, all suppliers have to meet the same Standard which puts us all on a

level playing field and provides customers with a level of risk they are comfortable with.’

John’s father started Acma in 1978, supplying seating, headrests, and armrests to local automotive factories and foam to manufacturers of office furniture.

Acma now employs 75 people and began exporting to Australia in the late 1980s/early 1990s. In 1993, Acma gained accreditation to the international quality Standard ISO 9002 Quality systems – Model for quality assurance in production, installation and servicing (now superseded) and in 2003, to AS/NZ ISO 9001 Quality management systems – Requirements.

John says ISO 9001 is normally a minimum entry point and, he says, it’s useful, in dealing with customers who don’t yet know you. Its wide recognition helps us especially in export markets.

‘Standards also help us to communicate with overseas companies. When we deal with Chinese companies, for example, they tell us what flammability Standard to meet. As the performance requirements are precisely set out in the Standard they know what we can do and exactly what they will be getting.’



Standardisation provides transparency on the performance of key product features

John Bowmar, Managing Director, Acma Industries Ltd

John says that Acma needed to diversify when car tariffs went in the 1990s and automotive factories began closing.

‘With our strong technical background, we aimed for more specialised and highly regulated products that are harder for other people to make. Regulation can be your enemy when you are trying to meet it, but it is your friend when you have passed it.

‘Today we supply components to Fisher and Paykel Healthcare for sleep apnoea masks. We also make special fire retardant foam for train seating in Australia and New Zealand and are now the main supplier of train seating for Australia.

‘We’re close to licensing the technology for fire-resistant train seat fillers to an American company. We’ve worked with Industrial Research Limited on this, which has been very good. We’re now submitting more foam samples to the special US labs for fire testing to ASTM Standards, making adjustments as needed.’

‘For industry, standardisation provides transparency on the performance of key product features. For example, if we’re trying to show that our product is more or less fire retardant than another product, and there’s no test, it’s much more complicated. A test clearly shows what performance level is achieved.

‘For New Zealand businesses, if there are strict local product Standards here and you meet them, then you have a much more international product. You are in a better position to sell your product overseas.’



SECTOR BUSINESS

KEY BENEFITS OF STANDARDS

- **SAFETY**
- **TRANSPARENCY**
- **ACCESS TO INTERNATIONAL MARKETS**



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