



An Irish entrepreneur's perspective on responsible recycling

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NSAI

Certification gives Irish companies global appeal

An interview with Chris O'Neill, International Quality and Compliance Manager, Wisetek

R2 Responsible Recycling and ISO certification through NSAI Inc is invaluable for Wisetek when it comes to proving its commitment to sustainable recycling.



Every year, Wisetek records and processes millions of IT components in Ireland, the UK, the US and Asia. A global leader in IT asset disposition (ITAD), its reputation depends on its ability to manage and track every last component of every asset it handles.

Based out of the US, NSAI Inc is a wholly owned subsidiary of NSAI and is accredited through ANAB* as a certification body.

*ANAB is the American National Standards Institute National Accreditation Board.

Wisetek's R2 certification through NSAI Inc enables it to signpost to current and potential customers that its processes are safe, transparent and trustworthy, and follow international best practice. (R2 is a set of guidelines for use by electronics recyclers to promote better environmental, health and safety, and security practices when recycling end-of-life electronics. The guidelines cover computers, peripherals, cell phones, and televisions sent to recyclers for proper refurbishment and recycling.)



“Many companies fear their used electronics and devices could end up in overseas landfills, and that can happen. R2 certification, along with other standards, gives our customers the element of trust they need,” says Chris O’Neill, International Quality and Compliance Manager at Cork-based Wisetek.

“The great thing about R2 is the process is fully transparent from the point a device hits a Wisetek facility right down through the subsequent tiers of downstream vendor recycling for dismantled devices. With R2, it’s audited right down to final disposition.”

Harnessing an integrated management system

To better manage all its certification, Wisetek created an integrated management system (IMS) manual to incorporate R2 and the three ISO standards.

“This IMS manual enables us to consistently provide product and service of the highest standard to our customers, while ensuring our activities, operations and services are carried out in an environmentally responsible way that also protects the health and safety of our employees and the public.”

Chris and the Wisetek team review their IMS manual every year to make sure it covers any new service options or business functions. They also use it in all their training as they seek to ensure everything is documented as staff follow set procedures.

To help everyone adhere to the standards in their day-to-day work, the company uses two systems: an enterprise resource planning (ERP) system and a document control system called ISO Express, which Wisetek put in place as part of its transition to certification with NSAI.

Choosing an internationally reputable registrar

Wisetek shifted its R2 registration to NSAI Inc in 2019. The company, which employs more than 450 people in Ireland and overseas, is scaling globally and needed to ensure its R2 and ISO registrar had a global reputation. NSAI Inc's client roster, which includes some of the world's best known technology companies, was a crucial factor for the Cork-based company.

"One of the main drivers for us was that NSAI is highly reputable," says Chris. "When you see blue-chip names on NSAI's client list, you know it's good."

Before any facility can get R2 certification, it must be audited for compliance with the standard by an accredited third-party organisation, such as NSAI Inc. Wisetek was particularly pleased with NSAI Inc's audit service.

"NSAI is competitive in terms of audit costs and we're now looking at having it as our global registrar for Wisetek, beyond the current markets of Ireland, the UK and the US".

Managing costs and continuous improvement

While cost is a key factor in deciding on a registrar, Chris says a high audit standard is also vital.

The audit standard is very high at NSAI Inc, he says, adding: *"The NSAI auditors are very practical, and their feedback, observations and findings are all relevant to enabling continuous improvement."*

He adds that NSAI Inc also gave Wisetek useful guidance on calculating audit days. *"By having our integrated management system manual, we can have a Multi-Site Registration (MSR) with all our sites in Ireland and the UK on one cert. That means we can run sample audits at each site, which brings down the number of audit days and the cost,"* he explains.

Integration with ISO standards

To gain R2 Responsible Recycling certification, an organisation must also have implemented ISO 14001 Environmental Management Systems and ISO 45001 Occupational Health and Safety Systems. Wisetek is certified in both and in ISO 9001 Quality Management Systems.

"The beauty of the R2 standard is that it's very much aligned with ISO 9001 and ISO 45001. A lot of the legwork is done in advance if you have certification to ISO standards," says Chris.

The process wasn't entirely straightforward, however, and Chris cites the downstream vendor reporting as the biggest challenge Wisetek had to address when implementing R2.

"We have to track every part to its final destination and we didn't have that structure in place. Furthermore, our tracking and tracing processes were quite manual before we implemented R2. The R2 code of practice is so helpful, however. It's well-structured and has good guidelines on how to follow it."

Wisetek.net

+ R2 Responsible Recycling certification is currently available globally through NSAI Inc.
+ To find out more about the benefits of R2 Responsible Recycling certification and to request a quote, please visit us at www.nsaiinc.com



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