

IAM USA Case Study: Transforming operations with ISO 55001

Organization Name	Palm Beach County Water Utilities Department (PBCWUD)		
Location	Palm Beach County, FL	Organization Type	County owned water utility
Organization Overview	Keywords: AMS, certification, water, utility, 55001, municipal		
PBCWUD is a County-owned utility, governed by the Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) that provides potable water, wastewater, and reclaimed water services to 600,000 residents, and is the third-largest provider in the State of Florida.			

Problem Statement

PBCWUD embraced the intent of the 2018 America's Water Infrastructure Act (AWIA) regulatory requirements and went beyond simple compliance. They choose to align their efforts to global best practices and became certified to the ISO 55001 standard.

Approach

PBCWUD recognized that to become a best-in-class utility, the whole organization had to transform how it operates and manages risk. In 2016, senior leadership chose to implement an ISO 55001 compliant asset management system across the organization.

The development of PBCWUD's asset management culture is self-driven and is not a response to a trend or an attempt to be buzzword-compliant.

The Asset Management Improvement Program was broken down into actions, categorized into documentation, people, processes, systems, data, risk, and supply chain. Employees from across the business – i.e. Operations, Maintenance, Engineering, Customer Service, Procurement, Finance, IT, Environmental, Health, and Safety, and HR were trained and developed their knowledge on a wide range of asset management topics. A framework was established that supported the definition of organizational arrangements, setting out roles and responsibilities across Asset Management's subject areas.

Success Factors/Lessons Learned/Messages/Key Takeaways

This framework coupled with using data to drive decision-making has benefited the organization's internal and external stakeholders.

The team recognized that changes are difficult and often met with hostility. The ISO Core team, taken from middle management and rank personnel, understood that to get buy-in from the organization, they would have to show how everyone could benefit from asset management. It was equally important that the framework slowly permeated and supported a positive organizational culture towards asset management.

By influencing the culture, finding like-minded individuals, and using the ISO 55001 framework to drive improvement and mitigate risks, a new perspective has taken root in the utility.

Ultimately, ISO 55001 was the vehicle that changed how people view their worth and the importance of their work in delivering on the organization's mission of providing safe and quality

drinking water. It took ten years for PBCWUD to change its culture and as the organization has completed its ISO 55001 recertification in 2024, the axiom of continuous improvement is alive and well and is driving the utility's next-generation asset management improvement program.

References / Further Information

Asset Management Subjects: All (attention to Asset Management System (Leadership & Governance box))

IAM North American Conference Denver 2022 presentation

Press Release:

<https://discover.pbc.gov/waterutilities/Lists/Latest%20News/NewsDispForm.aspx?ID=67&ContentTypeId=0x010400B2A607663386374ABDEDE09F03B027D2>

Paper on State Water Regulation including example from PBCWUD:

<https://usa.theiam.org/media/6172/epa-paper-state-asset-management-initiatives-for-public-water-systems-v12.pdf>