

IT company REACHes for the sky

A Lancashire IT provider is booming thanks to European regulations which can cause significant problems for any company that uses any one of 30,000 chemicals in its processes.

The list of the sectors that are affected by the EU's Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemical substances (REACH) regulations is extensive but Padiham-based Baytouch Ltd has spotted the opportunity to make life a lot easier for company bosses.

The regulations, which came into force just over a year ago, are not limited to the chemicals sector but impact on all businesses that handle chemicals in the EU – and beyond for companies importing into the EU.

Sectors affected include speciality chemicals, coatings, paints, lubricants, aerospace, automotive, household and consumer products and retailers.

"REACH replaces a patchwork of EU member countries' regulatory frameworks with a single regulation for safe use and, put simply, approximately 30,000 commonly used chemical substances within the EU must be registered for safe use over a 10-year period," said Malcom Pollard, Baytouch's managing director.

"The term 'safe use' is the key here. If any of a product's component substances are not registered for that use by its deadline, it becomes illegal within the EU to market that product after this date – no 'use' data, no market."

The problem for any manufacturer using chemicals or importing goods from outside the EU is tracking down the supply chain to ensure that each ingredient is registered for safe use and that can take them all over the world to determine a chemical's source.

"This in itself creates significant business process and organisational issues," says Malcolm.

"A small adhesives manufacturer may be



Malcolm Pollard

handling 1,000 or more raw materials which they have to track up the supply chain for their provenance. Businesses importing raw materials who may not have previously been involved in chemicals handling regulations, even the big retailers, will suddenly find themselves the registrant for that import – they will have to compile a dossier of the product's composition with evidence supporting safe use categories and then file this with the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) in Helsinki."

Baytouch has developed its REACHsuite software to help companies integrate REACH management into all levels of their businesses, from product development, to manufacturing, product sourcing and sales.

REACHsuite consists of databases for substance, mixture, article and product portfolio management, an online supply chain communications module, a project planning and action tracking database and REACH costing module.

"Since launching the software we have had a huge uptake with companies from all over Europe and beyond joining our client list. What is a business difficulty for some is an opportunity for us," said Malcolm.