

FIFCO becomes the first company in the sector to obtain international business continuity certification

The ISO 22301 certification certifies that the company has a management system that allows it to respond to events that put at risk the continuity of its operation in the beer production plant.

Florida Ice and Farm Company (FIFCO) became the first company in the food and beverage sector in Costa Rica to obtain the ISO 22301 international certification for its beer production plant, which accredits its capacity to respond to events that put its operation at risk, without compromising business continuity.

According to the company's risk manager, Ana Patricia Morera Martinelli, in an interview granted to Delfino.cr this week, the company completed its certification process on February 22 by the Mexican company NYCE, a partner of INTECO, which is the company in charge of certifying this type of compliance.

ISO 22301 is the standard that regulates business continuity as such. This means that we have a certified system to deal in an orderly manner with any eventuality that could interrupt the company's operations. We did it for Planta Cerveza (beer plant) because it is the core of our business and therefore it was important to guarantee that we preserve the continuity of the operation in the event of any contingency".

Morera added that this is something that is not normally certified, so this achievement shows that the plan designed will not remain on paper.

When you are certified in the standard, what the company is guaranteeing is that it has a continuous improvement system, where we are reviewing the plan, updating it and testing strategies to identify opportunities for improvement. This certification definitely comes from the responsibility as a company with all our stakeholders: with the shareholders so that they maintain the value of their shares, with our suppliers so that they know that they will always have business with us, with our collaborators who can rest assured that they will always have a place to work. Therefore, it becomes an issue that goes beyond any regulatory requirement and its objective is the search for operational excellence".

The risk manager indicated that this system, now certified, seeks to anticipate and prepare plans for contingencies that can be foreseen and others that cannot, such as a serious incident at the brewery that affects the operation and makes it necessary to activate a business continuity strategy that was previously defined and implemented.

The process is accompanied by change management and training for the employees involved and management actions to consolidate the system.

These actions began by approaching other companies that had already undergone similar processes and defining what was to be certified first. Subsequently, recommendations were obtained from other national and international companies with more mature business continuity processes.

In addition, the governance of the process was established with an operational team led by the risk management and several support committees formed by FIFCO's Senior Management for continuity management; while working together with the operational areas to determine those risks that could result in an event.

Finally, a testing program was developed for the strategies implemented and a change management process was carried out at managerial and operational level "to promote a risk and resilience culture".

Morera added that the process has taken a long time to work on, as they have been developing the subject for about four years.

We started the process about 4 years ago. Our plan was to be certified the year the pandemic started, but precisely because we were in pandemic, we had to dedicate ourselves to attend the COVID 19-related emergency, something that, in fact, was simple because the company and the personnel were already prepared to work remotely, which meant that the operation was not affected".

"FIFCO does not stop"

In this framework, the company launched a new internal campaign called "FIFCO no para" (FIFCO does not stop), which invites workers to be prepared to always keep its Beer Plant operations running, responding to emergency, crisis or business continuity events.

According to the risk manager:

FIFCO no para is associated to the symbolism of Formula 1 risk and continuity issues. Why did we choose Formula 1? because risk definitely exists but here it is managed to be resilient and thus be able to turn it into opportunities. Formula 1 is a sport where there is great teamwork, which is one of the values that we have wanted to promote within the company and on which our leadership model is based because, for example, when there is a pit stop in Formula 1, everyone knows exactly what to do and they change tires in seconds, right? If they didn't have defined processes that give them that clarity in their work, they would lose seconds that are vital in a race. That's why we think this is an excellent way for people to understand it, and that's how we took it to an internal program that has actually been quite successful".

Morera concluded by saying that they hope that this certification will allow them to inspire other companies to assume a responsible role with all their stakeholders. In FIFCO's specific case, it guarantees that when they have a disruptive event, they have a solid governance model that allows them to face the situation; safeguard people's lives; plan actions to protect the environment and comply with regulatory requirements, work with all their suppliers; and also continue supplying the market with the reputational guarantor that this means for the brand.