LUBE-TECH

NO.20

ARE YOU READY FOR THE NEW ISO 9000?

The new version of ISO 9000, vintage December 2000, seems to have slipped into the world 'not with a bang, but with a whimper'. And yet, at last some might say, ISO 9000 has finally come of age. This radically altered standard has changed its focus towards the customer and, with an insistence on only 6 to 8 procedures, looks for a more simplified documentation system. Likewise, it insists that organisations find ways to continuously improve their quality system, so that operating an essentially static bureaucracy is no longer good enough.

You might argue that the old standard included these issues to be addressed, but a certain amount of ambiguity allowed many quality systems to over emphasise documentation, and this had the effect of stifling real initiative in the quality domain. More than one chief executive has consigned ISO 9000, and, by association, all things quality, into the pigeon-hole marked 'necessary evils', and many question whether the quality systems that operate in their organisations deliver anything to the financial bottom line.

Let me quickly say that it is not all the fault of the standard; it is an issue of interpretation and misplaced emphasis by too many people involved in the quality profession. The proper operation of a well-designed quality management system will invariably result in substantial financial benefits to any organisation.

So, what's new? Well, from top to bottom, the standards has been re-thought and re-presented.

- It is based on 8 basic **Principles** of quality management
- The **Structure** of the ISO 9000 documentation has been simplified
- The **Format** inside ISO 9001 has also been radically altered

PRINCIPLES

The 8 underlying principles on which the standard is based do not actually appear in the system requirement standard, but are discussed in one of the supporting documents. Nevertheless, it is certainly important to check your quality system against these principles, which are:

- Customer Focus - basing business priorities on understanding, meeting and exceeding customer expectations
- Leadership - establishing the direction, unity of purpose and a conducive working environment within the business
- Involvement of people - ensuring that people from all levels of the organisation understand and contribute to business objectives
- Process approach - seeing activities as the use of resources to turn inputs such as data and raw materials into outputs, such as a service or product
- System approach to management - seeing the business as a system of inter-related processes
- Continual improvement - ensuring that continuous performance improvement is a permanent business objective
- Factual approach to decision making - basing decisions on objective analysis of data and information
- Mutually beneficial supplier relationships - working with suppliers to allow both parties to create value

STRUCTURE

Unlike the past, when there were 3 separate standards; ISO 9001, 9002 and 9003, there is now only one; ISO 9001:2000. It is supported by 3 associated standards: ISO 9000:2000 covers fundamental principles and vocabulary, ISO 9004:2000 is a set of guidelines for performance improvement and ISO 10011 provides guidance on auditing quality and environmental management systems.

FORMAT

The standard now consists of 8 clauses, as described in the table below. Businesses may claim exemption from parts of Clause 7 Product Realisation if, for example, they are not responsible for design and development.

Clause		Comment
1	Scope	
2	Normative Reference	
3	Terms and Definitions	
4	Quality Management System	The foundation of the quality management system. Looks at processes and their interaction and what documentation is needed.
5	Management Responsibility	How top management will run and control the quality management system.
6	Resource Management	How the organisation's resources are arranged to carry out the processes.
7	Product Realisation	Process management - how inputs such as raw materials and information are converted into outputs, i.e. products or services.
8	Measurement, Analysis and Improvement	How an organisation measures performance of the quality management system and how these measures are used for continuous improvement.

In response to such major changes, some organisations may take the view that they should completely re-design their quality system. Whilst this top-to-bottom approach may not be necessary, it is suggested that quality manuals, at least, will probably require a re-write to stay in line with the new structure and vocabulary. On the good news side, anyone with bookshelves sagging under the weight of hundreds of detailed procedures can order the paper shredder and set to work simplifying their documentation. The new standard takes the view that well trained people hold the key to operating a quality working process.

The new standard delivers other benefits; the wording has been changed to better suit service as well as manufacturing businesses and there is a clearer alignment with other standards such as ISO 14001.

In theory, we all have until December 2003 to gain certification to the new standard. However, in practice, most businesses will come under some pressure from customers and accreditation bodies to align more quickly than that.

You can obtain copies of the new standard from British Standards Online at http://bsonline.techindex.co.uk/

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