Quality Management, in Brief

by Leland R. Beaumont, Principal, Simply Quality® Consultancy

The term *quality management* refers to the approach an organization takes toward ensuring customer requirements are met. That approach may be non existent, nascent, evolving, chaotic, or it may be systematic and mature. ISO 9001:2000 is an international standard providing requirements for quality management systems. Currently more than 100 countries have adopted ISO 9001 as a national standard. Organizations that have suitably demonstrated compliance with the requirements of the standard can register a certificate recognizing the scope and compliance of their quality management system.

Benefits

A suitably designed, deployed, and maintained quality management system can provide a number of benefits to customers, suppliers, members, and managers of the organization. When customers purchase a product or service from an organization that is registered to the ISO 9001 standard, they have important assurances that the quality of what they receive will be as they expect. Registered companies have had dramatic reductions in customer complaints, significant reductions in operating costs, and increased demand for their products and services. Other benefits can include better working conditions, increased market share, and increased profits attained by reducing defects, rework, delays, and waste.

Requirements

The 14-page long standard itself establishes the full requirements that need to be met by a compliant quality management system. Salient requirements include:
1. Establishing the scope and application of the quality management system.
2. Referencing the relevant standards.
3. Defining terms used in the quality management system.
4. Establishing a Documented Quality Management System, including:
    a. Identifying and defining *key processes*.
    b. A written *quality manual* describing the overall quality management system.
    c. Procedures for controlling *documents* and *records*.
5. Management Responsibilities, including:
    a. Communicating management's *commitment to quality*.
    b. Establishing and maintaining *customer focus*.
    c. Establishing and communicating a *quality policy*.
    d. Establishing quantitative *quality objectives*.
    e. Defining and communicating *responsibility* and *authority*.
    f. Appointing a *management representative* to ensure effective operation of the quality management system.
    g. Holding periodic *management review meetings* to ensure the on-going suitability of the system.
6. Managing Resources, including:
    a. Providing adequate resources.

      b. Managing human resources, including establishing adequate *competency*, awareness, and training of personnel.

      c. Maintaining an adequate *infrastructure* and *work environment*.

7. Managing Product Realization, including:

      a. Planning product realization

      b. Determining *product requirements*, reviewing those requirements, and communicating with customers.

      c. Establishing a planned and managed *design and development process*, for those organizations that undertake innovative design work.

      d. Managing *suppliers*, *purchasing*, and *purchased products* and services.

      e. Controlling *production and services operations*.

      f. *Calibrating* measurement devices.

8. Measurement, analysis, and improvement, including:

      a. Planned monitoring and measurement activities and processes.

      b. Monitoring *customer satisfaction.*

      c. Conducting *internal audits* of the quality management system.

      d. Monitoring and measuring product and processes.

      e. Controlling *nonconforming products.*

      f. Analyzing data.

      g. *Continual improvement*.

      h. Taking *corrective and preventive action.*

Implementation

Organizations may approach establishing and implementing their quality management system in these high-level phases:

1. Management exploration, decision, and commitment to proceed.
2. Designing and documenting the quality management system, including writing a quality manual and related procedures.
3. Deploying the quality management system throughout the organization including communicating and training personnel.
4. Establishing a history of *systematic use* of the quality management system.
5. Conducting internal audits.
6. Conducting the compliance audit, by the chosen registration agency.
7. Obtaining a certificate of compliance from the registration agency!
8. Continuing with on-going internal and external audits and continual improvement.

Next Steps

A suitable quality management system can ensure you delight your customers every time.

More information on quality management and the ISO 9001 standard is available from our web site: www.SimplyQuality.org, and in our book *ISO 9001, The Standard Interpretation,* ISBN 0963600362. Simply Quality® provides consulting services to clients in and around central New Jersey and we can be reached via email to info@simplyquality.org or by calling 732-671-7130.