

ISO 9000

QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Road Map to Certification



In the globalized market place a key challenge facing organizations in developing countries is lack of national capacities to implement international quality management system (QMS) based in ISO 9000 series of International standards in order to overcome technical barriers to trade and effectively compete with other developed economies.

As many organizations continue to implement their QMS based on ISO 9000 series of international standards, Julius of Quality Centre Ltd takes a closer look at the road map to certification.

1. Management commitment

To start with, top management commitment is one of the key ingredients of a successful ISO 9000. Therefore, commitment should be assured before the start of the project in order to ensure allocation of resources and provide leadership. Total commitment will be realized if there is full understanding of the ISO 9000 concept, what it entails, what is required at the top management level and the benefits to be derived. Commitment will be demonstrated by defining the quality policy of the organization, provision of resources for implementing the quality management system and communicating the need to meet customer and applicable regulatory requirements.

Quality objectives have to be established at the relevant processes and management reviews held. It should be emphasized that the objective of implementing a quality management system based on 9000 is not just to get certified. A suitable and effective system should result in to more than a “certificate on the wall”.

Typical objectives to be aimed at include:

- products that consistently meet customer needs,
- increase in market share
- reducing costs and waste
- increasing confidence in the production system’s capability
- return on investment.

2. Preparation and planning

Proper preparation and planning is crucial at the onset. A management representative to coordinate the ISO 9000 project should be appointed. Moreover, a quality steering committee should be selected and trained.

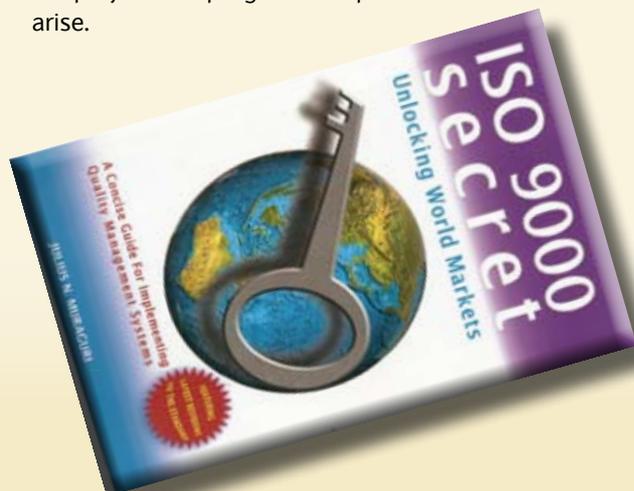
At the beginning of the development of ISO 9000, a documented implementation plan needs to be put in place. It will include the target dates, responsibilities and resources to be used.

The management representative has to ensure that the quality steering committee has a thorough understanding of the

project goals, the current position and the intended destination.

Once the quality steering committee has agreed on the structure of the quality management system, the management

representative can estimate the resources and time to be taken to complete the project. This will assist in ensuring that the project is in progress and problems are discussed as they arise.





A Gantt chart can be used for planning the project. The time taken will depend on commitment, size, complexity of processes and so on.

3 ISO 9000 awareness

An awareness training of the ISO 9000 needs to be given to the staff. The programme will include the aim of the ISO 9000 implementation, the benefits to the organization, customers and interested parties, in addition to how it works, staff roles and their responsibilities during the implementation period.

4 Appointment of management representative

The head of the organization, as the sponsor of the project, will appoint a management representative to coordinate it. He/she should give total support to this management representative. On his part, the latter should be a person who has demonstrated a genuine interest and passion to quality improvement and particularly to quality management system implementation. A quality steering committee to assist in the implementation will also have to be selected.

5 Training on ISO 9000

It is expected that the appointed management representative, the steering committee and other staff should have a clear understanding of what they are to implement, otherwise this may later turn out to be a burden, if it is taken just as a mere documentation of the existing system.

Training programmes for top managers, middle managers, supervisors and other groups of workers should be planned.

Training will include: quality awareness and concepts to be used throughout the standard so that there is a common understanding, the requirements of standard, documentation of a quality management system, internal audits and the overall impact on the strategic goals of the organization.

6 Baseline audit and gap analysis

It is obvious that every organization will have a system for running its operations. To avoid duplication, it is a good practice to conduct a detailed baseline audit of the current management system at the onset of the ISO 9000 project, in order to establish the prevailing situation, thus identifying the gaps to be covered during implementation.

7 Documentation

Documentation of a quality management system reflects what actually happens in the organization. It demonstrates consistency. A good documentation should avoid ambiguity and contradiction of the policies and objectives of the organization and the real happenings on the ground. The

practice of “borrowed documentation” should be a thing of the past if the staff are committed to quality improvement.

The heads of processes should develop a simple and clear documentation that includes: documented statements of a quality policy and quality objectives, a quality manual, documented procedures and records as required by the standard, as well as other documents and records to ensure the effective planning, operation and control of processes within the organization.

8 Implementation

This involves putting into use the documented quality management system. It is a good practice to do this for some time before going for certification, in case the organization is seeking one so that any areas of weaknesses can be identified and amended.

9 Internal quality audit

As the quality management system is implemented, internal audit should be conducted to verify whether the planned objectives have been met. Therefore, some members need to be trained on how to conduct internal audits.

10 Management review

Management review consists of collecting and analyzing data obtained from monitoring and measurements of products, processes, customer feedback, internal audits among others.

The aim is to identify opportunities for quality improvement.

11 Pre-audit and final certification

A pre-audit, also commonly referred to as pre-assessment, can be conducted in order to gauge the organization’s readiness for the final or certification audit. For an organization that is seeking certification, a certification body will need to be identified.

Once certified, the organization should strive for continual improvement. ISO 9004 provides guidelines beyond the requirements given in ISO 9001. It can be used for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of a quality management system, thus driving them to the best in class.

Julius Muraguri is the Author of the Book: ISO 9000 Secret: Unlocking World Markets, A Concise Guide to Quality Management Systems. He is a Member of National Technical Committee in Quality Management and Quality Assurance in Kenya involved in ISO 9000. He has consulted with many companies on ISO 9000 implementation and conducted third party audits with world leading certification bodies.

For more information please

email info@qualitycentregroup.com or
call +254-20-247 30 21, Cell: +254 720 614 600

www.qualitycentregroup.com