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**International Organization**

**for Standardization**

**Who and what is ISO ?**

ISO is the (International Organization for Standardization) and is the world's largest developer of standards. Because "International Organization for Standardization" would have different abbreviations in different languages ("IOS" in English, "OIN" in French for Organisation internationale de normalisation), it was decided at the outset to use a word derived from the Greek ISOS, meaning "equal". Therefore, whatever the country, whatever the language, the short form of the organization's name is always ISO.

**What does ISO do ?**

The International Standards which ISO develops are very useful. They are useful to industrial and business organizations of all types, to governments and other regulatory bodies, to trade officials, to conformity assessment professionals, to suppliers and customers of products and services in both public and private sectors, and, ultimately, to people in general in their roles as consumers and end users.

**Why standards matter ?**

Standards make an enormous and positive contribution to most aspects of our lives.

Standards ensure desirable characteristics of products and services such as quality, environmental friendliness, safety, reliability, efficiency and interchangeability - and at an economical cost.

When products and services meet our expectations, we tend to take this for granted and be unaware of the role of standards. However, when standards are absent, we soon notice. We soon care when products turn out to be of poor quality, do not fit, are incompatible with equipment that we already have, are unreliable or dangerous.

When products, systems, machinery and devices work well and safely, it is often because they meet standards. And the organization responsible for many thousands of the standards which benefit the world is ISO.

**What is ISO 9000?**

**ISO 9000 in brief**

The ISO 9000 standard is one of the best known international standards; it is implemented by countless companies and other organizations in over 150 countries.  ISO 9000 addresses "quality management".  This means what the organization does to fulfill:

* their customers' quality requirements, plus
* any applicable regulatory requirements,

          while aiming to

* enhance customer satisfaction, and
* achieve continual improvement of its performance.

Companies that follow the ISO 9000 requirements implement a so-called "ISO 9000 quality management system (QMT)".

# **Why is ISO 9000 Important?**

ISO 9000 is important because of its orientation. While   
the content itself is useful and important, the content   
alone does not account for its widespread appeal.

ISO 9000 is important because of its international orientation.  
Currently, ISO 9000 is supported by national standards bodies  
from more than 150 countries. This makes it the logical choice   
for any organization that does business internationally or that  
serves customers who demand an international standard   
of excellence.

ISO is also important because of its systemic orientation.  
We think this is crucial. Many people wrongly emphasize  
motivational and attitudinal factors. The assumption is that  
quality can only be created if workers are motivated and have   
the right attitude. This is fine, but it doesn't go far enough.  
Unless you institutionalize the right attitude by supporting   
it with the right policies, procedures, records, technologies,  
resources, and structures, you will never achieve the standards  
of quality that other organizations seem to be able to achieve.  
Unless you establish a quality attitude by creating a quality  
management system, you will never achieve a world-class  
standard of quality.

**What is the Difference between ISO 9000, ISO 9001, and ISO 9001:2000 ? And what are ISO 9002 and ISO 9003 ?**

The quick answer is “none”. These terms are all used to describe the ISO 9001 standard. Prior to December 2000, there used to be an ISO 9001, an ISO 9002 and an ISO 9003 standard; without focusing on the technical differences between them, people would just simply refer to each as ISO 9000. In December 2000, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) merged ISO 9001, ISO 9002, and ISO 9003 into a revised ISO 9001 standard. In order to distinguish between the previous ISO 9001 version, the revised standard was then often referred to as ISO 9001:2000 or ISO 9000:2000 (":2000" indicates the year of the revision).  The current revision of ISO 9001 is ISO 9001:2008; it was published in November 2008 as successor to ISO 9001:2000.

For all practical purposes, ISO 9000 and ISO 9001 mean the same.

**The new 2008 Revision:   ISO 9000 : 2008**

**What is this all about?**

According to the rules of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO - the publisher of the ISO standards), the ISO 9000 standard undergoes review and revision every 6-8 years.  In the past, ISO 9000 was revised in 1994 and then underwent a major revision in 2000.  In November 2008, ISO published the current revision, which is called ISO 9000:2008.

**What are the changes in ISO 9000:2008?**

The changes in ISO 9000:2008 are relatively minor.  ISO 9000:2008 does not contain any new requirements nor does it contain changes to any of the existing requirements in ISO 9000:2000; also, it does not change the intent of ISO 9000:2000. Further, the structure and outline of ISO 9000:2008 is identical to that of ISO 9000:2000.  
  
ISO 9000:2008 only introduces clarifications to the existing requirements of ISO 9000:2000 based on eight years of experience of implementing the standard world-wide with about one million certificates issued in 170 countries to date. It also introduces some changes to the wording intended to improve consistency with ISO 14001:2004  
  
The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) explains one of the reasons for the limited changes in the 2008 version as follows: “A key factor in the development of ISO 9000:2008 was to limit the impact of changes on users.”  
  
According to ISO, the benefits of the changes to the wording in ISO 9000:2008 are as follows:  
• Easier to use  
• Clearer language  
• Easier to translate into other languages  
• Better compatibility with the environmental management standard ISO 14001:2004

**Implementation of an ISO 9000 Quality Management System**

**When is the Best Time to start the ISO 9000 Implementation?**

Ideally you should begin your ISO 9000-2008 implementation when you first start up your company. If you are in the position of starting up a new company, you should be setting up your business processes according to ISO 9000-2008 requirements and start to implement ISO 9000 before hiring your employees. This is the most efficient approach as your company not only immediately reaps the benefits from ISO 9000 but you also don’t have to overcome resistance to change when adjusting work processes later to meet the requirements of the ISO 9000-2008 standard.

However, most companies have been long established before they start their ISO 9000:2008 implementation. Since a complete ISO 9000 quality system brings many benefits to a company, it’s always better to start the ISO 9000 implementation sooner rather than later.

**How long does it take to implement ISO 9000?**

It depends on you and your company. The very fastest is 2-3 months because most ISO 9000 registrars require at least 2 months ISO 9000 track record before the certification audit. More realistically: if you have a relatively small company (say, less than 20 employees), if your employees are motivated and if they don’t oppose change, if you have the backing of all senior executives, if you and other managers are ready to put some significant time and efforts into this endeavor, and if you use a really good ISO 9000 quality manual template (a sample ISO 9000 quality manual that you can modify to make it your own ISO 9000 quality manual), then you may be able to get certified in as short as 3-4 months; templates for ISO 9000 forms are an additional time-saver. Some companies are significantly slower, with 6-12 months not being unusual. However, companies that write their ISO 9000 quality manual and their ISO 9000 quality procedures from scratch, rather than base them on a proven sample ISO 9000 quality manual, often take up to 2 years or longer.

**ISO 9000 Documentation** :

ISO 9000 requires several different documents: a quality manual, quality procedures, a quality policy and quality objectives; in addition, ISO 9000 requires work instructions that provide detailed guidelines to employees on how to perform their work. However, the ISO 9000 standard is very clear that work instructions need only be created where they add value (for example, a trained painter will not find value in instructions on how to paint; on the other hand, brief instructions (possibly in form of pictures), displayed right on a machine, explaining how to replace a filter could be a great time saver). Forms, which must be kept on file after they are filled in, are also part of any ISO 9000 quality management system. Some of the most typical forms are the Corrective Action Report Form, the Employee Review Form, and the Customer Survey. It is important to note that ISO 9000 does not directly require these forms; however, ISO 9000 calls for recording certain information and a well-designed form not only requires the information but it also walks the user through the process.

**Specific Steps to Achieve ISO 9000 Registration**

These simple steps can prove to be an effective guide to obtaining ISO 9000 registration:

1. Get top management commitment
2. Train personnel
3. Prepare Quality Policy Manual
4. Prepare Operating Procedures
5. Hold internal audit
6. Select registrar
7. Go through registration process
8. Obtain ISO 9000 registration