



BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO ISO 9001 : 2015

Quality Management System Requirements Explained



What is ISO 9001 : 2015?

ISO 9001 is an internationally recognised standard in quality. It is a guide to best practice, not just in terms of the products or services you provide, but in how your business operates too. It clarifies and standardises the means with which a business can manage its processes, people and resources to meet its quality goals, with emphasis on the importance of conducting reviews and achieving continual improvement.

The standard also increases an organisation's awareness of its duties and commitment in fulfilling the needs and expectations of its customers, ensuring they achieve satisfaction in the delivery of products and services.

Why use it?

Today's market is becoming more and more defined by its customers' wants and needs. They are better educated and more demanding when it comes to the service they expect from a business, and they expect the same high standard from every supplier and partner too. Add to this the ease with which the internet allows people to provide feedback or vent frustrations about a brand, quickly damaging vulnerable reputations, they are even more influential than before.

ISO 9001 gives a business – regardless of any size, industry or business model – the tools to handle this.

A certified business will think more broadly, considering the impact of quality beyond the realms of customer satisfaction. By way of reward they will see an increase in confidence from customers, partners and suppliers who can trust that their demands and requirements will be met.

In a survey performed in 2016, QMS asked their clients who held the ISO 9001 certification what benefits they saw.



A full [list of the benefits our customers reported](#) is available on our website.



How does it work?

ISO 9001 : 2015 is built around 7 fundamental principles...



1

Customer focus

What?

Meet customer requirements and strive to exceed expectations.

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Why?

By focusing on your customer, you will attract and retain their confidence. A customer who is truly satisfied will be loyal to your business and therefore repeat business will increase. Don't forget, with the popularity of the internet and social media, their recommendations – or otherwise – can have much more impact on your attempts to attract new business or hold on to current customers.

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How?

Start by identifying your customers – direct and indirect: those who buy your products directly or through a reseller, suppliers, partners etc. If you know who your customers are you can find out their current and future needs and expectations and consequently you can introduce new products, services, goals and objectives that meet them. You should also gather customer feedback and act on it.



2

Leadership

What?

Leaders at all levels should establish a unity of purpose and direction.

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Why?

When the leadership of an organisation sets an example by actively participating in and encouraging those under them to care about the quality management system, they are creating an environment where everyone is working towards achieving the organisation's quality objectives.

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How?

Start by creating and communicating your organisation's mission, vision, strategy, policies and processes. If everyone knows what your organisation is about and how it aims to go about it, then they can act with one purpose – especially if your leadership is setting a positive example in this regard. It is important to empower your people by giving them the resources, training and authority to act with accountability. In addition, inspire, encourage and recognise their contributions.



3

Engagement of people

What?

Competent, empowered and engaged people enhance an organisation.

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Why?

Empowered employees who feel trusted and are clear on an organisation's objectives will not only be more satisfied in their roles, but will have an increased motivation to help your business achieve its goals.

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How?

Begin by telling your people how their contributions affect the organisation. Businesses are good at telling people what their job is but they forget to tell them how that role fits into the greater scheme of things. Further this by encouraging knowledge sharing and collaboration between areas of the business. Empower your employees by acknowledging and rewarding their contributions, ensure they are skilled in their roles, provide training where necessary. You should gather their feedback and act on it, setting personal objectives so they can feel they are making a difference.



4

Process approach

What?

Managing business activities as interrelated processes that function as one system.

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Why?

It is rare that an activity within your business does not affect others in some way. The process approach considers all business activities as interrelated processes in a single system, from design to assembly, customer communications to complaints management. By considering your business in this way, you can easily see where there is duplication of effort or wasted resource.

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How?

Start by identifying all the activities in your business, how they work with each other and who is responsible for their management. You may find it beneficial to produce a flow diagram to show these connections. By working like this, you can address problems more efficiently, considering the needs of all areas that are affected not just an individual department or activity.



5

Improvement

What?

Successful organisations focus on continual improvement.

Why?

A business that never improves will eventually stagnate, even in the unlikely event that performance remains constant. From small, incremental alterations to large breakthrough changes, all improvements can increase performance and customer satisfaction.

How?

When looking at any type of improvement, consider the root cause as well as addressing the consequences. This will allow you to introduce preventive actions and even allow you to spot and prevent further issues that may occur in the future. Regularly tracking and reviewing processes, making improvements, will ensure they are always fit for purpose and will help to improve productivity.



6 Evidence-based decision making

What?

Base decisions on the analysis and evaluation of data.

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Why?

Using evidence, facts and data analysis leads to greater objectivity and confidence in the result. This method also allows you to assess the performance and demonstrate the effectiveness of the decision.

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How?

Work out how you can demonstrate your organisation's performance and analyse this information. You can then use these deductions as evidence, alongside your experience and intuition, to make balanced and informed decisions. Continuing to monitor this information after a decision has been made will help you work out how successful the decision was.



7

Relationship management

What?

Manage your relationships to encourage success for all.

Why?

A successful company understands that its investors, partners and those involved in its supply chain must also prosper if that success is to continue. Maintaining relationships with the businesses you work with means you can share resources and understand each other's objectives.

How?

In the first instance, build a rapport with providers, partners and other interested parties. Find out their aims and goals, see what resources they use – it may be that you share these in common or can offer advice on how to improve. You may spot opportunities to collaborate with interested parties and strike a balance between short-term gains and long-term goals. This may mean a loss for either party at first, but will be beneficial in the long run.

Who can help?

Implementing an ISO 9001 Quality Management System is not something you have to do alone, and certification doesn't have to be expensive or complicated. If you are interested in the benefits that the ISO 9001 standard can bring to your business, and are looking for a common sense and an efficient approach which doesn't break the bank, QMS International can support you every step of the way.

Having helped implement thousands of Management Systems across the UK, QMS's market-leading services include everything from drafting a compliant Manual, to offering on-site training and Certification.

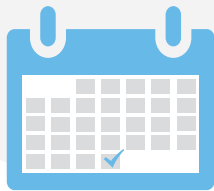
Figures shown below are taken from the QMS ISO 9001 customer survey 2016.

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99%

of clients were pleased with the speed of our certification process.



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of clients were satisfied with the support given by QMS Consultants.



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If you would like QMS to provide you with a straight forward and cost-effective route to ISO certification, then get in touch today:

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