

# Management Involvement



## IN THIS ISSUE

Whether QRC is helping organizations certify, or working with them to improve their already certified Systems, one of the most frequently expressed concerns is the problem of engaging or holding Management's interest in the ISO 9001 program.

A long ago Dilbert cartoon about certification referred to treating the ISO documentation package as if it was a "dead raccoon" that should be passed along to some other unfortunate as quickly as possible.

With that kind of notoriety, it is not surprising that managers do not drive to work each morning thinking "I wonder how our ISO program is doing today."

In this Issue of the Newsletter we consider why so many managers seem oblivious to their ISO programs, what, if anything, can be done about it, and is it worth worrying about anyway.

***"We have, in fact, two kinds of activity side by side: one which we preach but do not practice, and another which we practice but seldom preach"***

Bertrand Russell



## MANAGERS

When ISO refers to "Managers," a reader

Standard is referring to a combination of Nobel Prize winners and loving parents.

you will find eight quality management principles that should be used by

toward improved performance."

Examples of these principles are:

**Leadership:** "Providing unity of purpose and

**Involvement of people:** "Enabling people to

benefit."

## Systematic approach:

understanding and managing interrelated processes as a system"

"Basing decisions on the results of the analysis of data and information".

However, regardless of what is preached in a company's Quality Manual and Quality

consistently practiced.

One explanation for the inconsistent

management is too focused on other things. A lesser-understood reason is that the

9001 and ISO 9004 are sometimes in conflict with the instincts of the people who

To illustrate this point, let us consider some motivations of Managers and see how they

Standard.

## Top Management:

:  
Top managers are expected to be visionary

and directing others.

## Difficulties with ISO concepts:

the form of documented policies; procedures and goals (ISO 9001, Clause 5) can be

the complicated task of controlling an unpredictable business.

## Qualities:

Sales and Marketing Managers typically

sales in competition with others who do not always "play by the rules."

Anything that limits maneuverability in the market place is unacceptable.

customer negotiations (ISO 7.2), or the possibility of "opening old wounds" by asking

performance (ISO 8.2.1) are unwelcome and likely to be ignored.

## Qualities:

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Design Engineers are the inventors in an organization. They are skilled at taking a concept and making it a reality. But to get from concept to reality they demand a "freedom to create."

**Difficulties with ISO concepts:**

Ideas do not necessarily occur according to an orderly timetable, nor do they often arrive fully formed. ISO Clause 7.3 does not appear to accept these facts. As a result, the Clause is perceived, by some Engineering Managers, as a bureaucratic obstacle to an Engineer's "freedom to create."

**Operations Management:**

**Qualities:**

Operations Managers usually believe their profession to be a relentless grinding efficiency at achieving goals.

**Difficulties with ISO concepts:**

Operations Managers tend to welcome formal written procedures (ISO Clause 7.5), because they offer consistency.

Unfortunately, anything that appears to be an obstacle to achieving a goal is usually "toast." This includes the formal written procedures that were originally welcomed.

**Administrative and Financial Managers**

**Qualities:**

Administrative and Financial Managers are typically the pillars of consistency in an organization. They understand regulations and insure that they are followed.

ISO 9001 is generally a welcome sign of order in what often appears to be "chaos" outside their realm.

**Difficulties with ISO concepts:**

Change (ISO 8.5.1) can be the major problem. Improvement is welcomed in principle. Unfortunately, improvements anywhere in the company usually mean changes in Administration and Finance. It is stressful to have to make changes so that others can improve, especially when resources are limited.

**Summary:**

With these organic obstacles, it is understandable that many Managers treat the opportunity to follow the ISO program in the way Dilbert observed the treatment of documentation packages.

***"Experience ought to teach us two things: first, that we should do a great deal of correcting; secondly, that we must not correct too much"***

Eugene Delacroix



**GETTING IN STEP**

"Top management shall provide evidence of implementation of the quality management system and continually improving its

ISO 9001 Clause 5.1.

It would therefore appear that the

team, had better be reconciled to the idea that any obstacles to engaging and holding

program have to be overcome.

The obvious question is "HOW?"

9001 Standards, the program is not too different from purchasing another company.

are changed and cultures are modified.

The result of all this change is measurable.

of the combined operation has to reflect the wisdom of the purchase.

Certification Audit.

In both instances benefiting fully from the

The first stage is either taking ownership or getting certified.

stage is "syncretism," when the "old" and the "new" combine in a way that lets each

Let's return our focus to ISO 9001. The "old" is the way in which things were done before

designed, built and sold. Money was earned. The "new" adds to and changes processes

requirements of the ISO 9001 Standard.

Management's motivation for certifying to

stage of syncretism.

If, as is mostly the case, the driving force for

customers, getting management's long-term involvement is a serious challenge.

was to achieve ISO certification. That was realized, so that project is over. Now there

addressed. Compliance becomes confused

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with camouflage. As long as Certification is maintained, there is no problem. If the motivation for Certification was a desire to improve controls and reduce risk, the chances of getting management's attention improve. Provided, of course, that the motivating manager is still at the company, and that his/her theories about the potential benefits of ISO were confirmed. Finally, if Certification was achieved "long ago," it is probably not even on management's radar, except for a few inconvenient review meetings a year. After all, it is the "Quality guy's" problem. These are some of the problems. How about some solutions?

***"One thing we know beyond all doubt: Nothing has ever been achieved by the person who says, "It can't be done"***

Eleanor Roosevelt

**Solution 1**

Do not try to engage Management in ISO by using the threat of failing a Surveillance Audit.

It may get an immediate response, but once the Audit is over, Managers are liable to think that's all there is to ISO.

**Solution 2**

Do not work on the principle that there is such a thing as "Management." What exists is a group of people who together manage the organization.

As we tried to show earlier in this Newsletter, managers of different disciplines have different concerns and motivations. Identify each manager's needs and show how your Quality Management System either is, or could be, a solution.

**Solution 3**

Do not be confused by the authority assumed by the Certification Auditor. If he/she thinks you should have a larger display of Charts on the wall, only invest in their development if it benefits your organization, or can be proven to be essential for complying with the Standard. Nothing confirms a Manager's opinion of the irrelevance of ISO more than displays of unnecessary information created through the use of scarce and expensive resources.

**Solution 4**

Involve Managers in projects they see as useful using a language they understand. QRC trains companies to develop goals between Departments using Service Level Agreements (SLA) as a tool.

Interactive Departments negotiate performance requirements as Internal Customers and Internal Suppliers. Managers see a point in this and often participate to insure that their Department negotiates a "good deal." The fact that this addresses ISO 5.4.1 and 5.4.2 is irrelevant to them. It is worth doing because it makes sense for the organization.

**Solution 5**

Never give an impression that Internal Auditors are the "ISO Police." This creates a confrontational atmosphere between the ISO program and Department Managers. QRC instructors take great care when training Internal Auditors to help them understand that their role is to contribute to increased efficiency and effectiveness.

**Solution 6**

Work to make processes self-sufficient. The Sarbanes Oxley Act is encouraging this approach in the financial side of the business. It makes sense everywhere.

QRC trains people to add Preventive, Detective and Corrective controls to their processes. Unwanted changes become easier to avoid, find and correct.

Documentation of processes stops being just an ISO requirement. It becomes a tool for management control.

The fact that this also meets the requirements of ISO 8.2.3 may not even be mentioned.

**Solution 7**

Be innovative.

ISO 9004 Appendix A provides a tool for Self-Assessment.

One of the most immediately successful courses QRC provides is "Evaluating System Maturity and Risk."

This course is not principally intended for Internal Auditors. It provides tools to evaluate the effectiveness of one's own processes as well as those of Internal Suppliers and Customers.

It is interesting to see people discover the costly misunderstandings and confusions existing between Departments in companies that are icons of ISO credibility.

**Summary**

Managers will be engaged in ISO 9001 only when they see how they can use it to resolve the issues that are important to them.

***"Only the truth can still astonish people"***

Jean-Marie Poupart