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Appreciation of the ISO 9001 Standard

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Contents

Introduction	1
ISO 9001 Scope	2
ISO 9001 Requirements	2

Introduction

This paper is one of a series offering an insight into the benefits of a quality management system and exploring the realities of implementing and maintaining a living system within your business.

The ISO 9001 standard underpins Quality Management for all businesses, small or large, and has been specifically defined to be independent of business sector and capable of integration into any business structure. Earlier Quality Standards tended to set specific conditions to be met in a particular way, leading to ridged interpretation and as a consequence inflexible businesses structures impeding change and growth. ISO 9001 permits totally flexible business structures so as to accommodate change and growth.

Small businesses can accommodate the conditions set out by ISO 9001 with minimum resource impact since the standard has been designed to reflect best business practice, irrespective business size, and does not dictate the need for dedicated quality resources. Larger businesses, however, usually find the introduction ISO 9001 more involved mainly because many more employees are involved and business functions are usually split over several departments.

ISO 9001 has been well established as a world standard for over ten years and is well understood in all trading countries.



Consequently British companies trading either in the UK or overseas will find a demonstrable commitment to quality management well received. Furthermore company buyers and suppliers are readily able to judge company quality performance.

ISO 9001 Scope

An international standard which specifies requirements for a quality management system where and organisation needs to demonstrate –

- (i) Its ability to consistently provide products that meet Customer and applicable statutory and regulatory requirements and
- (ii) Aims to enhance Customer satisfaction through the effective application of the quality system including processes for continuous improvement of the system and the assurance of conformity to Customer, applicable statutory and regulatory requirements.

ISO 9001 Requirements

The organisation shall establish, document, implement and maintain a quality management system (QMS) and continually improve its effectiveness which means to identify and implement the -

- (i) Processes needed for the QMS and their application throughout the organisation
- (ii) Sequence and interaction of these processes

- (iii) Criteria and methods ensuring the effective operation and control of these processes
- (iv) Resources and information necessary to operate and monitor these processes
- (v) Means to monitor, measure where applicable, and analyse these processes
- (vi) Actions to achieve planned results and continuous improvement of these processes.

These requirements can be readily satisfied with minimum resource requirements.