



Britannia Chambers
181/185 High Street
New Malden
Surrey UK
KT3 4BH

SQMS Concept and Structure

By the team at SMaRT

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Contents

Introduction	1
1. Process Orientation	1
2. Responsibility/Ownership	2
3. Documentation	2
4. Training	2
5. Customer Satisfaction	2
6. Employee Satisfaction	2
7. Performance	2
8. Continuous Improvement	3

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 SQMS concept is one of creating and managing a web-based quality management system to meet your business and support needs consistent with ISO 9001 quality standard.

The Structure of SQMS is founded upon the eight principles of quality management against which the ISO 9001 Quality Standard is formulated. These principles are explained in the following sections.

1. Process Orientation

Process Orientation calls for your Company to function through a series of processes (eg Sales, Supply, Support and Training) each with well defined inputs and outputs. In general, the customer provides the initial input via a quotation request and receives the final output in terms of acceptance of the required product/service. Processes in direct line with the Customer are known as Business Processes; those in support of



the business are known as Support Processes.

2. Responsibility/Ownership

Responsibility and ownership of the quality management system needs to be clearly defined and assigned. Job Descriptions forming the record.

3. Documentation

Documentation (electronic for SQMS) calls for Business and Support processes together with inputs and outputs to be clearly defined and controlled. ISO 9001 clearly indicates those processes where documentation (electronic or otherwise) is mandatory whilst others are optional. However, whilst documentation of some processes may be optional, all inputs and outputs need to be defined. The documented definition of the processes together with inputs and outputs are managed through version control. Once inputs and outputs contain customer business or support data they become a record for that specific activity. Specified retention times and locations of such records are essential for success.

4. Training

Training is a support process which ensures that personnel have the right

level of competence to complete the assigned task. Required competences, as identified in the Job Description, coupled with any desired competence development as agreed at individuals' performance reviews become inputs to Training. In the interest of continuous improvement it can be beneficial to both the company and the individual to raise the level of a person's competence above the minimum required for the task. Training records form the Training output.

5. Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction calls for supplier sensitivity to the service being offered to the customer, both actual and perceived.

6. Employee Satisfaction

Employee satisfaction calls for employer sensitivity to the demands being placed on the employee, both actual and perceived.

7. Performance

Performance is considered in terms of assessment of the company meeting its objectives as well as those placed on employees. Such criteria must be clearly defined and measurable with assigned targets.



8. Continuous Improvement

Continuous improvement should be the aim of every company and is a key component of quality management.