

ISO 9001 2000 IMPLEMENTATION (The Complete Story)

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As any well managed company knows their ultimate success relies on the delicate balance between customer satisfaction and profitability.

The ultimate payoff for business comes from having your customers satisfied 100% of the time in regards to both the price and quality of your product. ISO 9001:2000 brings these two aspects of quality and customer satisfaction into focus by requiring a more rigorous approach to the analysis of internal process data. This approach requires that the data be meaningful, thus forming the basis of a factual approach to decision-making and responsible management.

ISO 9001:2000 places the emphasis and responsibility on upper management to be actively involved in the monitoring, measuring and analysis of "key processes", as so defined by the leadership collective. With this approach to management a certain level of transparency is needed within the organization. A transparency that demands all interacting processes to communicate meaningfully. The better the communication and the usefulness of the data exchanged, the more effectively organizations can react to adverse conditions that may affect product quality.

Many companies who implement ISO 9001:2000 may quickly find that there is an added strain on company resources in keeping abreast of the many requirements of the ISO 9001 system. Well... there may be two reasons for this. The first being that your pre-ISO system was totally ineffective and your organizations processes chugged along haphazardly through the product realization phase, having no real standards by which to measure the quality of your product. Now that your organization has implemented ISO 9001:2000 your data and processes have to come into line. True process management requires the exchange of meaningful data, where the required data can be as simple as a state of being (e.g. "On" or "Off", Pass or Fail...etc). In any case the next process within the product realization or management cycle must be informed of the previous process state so that informed decisions can be made. Records will than be kept of these states. Some records will be generated temporarily while others will be generated and kept until such time as is reasonable, depending on the impact to the customer and society at large. Now the burden quickly becomes how do you keep track of this data and render it meaningful so that we can make informed decisions that will impact our product quality, customer satisfaction and ultimately profitability.

The second reason an organization may find the implementation of ISO 9001:2000 cumbersome and overwhelming is that they have purchased a cookie-cutter standard from the many online companies selling ISO 9001 in a bottle. Upon purchasing these templates the organization soon finds that it does not have the resources to implement or maintain the added documentation, which seems totally separate from the daily documents and tasks that are at the core of the organizations functions.

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You may think that your organization is in one or both of these previously mentioned situations. Well I was also there. As the Circuit Design QA Manager of a multinational company's research and development department, which had been in a state of transition for a period of five years before I arrived, It was my job as QA manager to straighten out the mess that was created by a cookie-cutter ISO 9001:2000 template and a very ill advised method of internal record keeping. The job was a daunting one to say the least.

One of the first things I learned from this experience was that an organization should never let ISO 9001 dictate the processes and the data it needs to collect within its Quality Management System. An organization must first take into account its customer's needs and its organizations needs. This then forms the basis of the data and the records that you will need to collect and monitor in order to effectively implement your QMS. If you then find that your system is lacking in quality records as it may pertain to your efforts to effectively monitor the organizations quality and data, then you may choose to add procedures to ensure the collection or recording of this data. Meeting minutes are a good example of a requirement that you may need to enhance in terms of frequency and content in order to make your meetings more effective...There is nothing worse than sitting in a long meeting reviewing meaningless data, only to surface hours later with that empty feeling. Organizations need information that will empower their workers to take current and relevant situations in hand. A properly implemented ISO system should offer this.

A properly implemented ISO system should offer transparency throughout the organization as stated earlier, on all levels. This is the key for the effective management of any establishment. Nothing can be swept under the carpet. This philosophy may initially be viewed as harsh by management, because of increased personal accountability. The rewards of having transparency in such a system however, are enormous. Meetings and tasks take on more meaning and the organization suddenly becomes pro-active rather than reactive.

Most people think that ISO 9001 represents an overhead that is not manageable for small companies and only large companies have the resources to manage this QMS system. Remember that we have computers and a plethora of application software that readily lend themselves to data collection. Just do a little research and find the right one for you.

[LAVLAN Engineering Inc. can help to steer your organization in the right direction towards ISO 9001:2000 implementation and certification. We will assist you in devising an ISO system that truly reflects what is important to your organization, by tailoring a system that specifically fits your organizations needs.](#)

*Article by B. Minott P.Eng.
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