5 Steps to Implementing an ISO 9001 Quality Management System

1) Education and planning

Objective: To determine the rationale for implementation

- Determine the objectives and targets for registration
- Obtain knowledge about the standard
- Establish costs
- Approve or reject investment decision
- Raise awareness
- Undertake gap analysis
- Prepare project plan

Typical timescale:

- 2-4 weeks

2) Management system development

Objective: To develop the system

Strategic

- Determine how external events could impact company wellbeing (Context in ISO speak)
- Determine strategic direction, objectives and targets for the company

- Assess and document what could go wrong and what could be done better at the strategic / business planning level (risk and opportunity in ISO speak)
- Assess and document the needs and expectations of all the parties with a stake in your business e.g. customers, suppliers, staff etc (interested parties in ISO speak)

Operational & support

- Determine and document the core activities undertaken
- Determine and document the support activities undertaken, for instance; purchasing, supplier assessment, managing staff etc
- Establish KPI's where relevant for each of the above processes
- Assess and document what could go wrong and what could be done better (risk and opportunity) at the operational level

Improvement

- From the risk and opportunities identified, develop and prioritise improvement plan resulting from the risks and opportunities

- Develop and document a process for capturing problems and issues that cause concern (non-conformance and corrective action in standard speak)

Scope and policy

- Determine the scope of the system, what is and is not included
- Agree and publish the quality policy

Typical timescale:

- 20-30 weeks

3) Management system implementation

Objective: To implement and test the system

- Train staff – ensure all staff are aware of the company objectives, policies, systems and processes
- Train internal auditors
- Conduct internal audits – a check to ensure the processes and procedures are effective and efficient (if they're not effective there's not much point in them being efficient!)

- Conduct management review – a formal review of all systems and process
- Review certification bodies and obtain, submit and accept application document

Typical timescale:

- 4-6 weeks

4) Management system assessment

Objective: To obtain certification

- Stage one – the certification agency undertakes an on-site review of the system to ensure all aspects of the standard has been covered
- Stage two – knowing all the issues in the standard have been addressed the certification agency assesses the system against the company practices
- The outcome for most companies is "recommended for registration"
- Celebrate!

Typical timescale:

- 6-8 weeks

5) Management system development and improvement

Objective: To continually improve the company, its objectives, targets, processes and practices

- Use the system to create a culture of creative destruction which regularly reviews, picks apart and improves the whole of the system
- Conduct periodic (internal) audits of the system to ensure things are still working properly
- Conduct periodic management review meetings

Typical timescale:

- Ongoing

Need to know more?

Contact: Mark Woods at

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