

International management system: ISO 9001 on quality management

In brief

ISO 9001:2000 (hereafter referred to as ISO 9001) is by far the most widely used quality management system worldwide. It is part of the ISO 9000 series which addresses quality management and provides a set of standardised requirements for a quality management system.

The ISO 9001 standard can be implemented in all kinds of companies and organisations, regardless of size, public or private and sector. This broad scope is achievable because of the focus of ISO 9001, which is on customer satisfaction and processes rather than on product-related issues.

Market impact

The number of companies that are ISO 9001 certified is growing each year. The latest figures made available by ISO are for the year 2006, which show that almost 900 000 certificates had been issued in 170 countries and economies. This represented a growth of 16% compared to the year before.

The certified companies operate in a range of industry sectors and service sectors. In some sectors, ISO 9001 does no longer provide an added value, but has rather become a prerequisite for finding international buyers. In other sectors, ISO 9001 certification could still provide an advantage above competitors.

➔ [For more information](#) on the use of ISO 9001, please refer to the ISO survey for the year 2006 which you can find in the external links section.

Want to know more about the market impact in your sector?

➔ Check out the websites of large companies in your sector and see what they do. Most companies report about ISO 9001 and other management systems on their websites. If you can't think of companies in your sector, check out relevant buyer requirements and market surveys in this database!

Content

ISO 9001 provides a framework for standardising procedures and working methods, not only with regard to quality control but to the entire organisation: from purchasing to processing, quality control, sales and administration. ISO 9001 requires companies to exactly describe their processes (or activities), develop procedures according to which the processes or activities should be performed, and then follow these procedures exactly in daily business activities.

ISO 9001 includes the following main sections:

1. Quality Management System (QMS)
2. Management Responsibility
3. Resource Management
4. Product Realisation
5. Measurement Analysis and Improvement

➔ [For more information](#) on ISO 9001, please refer to the ISO website. You can find a link in the external links section.

ISO 9001 can be implemented in combination with other management systems such as ISO 14001 on environmental management and OHSAS 18001 on occupational health and safety.

➔ [For more information](#) on these management systems, please refer to the related documents in the database.

Monitoring

ISO does not require external certification, but in order to prove compliance to clients it may still be needed. In this case, the ISO 9001 system has to be certified by an authorised certifying body (such as Lloyd's, Veritas and SGS). A certificate is valid for three years. In order to maintain the certificate, regular audits, both internal (1-2 times per year) and external (2 times per year), are needed.

Costs

The cost of certification varies from one organisation to another, depending on factors such as the size and complexity of the organisation, the actual state of implementation of the quality management system, the attitude and commitment of the top management, etc. If you are interested in knowing more about certification costs, it is advisable to contact a certification organisation for more information.

Organisation

ISO, International Organization for Standardization, is a network of national standards institutes from 157 countries. The central secretariat is based in Geneva. Its members are organisations from both the public and the private sector.

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