

The New Mentality of ISO Management Systems
Focus is now Adding Value

(Quality) Management Principles
October 2009

Below are the Quality Management Principles initially established by TC176 to be the cornerstone of ISO 9001:2000. Since then it has been recognized that they apply to all systems, not just quality, and they are used today for all of the ISO Management Systems. They are described in ISO 9000:2005 Fundamentals and Vocabulary, 0.2 Quality management principles. The comments regarding each topic are mine.

a) **Customer focus – Organizations depend on their customers and therefore should understand current and future customer needs, should meet customer requirements and strive to exceed customer expectations.**

Comment -- Under the old standards prior to the 2000 version, the word “customer” showed up six (6) times. With the newer versions after 2000 it shows up 30 times – a big difference. Additionally, the concept of customer focus has changed dramatically. It is now not just focused on meeting customer requirements, but on “enhancing customer satisfaction.” You will see those three words quite frequently in the new standard. The new standard also takes things to the next level by introducing “customer perception” in clause 8.2.1. We will talk more about that topic when we get to that area of the standard.

b) **Leadership – Leaders establish unity of purpose and direction of the organization. They should create and maintain the internal environment in which people can become fully involved in achieving the organization’s objectives.**

Comment -- It used to be that Top Management turned to the ISO Reps of the world and said to them: “You do it!” meaning you design, implement and run the system, and don’t bother me with it. We quickly found out that to have a successful system management has to be involved to the point of using the system to drive management of the business. As third party auditors, we do not want to see an organization’s activities described one way and how they do business be a different way. Top Management’s role is to develop the strategic direction of the organization and it is up to the rest of the management team to perform the tactical steps needed to implement that strategy. The organization’s system has to be the way they do business for it to be effective! You will see many examples of this as we move forward.

c) **Involvement of people – People at all levels are the essence of an organization and their full involvement enables their abilities to be used for the organization’s benefit.**

Comment -- Every employee has to be able to show they are involved up to the level of their responsibility, AND that they know their role in making their

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particular work area successful. This is directly required by two different clauses of the standard. Again, more on this later.

- d) Process approach – A desired result is achieved more efficiently when activities and related resources are managed as a process.**

Comment -- With the adoption of the 2000 version of the standard we recognized that no organization runs based on the documentation it has in place, it runs based on its processes. Once management understands this concept it really does start to use the system to drive continual improvement.

- e) System approach to management – Identifying, understanding and managing interrelated processes as a system contributes to the organization's effectiveness and efficiency in achieving its objectives.**

Comment -- If an organization's processes are identified and managed to achieve objectives, it will be successful. I tell all of my clients that if I can't see objective evidence that their system is driving things to the bottom line I know that there is something wrong with their system!

- f) Continual improvement – Continual improvement of the organization's overall performance should be a permanent objective of the organization.**

Comment -- Organizations are required to be able to demonstrate that they are using the system to drive continual improvement. No longer can we be satisfied with the status quo. Continual improvement is a requirement.

- g) Factual approach to decision making – Effective decisions are based on the analysis of data and information.**

Comment -- Clause 8.4 is the money clause of the standard. If it is used the way it is written the organization has to be able to demonstrate it is using the system to drive things to the bottom line – no choice!

- h) Mutual beneficial supplier relationships – An organization and its suppliers are interdependent and a mutually beneficial relationship enhances the ability of both to create value.**

Comment -- We really are becoming more and more of a global society and we are outsourcing more and more to organizations that are specialists in our areas of need. In a very real sense, we are only as good as the products and/or services we purchase from our suppliers.

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