



TRAINING

ISO: Improving Management Systems Standards

A management system is the way in which an organisation manages the interrelated parts of its business in order to achieve its objectives. These objectives can relate to a number of different topics, including product or service quality, operational efficiency, environmental performance, health and safety in the workplace and many more.

ISO management system standards (MSS) help organisations improve their performance by specifying repeatable steps that organisations consciously implement to achieve their goals and objectives, and to create an organisational culture that reflexively engages in a continuous cycle of self-evaluation, correction and improvement of operations and processes through heightened employee awareness and management leadership and commitment.

Background

The company had worked with a Management Systems and Consultant to set up and maintain systems and processes for both ISO 9001 – Quality Management System Standard and ISO 14001 – Environmental Management System Standard.

ISO 9001 sets out the criteria for a quality management system and is the only standard in the that can be certified to. This standard is based on a number of quality management principles including a strong customer focus, the motivation and implication of top management, the process approach and continual improvement.

ISO 14001 sets out the criteria for an environmental management system and can be certified to. It maps out a framework that a company or organisation can follow to set up an effective environmental management system.

The company were accredited to the 2004 versions of these standards in 2007. In 2010 I worked with the Management Consultant to implement the requirements of OHSAS 18001. BS OHSAS 18001 is a truly international standard which sets out the requirements for occupational health and safety management good practice.

In 2018, OHSAS 18001 was replaced with ISO 45001, which brought the health and safety standard in line with 9001 and 14001. I worked to transition this and led the company to achieve certification against this standard in 2019.

What's Involved

The level of complexity of the system will depend on each organisation's specific context. For some organisations, especially smaller ones, it may simply mean having

strong leadership from the business owner, providing a clear definition of what is expected from each individual employee and how they contribute to the organisation's overall objectives, without the need for extensive documentation. More complex businesses operating, for example, in highly regulated sectors, may need extensive documentation and controls in order to fulfil their legal obligations and meet their organisational objectives.

We worked together to put the three standards as an Integrated Management System rather than stand alone standards, as they all focus on the same Plan Do Check and Act cycle.

Our Management Consultant was responsible for carrying out the internal audits and providing audit reports and findings, such as observations and non-conformances against the processes and standards, I was responsible for ensuring these items were closed off ahead of the next audit, as well as measuring the company's performance against the objectives and Management Programme.

I was responsible for the communications with the certifying body and providing them with the required evidence at our annual surveillance visits.

The challenge was in transitioning to the new standards - ISO 9001 and 14001 from the previous standards and then transitioning again as things changed further from OHSAS 18001 to ISO 45001 in March 2020. There was more of a focus on business management and leadership and the challenge was always in illustrating a unified approach to top management commitment and leadership as within such a tight knit team each director had differing styles and advice that they wanted to incorporate. This was something we needed to work through and progress, so we could find a uniform approach to communicate.



Impressing the Assessors

What was involved:

1. Maintaining and updating an Environmental Aspects Register - detailing the aspects ('elements of the organisation's activities, products or services that can interact with the environment'.)
2. Legal Requirements Register All Acts and Regulations relating to Quality, Environmental and Health & Safety that were applicable to the company
3. Quality, Environmental and OH&S Management Programme: Objectives and targets each year the company had set to implement and achieve for each area and continuous measurement
4. Operating Procedures: Maintenance and implementation of Operating Procedures:
 - System Review: A process for how the company would review and audit the system
 - Document and Data Control: A process detailing how the company-controlled paperwork, forms, emails, client correspondence, plans, etc.
 - System Improvement: A process detailing how the company would make improvements feedback from clients, feedback from staff, feedback following audits, general improvements

- Supplier Approval and Purchasing: Detailed how the company would appoint subcontractors and against what criteria, how it monitored them and our suppliers, what measures were taken throughout purchasing i.e. quotations, best practice etc
- Order Administration and Project Design: How the company secured works? PO Numbers, quotes, invoicing procedures, Terms and Conditions etc.
- Process Control
- Calibration and Statutory Inspection: How we maintained plant, equipment etc and vehicles
- Training, the process for planning and implementing training and evaluating its effectiveness
- Quality, Environmental and OHSAS planning: How we planned to ensure these are implemented into each work activity
- Quality, Environmental and OHSAS Communication: The process of internal and external communications
- Quality, Environmental and OHSAS Operational Control. How these would be implemented in everything we do
- IMS Manual an overview of the company, standards and how we operated as a company, including our policy statements relating to each standard
 - 5.System Improvement Reports for improving the standard, client feedback, complaints and compliments
 - 6.Internal Auditing - and internal audit report
 - 7.Liaising and communicating with certifying bodies

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Why This is Great for Business

Using ISO 9001 helps ensure that customers get consistent, good-quality products and services, which in turn brings many business benefits.

ISO 14001 provides assurance to company management and employees as well as external stakeholders that environmental impact is being measured and improved.

BS OHSAS 18001 / ISO 45001 helps eliminate or minimise operational risks and hazards. The standard is designed to help you create the best possible working conditions in your organisation - helping you to meet legal, industry and customer requirements.

The benefits of an effective management system to an organisation include:

- More efficient use of resources and improved financial performance
- Improved risk management and protection of people and the environment
- Increased capability to deliver consistent and improved services and products, thereby increasing value to customers and all other stakeholders

This kind of accreditation can seem REALLY intense and it takes a very systematic approach to achieving it - what this brings though is huge improvements across the business once all the i's are dotted and the t's are crossed - this is not just an administrative exercise, the business benefits of having all these systems in place really set a company up for growth.

"When you see what is required to comply to some of these regulations as a business owner it would be so much easier to bury your head in the sand. I am so lucky I had someone I trusted to work through all the logistics with our team to make sure our management systems are performing well as this is not my area of expertise. I am also grateful that the work done behind the scenes to get us to this point has actually also been hugely valuable in terms of increasing productivity too so it's a win win all round. "

I am now working towards becoming a lead auditor and currently working with another company to achieve the same 3 standards