



ISO 9001

ISO 9001:2015
How to use it



ISO 9001 is a standard that sets out the requirements for a quality management system.

It helps businesses and organizations to **be more efficient** and **improve customer satisfaction**.



What **benefits** will it bring to my business or organization?

Implementing a quality management system will help you :

- Assess the **overall context** of your organization to define who is affected by your work and what they expect from you. This will enable you to clearly **state your objectives** and **identify new business opportunities**.
- Put your **customers first**, making sure you consistently meet their needs and exceed their expectations. This can lead to repeat custom, new clients and increased business for your organization.
- Work in a **more efficient way** as all your processes will be aligned and understood by everyone in the business or organization. This increases productivity and efficiency, bringing internal costs down.
- Meet the necessary **statutory and regulatory requirements**.
- **Expand into new markets**, as some sectors and clients require ISO 9001 before doing business.
- **Identify and address the risks** associated with your organization.

What is **quality management** all about?

ISO 9001 builds on **seven quality management principles**. Following these principles will ensure your organization or business is set up to consistently create value for its customers. With these seven pillars firmly in place, implementing a quality management system will be much easier.

The seven quality management principles are :

- 1. Customer focus.** Meeting – and exceeding – customer needs is the primary focus of quality management and will contribute to the long-term success of your enterprise. It is important to not only attract but also retain the confidence of your customers, so adapting to their future needs is key.
- 2. Leadership.** Having a unified direction or mission that comes from strong leadership is essential to ensure that everyone in the organization understands what you are trying to achieve.
- 3. Engagement of people.** Creating value for your customers will be easier if you have competent, empowered and engaged people at all levels of your business or organization.
- 4. Process approach.** Understanding activities as processes that link together and function as a system helps achieve more consistent and predictable results. People, teams and processes do not exist in a vacuum and ensuring everyone is familiar with the organization's activities and how they fit together will ultimately improve efficiency.



More information on the value and benefits of these quality management principles, as well as some useful tips for putting them into practice in your organization, can be found in ISO 9000, which deals with the fundamentals of quality management.

5. Improvement. Successful organizations have an ongoing focus on improvement. Reacting to changes in the internal and external environment is necessary if you want to continue to deliver value for your customers. This is of paramount importance today when conditions evolve so quickly.

6. Evidence-based decision making. Making decisions is never easy and naturally involves a degree of uncertainty, but ensuring your decisions are based on the analysis and evaluation of data is more likely to produce the desired result.

7. Relationship management.

Today's businesses and organizations do not work in a vacuum. Identifying the important relationships you have with interested parties such as your suppliers – and setting out a plan to manage them – will drive sustained success.

How do I get started?

There are many ways an organization can implement a quality management system. In-depth advice is available from a number of different resources, including the publication *ISO 9001 for small businesses – What to do*, but here are a few tips to get you started.

Tip 1 – Define your objectives. Why do you want to implement the standard?

Tip 2 – Make sure senior management is on board. It is crucial that everyone – from the top down – is supportive of the initiative and its objectives. If you are struggling with this, publications such as *Reaping the benefits of ISO 9001* and *ISO 9001: Debunking the myths* might help.

Tip 3 – Identify your organization’s key processes for meeting your objectives as well as your customers’ needs. Within each of these processes, make sure you understand your customers’ requirements and can guarantee that these are met – each and every time. This will form the basis of your quality management system.





How is the **standard structured?**

ISO 9001:2015 (the most recent version of the standard) is made up of a number of different sections, each concentrating on the requirements involved in different aspects of a quality management system.

- Clause 0-3 – Introduction and scope of the standard
- Clause 4 – Context of the organization
- Clause 5 – Leadership
- Clause 6 – Planning
- Clause 7 – Support
- Clause 8 – Operation
- Clause 9 – Performance evaluation
- Clause 10 – Improvement

You can preview the freely available sections of the standard on ISO's Online Browsing Platform (www.iso.org/obp).

How can I get **certified to the standard**?

There is no obligation to be certified to ISO 9001, so a good first step is evaluating whether certification makes sense for your organization. Although certification might reassure customers that your products and services are in line with their expectations – and might in some cases be a prerequisite to working with certain clients – many organizations benefit from using the standard without seeking certification.

If you do opt to get certified, the first step is to find a certification body as ISO does not perform certification. In so doing, you should:

- Evaluate several certification bodies.
- Check if the certification body uses the relevant CASCO standard.

CASCO (ISO's Committee on conformity assessment) has produced a number of standards related to the certification process. **ISO/IEC TS 17021-3:2013** sets out the requirements for bodies providing audit and certification to quality management systems.



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- Check that the certification body is accredited. Accreditation is not compulsory. While non-accreditation does not necessarily mean an organization is not reputable, being accredited does provide independent confirmation of its competence.

To find an accredited certification body, contact the national accreditation body in your country or visit the International Accreditation Forum.

What is accreditation?

Accreditation is the formal recognition by an independent party (generally known as an “accreditation body”) that a certification body operates according to International Standards – a form of certification of the certifying body.



Other standards in the family that might help

ISO 9001 is the best known of the ISO standards on quality, but there are many other standards that can help you reap the full benefits of a quality management system and put customer satisfaction at the heart of your business.

A few documents are mentioned here, but additional information on the full family of quality standards can be found in the brochure *Selection and use of the ISO 9000 family of standards*.

- **ISO 9000** contains detailed explanations of the seven quality management principles in addition to many helpful tips on how to ensure these are reflected in the way you work. It also contains many of the terms and definitions used in ISO 9001 and constitutes a useful companion document to help you build a successful quality management system.
- **ISO 9004** provides guidance on how to achieve sustained success with your quality management system.
- **ISO 19011** gives guidance for performing both internal and external audits to ISO 9001. Good internal audits will help ensure your quality management system delivers on promise and will get you ready for an external audit, should you decide to seek third-party certification.





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