INTERNATIONAL STANDARD

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Quality management — Customer satisfaction — Guidelines for codes of conduct for organizations

Management de la qualité — Satisfaction du client — Lignes directrices relatives aux codes de conduite des organismes

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

International Standards are drafted in accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

The main task of technical committees is to prepare International Standards. Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

ISO 10001 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 176, *Quality management and quality assurance*, Subcommittee SC 3, *Supporting technologies*.

Introduction

0.1   General

Maintaining a high level of customer satisfaction is a significant challenge for many organizations. One way of meeting this challenge is to put in place and use a customer satisfaction code of conduct. A customer satisfaction code of conduct consists of promises and related provisions that address issues such as product delivery, product returns, handling of personal information of customers, advertising and stipulations concerning particular attributes of a product or its performance (see Annex A for examples). A customer satisfaction code of conduct can be part of an effective approach to complaints management. This involves:

a)   complaints prevention, by making use of an appropriate customer satisfaction code of conduct;

b)   internal complaints handling, for instances when expressions of dissatisfaction are received;

c)   external dispute resolution, for situations in which complaints cannot be satisfactorily dealt with internally.

This International Standard provides guidance to assist an organization in determining that its customer satisfaction code provisions meet customer needs and expectations, and that the customer satisfaction code is accurate and not misleading. Its use can:

⎯   enhance fair trade practices and customer confidence in an organization;

⎯   improve customer understanding of what to expect from an organization in terms of its products and relations with customers, thereby reducing the likelihood of misunderstandings and complaints;

⎯   potentially decrease the need for new regulations governing an organization's conduct towards its customers.

0.2   Relationship with ISO 9001 and ISO 9004

This International Standard is compatible with ISO 9001 and ISO 9004 and supports the objectives of these two standards through the effective and efficient application of a process to develop and implement a code of conduct related to customer satisfaction. This International Standard can also be used independently of ISO 9001 and ISO 9004.

ISO 9001 specifies requirements for a quality management system that can be used for internal application by organizations, or for certification, or for contractual purposes. A customer satisfaction code of conduct implemented in accordance with this International Standard (ISO 10001) can be an element of a quality management system. This International Standard is not intended for certification or for contractual purposes.

ISO 9004 provides guidance on continual improvement of performance regarding quality management systems. This International Standard (ISO 10001) can further enhance performance regarding codes of conduct, as well as increase the satisfaction of customers and other interested parties. It can also facilitate the continual improvement of the quality of products and processes based on feedback from customers and other interested parties.

NOTE   Apart from customers, other interested parties can include suppliers, industry associations and their members, consumer organizations, relevant government agencies, personnel, owners and others who are affected by an organization's customer satisfaction code of conduct.

0.3 Relationship with ISO 10002 and ISO 10003

This International Standard is compatible with ISO 10002 and ISO 10003. These three standards can be used either independently or in conjunction with each other. When used together, this International Standard, ISO 10002, and ISO 10003 can be part of a broader and integrated framework for enhanced customer satisfaction through codes of conduct, complaints handling and dispute resolution (see Annex B).

ISO 10002 contains guidance on the internal handling of product-related complaints. By fulfilling the promises given in a customer satisfaction code of conduct, organizations decrease the likelihood of problems arising because there is less potential for confusion regarding customer expectations concerning the organization and its products.

ISO 10003 contains guidance on the resolution of disputes regarding product-related complaints that could not be satisfactorily resolved internally. When disputes do arise, the existence of a customer satisfaction code of conduct can assist the parties in understanding customer expectations and the organization's attempts to meet those expectations.

0.4 Statements regarding conformity

This International Standard is designed to be used solely as a guidance document. Where all applicable guidance provided in this International Standard has been implemented, statements that a customer satisfaction code of conduct is planned, designed, developed, implemented, maintained and improved based on that guidance can be made.

However, any statements claiming or implying conformity to this International Standard are inconsistent with this International Standard, and it is therefore inappropriate to make such statements.

NOTE   Statements claiming or implying conformity to this International Standard are thus inappropriate in any promotional and communication material, such as press releases, advertisements, marketing brochures, videos, staff announcements, logos, slogans and catch lines for diverse media, ranging from print and broadcasting to Internet and multi-media applications, to product labels, signs and banners.

Quality management — Customer satisfaction — Guidelines for codes of conduct for organizations

1 Scope

This International Standard provides guidance for planning, designing, developing, implementing, maintaining and improving customer satisfaction codes of conduct. This International Standard is applicable to product-related codes containing promises made to customers by an organization concerning its behaviour. Such promises and related provisions are aimed at enhanced customer satisfaction. Annex A provides simplified examples of components of codes for different organizations.

NOTE 1   Throughout this International Standard, the term "product" encompasses services, software, hardware and processed materials.

NOTE 2   In this International Standard, the term "product" applies only to the product intended for, or required by, a customer.

This International Standard is intended for use by organizations regardless of type, size and product provided, including organizations that design customer satisfaction codes of conduct for use by other organizations. Annex C gives guidance specifically for small businesses.

This International Standard does not prescribe the substantive content of customer satisfaction codes of conduct, nor does it address other types of codes of conduct, such as those that relate to the interaction between an organization and its personnel, or between an organization and its suppliers.

This International Standard is not intended for certification or for contractual purposes, and it is not intended to change any rights or obligations provided by applicable statutory and regulatory requirements.

NOTE 3   While this International Standard is not intended for contractual purposes, customer satisfaction codes of conduct promises can be included in an organization's contracts.

NOTE 4   This International Standard is aimed at customer satisfaction codes of conduct concerning individual customers purchasing or using goods, property or services for personal or household purposes, although it is applicable to all customer satisfaction codes of conduct.

2 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 9000:2005, *Quality management systems — Fundamentals and vocabulary*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO 9000:2005 and the following apply.

3.1
customer satisfaction code of conduct
code
promises, made to **customers** (3.4) by an **organization** (3.6) concerning its behaviour, that are aimed at enhanced **customer satisfaction** (3.5) and related provisions

NOTE 1   Related provisions can include objectives, conditions, limitations, contact information and complaints handling procedures.

NOTE 2   Hereafter in this International Standard, the term "code" is used in place of "customer satisfaction code of conduct".

3.2
complainant
person, **organization** (3.6) or their representative, making a **complaint** (3.3)

NOTE   This definition clarifies the definition given in ISO 10002, in that a representative can represent a person or an organization.

3.3
complaint
expression of dissatisfaction made to an **organization** (3.6), related to its products, or the complaints-handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected

[ISO 10002:2004, 3.2]

NOTE   Complaints can be made in relation to the **code** (3.1).

3.4
customer
organization (3.6) or person that receives a product

EXAMPLE   Consumer, client, end-user, retailer, beneficiary or purchaser.

NOTE 1   A customer can be internal or external to the organization.

NOTE 2   For the purposes of this International Standard, the term "customer" includes potential customers.

NOTE 3   Adapted from ISO 9000:2005, 3.3.5.

3.5
customer satisfaction
customer's (3.4) perception of the degree to which the customer's requirements have been fulfilled

NOTE 1   Customer **complaints** (3.3) are a common indicator of low customer satisfaction but their absence does not necessarily imply high customer satisfaction.

NOTE 2   Even when customer requirements have been agreed with the customer and fulfilled, this does not necessarily ensure high customer satisfaction.

[ISO 9000:2005, 3.1.4]

3.6
organization
group of people and facilities with an arrangement of responsibilities, authorities and relationships

EXAMPLE   Company, corporation, firm, enterprise, institution, charity, sole trader, association, government agency or parts or combination thereof.

NOTE   Adapted from ISO 9000:2005, 3.3.1.

4 Guiding principles

4.1 General

Effective and efficient planning, design, development, implementation, maintenance and improvement of a code is based on adherence to the customer-focused guiding principles set out in 4.2 to 4.9.

4.2 Commitment

An organization should be actively committed to the adoption, integration and dissemination of a code and the fulfilment of its promises.

4.3 Capacity

Sufficient resources should be made available for code planning, design, development, implementation, maintenance and improvement, and for managing them effectively and efficiently.

4.4 Visibility

A code should be well publicized to customers, personnel and other interested parties.

4.5 Accessibility

A code and relevant information about it should be easy to find and use (see Annex D).

4.6 Responsiveness

An organization should respond to the needs of customers and the expectations of interested parties in its code (see Annex E).

4.7 Accuracy

An organization should ensure that its code, and information about its code, are accurate, not misleading, verifiable and in compliance with relevant statutory and regulatory requirements.

4.8 Accountability

The organization should establish and maintain accountability for, and reporting on, the actions and decisions with respect to its code.

4.9 Continual improvement

Increased effectiveness and efficiency of the code and its use should be a permanent objective of the organization.

5 Code framework

5.1 Establishment

A code should be supported by an organizational framework for decision-making and action to use in code planning, design, development, implementation, maintenance and improvement. This framework involves resource assessment, provision and deployment needed to carry out the interrelated activities to fulfil code objectives (see Annex F). It also includes top management commitment, assignment of appropriate responsibilities and authorities, and training throughout the organization.