
Quality management — Guidance for people engagement

*Management de la qualité — Recommandations pour l'engagement
du personnel*

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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.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

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. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see www.iso.org/patents).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html.

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 176, *Quality management and quality assurance*, Subcommittee SC 3, *Supporting technologies*, in collaboration with Technical Committee ISO/TC 260, *Human resource management*.

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition (ISO 10018:2012), which has been technically revised. The main changes compared with the previous edition are as follows:

- in accordance with the revised ISO quality management principles, “people involvement” has been changed to “people engagement”;
- the different clauses have been linked to those in ISO 9001:2015;
- a smaller section has been dedicated to competence as the majority of that text has been transferred to the revised ISO 10015:2019.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html.

Introduction

While the term “quality” is defined in ISO 9000:2015, many definitions of the term can be found. Most concur that it is based upon making organizations perform for their interested parties: from improving products, services, systems and processes to making sure the entire organization is fit and effective and what it does is fit for purpose, and not only stays that way but keeps improving.

Quality is pursued in many ways, from informal approaches to a systematic, enterprise level operating under certification to ISO 9001:2015 and other standards. A common challenge is the difficulty in encouraging people to engage with those arrangements within the context of their cultures, traditional work values, perceptions and practices.

In a more general context, people engagement is the emotional commitment that people have to the organization and its goals. This emotional commitment means engaged people actually care about their work and their organization. They don't work for just a paycheck, or just for the next promotion, but work towards the organization's goals. When we consider engagement with quality, it is an extension of this emotional commitment.

In the hiring of people, an organization should consider both value alignment and skills.

Practical difficulties to achieve engagement include the following examples:

- quality has a reputation of being linked to compliance rather than a collective pursuit of excellence;
- quality is seen as a technical discipline and not “the best way to get things done” of relevance to all;
- language and tools can be used to make quality seem inaccessible to those not formally trained;
- quality professionals often lack the “softer skills” necessary to change the paradigm.

This document provides guidance on how important changes can be made to the level of people engagement with quality within organizations of all types and sizes to the benefit of all interested parties.

The following concepts are addressed throughout [Clauses 4](#) through [9](#):

- a) considerations;
- b) link to ISO 9001 and other quality management standards and systems;
- c) potential action steps;
- d) potential benefits.

Although this document is intended to address these concepts in relation to quality management standards, they can be applied to other management systems, standards and disciplines.

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Quality management — Guidance for people engagement

1 Scope

This document gives guidelines for engaging people in an organization's quality management system and on enhancing their involvement and competence within it.

This document is applicable to any organization, regardless of its size, type or activity.

2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements 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 9000:2015, *Quality management systems — Fundamentals and vocabulary*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document the terms and definitions given in ISO 9000:2015 apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>

4 Context of the organization and quality culture

4.1 Considerations

Organizational culture refers to the beliefs and behaviours that determine how employees and management interact and handle beyond-organization transactions. Often, culture is implied, not expressly defined, and develops organically over time from the cumulative traits of the people who are involved. In other situations, it can be the result of the personality and philosophy of a powerful and influential leader.

Social media allows those impacted to have a voice far more powerful than traditional marketing activity. For most organizations, quality has never been more important. Customers have a near limitless ability to search for products and services from around the world and to review objective performance data from numerous sources. At the same time, people prefer to be associated with an organization with a positive cultural image.

These pressures and opportunities require new approaches to quality, and the development of quality cultures in which people see quality as central to their workplace identity is one such approach.

A common quality expectation is an integral component to such a quality culture. Leadership and management need to establish unity of purpose and shared values. People should know the relevant quality objectives, commit to the strategic direction, and understand the quality expectations and targets that apply to their specific role.

4.2 Link to ISO 9001 and other quality management standards and systems

ISO 9000:2015, 2.2.1, states that “an organization focused on quality promotes a culture that results in the behaviour, attitudes, activities and processes that deliver value through fulfilling the needs and expectations of customers and other relevant interested parties”.

4.3 Possible action steps

The establishment of a quality culture is helped by taking the following steps:

- a) embedding quality within a written value statement;
- b) aligning the consistent behaviour of top management to support the written value statement;
- c) having a clear and well-defined organizational structure that allows the cascading of values throughout the organization;
- d) having effective support systems (such as information technology) for communicating the intent of the quality culture;
- e) capturing stories that show the quality culture in action with associated valuable outcomes;
- f) continuing to celebrate the successes of the quality culture.

4.4 Potential benefits

A strong, positive quality culture, where people agree upon and care deeply about organizational values, can improve organization performance, motivate people and coordinate their behaviour towards a vision and specific performance goals.

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5 Leadership

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5.1 Considerations

Leaders establish unity of purpose and the 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. Leadership provides a clear focus for people throughout an organization and enables them to follow a path to achievement of the organizational objectives.

A leader needs to possess the necessary competences to achieve this.

Leaders define objectives and designate resources, and they act in a more strategic role. Managers organize resources to achieve a result by engaging the people in the organization, and they act in a more tactical role. Managers coordinate activities to direct and control an organization.

Leadership is the process for determining a possible future state that does not yet exist. Management is the coordinated activities to direct and control an organization (as defined in ISO 9000:2015, 3.3.3). For an organization to succeed, it is imperative that it has both effective leadership and management.

5.2 Link to ISO 9001 and other quality management standards and systems

Through effective leadership, top management is held accountable for ensuring the overall effectiveness of the quality management system by keeping the quality policy and quality objectives in alignment with the strategic direction of the organization, by integrating the quality management system requirements into the organization's processes, and by supporting other members of the management team in their respective areas of responsibility.

5.3 Possible action steps

5.3.1 Typical components of leadership include the following.

a) Vision — A description of a desired possible future state, such as envisioning a possible engagement strategy that facilitates the improvement of organizational outcomes. In the context of the quality management system, leadership should develop the vision of a future state that would enhance the achievement of desired outcomes. For example, many people view the quality management system as a series of documents and records to which their activities should align. The desired possible future state of a quality management system is that it results in positive organizational success and societal benefits.

b) Alignment — The ability to align people to the vision of the desired possible future state, thereby attaining their commitment and support.

EXAMPLE 1 Obtaining the concurrence of top management in the vision of the desired future state of the quality management system.

c) Enablement — The provision of necessary resources and the removal of barriers to achieving a desired future state.

EXAMPLE 2 Providing any training required to achieve a desired possible outcome.

5.3.2 In addition to the provided functional breakdown of leadership, it is important to consider the typical attributes of effective leaders, which include the following.

a) Passion — Great leaders have a passion for their work and believe it to be truly important. Sharing that enthusiasm is motivating for all people involved and is a way to leverage greater success.

b) Communication — Strong leaders know the importance of and how to communicate with people at all levels of their organization. Messages are clear and accessible. They leave people in no doubt as to what is expected and motivated to want to do it.

c) Commitment to others — Effective leaders know that they do not exist alone and need other people to help them achieve their vision. Those people deserve the support and encouragement appropriate to their own contribution and current capabilities.

d) Team building — Collaborative leaders see that we all achieve more when we work together. Working across roles and functions brings energy, ideas and new solutions to any task.

e) Decisiveness — People will often look to their leaders, not for perfection, but for someone able to make quick, considered, and well discerned decisions to allow them to focus on deployment within an agreed set of priorities.

f) Empathy — Good supportive leaders always take into consideration other people's points of view.

5.4 Potential benefits

The benefits of effective leadership include:

- a) the development and realization of the vision;
- b) an engaged workforce, supportive of quality and the quality management system;
- c) the absence of barriers to the achievement of desired outcomes;
- d) improved and sustainable productivity;
- e) organizational resilience and agility;
- f) innovation and creativity.