
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.

5 Leadership

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.

6 Planning and strategy

6.1 Considerations

Before considering the methods by which engagement with the organization's purpose and strategic direction can be promoted by the people, it is necessary to first place strategy in context through its relation to vision. [Figure 1](#) demonstrates the relationship between the vision, strategic direction and quality management system within an organization.

An organization's vision should be an overriding idea of what it aspires to be. It should provide a destination that can be used to guide actions and decision-making. A vision is usually a carefully crafted statement prepared by the organization's leader or leadership team that describes in simple terms what the organization stands for. "We aim to be the world's soft drink of choice" or "Our dream is to be the finest confectioner in our community" are equally valid.

To be effective, a vision requires courage, as it needs to describe a future state. It also requires measurement. How will the organization know when it is the finest confectioner in the community? To track the journey, what position does the organization hold now? Where does it need to be?

A simple review of websites will reveal that while some organizations have addressed these two key attributes, many others have not. Common failings include visions that celebrate the "now" rather than guide the future, visions that are so vague in aspiration that attainment and measurement are equally unlikely and visions that are much closer to being statements of values or ethos. These do not lack value but are not visions.

With its vision established, an organization is ready to develop its strategy, which is the road map for achieving its vision.

In practical terms, it is unlikely that the full strategy will be defined at an initial stage. More likely is that the very broadest structure will be in place with increasing content developing over time. For example, becoming "the finest confectioner in the community" may be based on a 10-year programme of acquisition and product range enlargement but is unlikely that every target and new product will be defined at the outset. What is important is that the end destination remains clear and that operational actions remain strategically aligned. It should also be noted that the vision and associated strategy can change over time in response to internal and external factors, but if effectiveness is to be maintained, these are changes that should be carefully considered at appropriate organizational levels.

Leaders should encourage appropriate and aligned behaviours to maintain and improve quality within the organization by means of sound decision-making and application of risk-based thinking.

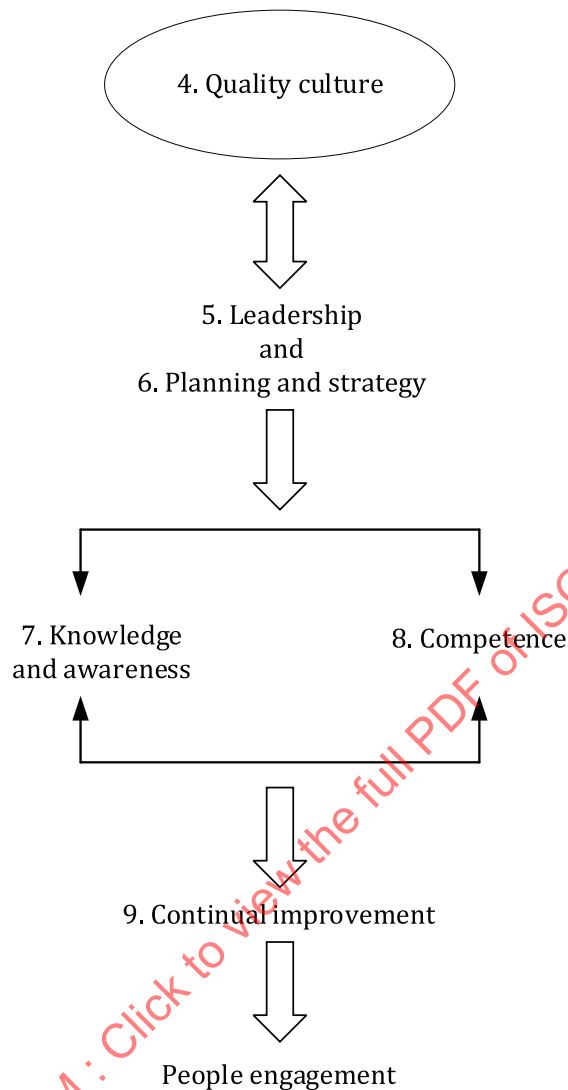


Figure 1 — Relationship between people engagement, strategic direction and the quality management system within an organization

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

ISO 9001:2015 places enhanced responsibility on “top management” to demonstrate leadership, commitment and accountability with respect to the effectiveness of the quality management system. In particular, it is noted that the quality policy and objectives, which in turn support the quality management system, are compatible with the strategic direction of the organization.

It is clear that if vision and strategy are not properly constituted and aligned, key principles of leadership and management are undermined, and the overall effectiveness of the quality management system is compromised.

6.3 Potential action steps

At the simplest level, for basic conformity to ISO 9001:2015, it is necessary for people to align the quality management system with the organizational vision and strategy. This aligning might fall short of what can be achieved, so people should not be required to follow visions to which they do not subscribe or to ineffective strategies.

Engagement with the quality of products and services and the quality management system has many facets. Without genuine alignment, quality remains a disconnected component of the organization. Alignment transforms this situation and shows the high-level value that can be contributed.

Engagement with those at operational levels is also key. The actions at that level should serve to provide far more relevance to the activities of people and the requirements of the quality management system. Many challenges with people engagement arise from the lack of relevance. There are many examples of the quality management system being “those files in the office” and people being in charge of audits and correcting “people” when things go wrong.

Some methods using people engagement to develop and manage the strategy include:

- a) determine the expected outcomes;
- b) involve interested parties and define their contributions;
- c) clarify the understanding of their individual roles in implementing the strategy;
- d) improve people's competence aligned to strategy;
- e) understand the effects of not developing quality for the internal organization and for relevant interested parties.

6.4 Potential benefits

An organization can benefit from contributions to the development of its vision and strategy from a wider range of people, not only top management.

Some potential benefits to the organization's strategic direction and overall success include:

- a) greater involvement and contributions of the organization's staff;
- b) greater clarity to personnel in understanding their individual roles in implementing the strategy;
- c) improved people's competence;
- d) achieving the organization's vision and strategy;
- e) improved performance;
- f) better engagement;
- g) higher levels of customer and employee satisfaction;
- h) improved productivity.

7 Knowledge and awareness

7.1 Considerations

ISO 30401:2018, 3.25, defines knowledge as the “human or organizational asset enabling effective decisions and action in context”.

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

ISO 9001:2015, 7.1.6, requires that organizational knowledge is maintained and made available to the extent necessary.

7.3 Possible action steps

Knowledge and awareness are motivational facilitators that can promote improved individual performance in organizations. The organization should analyse the results of the performance of people through such means as performance reviews, periodic evaluations, on-site reviews, etc. and distribute that information throughout the organization to build awareness and foster performance improvement. The organization should encourage people to use self-evaluation as a means to improve individual knowledge and awareness.

Some methods to enhance knowledge and awareness include:

- a) communicate using the appropriate language, language level and medium to facilitate the assimilation of knowledge;
- b) use tools such as coaching and mentoring;
- c) motivate the ongoing enhancement of learning;
- d) nurture the development and retention of knowledge.

7.4 Potential benefits

A knowledge management system supports the acquisition, distribution and retention of desired knowledge within an organization. The benefits of a structured approach are likely to include:

- a) better decision-making and creative thinking;
- b) sharing of effective approaches and solutions;
- c) development of innovation and growth;
- d) improved organizational performance and customer service;
- e) improved protection of developed organizational intellectual capital.

8 Competence

8.1 Considerations

Competence is the ability to apply knowledge and skills to achieve intended results (as defined in ISO 9000:2015, 3.10.4). The benefit of training and development is the increase in competence, which leads to an increase in a person's ability to create value for the organization and its customers.

Training and development are essential factors in people engagement, including the management of industrial/labour relations, and formal grievances. Successful organizations apply the knowledge and skills of their people in a way that creates value for the organization and its customers.

Learning is the process of acquiring knowledge or skills through experience, from study or from instruction. Formal learning will often result in a person receiving qualifications. Learning processes may apply to a person or collectively to an organization. An organization should recognize that people learn in different ways. Some people are more suited to a classroom environment; while others are inclined to a mentoring environment; while still others learn better in a web-based environment.

A learning organization focuses on increasing and retaining its knowledge to enhance the organization's capacity for performance. The organization needs to have competent staff in order to be competitive. To achieve the necessary flow of information and knowledge and become a learning organization, the organization's processes need to be combined into a management system. An organization's ability to learn enables it to be more competitive.

The benefits of an effective learning process are increased achievement, job satisfaction and job security. These lead to an improvement in attitude and motivation. Improvements in competences such as communication leads to improvements in product quality and better customer service. For the organization, this leads to increased competitiveness and profitability.

Training is the process by which people learn skills and competencies. Development is the process by which people change and become more competent. The intent is to engage people with the journey towards a personal connection with strategic direction and outcomes.

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

Ongoing training, education and diversified experience are prime means to achieve necessary competence so that the performance and effectiveness of the quality management system can be achieved.

8.3 Possible action steps

8.3.1 When considering the improvements that can be made, it may be helpful to review the barriers to engagement described earlier in this document. This review triggers some direct questions, including the following.

- a) If people engagement with the quality management system is desired, at what stage is training provided to appropriately define its nature and value?
- b) In this training, is quality presented as a specialist discipline or a part of normal process activities?
- c) Is the training material structured to present quality tools and techniques in an easily accessible manner?
- d) Are the quality management professionals and other people trained to take quality to the organization in a compelling manner?

8.3.2 Training should also be seen as an activity that starts from a new person's first experiences. The recruitment process should send a message about the organization's approach to the quality management system. The quality management system should appear at an early stage in the organizational entry period:

- a) quality should be linked to the collective pursuit of excellence, as simply the best way to get things done;
- b) language and tools should be used to make quality more accessible to those not formally trained;
- c) quality professionals should possess the soft skills necessary to enhance people engagement.

8.3.3 Training is a major driver of effective performance; therefore, organizations need to ensure that it also drives people engagement. Training plans should be linked to some form of competence requirement within a job description.

8.4 Potential benefits

Organizations whose people are engaged perform better than organizations whose people are not engaged. When employees are engaged at work, they feel a connection with the organization. They believe that the work they're doing is important and subsequently work more effectively.