

10 STEPS TO ISO 9001 CERTIFICATION

Regardless of the product or service your organization provides, ISO 9001 focuses on the effectiveness of your processes and delivery of your services.

DNV GL offers 10 simple steps to certification:

1. Identify your key drivers

We recommend that you formally review, at a senior management level, your key drivers for implementing a Quality Management System.

Such drivers should include improved awareness of the performance of your key processes and the need for continual improvement, as well as any specific customer requirements.

2. Obtain the standard

Purchase a copy of the standard. Search the web for links to ISO 9001 relating to your particular sector. Make sure you know the facts from the myths. For example, ISO 9001 is applicable to any organization in any industry, not just the manufacturing sector.

3. Define your strategy

To successfully implement a Quality Management System, commitment is required from senior management on defining the strategy. Start to formally document a quality policy and objectives following the requirements given in ISO 9001. Ensure the requirements of the quality policy are measurable to be able to demonstrate continuous improvements.

4. Planning provides resources for developing the quality management system

The required resources need to be made available and realistic timelines allocated ensuring that responsibilities are shared within the organization and not just allocated to the Quality Manager. In itself, a formal implementation project plan is not a requirement of ISO 9001 but is a sensible way of identifying needs and progressing implementation.

As the system is developed, this plan should be reviewed by senior management and kept updated. The responsibility for the Quality Management System and the Quality Management representative should be clearly identified. In addition, you may wish to employ a consultant to help develop the system. Take care that the consultant knows and understands your business and any advice covers your whole business.

5. Know your processes

ISO 9001 requires you to formally describe the interaction between the processes within the management system. This can be achieved by a simple process map specific to your organization.

The map should identify the key processes and also indicate the resources, controls, documentation and records needed to meet your customers' requirements. Ensure this process map is validated throughout your business to ensure no areas or interactions are missed. As the system is developed this process map should be used, reviewed and updated for its eventual inclusion in the Quality Manual.

6. Determine training needs

ISO 9001 requires proper identification of competence requirements for employees coming within the scope of the Quality Management System. Team leaders, employees and internal auditors will all need to meet the requirements of competence, sometimes requiring external training.

A range of courses, workshops and seminars are available to meet these needs. Make sure to define how you will demonstrate the effectiveness of training.

7. Develop management system documentation

ISO 9001 requires controlled documentation of a policy, manual and procedures as well as certain records. Whilst certification requires documented procedures, over-detailed documents are not the goal.

There are six documented procedures specifically required by ISO 9001 as well as those needed and identified by the organization. The required procedures should be drafted and developed in conjunction with the personnel who will be involved.

8. Implement your Quality Management System

Proper implementation of the requirements of your Quality Management System should be measured and recorded by internal audits. A management review must also be conducted to ensure the system's continuing suitability, adequacy and effectiveness.

The main review is a key driver to demonstrate the effective implementation of the Quality Management System. Any corrective and preventive actions should be identified, progressed and recorded.

9. Consider a pre-assessment audit

A pre-assessment audit or gap analysis by your intended certification body will help you identify any gaps that exist between the requirements of the standard and your organization's existing processes.

This audit can be carried out at any stage and is independent of the certification process - it will not constitute consultancy help.

10. Go for certification

Only use a nationally accredited certification body. DNV GL has a very wide range of accreditations. Initial certification is a two-stage process. The stage 1 process is an on-site document and readiness review at your head office. You will be awarded an accredited certificate on successful completion of the stage 2 audit. Forward planning and early dialogue with your chosen certification body is important.

For more information please do not hesitate to contact us.

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