



ISO advises managers how to get the best out of the ISO 9000 family

by Roger Frost

Manager, Communication Services, ISO Central Secretariat

ISO has published on its Web site a new electronic edition of its advice for managers, *Selection and use of the ISO 9000 family of standards*.

The ISO 9000 family, which currently consists of 17 international quality management standards and guidelines (plus a corrigendum), has earned a global reputation as a basis for establishing effective and efficient quality management systems.

A basis for continual improvement and business excellence

The best known standard is ISO 9001, which specifies the basic requirements for a quality management system (QMS) that an organization must fulfil to demonstrate its ability to consistently provide products (which include services) that enhance customer satisfaction and meet applicable statutory and regulatory requirements.

The standard can be used for certification/registration and contractual purposes by organizations seeking recognition of their quality management system. It is estimated that a million ISO 9001 certificates have been issued in 170 countries.

However, ISO technical committee ISO/TC 176, *Quality management and quality assurance*, which is responsible for developing and maintaining the ISO 9000 family, and which has updated the e-brochure, states: "You will obtain the greatest value by using the entire family of standards in an integrated manner."

Perspective

The e-brochure provides a general perspective on the ISO 9000 family of standards. It is an overview of the standards and demonstrates how, collectively, they form a basis for continual improvement and business excellence. The e-brochure includes:

- an overview of the ISO 9000 core standards;
- a step-by-step process to implement a quality management system;
- examples of typical applications of the documents;
- information on the ISO 9000 family of standards.

The experts of ISO/TC 176 give this advice to users: "It is highly recommended that you use ISO 9000 to become familiar with the basic concepts and the language used before you adopt ISO 9001 to achieve a first level of performance. The practic-

es described in ISO 9004 may then be implemented to make your quality management system more effective and efficient in achieving your business goals and objectives. The ISO 9001 and ISO 9004 standards have been written to enable you to relate them to other management systems (e.g. environmental), or to sector specific requirements (such as ISO/TS 16949 in the automotive industry) and to assist you in gaining recognition through national or regional award programmes."

ISO Secretary-General Alan Bryden comments: "ISO not only develops standards for organizations operating in global markets; it also provides informative documents and advice to help these organizations get the best out of ISO standards."

Selection and use of the ISO 9000 family of standards, which can be accessed free of charge on the ISO Web site www.iso.org, is the latest edition of the highly successful brochure, first published by ISO in 1994 as *Implementing ISO 9000*. The brochure will be updated further once the next edition of ISO 9001 is published – which is expected before the end of 2008.

