



Why ISO?

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Are you considering registering your quality system? If you currently have a certified system, do you sometimes ask yourself, “What does this certification do for us?” This article discusses the benefits of having a well-defined, recognized quality system and the value that this discipline and structure can provide.

There is awesome power for the person on the floor who “owns” the system. The value in inviting customers to walk through the shop so your operators can demonstrate the technologies available to them to make world-class products cannot be overlooked.

As long as you defined the standards to serve you, having a registered quality system can be a great benefit. As long as you eliminate bureaucratic signoffs and define how things are done (never *why* things are done), it can be effective.

A quality system is only a burden if it is viewed as something that adds unnecessary costs and the requirements are met only because “ISO says so.” This approach offers no additional value outside of your customer mandate to be certified.

Here are a few benefits of what a well-defined, non-bureaucratic quality system can do for your company:

Internal Benefits

1. **Process Improvements:** As you implement the system, you have the chance to improve your processes with input from the “owners.”

2. **Reduce Variation:** A quality system standardizes like processes while improving quality and consistency.



3. **Knowledge Retention:** Your older workers should be instrumental in ensuring their tasks are properly defined and then assist in transferring that knowledge to new employees.

4. **Continuous Improvement:** A formally defined quality system will organize the company’s process and systems to allow for continuous improvement (especially the process improvements generated by the people responsible for the tasks).

5. **Increased Quality Awareness:** Going through the process will make everyone, from management to floor, aware of the importance of quality and the positive impact successful completion of the certification process can have on the organization.

6. **Improved Throughput:** By having clearly defined systems.

7. **Scrap and Overtime Reduction.**

8. **Reporting Mechanism:** Allows you to capture key business considerations, such as 1.) Corrective and Preventive Actions (root cause analysis, eliminating

reoccurring issues), 2.) Internal Audits (evaluation of the effectiveness of your company’s quality systems; identifying and prioritizing improvement opportunities found by your audit team), and 3.) Management Review (concise evaluation of the entire quality system with top management).

External Benefits

1. **New (and Old) Business:** It is important that a quality system is registered in order to get new business and to maintain existing business. (Currently satisfied customers may be under pressure to utilize only registered organizations.)

2. **Reduced Customer Audits:** With your positive product quality performance, customers will (or should) recognize certification as a means to achieve their audit requirement.

3. **Marketing Potential:** Registration can be marketed. Your company makes the cut.

4. **Customer Satisfaction:** Assists in the company’s ability to continue to successfully respond to customers’ needs.

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5. Demonstrable Quality:

People and systems can distinguish you from competitors. Your people demonstrating your systems can have a positive, compelling impact.

But will this bring me more work? A registered quality standard does not necessarily mean more work will be coming your way. It does say that you have the discipline and systems to handle the additional business.

If you promote why you are unique and how your system is world-class, certainly you could have more opportunities. And, at the very least, your efforts with a certification process will reaffirm

your expertise/service with your current customers.

Having a binder full of information that is ignored or not reviewed until audit time, and maintaining a bunch of paperwork to explain why things are done prove nothing. Many companies can become ISO-certified. The key is to structure the system clearly, usefully and uniquely to your business.

The main thing with any quality standard is that it should not be an additional burden to what you are already doing. If it is, then it is not properly structured. You know better than anyone what you do and how you do it. You are the expert

on your processes.

There is nothing within the standard that most businesses were not already doing. Review contracts? Calibrate equipment? Confirm processes? Use data to analyze and improve? Yes to all.

The standard just provides an accepted and recognized framework for this work to be standardized. In fact, there are very few things that established businesses would have to create in order to address their need for ISO certification.

NEXT MONTH: A Philosophy to Consider

Pedestal Grinders, OSHA and You



By Miles Free, Director, Industry Research and Technology / mfree@mpa.org

OSHA cited an Ohio company for 15 safety violations and fined that company \$159,600 after a pedestal grinder operator was killed. The abrasive wheel on the grinder had exploded and struck the operator on the head.

In precision machining shops, grinders are essential for tool preparation, adjustment and modification. We have to master our grinding technology in a safe and compliant manner. Among the 15 safety violations, the shop was cited for two pedestal grinder violations: lack of properly adjusted safety guards and lack of properly adjusted work rests.

OSHA placed the company in its Severe Violator Enforcement

Program (SVEP), which mandates targeted follow-up inspections to ensure compliance with the law. The company was placed in the program for receiving two willful violations covered under the agency's National Emphasis Program on Amputations.

Pedestal grinders are foundational pieces of equipment in precision machining shops. It is up to us to assure that the potential hazards they can present are controlled. Here are four tips, from my experience, to keep your shop grinders in compliance:

- Don't allow wheels to get out of dress.
- Assure that the proper clearance, and no more, exists between

properly dressed wheel and front tool rests.

- Assure that all grinders have all guards in place. If guards are missing, LOCK THEM OUT.

- Assure that the grinder is mounted to the floor if the pedestal was designed to be bolted to the floor. If no bolt holes are present, bolting down is not necessary.

The safe use of grinders is a key part of our craft. It is up to us to keep the potential hazards grinders can present safely controlled. We do this by insisting on safe grinder practices and inspections to assure guards are in place and properly adjusted.

Grinders are ubiquitous in our shops. Safe conditions and use of grinders have to be ubiquitous, too.