



Quality Management Systems

Thought Leadership Report

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) is an independent, non-governmental standard-setting body composed of representatives from various national standards organizations. ISO sets voluntary standards for everything from Food Safety Management (ISO 22000) to Social Responsibility (ISO 2600). Established in 1987, the standards for the ISO 9000 addresses various aspects of Quality Management such as providing guidance and tools for companies and organizations who want to ensure that their products and services consistently meet customer’s requirements, and that quality is consistently improved. ISO 9000 was originally created as a standard of workmanship between the “soon-to-be” European Common Market Countries. Today, ISO 9000 is the worldwide standard that defines how a company should manage its processes in order to ensure quality throughout its organization.

Lean Manufacturing, now more commonly referred to as Continuous Process Improvement (CPI) or simply Lean, has been around as long as ISO 9000. Lean is a management philosophy derived mostly from the Toyota Production System (TPS). Championed by Toyota in the late ‘80s and early 90’s, Lean drives an organization to become more efficient in its operations. Lean too has now become the worldwide standard for companies to ensure control (and cost control) throughout their organizations. However, ISO 9000 utilizes a more structured approach for its standards, compared to Lean.

How do ISO 9000 and CPI work together? Very well actually. ISO 9000 requires that the organization practice CPI, particularly in the TS-16949 automotive standard. At its core, CPI has the identification and elimination of waste or ‘muda’ including the elimination of defects by practicing prevention or mistake proofing of processes. There are many striking similarities between the two systems, most notably:

- Management Commitment and Culture
- Standardization and Training
- Self-Policing and Self-Correcting

Management Commitment and Culture - Like any initiative, the initiative will not be successful unless management shows that it is fully committed to the way forward. ISO 9000 and CPI specifically require a management team be committed from top to bottom to analyze their own operations and continual improvement of every process.

Once that type of culture is established, management will reap the benefits of an organization that is driven to continually improve.

Standardization and Training - Both ISO 9000 and CPI demand that the organization apply standards to its processes. Both systems want to ensure that tasks are designed and adopted that have been proven to produce a “good” product and employees are trained in the “proper” method of doing the task. As stated in ISO-9000, the organization shall determine the skill requirements for a given task and ensure that training is provided to achieve that required skill level.

Self-Policing and Self-Correcting - CPI follows a simple credo called, “Plan...Do...Check...Act”. Check means that the organization will analyze its process improvements to ensure they are producing products efficiently and to customer requirements. ISO 9000 is based upon meeting customer requirements, but it also requires the company to audit itself. This is needed to ensure the organization is following its documented processes in all areas of the organization. In other words, “say what you do and do what you say”. Organizations that become certified to ISO 9000 or one of its variations have an outside organization, called a Registrar, audit them annually to ensure they continue to meet the requirements of the ISO 9000 standard.

There are many other complimentary components shared by a Quality Management System and CPI including:

- The establishment of teams
- A problem solving culture
- Periodic management review and introspection
- Goal establishment and achievement

The moniker “World Class” applies to those companies that surpass their competition in terms of quality and efficiency, among other areas. The adoption of both a Quality Management System and a culture of CPI is a critical and sometimes overlooked step in achieving the elite “World Class” label. If you are interested in finding out more about tools that can help Increase Performance and Sustain Gains feel free to contact MainStream GS at info@mainstreamgs.com or 877-785-4888.

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