



Taking Care of the Basics®

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Management Methods, Inc., P.O. Box 1484, Decatur, AL 35602

www.managementmethods.com davisw@managementmethods.com Tel: 256-355-3896

"--blessed is he who trusts in the Lord." Proverbs 16:20

The 10 Essentials for an Effective Quality Management System by Davis Woodruff, PE, CMC

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Quality....What is it? According to various experts you get definitions like quality is "fitness for purpose, degree of uniformity of product, or what the customer says it is" or some other similar definition. According to the definition found in the ISO 9000 standard, quality is "the degree to which a set of inherent characteristics fulfills requirements." Regardless of the definition you use, the issue is establishing and using a management system for quality that enables your business to fulfill customers' needs and requirements while making a profit.

Through experience with clients and empirical research over the past two decades we have identified 10 essentials for an effective quality management system.

The Ten Essentials are:

1. The needs and expectations of customers & interested parties are taken into account in decision making and procedures.
2. The Quality policy & quality objectives are clearly defined and understood within the organization.
3. Processes & responsibilities to achieve objectives are implemented and managed; including linkages or "hand-offs" among processes.
4. Resources and infrastructure to meet objectives are provided.
5. Methods to measure processes, as well as products, are defined and implemented.
6. Using the measurements of quality and process performance to guide improvement, because measurement without action is a waste of time and resources.
7. Preventing nonconformities and eliminating causes of nonconformities is systematic and managed as a process.
8. A process for continual improvement is planned, implemented and monitored for effectiveness.
9. Framework for verification of processes and products is clearly defined and understood within the business.
10. Management involvement in the system and thorough management reviews of the system. (These should be working meetings and not just "dog and pony" shows.)

"Quality is a never ending journey. Quality is not an accident; it is the result of planned processes which are diligently implemented and monitored."

8 Traps to Avoid with Your QMS or EMS*

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1. *Understanding the work to be done*
 2. *Consistency in operations*
 3. *Useful documentation*
 4. *Satisfying customers*

The four keys to success for a QMS.

1. **Too much documentation**
 - Sometimes less is better, don't over-do it with procedures that you can't follow nor maintain.
 - Use flow charts and pictures in your documentation instead of lengthy paragraphs.
2. **Document control issues**
 - Simplify your approval process by having only 2 or at most 3 approvals required.
 - Use simple methods to track and maintain documents.
3. **Keeping track of & acting on data**
 - Recording data for the sake of recording data is useless, use the information.
 - When goals and objectives are relevant to the process, it is easier to use the data.
 - Remember, no data is better than bad data.
4. **Required competencies & training records**
 - Identify the positions in your organization and list the competencies required.
 - Use a simple approach such as a spreadsheet to keep records that will indicate when training has been completed and competencies are achieved.
5. **Corrective/Preventive Action**
 - Be sure to distinguish between corrective and preventive action.
 - Simplify the record keeping.
 - Focus on root cause analysis, not just symptoms.
 - Follow-up to be sure actions taken are effective.
6. **Planning for the customer/customer satisfaction**
 - Be sure you can actually deliver what your customer is asking before accepting an order.
 - Assess customer satisfaction in the simplest way practical. Perhaps conversations with customers and records maintained.
 - One way is to ask, "Would you buy from us again?"
7. **Implement systems that work for your business**
 - Whatever processes and systems you implement should reflect the realities of your business, and not just something to "satisfy an auditor" or your registrar in the case of an ISO based QMS.
 - If something doesn't make sense for your business processes or model, then figure out another way to satisfy a particular requirement.
8. **Avoid a bureaucracy**
 - A QMS should work for you and not be a bureaucratic nightmare.
 - Build on your culture and your organization.
 - Don't build an empire; instead implement simple processes that work for your business.

*QMS = Quality Management System

*EMS = Environmental Management System



Establishing an Energy Management Policy

(Follow-up from the last issue of our newsletter.)

As with any effective enterprise wide policy, the energy policy must begin with top management and involve leadership and employees throughout the organization. Borrowing from the ISO 9001 model, the policy will contain at a minimum:

- A clear statement of understanding energy use
- A commitment to conserving energy
- Minimizing or reducing the environmental impact

The energy policy should also:

- Involve all employees in the process
- Provide a framework for goals and objectives or targets

The energy policy should be deployed and understood by all employees as well as how it relates their job if it is to be effective.

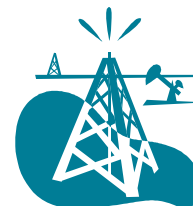
To summarize, the energy policy enables you to clearly and concisely communicate the policy to all employees so it can be understood. Next, it provides the framework for setting measurable targets and objectives and finally, it should guide you to continual improvement in energy management and utilization. Sounds sort of like an ISO 9001 quality policy or ISO 14001 environmental policy doesn't it?

A sample energy policy could be:

"We will be environmentally and economically responsible energy users at XYZ Company by implementing planned energy conservation measures to minimize environmental impacts while reducing energy costs."

This simple policy statement includes all of the requirements mentioned above, is easily communicated and understood by all. It cannot just be a philosophical statement if it is to be effective in guiding the organization. Of course, unless the policy is followed it is useless.

The energy policy could be introduced in a "kick off" type employee meeting with top management emphasis. If it "just appears" it is only another philosophical statement without meaning to the organization.



Sample Energy Policy Statement:

"We will be environmentally and economically responsible energy users at XYZ Company by implementing planned energy conservation measures to minimize environmental impacts while reducing energy costs."

Success Factor:

QUALITY

Success Factor 66

(Excerpted from Davis' book *Taking Care of the Basics: 101 Success Factors for Managers*, page 66, order it from amazon.com; authorhouse.com; bamm.com and others)

Working Definition: Whatever the customer says it is! At a minimum quality is meeting the expectations of the customer. According to ISO 9000 it is “the degree to which a set of inherent characteristics fulfills requirements.”

Success Factor: The struggle for quality never ends. It requires constant attention to detail, communication of requirements throughout the organization and measuring results through quality objectives.

Application: Effective leaders make quality a demonstrated priority along with safety, production and regulatory concerns. Daily decision making is what really communicates your priorities to the organization, not what you say or write or post on the walls!

Verses to Consider: Genesis 1:10; 21 (From the first quality system!)

Being More Successful: How do we know and measure quality in our business? How do we demonstrate the priority of quality each day?

To Do: Be sure you know the requirements for quality in your operations or business. Clearly communicate these requirements to each employee. If you've already done this, now would be a good time to review it in detail with your people.

Email Tip: Clean out your inbox and sent items box before you bog down your system. While these are convenient “filing cabinets,” don't let them overflow!

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Management Methods, Inc.

P.O. Box 1484
Decatur, AL 35602

Phone:
256-355-3896

Fax:
256-353-3140

E-mail: davisw@managementmethods.com