Business Improvement 2

ISO without the agony

Strategic Safety Systems

> What I thought would be a painful experience was, in fact, pain-free, using the support of Strategic Safety Systems.
> *D Vokins, Operations Director - Hunts*

> Certification to ISO 9001 and 14001 were two cornerstones in enabling G&P to secure three new lucrative accounts.
> *M Kells, Managing Director – G&P*

> The recent support towards certification to ISO 9001 and more recently, ISO 14001 enabled us to get certification without any fuss. The systems were clear, simple and a contrast to what you normally expect in a QA manual.
> *M Burn, Director – A Local Printer*

The prospect of gaining certification to ISO 9001 or similar standards fills most people with foreboding. Yet, many companies have started to realise that they will lose out if they do not have certification and we know of many who have already lost business because they are not certified.

But it doesn't have to be difficult. The comments shown above are just three of the many we receive from companies we have helped gain certification without the fuss and extra workload that people perceive that will encounter.

Far from being a burden, sensible ISO systems can be used as a tool to drive improvements and gain major benefits for your business.

Any with well over 170 certifications under our belt, Strategic Safety Systems is the company who delivers the goods with the minimum of fuss

Benefits

As a result being certified to ISO 9001, a company will:

- Have systems in place to manage quality, gaining internal cost savings and improvements
- Be in a strong position to gain business where demonstrated quality performance is a key part of the business

So what are the perceived problems?

"ISO 9001 will involve us in lots of extra work."

No, it's not necessary for there to be lots of additional work. It's simply a case of "saying what you do and then doing what you say." And the INTACT system, which is unique SSS software, does the hard work for you and gives meaningful management information. What's more, it enables you to have a paperless system.

"I've heard about ISO systems and they involve masses of paperwork and time."

This is a common myth and is what we call the BS 5858 curse. Once upon a time, this may have been true and you do find people out there who seem to love complex (and unworkable) systems. We, at SSS, cut through all of that and provide systems that require little effort to run and enable you to derive some major benefits. In fact, a reasonable proportion of our 9001 business involves mending existing systems.

"We end up with a big, thick, wordy manual."

No, SSS systems use simple flowcharts and the manual is quite slim. For example, a procedure for a key manufacturing process may be only a couple of pages. The longest single procedure we did, for a company producing complex capital equipment, ran to 9 pages of mostly flowcharts.

So, what is the SSS approach and what will SSS do for us?

The SSS approach involves us:

- Working with your people to understand and document your existing processes, and fill in any gaps.
- Providing software to manage issues that may arise.
- Helping with any internal audits or training, if desired.
- If required, liaising with the certification body

What do systems look like?

All SSS systems are implementation-based. What we mean by this is that they are written from the perspective of the users of the different systems and do not look like semi-legal documents.

The systems are built around what you do, and it's not a case of you having to fit the system.

In most cases, the procedures are just flowcharts, like the one shown here. You can see more details of the systems on the Business Improvement pages of www.StrategicSafety.co.uk.

What does the software do?

INTACT, which is an Integrated Action management system is used to manage many areas, including:

- Objectives
- Customer feedback
- Training records
- Internal and certification body audits
- Meetings

and to provide action plans and management information arising from these. So, you don't have to have lots of documents and spreadsheets one often sees in typical ISO systems. And management information is the click of a button away.

What are the steps?

Essentially there are two steps to gaining certification:

- Setting up and implementing management systems as described above.
- Being audited by a UKAS-accredited certification body. This requires initial certification visits and then repeat visits to maintain certification

How long does it all take and what are the costs?

Not very long, really, but it does of course, depend on the size of the company. We aim to get you started in the first month and then there is a UKAS requirement that you have to have the system running for 3 months. After that, there are 2 external audits, typically spread over a month. So, you should be aiming at 5 or 6 months from start to certification.
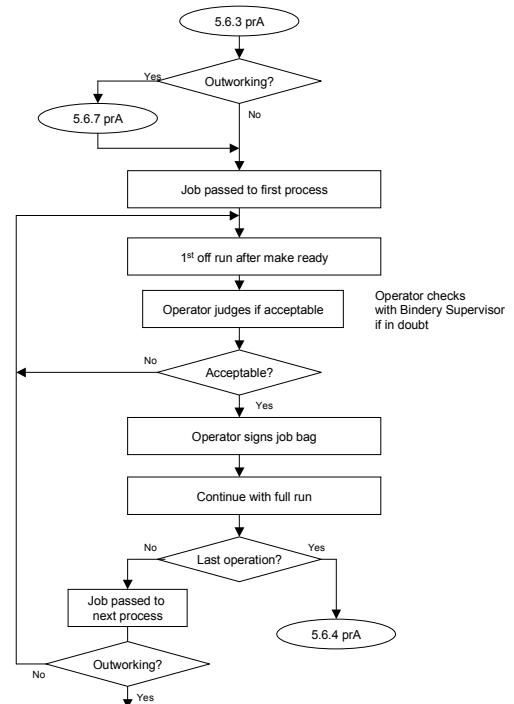
Costs obviously depend on the size and complexity of the organisation, but we give you indicative cost breakdowns on www.StrategicSafety.co.uk/ISOWithoutTheAgony.html .

Can systems be integrated?

Yes, the approach that SSS take from the outset is to structure systems so that they can be an integrated system to cover, or can be extended to cover, any combination of ISO 9001, ISO 14001, OHSAS 18001 and other standards like FSC or ISO 27001.

How do I find out more?

More details on ISO certification support are available from the Business Improvement pages of www.strategicsafety.co.uk. Alternatively, e-mail or phone us on the numbers below

Scan with RedLaser

Strategic Safety Systems Ltd., 8 The Highgrove, Bishops Cleeve, Cheltenham, GL52 8JA, UK
Phone: 01242 679713   Mobile 07768 011667
E-Mail: info@StrategicSafety.co.uk   Web site: www.StrategicSafety.co.uk