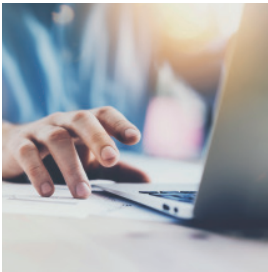


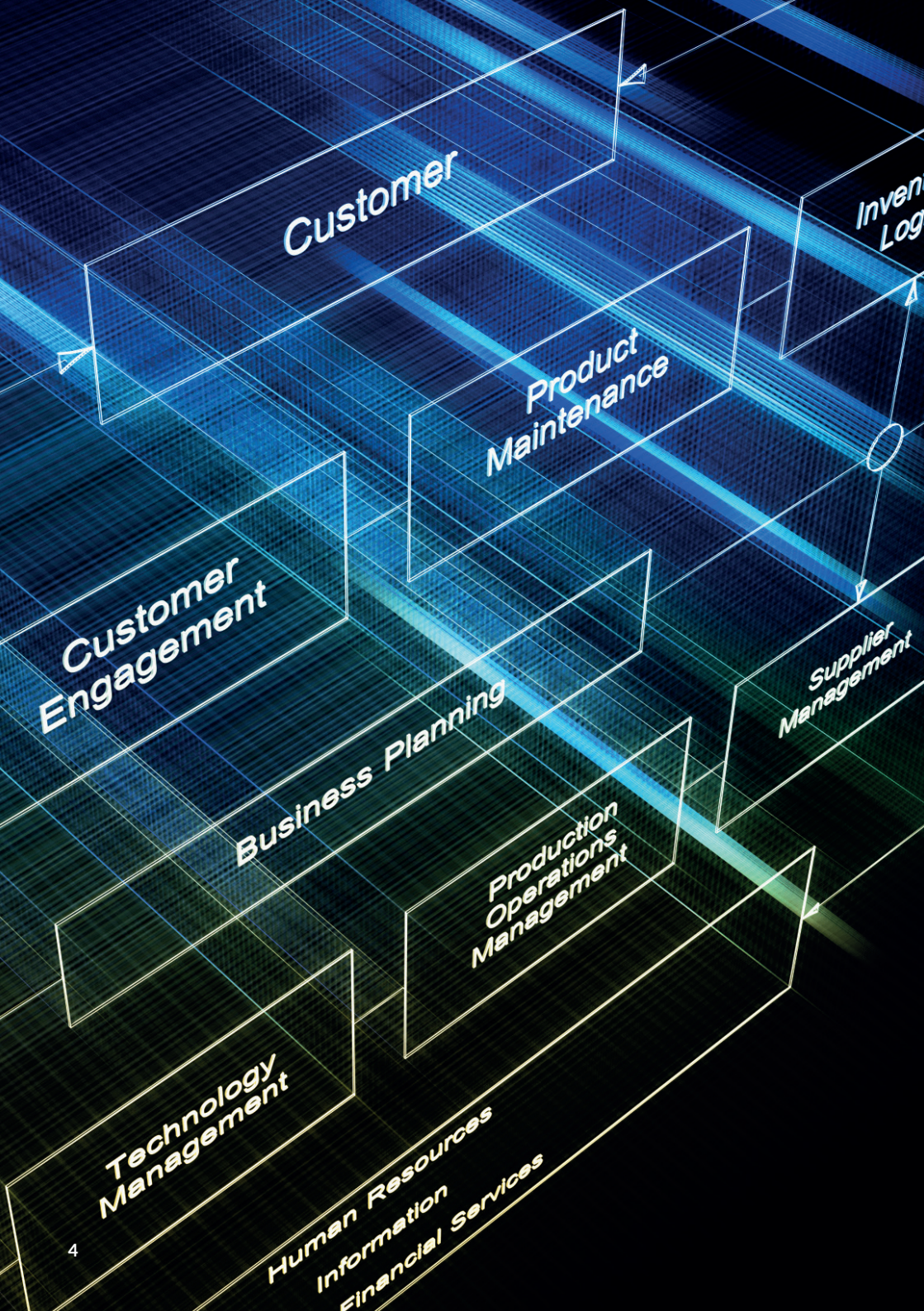
# ISO Management Standards The Essentials



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## Introduction

If you are looking for a simple to implement business management system that will help you build a business that is easy to run, monitor and grow, you are looking in the right place.

For over 10 years our business partners Business Keys Limited have been helping businesses to survive and grow, taking away the burden of complying with regulations and standards and ensuring that products and services are welcomed by customers and accepted by regulators.

In today's markets it is essential that you outrun your competition by delivering superior value to your customers and others impacted by your business and continually improve your organizational capability.

Delivering products and services that customers value begins with the identification of their needs and the translation of these needs into key process activities that you and your employees can carry out to ensure consistent delivery of high quality products and services. A business management system, that is the way you run your business, ensures that this is done efficiently and effectively and is the way to ensure that you optimise profits.

ISO Management System Standards can be used to check if your processes and systems comply with a generally accepted way to implement a management system and contain all the necessary elements. As such, they can be important tools for improving the capabilities of your business.

However, there is a plethora of 'management' standards and guides, with more being developed all the time. The number and complexity swamps most SME's, to the extent that they are not able to identify those most applicable to their business. Larger businesses dedicate significant resources to maintaining awareness of and compliance to standards, and even they struggle.

This booklet cuts through this complexity and provides an introduction to ISO Management Standards, hopefully in a way that allows you to grab the key points and decide what is needed for your business.

Help or more information is always at hand via the Thames Valley Chamber's International and Compliance help-line 01753 870560.

## A word about standards

We're pretty big on standards and the roles that they can play in ensuring compliance, reducing waste and costs, creating growth opportunities and driving innovation.

For most business leaders though, standards are something to be avoided, a hygiene factor at best, 'a job for old George' to look after while I get on with the real business. We beg to differ.

We find that standards can create focus and drive innovation. Used strategically they can transform the value of your business. Used operationally they can precisely define a customer's requirements, thus enabling you to develop an offer to satisfy them.

### Why are standards so important?

Standards are just an agreed way of doing something. They may be a voluminous technical document published by BSI, or they may be the key measurable criteria within your business plan.

They may be the core values of your organisation, or they may be the dominant specification in a competitive market space.

We would encourage you to look beyond the narrower definitions contained in ISO and other standards body's technical definitions, such as, "Standards are documented agreements containing technical specifications or other precise criteria to be used consistently as rules, guidelines, or definitions of characteristics, to ensure that materials, products, processes and services are fit for their purpose" (ISO 1997).

### Standards define value

Think how useful it would be if you could identify exactly where the value-adding activities were in your organisation and, of course, the non-value adding activities, i.e. the waste and added costs. This is essentially what quality management is about.

All control requires the establishment of a standard for the means of comparison, the assessment of conformity with the standard, and the application of suitable corrective action where necessary.

If your policies, processes and procedures do not include standards, they are really only intentions without substance.

Within the context of an organization or supply chain, standards can define the individual component, its performance and its relationship to the other components. Those that own the key standards within the value chain effectively own the market. Or, as quality guru W. Edwards Deming put it "If you control an industry's standards, you control that industry, lock, stock and ledger".

In other words, if you aspire to any kind of leadership within your market, you have to manage standards strategically, as well as operationally. Both risk management and standards management ensure a consensus and focus on the things that matter, i.e. prioritised business objectives.



# Management Systems

## Why bother?

Profit comes from the value being provided to a customer and that value is based on how well the product or service meets customer requirements (needs, wants, preferences). Profit is therefore the result of consistently delivering value through an effective and efficient business management system.

The key is to produce consistent, profitable, high quality results each time, operating as cost effectively as possible, without compromising safety, security, sustainability or compliance.

A business's management system can help you do this and can simply be defined as the way the business is run by its managers. It is a system of structuring, operating and controlling a company with a view to achieving the strategic goals and objectives of the organization to satisfy shareholders, creditors, employees, customers and suppliers, while complying with legal requirements and meeting environmental and other social needs. Or, more simply, it is a tool for achieving your business objectives. Your management system therefore provides

assurance to your customers and other stakeholders that your business is achieving its objectives.

For avoidance of doubt, the responsibility for this lies with top management, the directors of the business. The UK governance code (and laws) say so and ISO standards are now even more explicit on this point. Unfortunately, examples abound where management has not responsibly maintained good governance. Kodak (commercial failure), VW (technical failure), banking (reputational failure), etc., demonstrate that unmanaged risks can cause total failure, even when market positions seemed unassailable. On a smaller scale, we have been surprised by how many businesses lack basic controls because managers are "far too busy for management" (An actual quote from one of our clients, albeit tongue in cheek!).

So much for the downside of not having a sound management system. Let's now consider what a management system can do for you and the commercial return that justifies the effort and outlay.

## What's in it for me?

Your management system should be designed to assist decision-makers in selecting cost-effective strategies and actions to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of your business.

In general, it does the following:

- Ensures that requirements of those who have influence on the company's operations or are impacted by it (commonly known as stakeholders or interested parties) are taken into account in planning the business and delivering its products and services. Requirements may relate to health and safety, security, environment, quality, etc.
- Ensure that these requirements are captured in company policy and that this policy is embedded in business processes through communication, objectives and controls.
- Provides a mechanism to manage and mitigate risks or exploit opportunities and translate these into change programmes

- Ensures that performance is monitored, measured, evaluated and reviewed, with appropriate changes then being made to the system, its processes and products and services.

The results of this are that there is compliance to defined requirements, performance objectives are met and capability is improved, i.e. the value of your business to its owners and the value of its products and services to its customers are improved.

It is very important to note that all elements of the system are required to achieve optimum performance and value. Since all elements are interrelated, a weakness in one area can impact the whole business.

## Documented Information

For over 40 years standards have been advocating simplicity and proportionality with respect to 'paperwork'. For the same amount of time, businesses have been piling on the procedures, work instructions, guidance and all manner of other documentation in their organisations and blaming the standards.

A certain amount of documentation is necessary in a management system to create efficient operational procedures and maintain effective controls. Documentation facilitates management of the system, including communication and administration and also plays a vital role in structuring the oversight process.

Procedures can play an important role in supporting policy and translating its requirements into practice. They help your people understand what is required of them and enable them to carry out their work consistently in accordance with your policy and processes.

However, excessive paperwork is wasteful and counter-productive. The latest revisions to ISO Management Standards have tried, again, to explain that only "documented information determined by the organisation as being necessary for the effectiveness of the XXX Management System" is required.

## What is the status of your Management System?

Whether you have implemented or even read any ISO management standards, your business already has a management system. It can be formal and documented or informal. Either can be effective, to a point. The system is how you are running the business right now, in real life, and not just some form of documentation.

Here are some questions that you can ask yourself about your system to gauge its status:



## Is there an effective system in place?

- Is your businesses scope, objectives and standards (what the system is intended to deliver) defined?
- Are there arrangements for reviewing the design, operation and performance of the system, so that deficiencies may be identified, corrective action taken and improvements made?
- Are responsibilities, accountabilities and authorities defined?
- Have you provided adequate resources to operate the system effectively?
- Are competencies defined and achieved?
- Are there procedures defining how the system is to be implemented and performance standards of what is expected?

## Is the system adequate?

- Is your system fit for purpose, relative to your objectives?
- Does it meet relevant legal requirements, standards, best practices and other requirements, i.e. is it compliant?
- Is the level of compliance with your intended arrangements sufficient to manage the risks and opportunities facing your business?

The Chartered Quality Institute (CQI), the professional body for Quality professionals, has introduced a 'Competency Framework' for its members, who are often involved in management systems design, implementation and auditing.

They propose that a quality professional, by asking the right questions, is able to identify, report and address any risks associated with stakeholder requirements, and so protect and enhance reputation and improve efficiency.

The CQI suggests asking the following six simple questions, at both organizational and operational levels, which you might find helpful to further assess your own system:

## Governance

Which ensures that all organization requirements are reflected in operational frameworks, policies, processes and plans, and meet all stakeholder requirements.

**Q1:** *Is management intent defined?*

**Q2:** *Is management intent fit for purpose?*

## Assurance

Which embeds a culture to ensure that policies and plans are effectively implemented, and that all outputs are consistent with requirements.

**Q3:** *(Process) Is management intent effectively implemented?*

**Q4:** *(Product) Does it produce the desired outcomes?*

## Improvement

Which facilitates a culture of evaluation, learning and improvement and drives more effective, efficient and agile ways of working.

**Q5:** *Is there a commitment to continuous improvement and redefining management intent?*

**Q6:** *Is there a culture of objective evaluation?*

The CQI Competency Framework also includes Context and Leadership, both subjects picked up by the ISO 'High Level Structure' and resulting management standards. For further information on the Framework refer to: [www.thecqi.org/Competency-Framework/](http://www.thecqi.org/Competency-Framework/)



## The fit with international trade

### Market Access

In order to be able to import, distribute or sell a product or service in any market, it is necessary to meet the local legal requirements of the country in which the products or services are to be sold.

Businesses therefore have to provide competitive exportable products that conform to international standards; and they need the capabilities and capacity to prove that their products conform.

For example, when selling products to a market within the European Community, products must satisfy specific 'Essential Safety Requirements' before they may be placed on the market. These are specified in European Regulations, that apply directly to all member states, or are given in European Directives, which are subsequently implemented through national legislation.

Meeting the legal requirements can basically be achieved in two ways; either meeting the requirements directly, which often involves construction of a technical file with a considerable amount of supporting evidence in order to be able to demonstrate compliance; or suppliers can choose to

implement European Standards, which carry a presumption of conformity to the legal requirements. The latter is often the simpler and more cost effective route.

The EU has also implemented a common system for conformity assessment, that is testing and inspection to the recognised European Standards. The benefit of this for business is that it allows a product to be tested once and then sold in any European Community country. The products must be accepted by the local authorities.

Whichever compliance route is taken, it is necessary for the supplier to demonstrate that their products will consistently meet their agreed specifications. This is where management standards, such as ISO 9001, come in. EU requirements commonly stipulate a range of quality system options which must be met as part of the conditions for compliance to legal requirements. Similar principles have been adopted in other areas, such as environmental regulation, since they have proved to be effective with regard to product safety.

### Market Acceptance

Of course, getting products allowed onto the market by regulators is only part of the story. Your products must also be wanted by customers. They need assurance that, not only are your products safe and legally compliant but that they also meet their own market or industry needs.

Again, standards can play a role. Product standards are often quoted as an efficient way of specifying what product characteristics are required. Management standards, such as ISO 9001, are then requested as demonstration of continuing compliance and control.

Increasingly, as supply chains become longer and relationships between suppliers and buyers become more distant, assurance is sought in other areas, including business continuity, ethical practice, supply chain security and so on. Management standards covering these issues present a clear way for confidence in transnational trade to be assured.

For more information on meeting overseas product requirements, see our booklet 'International Product Standards & Compliance – The Essentials' available from the Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce web site at: [www.thamesvalleychamber.co.uk/international](http://www.thamesvalleychamber.co.uk/international) or contact the International Trade Services Team on **01753 870560**.



## ISO Management Systems Standards – an overview

The first thing to say is that the national and international standards bodies (e.g. BSI and ISO), do not make it easy to find the standards that might be applicable to your business, as a quick trawl of their websites will show you.

There are dozens of management standards available, supplemented by guidance documents and technical specifications. In addition to the core generic standards, which are applicable to all organizations, there are a number of management standards applicable to specific market sectors, including:

- Automotive (ISO/TS 16949)
- Aerospace (AS 9100)
- Medical devices (ISO 13485)

The intention behind these documents is to develop management systems standards and associated guidance that distil agreed good practice and how to address the increasing range of stakeholder expectations.

Some of the most commonly used generic standards are illustrated on the standards map over the page.

They include:

**ISO 9001 – Quality Management**  
*Addressing customer product and service requirements*

**ISO 45001 – Occupational health and safety**

**ISO 14001 – Environment**  
*Both the impact of the environment on your business and the impact of your business on the environment*

**ISO 31000 – Risk Management**

With the introduction of a more consistent approach to standards development by ISO (See section “The ISO Management Systems Standards ‘High Level Structure’”) many organisations will now seek to combine or integrate the range of standards that they are addressing into a single business management system.

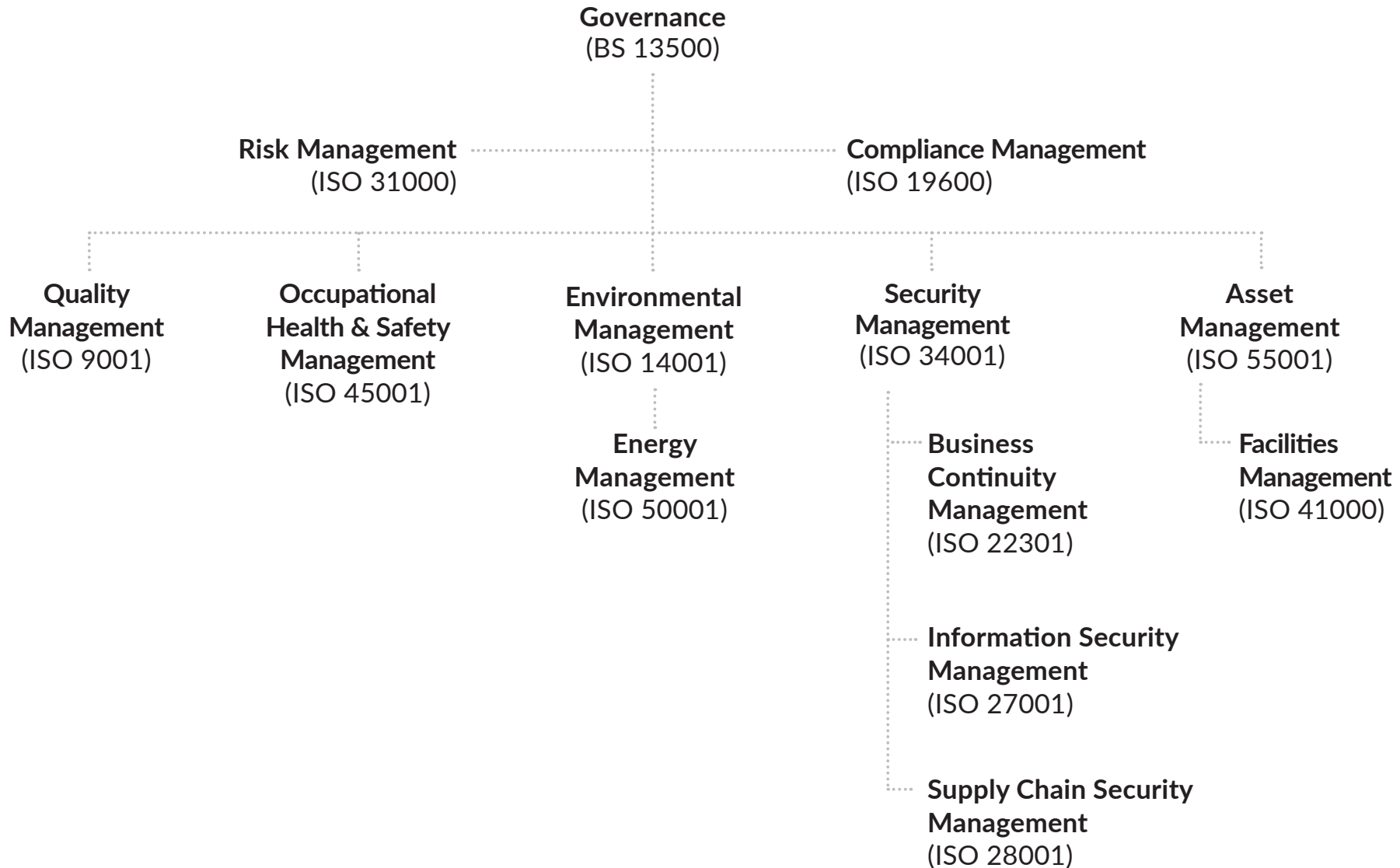
In our view, it has always been necessary for Management to think of their business in terms of being a single system, albeit with several sub-systems.

A system is a set of components that work together for the overall objective of the (whole) organization. Sub-systems can include technical (work flow), social (people/ culture) and economic (money flow), for example.

The key thing to bear in mind is that your business should be designed to achieve its purpose, not to meet one or more management standards.



## ISO Management Systems Standard



## Management standards and certification

Product manufacturers and service providers often employ 'conformity assessment' bodies to help them provide assurance to purchasers or customers. Testing laboratories or inspection bodies are concerned with assessment, whereas certification bodies are concerned with providing assurance that specified requirements have been fulfilled, e.g. product conformity, management systems conformity or fulfilment of requirements for personal competence.

Certification bodies in particular help businesses demonstrate that their products, processes, systems or persons conform to defined standards.

### Auditing

Auditing is generally used to determine whether an organization's activities and results comply with specified requirements. These can be customer, company or regulatory requirements but could relate to any stakeholder. An audit also seeks to determine whether the planned arrangements to meet requirements are implemented effectively and to inform future improvement and change.

There are three types of audit:

1. **First party audits** – audits conducted by the organization, commonly known as 'internal audits'.
2. **Second party audits** – audits conducted of a supplier's or contractor's management system.
3. **Third party audits** – independent audits conducted by certification bodies, i.e. bodies that award certification or registration to management system standards. Preference should be given to certification bodies accredited by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) in the UK, as they are the sole body recognised by Government to provide the required level of confidence in certification bodies. Note that certification bodies may not also provide consultancy to the organisations which they audit, since this would compromise the integrity of the certificate.

### Certification

Certification can be used by regulators to demonstrate compliance with certain regulations. Under European legislation products and services involving high risks are likely to require third party conformity assessment, whereas items perceived as having low risk may be subject only to self-declaration by the manufacturer.

For example, the level of control applied to medical devices relates to the device's classification under the European directive, which requires the use of a notified body to assess compliance to the directive for some items. Options or routes to compliance are listed as part of the directive.

Businesses may use certification, on a voluntary basis, for a number of reasons, including:

- Cost effective method of demonstrating regulatory compliance
- As a condition of market acceptance or customer assurance
- Perceived marketing benefit

In some industry sectors certification is a necessary condition of doing business.

The particular requirements of the sector are often industry-driven and commercially focussed and specified in industry-specific standards or certification schemes.

### Getting value from certification to management system standards

Whether certification is mandatory for your business, or you believe that being certified will increase your sales, you will need to ensure that you receive value for your investment. Here are some things to consider when choosing a certification body:

- As noted above, ensure that your certification body is accredited by UKAS. This ensures that your certificate has credibility, with both regulators and knowledgeable customers. If you choose a non-accredited organization, you may not receive a competent service, or the integrity of the assessment may be compromised by poor practice.

- Talk to several certification bodies and compare their approach, prices and knowledge about your specific industry. Some organizations offer more support than others and some are more constructive in their approach. Cut and paste reports and tick-box assessments should be avoided.

- Choose the certification body that is right for your business. Sometimes a smaller organization, which may be more focussed on your specific industry, may not only do a better job for you but may also have more credibility within a specific industry.

Remember that assurance is about providing confidence to your customers and other interested parties.

- Beware the 'super-auditor'. These are often sub-contracted individuals trained across a number of disciplines but without in-depth knowledge.

Consider the competences an individual would need to have to be able to talk to your fellow directors from finance, marketing and IT, for example, with equal understanding of the issues affecting their departments.

Or a person skilled at quality, environment, health and safety, security and governance. The assessment programme must address these complexities, since an individual is unlikely to be able to cope.

- Ensure that the auditor works for you and that you do not work for them. There has been a tendency for companies, in order to secure their certificates, to produce paperwork for the assessor's benefit and not the company's.

The management system should be designed around your organization and its objectives, not around any one particular standard, even if this does make auditing easier for the assessor.

Although you need to be able to demonstrate how you meet the requirements, how you do this is up to you.

- Make sure that you know why you are obtaining certification and ensure that the benefits outweigh the costs.

If you are not fully convinced that your organization will achieve tangible benefits, both commercial and in terms of added capabilities, how will your staff act when called upon to implement the standard? In our opinion, 'doing it for the badge' is never a good idea.



## The ISO Management System Standards 'High Level Structure'

ISO, the International Organization for Standardization, has adopted a 'High Level Structure' for the drafting of many of its management system standards.

This should make it easier for organizations to understand and manage common requirements and gain operating efficiency savings when trying to conform to more than one standard.

The new drafting rules mean that management system standards will have identical core text and common terms and definitions. For example, ISO 9001: 2015, the standard for quality management systems requirements, has 70% specific requirements and 30% of content from the High Level Structure. Whereas, ISO 14001: 2015, the standard for environmental management system requirements, has 45% specific requirements and 55% of the common text.

### Common Terms and Core Definitions – ISO 9001:

- Organization
- Interested Party
- Requirement
- Management system
- Top management
- Effectiveness
- Policy
- Objective
- Risk
- Competence
- Process
- Performance
- Outsource
- Monitoring
- Measurement
- Audit
- Conformity
- Nonconformity
- Corrective action
- Continual improvement
- Documented Information

The following clauses form ISO's High Level Structure:

Introduction - This is the place where the standards writers place the explanations of some of the principle concepts (see Key concepts underpinning ISO Management Standards) used with the standard and other information to help the reader understand the intent behind the standard.

1. Scope - the purpose of the standard
2. Normative references - other standards which must be taken into account
3. Terms and definitions - explanation of terms and definitions may be included within the standard or, as for ISO 9001, be the subject of a separate standard (ISO 9000: 2015).
4. Context of the organization - Sometimes called "the business environment", are the external influences to which the organization is subject ("issues"), which may affect its internal decision making, strategic and operational actions, or which may have other implications for the organization.
5. Leadership - demonstrable leadership and commitment of top management, i.e. the organization's most senior management, to the implementation, performance and improvement of the management system.
6. Planning - the planning of actions to achieve objectives and address risks and exploit opportunities. Note that the standards require planning of the management system, including its processes, and the planning of operations.
7. Support - the resources needed "for the establishment, implementation, maintenance and continual improvement of the XXX management system".
8. Operation - operational planning and control of processes needed to meet management system requirements. This can include the design of processes, products and services and their delivery.
9. Performance evaluation - includes monitoring, measurement, analysis, evaluation, audit and review of performance, both of the management system and its deliverables.

10. Improvement - usually will include a requirement to put things right when they go wrong and continual improvement of the management system.

Note that although the introduction of the High Level Structure is bringing more consistency across ISO management system standards, the standards are drafted by large, independent international committees, each with its own discipline and culture. The reader still has to ensure that the relevant elements of each standard are aligned within their own organization's management system.

There are three basic implications of the new High Level Structure:

1. Alignment of the standards brings operational savings, such as the possibility of reduced audits, consolidation of paperwork and specific enhancements to your management system.

2. The shift in emphasis to require more involvement from top management and alignment of your system(s) with your business strategies. This presents a major opportunity for businesses to re-evaluate their systems and expand them to include both strategic (i.e. matters concerning the whole business) and operational (i.e. the delivery of products and services) levels.
3. ISO management standards now better articulate, in the form of requirements, some of the standards developer's original intentions, which were found not to have been implemented in practice, for example process-based systems. The inclusion of requirements for risk-based thinking, analysis of the business context and other elements of business planning also necessitate the involvement of senior management.

## Key concepts underpinning ISO Management Standards

ISO management system standards are based on a number of key concepts which are common across the standards. The main ones are briefly described below but are the subject of books in their own right – and of course many more standards!

### Process Approach

The process approach is basically about understanding, organising and managing the organization's interrelated processes as a system. It can be defined as "the systematic definition and management of processes and their interactions in order to achieve the intended results".

Although it may seem time consuming and difficult at first, adoption of this approach can enable managers to better understand the value-adding activities within the organization and how to better manage resources and performance. There can be several benefits in adopting a process approach, including the ability to:

- Improve customer focus and service
- Ensure compliance
- Manage risks
- Increase internal controls
- Enable innovation
- Increase agility and resilience

The approach requires a basic understanding of several terms:

### System

Quality guru W Edwards Deming described a business as a system, "a network of interdependent components that work together to try and accomplish the aim". A business can therefore be thought of as a value delivery system. Any system will be comprised of sub-systems, e.g. quality management system, environmental management system, social system, technical system. It will also itself be part of a larger system, e.g. the organization's value chain.

## Process

Systems support processes. (For example your digestive system supports the process of eating). A process is the means by which products, services or information that are provided to customers is produced. All processes within the system should be designed to add value to the organization and achieve its purpose and objectives.

ISO standards define a process as a “set of interrelated or interacting activities which transform inputs into outputs”. This implies that each process must have inputs, such as customer requirements, a set of controlled activities or process steps and outputs, such as products or services. A process may also produce unintended outputs, such as waste or pollution. Note that a process defines who does what, whereas a procedure describes the detail of how the steps will be performed.

## Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle

The PDCA cycle may be applied to all processes, or to the organization (system) as a whole. The PDCA cycle briefly is:

**PLAN** – establish the objectives of the system and its processes and the resources required to deliver results to customers and others in accordance with pre-defined requirements.

**DO** – implement what was planned

**CHECK** – monitor and measure processes and resulting products and services against what was planned and report the results.

**ACT** – take actions to improve performance, as necessary.

The PDCA model provides an iterative process which can be used by the organization to achieve continual improvement. Or, to look at it another way: set the standard; deliver to the standard; inspect against the standard; improve by creating a new standard. This is the essence of control, a core management function.

The PDCA model can be aligned to the clauses within the ISO ‘High Level Structure’, as follows:

**PLAN** – Context; Leadership; Planning

**DO** – Support; Operation

**CHECK** – Performance evaluation

**ACT** – Improvement

## Risk-based thinking

Risk is the effect of uncertainty, which might be positive or negative. Positive effects may lead to opportunities which could be exploited. On the other hand, negative effects may have a damaging or harmful impact on the organization, its people or its property.

ISO management standards now generally contain the requirement to plan and implement actions to address risks and opportunities. Although the organization is not required to have a formal risk management programme, the principles contained in ISO 31000 (Risk management: Principles & Guidelines) provides useful information for those seeking a more formal approach to risk management, perhaps as part or overall governance arrangements. As a minimum, an organization will need to:

- Identify risks and opportunities
- Analyse and prioritise risks and opportunities, deciding what is and is not tolerable
- Plan how to address risks by, for example, avoiding them altogether, mitigating negative effects, accepting the risk in order to pursue an opportunity, or sharing with another party, such as through insurance
- Implement planned actions
- Check the effectiveness of the actions taken

In business, the aim will be to optimise the taking of risks, not to eliminate them, thus achieving improved results and preventing negative effects. It is only by taking some degree of risk that an organization will be able to survive and grow.

## Jargon-Buster

Standards are produced with the correct technical terms and the language used is accurate. A lot of time and effort goes into developing standards so that a wide range of people can correctly understand and interpret them, whatever their native language. However, to the non-expert the language used can be difficult (to say the least!). So here is our, strictly unofficial, explanation of some of the more common terms that you will encounter:

### Management System

– *the way you run the business*

### Policy/ Strategy

– *the way we think and plan*

### Process

– *the way we operate*

### Systems

– *the way we interconnect*

### Standards

– *our agreed way of doing things*

### Improvement

– *the way we develop a standard to make things better over time*

### Governance

– *the way decisions are made and outcomes monitored*

## A practical route to implementation

In this section, we try to bring together the concepts and explanations from the previous sections into a coherent, practical way forward. The intention here is to provide an outline map of what you need to do, whether your intention is to use ISO management standards, seek certification to one or more of them, or simply to improve the way you run your business.

When you examine ISO management standards you will find that the various technical committees drafting the standards, despite using a common framework in many cases, still have slightly different approaches or terminology.

This can vary with discipline. For example, risk, is defined in ISO 31000 as the “effect of uncertainty on objectives”, with a note that an effect is a deviation from the expected, which can be positive or negative. Whereas ISO 9001 uses the term risks and opportunities.

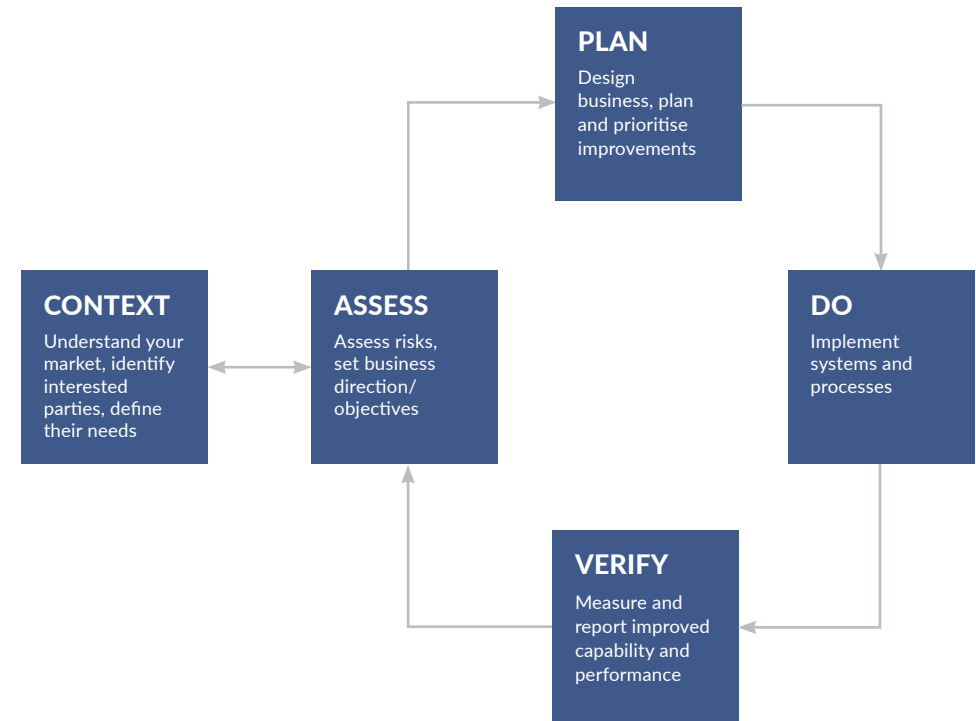
These slight differences in terms and the appearance of risk in multiple places throughout ISO 9001, for example, can confuse the inexperienced.

We have therefore developed a simple, five step approach to implementation that logically addresses all aspects, no matter what standard or regulation is being considered – and you will have to consider many in combination. These five steps are explained below and illustrated on the page opposite.

If you've been paying attention, you will recognise it as a modification of the 'Plan-Do-Check-Act' cycle which underpins many ISO management standards. The modifications though are significant.

The starting point for any system is to establish its purpose; who does it serve; what are its objectives? From these requirements you can then assess how you will meet them and what internal constraints or objectives apply.

The next stage is to plan the system, processes and products and services, together with the resources, that will deliver to your aims. This is followed by implementation of your processes and procedures and verification of the results.





## Context

Understand your stakeholders' needs, define your business drivers by:

- Understanding who are your customers, suppliers, regulators and others who may affect or be affected by your business
- Identifying their requirements
- Understanding the external issues, risks and opportunities facing your business

We have found that it can be helpful initially to define the requirements with which your business has to comply from three perspectives:

1. Government – the political and legal requirements
2. Market – the market and industry standards
3. Customer – the requirements specific to a specific customer, project or contract

## Leadership/ Improvement:

**Assess/ Decide how you will provide value**

This step entails establishing what ISO standards refer to as policy. Essentially this is the rules that will govern your business and spelling out its direction, objectives and arrangements. You will want to consider:

- Governance (Direction, Control, Accountability)
- Vision, Mission, Values
- Strategy (Direction, goals, objectives)
- Standards (Mandatory and voluntary)

Note that our model includes the external inputs (requirements, issues) established above, plus the internal inputs from your management system, which come from measuring, auditing and reviewing your current performance and the effectiveness and suitability of your current system. You will also want to consider any non-conformities or improvement opportunities.

An important part of this stage is to use risk-based thinking, i.e. risk assessment and management, to identify the risks and opportunities that have an impact on your business and its product and service delivery.

## Planning/ Support:

**Plan your business and the resources needed to carry out your plans**

Design and implement a strategy to respond to the identified, prioritised risks and opportunities.

Develop systems and processes that will ensure consistent value delivery. Provide suitable and adequate resources.

## Operation:

**Do the work, i.e. deliver your products and services**

Implement controls within your processes to manage your product and service delivery and assure that stakeholders needs are being met. In particular, you should consider:

- Process management – the architecture of your business system, process interaction and document processes
- Operational control – including physical, procedural and behavioural controls
- Resource management – providing appropriate and sufficient resources to get the job done and ensuring that people have the right information that they need to do their jobs

## Performance Evaluation:

**Verify that the required results have been achieved**

Your assurance mechanisms should be robust and provide evidence that requirements have been met, risks managed and intended results achieved.

They should also allow you to identify areas of weakness, improvement opportunities and build in additional resilience.

Some key areas to consider are:

- Monitoring, measuring and testing
- Analysis and evaluation of performance data
- Evaluation of compliance
- Internal and external auditing
- Non-conformities; corrective action, preventive action and improvement actions
- Regular review by Management of the performance and adequacy of the business management system

## About Business Keys Limited

Business Keys Limited is a business assurance practice, specialising in compliance and performance improvement. Working with the International Trade team at the Thames Valley Chamber we can offer a range of services from generic training to bespoke consultancy and ongoing support including:

### Management System

Help to implement a Business Management System, a simple management framework to make your business easier to run, monitor and grow – and comply with regulations, standards and customer requirements.

- Governance, Risk, Compliance and Assurance
- Business Management Systems Implementation
- Implementation of ISO management standards (ISO 9001: 2015, ISO 14001: 2015, etc.)
- ISO Management Systems Transition
- Product and Process Innovation and Management

### Product Compliance

Technical advice and support to enable your products to demonstrably comply with regulations, standards & customer requirements.

- Standards and Regulations Identification
- Product Assessments
- Product Compliance
  - Product requirements and risk assessments
  - Technical File development
  - Steward product testing, approval and certification
  - Preparation of Declarations of Conformity/ Performance

### Compliance Management

Technical information and assurance services to lighten your burden of complying with regulations and standards, including:

- Maintenance of your Compliance Register/ Notification of changes to regulations and standards impacting your business
- Help-Desk facility by email and telephone to enable fast resolution of customer, market or regulatory issues as they arise
- Internal Audits/ Assessment of processes and management systems
- Evaluation of Compliance
- Assessment of your internal controls, governance and assurance arrangements

## Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce

### International Trade Services

The International Trade team provides advice and assistance to help businesses trade within the EU and across the world.

Whether you are thinking of taking steps towards importing or exporting, or you're an existing exporter looking to expand into additional overseas markets, you will know that there are many trade barriers as well as regulations for international businesses to consider.

The Chamber's International Trade Centre of Excellence is one of the leading providers of international trade services in the UK. Located in a catchment area which includes Heathrow Airport, we enable hundreds of companies to export and import products throughout the world every year.

Through our offices in Slough, Banbury and Heathrow businesses can access a wide range of international trade services, aimed at facilitating successful trade with the rest of the world.

Trade Services include:

- Advice and Guidance on any aspect of International Trade
- Export & Import Documentation and publications
- Workshops and training courses

- Events, Trade Forums & Market Briefings
- Customs Advice and Audit Services
- Letters of Credit Service
- Chamber Notarial services
- Compliance and Conformity
- Chamber Credit Insurance
- Foreign Exchange
- Translation & Interpretation Services
- Visa & UK Passports
- Matching service for overseas business opportunities
- Country and Market Sector Guides
- Market research to assist with identifying potential markets and entry strategies
- Market visits: overseas exhibitions and trade missions
- Monthly International Trade E-Bulletin which gives latest updates to news and services
- Publications & Online Resources

**Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce Group**

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