

Why Implement ISO 9001?

By Bill Soller, SupplierSixSigma.com

ISO 9001 is a set of standards that apply to quality management systems of any business, not for profit organization, government agencies or academia. These standards do not apply to products but to **management** systems. Any size company can benefit from implementing an ISO 9001 System.

ISO stands for "The International Organization for Standardization" which at present is comprised of the national standards bodies of 91 countries. The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) is the member body representing the United States. The purpose of ISO 9000 is to promote the development of standardization. These are the only standards recognized and accepted worldwide. They were developed to effectively document the quality system elements to be implemented in order to maintain an efficient quality system in your company. ISO 9001 certification does not guarantee quality. However, they help to ensure repeatability of your company's processes which produce quality products and services.

There are many industry specific standards that are based on ISO 9001:

- TL 9000- Telecommunications
- ISO 13485- Medical Devices
- TS 16949- Automotive
- AS 9000- Aerospace
- ISO 14001- Environmental

Why is ISO 9000 important to your business?

There are several benefits to implementing ISO 9001 in your company. For example, it will guide you to build quality into your product or service and avoid costly after-the-fact inspections, warranty costs, rework, lost customers, and profit margin erosion.

Increasingly, customers are only accepting supplier quality system registration from an accredited third-party assessment based on the ISO standards.

Many customers will select an ISO 9001 registered supplier over one who is not. There is too much risk to a customer for a supplier to have informal systems.

In these days of Just in Time shipments, short cycle times, 100% quality and cost reductions, customers can not afford to take a risk on a company that is not ISO 9000 registered.

Both large and small companies with international and local businesses perceive the ISO 9000 series as a route to open markets and improved competitiveness. You can't hope to meet the expectations of customers long term and to stay in business if you are not implementing the ISO 9001 standards in your company.

These standards provide the foundation on which you can build your operation's management and business systems so you may ultimately achieve a high level of success.