

ISO 9000 International Quality Standards

Introduction. North American Nutrition Companies, Inc. is updating its quality management system to a process approach following the ISO 9001:2000 guidelines. ISO 9000 certification will be sought for the Lewisburg facility during 2004.

Defining ISO 9000. ISO 9000 is a series of quality management system standards created by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), a federation of 132 national standards bodies based in Geneva, Switzerland. The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) is the member body representing the United States.

The ISO 9000 quality management standards are not specific to products or services, but apply to the processes that create them. The standards are generic in nature so that they can be used by manufacturing and service industries all over the world. First released in 1987 and revised in a limited manner in 1994, the standards have recently undergone a major overhaul. The objectives of the changes were to keep the standards responsive to the marketplace and make them more user friendly.

Origin. ISO 9000 is a descendant of a number of earlier quality standards. The purpose of developing ISO 9000 was to simplify the international exchange of goods and services by creating a common set of quality standards. ISO 9000 has been a major factor in the United States, the European Union (EU) and elsewhere in the world since its release in 1987. When released, most industrialized nations quickly adopted harmonized versions of ISO 9000.

ISO 9000 is intended to establish, document, and maintain a system for ensuring the output quality of a process. It consists of a group of common sense and generally well-known guidelines laid out in an organized fashion. Today, the international standards are sanctioned by the 15 nations of the EU, making ISO 9001:2000 registration a virtual prerequisite for doing business there.

The Revised Standard. Previously, there were more than 20 standards and documents within ISO 9000, and this raised concerns among series users and consumers. The revised standard uses a simple process-based structure that is more generic than the old 20-element structure. The revised standard is also consistent with the “Plan-Do-Check-Act” improvement cycle (outlined in the model on the following page) used in many ISO standards, and it adopts the process management structure widely used in business today. The 20 elements have been replaced by 5 clauses containing 23 elements. The major clauses are:

Quality Management System (2 elements) – provides a general framework to establish a quality management system, which defines and manages processes in order to produce a good product or service and allow continual improvement.

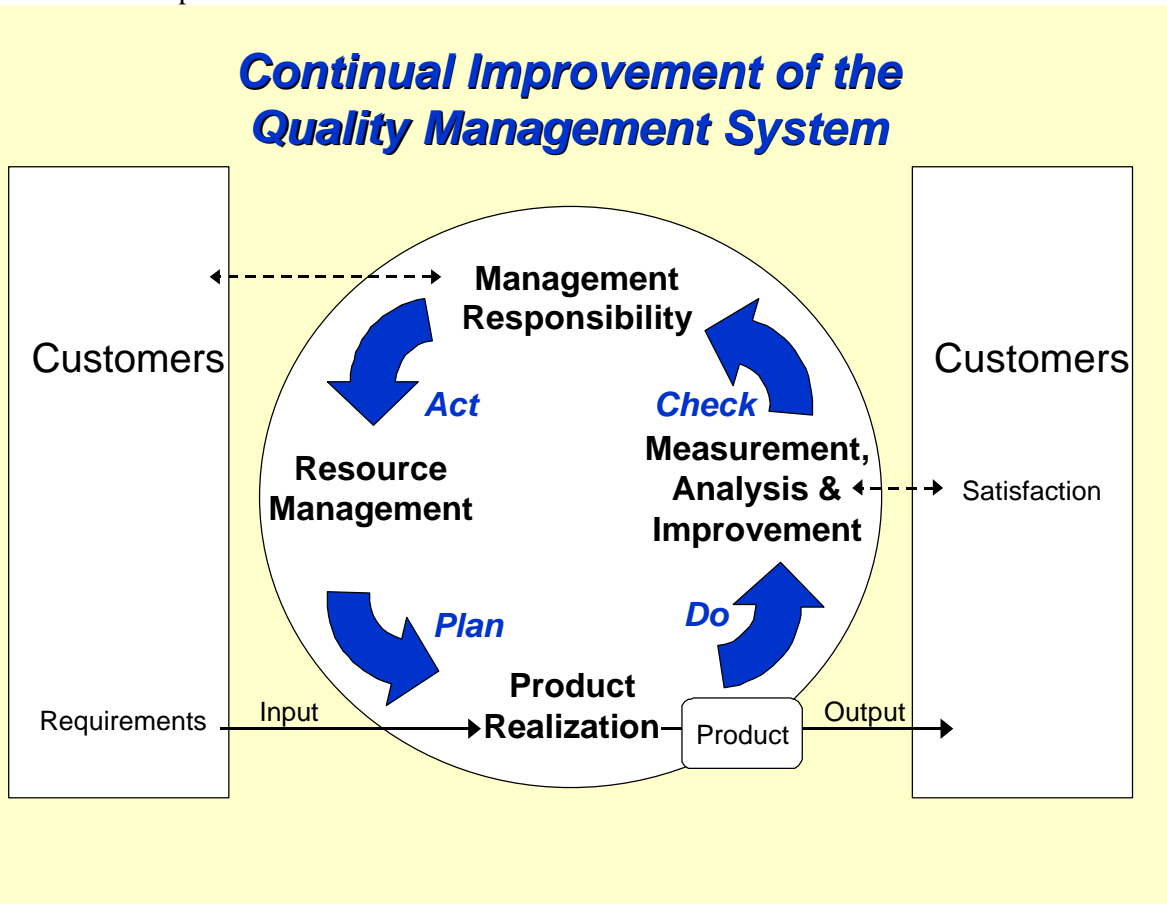
Management Responsibility (6 elements) – addresses management’s responsibility to establish a system that continually meets customer needs and expectations.

Resource Management (4 elements) – necessary resources are determined and applied that are required to implement and maintain the quality management system.

Product Realization (6 elements) – processes are established and implemented that are needed to manufacture product and/or deliver services from receipt to delivery.

Measurement, Analysis and Improvement (5 elements) – organizations are required to monitor and measure processes, and product and/or service conformity. Collected data must be analyzed to initiate corrective and preventive action for continual improvement.

All quality management system requirements for achieving conformity of product and/or service may be placed within the process-based model shown below.



For example, management defines requirements under “Management Responsibility.” Necessary resources are determined and applied within “Resource Management”(Plan). Processes are established and implemented under “Product Realization” (Do). Customer satisfaction and other requirements are measured, analyzed, and improved upon through “Measurement, Analysis and Improvement” (Check). Management Review then provides feedback to “Management Responsibility” for change authorization and initiation of improvement (Act). And so the cycle continues, allowing North American Nutrition Companies to respond to the needs of its customers, producing high quality products consistently.

Reference: ISO 9001:2000 - The Revised International Quality Standards (An Executive Overview). Perry Johnson, Inc., 2001.

Copyright © 2003 by Akey. All rights reserved.