

Quality Management System

1. Is your system thought of as a set of documents or a set of interacting processes that deliver the organization's objectives?
2. Is your system integrated into the organization so that people do the right things right without having to be told?
3. Is your system a collection of interacting processes rather than a series of interconnected functions?
4. Does every process in the chain of processes from requirements to their satisfaction add value?
5. Are your business objectives functionally oriented driving a functional oriented organization or are they process oriented?
6. If you have simply changed the names of your procedures to reflect processes where have you defined the process objectives, the resources and the behaviours required to cause these objective to be achieved and the measures required to determine process adequacy, efficiency and effectiveness?
7. Are your processes described simply as a series of transactions or are there provisions in the process to manage its performance?
8. Do the outputs from one process connect with other processes?
9. Do all the inputs to a process have their origin in other processes or external organizations?
10. Do you have measures that enable you to determine how well each process is performing and are these known to those controlling the process?
11. Is there any activity, task or process that exists only to meet the requirements of ISO 9001?
12. Are you sure that all the documentation in place is needed for the effective operation and control of your processes?
13. There are six ways of conveying information. Before you document, have you eliminated the other five ways as being unsuitable for the particular situation?
14. If a person moves onto another job, how much of what is removed from the process is essential for the process to maintain its capability?
15. How much of what affects your ability to achieve results is dependent on staff following documented procedures?
16. How much of what affects your ability to achieve results is dependent on the physical and human environment in which your staff work?
17. How much of what affects your ability to achieve results is dependent on your staff's ability to do the right things right?
18. How much of what affects your ability to achieve results is dependent on your staff's motivation to do the right things right?
19. Do you question the effectiveness of established policies and procedures first when the customer complains or do look for someone to blame?
20. What causes the actions and decisions for which there are no documented policies or procedures?
21. Are you managing a set of functions or a series of processes and do you know the difference?
22. Do you know what each process aims to achieve?
23. Do you know how each process causes the observed results?

24. Do you know whether the process is producing outcomes that satisfy the process objectives?
25. Do you know how to change process performance to bring it into line with the objectives?

Management Responsibility – Food for Thought

26. Does your quality management system make the right things happen or is it just a set of procedures?
27. Does your management perceive the quality management system as the means by which the organization's objective are achieved?
28. Does your organization exist to make profit or to create and retain satisfied customers?
29. Does your quality policy affect how people behave in your organization or is it simply a slogan?
30. Do all your quality objectives relate to the organization's mission or are they focused only on what the quality department will achieve?
31. Does your management review examine the way the organization is managed or does it simply focus on conformity issues?
32. Do you struggle to obtain the necessary resources to do your job, or have you designed your job so that you get all the resources necessary for you to achieve your objectives?
33. Do you wait to receive a customer enquiry before identifying customer needs and expectations or have you researched the market in which you operate so that your offerings respond to customer needs?
34. What made you think that by simply publishing your quality policy, anything would change?
35. If you didn't know your current performance, how did you manage to set meaningful objectives?
36. When you set your objectives, was there any discussion on how they might be achieved and did it result in changing the way you do things?
37. If you don't think you need to change, how come you didn't meet these objectives last year?
38. How will you know when you have achieved your objectives?
39. Are you sure that none of the managers' objectives relate to extracting more performance from unstable processes?
40. Are you sure that none of the managers are tasked with meeting objectives for which no plans have been agreed for their achievement?
41. How many plans are the managers working on that have an objective that is not derived from the business plan?
42. Are you sure that managers are not pursuing objectives that will cause conflict with those of others managers?
43. Are you sure you have not imposed a target on a member of staff for performance improvement when it is the system that requires improvement?
44. Do you always consider the impact of change on other processes before you proceed?

45. Does your staff know of the results for which they are accountable and are their job descriptions limited to such responsibilities?
46. If your management representative is unable to influence the other managers to implement, maintain and improve the management system, are you sure you have appointed the right person?
47. How often do you check that messages conveyed from management are actually understood by those they are intended to affect?
48. How often do you check that messages conveyed by workers are actually given due consideration by management and interpreted as the consequence of their own actions and decisions?
49. If the person with the most interest in the effectiveness of the management system is not your CEO, is there not something wrong with the way the management system is perceived in the organization?

Resource Management – Food for Thought

50. Are there any activities in an organization that require no human or financial resources?
51. What business benefit is derived from excluding particular resources from the management system?
52. Why are the costs of maintaining the management system different from those of maintaining the organization?
53. Are functional budgets justified when in reality the organization's objectives are achieved through a series of interacting processes?
54. If your staff are your most important asset, why are staff development programmes a prime target for cost reduction?
55. Do you select people on what they demonstrate they know or what they demonstrate they can do?
56. How do you know that your staff are competent to achieve the objectives you have agreed with them?
57. From where does the evidence come from to assess staff competence?
58. There are seven ways of developing staff. Before you send them on a training course have you eliminated the other six ways as being unsuitable for the particular situation?
59. What action was taken the last time your staff returned from an external training course that resulted in an improvement in their performance?
60. How do you ensure that staff work on those things that add value to the organization?
61. What's the second thing you do on receipt of a customer complaint?
62. How much information is contained in your personnel training records to help you make decisions on staff development needs?
63. Do you know of all the ways in which an infrastructure failure might impact customer satisfaction?
64. How much of what affects individual performance depends on the relationship between management and staff?
65. In describing what it is like to work in your organization, would you identify any factors that were detrimental to overall performance?

66. Would anyone in your organization take an action or make a decision that might be considered unethical in your society?
67. What actions do managers take to create conditions in which their staff are motivated to achieve their objectives?
68. When did you last examine the organization's culture for its relevance to the current conditions in which the organization operates?
69. When did you last recognize or appreciate the efforts of your staff in contributing towards improved performance?
70. When did you last reprimand a member of staff for something that was symptomatic of the natural variation inherent in the process?
71. If every employee were to follow the examples set by the management, in what way would the organization's performance change?
72. Do you wait until you have no option but to take drastic action to restore financial stability or do you involve your workforce in seeking ways to lessen the impact?
73. When did you last calculate the time lost by the inappropriate location of tools, information, equipment and facilities?
74. If an employee was dissatisfied with the working environment, could you be sure that he or she would approach the manager with confidence that the matter would be dealt with objectively and sympathetically?

Product Realization – Food for Thought

75. Do your marketing, sales and design processes include provisions for measuring the extent to which the process objectives are being achieved?
76. Are you confident that your sales personnel will not commit the organization beyond the capability of its processes?
77. When preparing plans for product realization how do you know you have taken account of all the factors that will affect successful implementation?
78. How do you know that the plans made for fulfilling product requirements will reach those who will create the product and process features necessary for successful implementation?
79. Do you assume customers will define the characteristics necessary to give satisfaction or do you recognize they are not experts and endeavour to find out what their expectations really are?
80. How do you know you have identified all the relevant regulations that apply to the customer transaction?
81. Would your customer expect you to proceed knowing there are issues to be resolved or to wait while you sought resolution?
82. However, simple the order, do you always confirm understanding before proceeding?
83. How confident are you that the sales literature does not lead potential customers to expect more than you are prepared to provide?
84. Is customer feedback collected from all the points of contact with customers or only through the mailbox?
85. At what point do you bring design under control, before the design is released or before you spend money?

86. Are you confident that you won't make the same mistakes on the next new design as you did on the last design?
87. How do you stop your designers reinventing solutions to problems solved previously?
88. How do you ensure that design weaknesses revealed through risk analysis techniques are eliminated, reduced or at least controlled before the design is released?
89. What research is performed to discover the probability of success with new designs?
90. Is your purchasing process sufficiently flexible to prevent inappropriate conditions being placed on your suppliers?
91. Does your supplier selection procedure permit value-based decisions to be made or is it one size that fits all?
92. How do you know that the products you purchase for incorporation into supplies will satisfy the regulatory conditions that apply to the item you deliver to your customer?
93. How do your receipt inspectors know of the decisions your supplier verification personnel have made on the shipments received?
94. How do you know the processes are capable of achieving the required product or service features before commencing production or service delivery?
95. Does your system include all the distribution channels that have been established for delivering product to customers?
96. If a product was returned because of a failure, are you confident that you could find out what work has been done on it as it passed through the production process?
97. If an item of customer property was recalled, could you find it and return it in its original condition if requested to do so?
98. Have you put in place methods that will ensure the integrity of all of the devices used for monitoring and measurement?

Measurement, Analysis and Improvement – Food for Thought

99. Do you manage the system as a series of processes or as a series of functions?
100. If no objectives are set for a process, will any level of performance be acceptable?
101. Do you spend more time putting out the fires than on improving the process?
102. Do you act on suspicion, or always confirm that a problem exists or might exist before taking action?
103. Have you discovered any root cause of a problem that cannot be traced to lack of application of one or more of the eight quality management principles?
104. Do you always undertake data analysis with the intent of taking action on the results?
105. Are you confident that you are not expecting success to be achieved by chance?
106. Have you re-examined existing controls from the perspective of establishing the failure modes they prevent?
107. Have you equipped every process with provisions for measuring its performance?
108. How often do you check that your objectives and targets are still relevant to the organization's goals?
109. If the questions in your customer satisfaction questionnaires were generated internally, how do you expect to obtain unbiased results?

110. When was the last time your internal audit programme found something that led to improved performance?
111. If you discontinued your internal audit programme, would anyone other than the internal or external auditors demand its reinstatement?
112. If your auditing approach has been to verify compliance with procedures, what approaches are you intending to take now that the system has to enable the organization to achieve its objectives?
113. Do you consider that the system is effectively implemented if people are following the documented procedures or would you also verify that the planned results are being achieved?
114. Would you accept a box of 1000 components by simply checking one sample, if not why would you base your audit conclusions on a few unrepresentative samples?
115. Why shouldn't the manager perform the internal audits, and if you should think he or she is not competent to do so, why do you trust him or her to manage the function?
116. How do you know that each of the processes is achieving the planned results?
117. When was the last time you changed your operating methods in order to increase resource utilization?
118. Do you continue with the current level of product verification regardless of detecting no nonconformities?
119. Are you sure that those examining products or services for conformity apply the same criteria as those using them?
120. Is the data used by management to make decisions generated from the processes of the management system and if not why not?
121. Are there any data collection routines that are not triggered by a process in the management system?
122. How continuous is your continual improvement process?
123. When was the last time a problem recurred?
124. When did asking the question? What if ... become a habit?
125. What we remember we can avoid, what we forget we can repeat therefore what have you done lately to help you remember the mistakes of the past?