

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND CRUISES

Three Celebrity Cruise liners, Galaxy, Mercury and Century, are amongst the first vessels to have been recently awarded the Lloyd's Register environmental protection descriptive note. To achieve this all liners underwent a process of plan, appraisal, survey and audit to demonstrate compliance for:

- NO_x and SO_x emission levels
- Ozone depleting gases and fire fighting agents
- Oil pollution prevention
- Sewage treatment
- Hull anti-fouling systems
- Ballast water

The award recognises Celebrity Cruises' compliance with LR's provisional rules for environmental protection.

OUT OF DATE WEAPONS

According to the National Audit Office, only 2 out of 25 of the Ministry of Defence's most expensive military equipment projects are running on time, the rest are running behind schedule by an average of approximately 4 years. Extra costs and delays have also added to the overall cost for these programmes.

The anti-tank guided weapon system, which is one of the 25 programmes, will be more than 9 years late by the time it comes into service in 2005. The protective armour on tanks have improved so much that the MoD might have to purchase another system to go with the anti-tank guided weapon system.

The MoD chose to buy the Brimstone, developed by Alenia Marconi Systems, which will not come into service until October 2001. This guided anti-armour weapon will be approximately 10 years behind its scheduled date, although most of the delays were caused by the MoD who froze the project for several years.

Other projects with time delays and extra costing problems include the Merlin Mark I, which came into service in March 1999, and cost an additional £1.16 billion and was more than 5 years late.

NHS HOSPITALS

Recently the NHS Hospitals have come under a lot of criticisms. To raise standards in hospitals, a system of red, amber and green lights has been suggested to identify the best and worst performing NHS hospitals. Hospitals with shortest waiting times, highest clinical standards and whose performance is in the top 25% in the country would be granted as green light.

IT SERVICE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

BS 15000 is the new British Standard for IT Service Management Systems and is due to be released in December. This standard is aimed at people who provide IT Service Management and companies that look after their own IT needs. The specification in the standard is based on the well-known Code

of Practice PD 005. This Standard, together with the Code of Practice should give all that is needed for guidance in this area.

UKAS SUPPORT

Six principles have been developed by UKAS to assist in determining which sector specific schemes it will provide national accreditation for. It will support schemes if:

1. there is a demand from end users and suppliers
2. the scheme is based on the concepts of an existing Quality Management System e.g. ISO 9000
3. there are no requirements for specialist auditors
4. there are no conflicts with UKAS' accepted accreditation practices
5. it is clearly identified
6. they are not intended to be mandatory for accreditation of certification bodies.

SAFETY OF MACHINERY

The PD 5304 Code of Practice on the Safety of Machinery has been released. It replaces BS 5304:1988 which was made obsolete when the series of harmonized European Standards were published. This Code of Practice provides advice on the basic principles of safeguarding machinery and includes illustrations to show the application of the principles described. It should contribute to the prevention of machinery accidents and help those with duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1975 and the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998.

“TECHNICAL DEBT”

“Technical Debt” is a recently introduced term used to describe the issues or possible problems which are left over for other groups or departments to resolve further down stream in the process or project. These issues can knowingly (we'll sort that out at the testing stage), or unknowingly (where is the requirement for that in the terms of reference, quotation or order?), contribute to the final Technical Debt. They can be debts left by the Sales Team who said “that's too much detail to be determined at the quotation stage, we will resolve it during design”. The debts could be left at the design stage when the designer said “service or support will be able to modify or manipulate that during the installation phase”. These are not necessarily mistakes or oversights, they are conscious decisions that have been made at that specific stage in the project or process (possibly due to time or resource pressure), but nevertheless have not been communicated, agreed or thought through. The consequence of these issues, if allowed to accumulate throughout the process or life of the project, can be catastrophic for the final stages (particularly for those people attempting to manage these latter stages - effectively pay back the debt!). Is it necessary to monitor this Technical Debt? If it is to be monitored how can Technical Debt be recorded, measured, agreed, controlled and resolved? Does Quality Assurance hold the answer to this question? In later editions we will explore this concept further and explain what steps can be taken to keep this debt to a minimum and repay it as easily as possible.

PD 6668 MANAGING RISK FOR CORPORATE GOVERNANCE : 2000

In September 1999, the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales published ‘Internal Control - Guidance for Directors on the Combined Code for Corporate Governance’, more popularly known as the ‘Turnbull Report’. Corporate Governance was described in the Cadbury Report as ‘the system by which companies are directed and controlled’. PD 6668 provides a systematic approach

to the management arrangements needed to encompass the Turnbull Report's recommendations for effective corporate governance. It covers:

- Risk identification
- Risk prioritization
- Control measures
- Establishing the culture
- Conduct
- Review
- Reporting

The type of risks that should be addressed may include: credit, liquidity, technology, product failure, quality, health and safety and environmental issues. The Turnbull Report covers how a company should control and report on the risks in its business.

Companies must meet the requirements of the Combined Code and failure to meet these requirements could result in a company being delisted and its directors barred from holding office.

IQA'S ROLE

The Institute of Quality Assurance (IQA) is the professional body for quality practitioners and it provides training, education and information on a full range of quality issues. Although, like quality itself, the origins of the IQA were in manufacturing, it now embraces all sectors of the economy from manufacturing to service, and both public and private corporations. There are 13,000 individual members and 600 affiliated organisations.

It can offer unbiased advice and guidance on the best ways to improve standards and help any company find the right quality tool to add value to their processes and give the company a competitive edge.

Quality is now an essential element for a competitive company as customers have higher expectations and demand improvements in the quality of products and services. The focus on quality is a key to successful business and the IQA is committed to this pursuit of quality and has an important contribution to make. Standards can be a way for companies to guarantee quality. These standards include both international (ISO 9000 and ISO 14001) and British (OHSAS 18001 and BS 7799) ones. However whichever standard is used the key is to ensure that it adds value.

Further information is available from Institute of Quality Assurance, 12 Grosvenor Crescent, London SW1X 7EE. Telephone: 020 7245 6722. Fax: 020 7245 6788. Website: www.iqa.org.

SCHIZOPHRENIA PATIENTS DENIED THE NEW DRUG

Schizophrenia is a neurological brain disorder that affects one in a hundred people in Britain. It can start at any age, but most commonly begins in the late teens or early twenties. The disease leaves people disoriented, unable to make every day decisions, manage emotions or relate to others. Schizophrenics often become depressed and the suicide rate of sufferers is approximately 12% above average. What exactly causes the disease is not yet known and there is no cure for it. However, drug and psycho-social treatments can be successful in controlling the symptoms, allowing sufferers to lead normal lives.

In a Europe-wide survey, it was reported that 53% of British schizophrenia patients described the side effects of their drugs were worse than their symptoms (uncomfortable twitching and muscle spasms). Modern antipsychotic drugs are available to relieve the symptoms of schizophrenia, but a large number of patients are still receiving older type drugs even though it is believed that the newer drugs are more effective and produce far fewer side effects. Money seems to be the issue. The older drugs are cheaper, costing only £100 a year for a typical patient whilst the new drugs, due to the expense of research and development, cost £2000 a year.

DIARY DATES

29 Nov - 2 Dec 2000

EuroMold World Fair
Exhibition Centre, Frankfurt, Germany
Contact: 49 069 234331

7-8 December 2000

World Strategic E-Business Alliance
The Holborn Hotel, London
Contact: Customer Services on 020 7368 9300

11-13 December 2000

Six Sigma in Service & transaction
Cumberland Hotel, London.
Contact: IQPC on 020 7430 7300

13-14 December 2000

Measuring Customer Satisfaction
California, USA
Contact: CA Institute of Technology on 001 626 395 4045

TOTAL WORDS 1594

Contacting QM&T

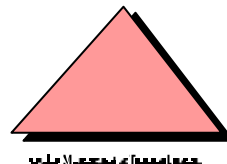
If you would like to learn more about either of the above or any other quality issues, please contact Edda Saunders at the following address:

Quality Management & Training Limited
P.O. Box 172 Guildford Surrey England GU2 7FN
Telephone / Fax: +44 -(0)1483 453511/512

E-mail: help@qmt.co.uk

Web Site: www.qmt.co.uk

Web Site: www.customer-satisfaction.co.uk



Where Quality Counts