

## **JANUARY ISSUE**

### **BACK CARE AT WORK**

Back pain and other back disorders cost the UK economy something in the region of £5 billion a year with over a million days of work lost. There is an initiative with emphasis on reducing back pain and other back disorders by increasing awareness, identifying solutions and supporting practical projects in the workplace. This year's European Week for Safety and Health (16-22 October) broke all previous records, with thousands of organisations throughout the UK taking part. Organisations of all sizes are persuaded to do something no matter how small to improve health and safety at work.

### **WORKSPACE LOUNGES ON THE MOTORWAY**

Due to developments in the IT industry, more and more people are now working away from a fixed office environment. Figures show that there are now more than 4 million people who work away from this environment and that number has been growing at a rate of approximately 15% a year since the 1990's.

This is a joint venture between Granada Road Services and BT to offer these mobile workers an office environment which is an essential part of their working day. They intend to have 100 similar sites across the UK within 12 months.

The first 2 Workspace business lounges are now available in Heathrow and Reading Motorway service stations.

The Workspace lounges offer the facilities to:

- read and send e-mails
- access the Internet
- make telephone calls
- hold meetings
- have video or audio conferences

There is also secretarial support service, providing colour and mono printing, faxes, scanning and photocopying.

The launch of these Workspaces acknowledge the important changes that are taking place in our daily working lives, such as the work pattern for a growing number of people and also the necessity to provide this group of people with the right back-up facilities on the road.

### **SIGN OF EXCELLENCE OR A WARNING?**

Mitsubishi Motors' admission to having concealed customer complaints for over 20 years, has led to the dismissal of the company's president. Also Mitsubishi Electric recalled 45,000 television sets, which they admitted were prone to ignite. The Japanese government has filed criminal charges against the company for deception. Due to these problems, its share price has dropped, allowing Daimler Chrysler to get a reduced cost on their 34% stake in the company. The transport ministry discovered hidden complaints at the headquarters. It was announced that executives would have

their salaries cut as a result. Mitsubishi Motors have been forced to recall a million cars for repair worldwide, at a cost of £45 million and overall the company has suffered a 10% loss in value.

### **ENVIRONMENT CODES**

The Department of Trade and Industry and the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions has released a new “Greens Claims Code” which is consistent with ISO 14021. ISO 14021 - Environmental labels and declarations - Self-declared claims (Type II) environmental labelling is the International Standard on labelling and the labels claims about a product’s environmental aspects. It is one of the ISO 14020 range of standards which contain guiding principles for the development and use of environmental labels of many types.

The code tells businesses to provide clear and meaningful information about the claims they make about “environmental friendliness”. It hopes to stop the use of vague, irrelevant and unhelpful information on product labels.

### **CEMENT STANDARD**

EN 197 - Cements has been handed over to the European Commission by CEN, the European Committee for Standardisation. It is the first harmonised European Standard prepared for the Construction Products Directive (CPD).

The new standard is supported by the European cement industry which trades over 170 million tonnes per year. There will be a transition period until the current British Standard is withdrawn in 2002.

### **TELECOMMUNICATION STANDARD TL9000**

TL 9000 is the Telecommunication interpretation of ISO 9000. It was developed in the USA by the Quality Excellence for Suppliers of Telecommunications Forum (QuEST Forum) and is now beginning to be used in the UK.

In October 1997 the QuEST Forum began and they decided to follow the lead of the automotive industry and create a sector specific ISO9001-based quality system. The goals of the forum were:

- improve measurable quality performance
- establish world class forum infrastructure
- develop and publish TL 9000 handbooks
- encourage companies to register to TL 9000
- increase forum Membership

They realized that by basing it on the existing ISO 9001 system they would benefit from the infrastructure of registers, trainers and consultants. Although the requirements of TL 9000 are based on ISO9001, the metrics were developed separately.

The QuEST Forum has achieved all of its initial goals and it is now piloting the TL 9000 Quality System, with 14 international companies being registered so far. Forum Members have also become liaison members of ISO TC 176 and have been actively working with that team.

The immediate benefits are the elimination of multiple industry requirements and conflicting metrics requirements, in line with the TC 176 guidelines for acceptance of sector specific standards. Further there are potential benefits in the use of metrics, and an organised customer/supplier interface has great potential in guiding companies towards greater improvements. The next step is to identify industry-wide improvement initiatives, based on information gathered.

Book One, Release 2.5 “TL 9000 Quality System Requirements - The World’s First Quality System Requirements and Metric for the Global Telecommunications Industry QuEST Forum”. This books consists of Hardware, Software and Services Quality System Requirements.

Book Two, Release 2.5 “TL 9000 Quality System Metrics - The World’s First Quality System Requirements and Metric for the Global QuEST Forum”. This book consists of Hardware, Software and Services Quality Metrics and complements Book One.

### **BENEFITS OF QUALITY**

Some of the high profile institutes, including the Electrical Engineers, the IMech E and the IQA, have for the first time in 6 years, united together to investigate the benefits and deficiencies of quality. A survey will be carried out by the Engineering Quality Form to establish the effectiveness of quality related initiatives in the UK and the results will be published in 2001.

### **POWER TO THE PEOPLE**

ISO who are the publishers of more than 12,500 international standards, is offering both the general public and any special interest groups the opportunity to influence the direction of the international standards it produces each year. The organisation is opening the business plans which guide the development work of the technical committees, by posting them on the Internet for the public to comment and scrutinise. As the business plans become available, between now and the end of the year, anyone will be able to contact them and provide their comments and have an input.

### **A QUESTION OF QUALITY**

The Institute of Management and the BQF (British Quality Foundation), in July launched a survey “a question of quality” which found that over 80% of managers predict increased emphasis on the quality of products and services over the next 3 years. Research amongst UK managers suggests successful organisations need to place quality at the heart of their business in order to keep pace with the expectations of customers, competitors and regulators. Quality has already found a place in most organisations. The most widely adopted initiative is Investors in People (45%), then ISO 9001 (42%) and business excellence model (15%).

### **SAFETY AT WORKPLACE**

The latest safety statistics for workplace safety from the Health and Safety Commission, shows a downwards trend in numbers and incidence rate of injuries at work. Figures show that in 1999/2000 the fatal injury rate has shown to have fallen from 0.9 to 0.8 per 100,000 workers and the major injury rate has also fallen from 108.8 to 107.5 per 100,000. In fact, 35 fewer workers died, which a decrease in numbers from 253 to 218.

### **VIDEO COMMUNICATION**

The company Labelon, are manufacturers of clothing labels and they supply many UK clothing

retailers and manufacturers. The company is one of the growing number of manufacturers who are using the latest video communications technology to speed up their decision making and to maintain quality control of its products. They have installed video phones at two of its operations in the UK and Hong Kong. The video phone link enables the labels to be verified quickly prior to being sent from the production operation in Hong Kong to the UK.

### **PREVENTION BETTER THAN CURE**

A manufacturing company producing fluoropolymer coating, are now using a spectrometer to verify the quality of the incoming raw materials prior to their use. It is essential that the raw materials are up to standard before initiating the manufacturing process. The infrared spectrometer helps identify raw material constituents by measuring the infrared spectra which result from the interaction of infrared radiation with the vibrational modes of the molecules. Using this technique they can create a reference database of the 'fingerprint' of all their raw materials. So the company can ensure rigorous quality control of incoming raw materials and that the supplied material conforms exactly to requirements.

### **NOISE DIRECTIVE**

A new European Directive concerning noise levels will become law in the United Kingdom next year. The noise levels emitted by a wide range of equipment that is used outdoors must be within specified limits. This includes gardening equipment, pumps drills and saws. There are 57 categories of equipment to be measured and of these 22 must meet limits. For equipment in the other categories that are not subject to limits the manufacturers need to guarantee the sound level of their products.

### **DIARY DATES**

15-16 May 2001

QM 2001 (Quality in Manufacturing) - UK's annual  
Exhibition for Quality Professionals - National  
Motorcycle Museum, Solihull, West Midlands  
Contact: Norma Hutchings on 01332 660070

### **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:

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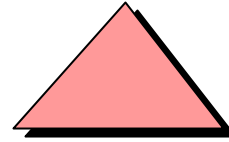
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