

JULY NEWS

NEW SERVICE FOR AUTOMOTIVE SECTOR

A new service for the automotive suppliers wishing to comply with the new automotive standard, ISO/TS 16949 has been launched by the Lloyd's Register Quality Assurance Ltd. (LRQA). This standard will offer significant benefits particularly to those major automotive suppliers who may currently have to comply with more than one standard and therefore have to undergo multiple assessments, often by different organisations.

The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) as UK members of the International Automotive Task Force (IATF) has signed an agreement with LRQA to provide the service on a worldwide basis.

GROCERY AID

It began life in 1992 when HRH Prince Charles asked the Institute of Grocery Distribution (IGD) to establish a charity distributing surplus products from manufacturers and retailers to those in genuine need. Just one year later Prince Charles opened the first depot in Bristol. Grocery Aid now operates five depots across the country which receive bulk deliveries of food and other products donated free of charge by many of the country's largest food manufacturers and retailers. To date Grocery Aid has donated over £15m worth of products to charities helping those in need throughout the UK.

Grocery Aid is the only charity of its kind to be certified to ISO 9002. While many cash-strapped voluntary organisations find it difficult to justify the resources needed to undertake ISO 9000 certification. Grocery Aid had to demonstrate that procedures were in place to ensure the products were only given to recipient on benefit. MAFF agreed to a trial and in autumn 1999, saw the delivery of its first pallet of apples from Essex to the Broxburn depot for onward distribution to its Scottish charities.

With over 120 charities on the scheme's waiting list and another 200 potential charities in London alone, Grocery Aid is faced with two key tasks. Firstly, to raise awareness of the scheme within the food sector to increase the quantity of donated product, and secondly, to attract the skilled people needed to manage and extend the work of the charity in years to come.

'ROGUE' CERTIFICATION

There is growing concern that some certification bodies not accredited by UKAS are targeting unsuspecting SMEs with the cheap and easy route to ISO 9000 certification.

Although unaccredited certification is not illegal, many feel that not enough is being done to stop unaccredited certification bodies targeting smaller companies, which may not be aware of the guarantees provided by accreditation. Some unaccredited certification bodies openly offer to write company's manual and then audit them against ISO 9000, which contravenes the spirit of third-party auditing. Accreditation stipulates that certification bodies shall not carry out consultancy and certification of the same organisation.

FOOD INDUSTRY ALERT

Product Liability law is soon to be extended to agricultural produce, by reason of E.U. Directive 1999/34. In future if products like meat, fish, eggs, fruit and vegetables are contaminated, liability will be attributed to those responsible for the original produce. So consumers, or anyone else in that chain, will be able to sue the farmer (or the one in the production chain with the most money). He in turn will be looking to pass the blame onto those who made his product defective. So:-

1. Who produced the fertilisers, the herbicide or the G.M. seeds?
2. Who contaminated the soil, the air, the water supply?
3. Who is responsible for any pollution or mismanagement of water?

Quality and Risk Management strategies are being extended as all parties seek to reduce or offset their liabilities. A Checklist should be produced which includes the introduction or review of the following: contractual arrangements, exclusion clauses, Q.A. systems, marketing claims, warnings, instructions for use, consumer complaints, traceability, records, product recall, product liability insurance. For more information please contact us on our Help Desk.

BNFL FALLOUT

In March this year Sweden announced it was refusing to deliver nuclear fuel for reprocessing, because of reports of falsified documents and safety doubts at the Cumberland plant. Its contract was the first to be suspended in the wake of the safety scandal.

Four days later Nuclear Installations Inspectorate (NII) impounded four batches of uranium fuel at BNFL's Springfields manufacturing site, near Preston, because it considered unsafe. The fuel assemblies were due for dispatch to two reactors run by privatised nuclear generator British Energy, but were seized by NII inspectors because if they had been loaded into a power station's core, radioactive material would have leaked from the containers. And in a final blow to the sorry BNFL safety saga, the German government suspended indefinitely all contracts to buy reprocessed fuel from the company on safety grounds.

These incidents demonstrate there is a very serious question over quality control of BNFL and about the management systems to guarantee it. This has implications for the government's plans to part privatise the company before the next election.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The British Standards Institute (BSI) have released draft guidelines which specify requirements for the definition, targeting and measurement of service quality in public passenger transport. The European Standard BS EN 13816 is applicable to all passenger transport operators, including airlines, trains, underground trains, buses and even taxis. It was initiated by the European Parliament and comes into effect in early 2001. Its aim is to encourage consistent standards of public transport across Europe, and will enable comparisons between public transport operators. Public transport firms will need to identify service quality targets from a range of 104 criteria listed in the standard, adopt the chosen targets in their own quality specification, and publish their specification to give it public visibility. The quality criteria cover areas such as; availability, accessibility, information, time, customer care, comfort, security, environmental impact.

It is expected that commercial pressure will push companies to comply with the new standard, since organisations issuing licenses and franchises to service providers will ask for evidence that they

comply. The standard should enable the good operators to show that they are the best.

Recently Railway companies were given a strong message that they are still performing badly, with official figures showing that 59% of passengers feel their journeys are unsatisfactory. The performance of 13 out of 25 train operating companies has worsened in the six months leading up to last March, compared with the same period a year earlier. This comes at a time when passenger usage is at its highest since 1946 and the number of trains has risen by 400 in a year. Passenger usage has increased by 30% in five years and is rising. The South-East and London have the lowest satisfaction levels and some commuters think their season tickets are too expensive for the poor service they receive.

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE

Customer Complaints registers are standard in most companies, particularly those who expect to gain quality Accreditation. As well as demonstrating the company takes note of its complaints, this can also provide an improvement mechanism. By analysing these complaints trends might be seen which can highlight problem areas and lead to savings in warranty costs and an improvement in quality.

At last a similar technique is to be adopted by the National Health Service. They are to launch a central database in which all incidents of harm or potential danger to patients will be reported. The system will be similar to that used in the aviation industry and will be used by the independent Commission for Health Improvement. It aims to pinpoint problems as they develop and will collect complaints and litigation from patients and medical staff. Currently incidents are dealt with in a fragmented way and there is no way of knowing whether the lessons learnt from an incident in one part of the NHS is communicated with the rest, and this can mean that sometimes history seems to repeat itself. The BMA supports this system and feels that it is only sensible and good risk management for there to be an effective system for identifying and logging adverse incidents so that remedial action can be taken quickly. There are to be five year targets including reducing the number of negligent cases in obstetrics and gynaecology so that litigation is reduced by a quarter and they want to reduce serious errors in the use of prescribed drugs by 40%.

This response by the Government is partly as a reaction to some of the recent disasters which have hit the head lines. Harold Shipman, the serial killer GP; the gynaecologist who botched operations and the elderly doctor who gave faulty cancer diagnosis.

SMILE

Smile is the Internet bank operated by the Co-operative Bank. It has demonstrated that it is safe from on-line interference as it recently became the first bank in the world to register with BSI to the internationally recognized information security standard, BS7799.

Important areas covered by BS7799 include maintaining the confidentiality, integrity, availability and accountability for all kinds of sensitive information. The British Standard is presented as a Code of Practice (Part 1), containing general guidelines for implementing a system, and full Specification of Requirements for compliance and certification to the standard (Part 2). It has been specifically developed to make sure that organisations have the most appropriate controls and systems in place to ensure best practice in managing the storage and exchange of information, whether it is in

electronic or in paper form. The controls also cover information exchanged verbally. Registration shows that information security management is effective to both customers and the companies they do business with.

NEW BOOK EDITION

A new edition of Introduction to Quality Assurance (ISBN 0-952839-1-3) has been released. This book, together with its companion Quality Management (Principles and Techniques) (ISBN 0-952839-0-5) form a practical guide for individuals and companies and are extensively used by academia and industry. The books are written by Geoff Vorley and Fred Tickle and are published by Quality management and Training Ltd.

LAUNCH OF QM&T'S NEW WEB SITE

www.customer-satisfaction.co.uk

Our new Web Site can help you

1. Learn how to measure customer satisfaction & requirements
2. Understand your customer and product
3. Retain customer loyalty
4. Value your own customers
5. Meet customer satisfaction requirements of the ISO9001:2000 standard

DIARY DATES

Some dates for your diary.

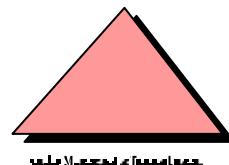
IQA Membership Courses:

5-7 September 2000	A11 Introduction to Quality Assurance
12-14 September 2000	A12 Quality Assurance Management
19-21 September 2000	B2 Statistical Analysis for Control of Quality
26-28 September 2000	B6 Computing & Quality Assurance
	Contact: QM&T 01483 453511
6 September 2000	Management of OH&S in the workplace
	Contact: BSI 020 8996 9000
12-13 September 2000	Quality in Manufacturing Exhibition
	National Motorcycle Museum, Birmingham
	Contact: Nexus Media 01322 660070

Contacting QM&T

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

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