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Are you ready for ISO9001: 2000?

The deadline for transfer of Accreditation from ISO9000: 1994 to ISO9000: 2000 is rapidly approaching – December 2003. One major Assessment organisation is predicting a mad rush towards the end of the year as many companies have yet to start their preparations. This will put a strain on the Assessment bodies as they expect to be asked not just for Assessment days but also to find time and consultants to provide consultancy and support prior to the Assessment.

BSI have released a guide called ‘ISO9001: 2000 Achieving Registration’ This answers many of the most frequently asked questions e.g. what is process-based management, what is continual improvement, how do we begin? It cost £30 and is available from QM&T as well as BSI.

The ISO have published two free brochures to assist organisations in implementing and getting the best out of the new standard. The full texts of the brochures “Quality Management Principles” and “ISO9000: 2000 – Selection and use” are freely available on their web-site or printed brochures can be ordered. To download your free copy go to www.iso.ch

Another source of free advice and assistance on preparing for ISO9001:2000 is QM&T website. This has a range of documentation and suggestions to help you – and you can also order the BSI guide mentioned above. www.qmt.co.uk

Final Results

The results for the last set of IQA examinations based on A11, A12 etc that were taken in November 2002 have been released. QM&T students had a 100% pass rate of which 40% were distinctions. In fact of all IQA candidates who obtained distinctions, 80% were QM&T students. These examinations have been replaced by the new diploma course launched by the IQA and this is also offered as distance packages by QM&T.

Congestion Charging

The new congestion charging in London starting last month and if successful may well be extended to cover other city centres. The system uses cameras and computer technology to read and identify number plates. However, the system is not perfect and Transport for London is only claiming that it will be able to identify 90% of the number plates. Further some plates may need to be identified manually e.g. foreign numbers, personal plates that have been squashed up to make words. Particular problems also arise when the computers wrongly pick out radiator grills rather than plates (BMW's are a problem), lettering on vans and sometimes even roof-racks. There can also be problems when cars switch lanes at particular points or are ‘tail-gating’. The scheme aims to cut traffic in the central London by 17% although there will be increased congestion out the edge of the zone. For further details on this story visit www.bbc/news.co.uk



Laser Eye Surgery risks?

The use of laser surgery to correct eyesight is becoming increasingly popular with around 100,000 people undergoing it every year in the UK. In most cases the procedure is simple and quick and very low risk. However, 'Health Which' are concerned that any doctor can carry out the treatment after only a few days of training – no specialist qualification is needed. They also found that there are differences in complication rates between surgeons and clinics. Complications can include dry eyes, night vision problems and in very rare cases damage that requires a corneal transplant to correct. The Royal College of Ophthalmologists' guidelines say that only doctors with specialist training should carry out the procedure. Patients should not be taken in by all the advertisements and should ask about their doctor's training and complication rates. In most cases this is a very successful procedure but patients should go in 'with their eyes open'! For further information contact 'Health Which'

Greenhouse Gas

A recent report, the Global Atmosphere Research Programme 2000-2002, published by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs says that the UK exceeded its international target for cutting greenhouse emissions by 2000 and much more needs to be done to reduce emissions. The key findings of the report are:

- In 2001, the atmospheric concentrations of many greenhouse gases reached their highest ever levels
- 1998, 2001 and 2002 were the three hottest years on record
- Actions being taken by the UK could reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to 23% below 1990 levels by 2010

The Sustainable Development Commission has also published a report, UK Climate Change Programme. The Commission says that measures for significantly reducing carbon dioxide emissions are lacking. As the Commission points out "there are great benefits, not only for the long-term by helping to slow global climate change, but immediately through business opportunities for low carbon technologies and by giving ourselves a better quality of life". Although the Commission does point out that "the UK is likely to achieve

its Kyoto target ... Few other countries can claim that. It is a positive point, which we must build on in encouraging greater efforts internationally".

In April, the greenhouse emissions trading scheme will begin in the UK. This includes carbon dioxide and five other greenhouse gases. This is a voluntary scheme and to qualify companies had to determine their average emissions for 1998-2000. This baseline has to be verified by an accredited verifier e.g. LRQA.

All organisations can become more 'environmentally aware' and ISO14001 can help you structure your improvements and gain business benefits as well.

ID Cards

The new Proof of Age Standards Scheme – or PASS – is being launched by licensees and retailers with the support of the government. An ID card showing the PASS logo will have been validated by trading standards officers and contains reliable and accurate information. There are many proof of age cards around at the moment and shopkeepers often have difficulty in deciding which are fake and which are valid. The new scheme logo will help in identifying the valid cards. Products that have age restrictions include videos, computer games, alcohol, fireworks, petrol, cigarettes, guns and lottery tickets.

Charter Mark – Revised Criteria for 2003

The Charter Mark – used by Public Services to demonstrate business excellence has been revised and updated. The new criteria have recently been launched. They reflect the main principles for improving the delivery of public services that have been developed by the Prime Minister's Office of Public Services Reform. The new revision reduces the duplication that previously existed and a new challenge has been added - "contribute to enhancing opportunities and quality of life in the communities you serve".

- Criterion 1 Set Standards and Perform Well
- Criterion 2 Actively Engage with your Customers, Partners and Staff
- Criterion 3 Be Fair and Accessible to Everyone and Promote Choice
- Criterion 4 Continuously Develop and Improve



Criterion 5 Use your Resources Effectively and Imaginatively

Criterion 6 Contribute to Improving Opportunities and Quality of Life in the Communities you Serve

There will be a temporary suspension in Charter Mark applications whilst the assessors understand the revised criteria. However, a self-assessment package is available on-line. Following a launch later this year the new scheme will come into full effect at the beginning of 2004. During 2003 there will be events around the country where you can find out about the new scheme. For further information on the revised Criteria and the programme of events go to www.chartermark.gov.uk

Patient Privacy

According to the Foundation for Information Policy Research (FIPR), up to 200,000 requests are made by investigators under false pretences to obtain health details on patients and most are successful. The BMA have recommended that telephone requests should be logged, approved by a clinician, authenticated and then the enquirer phoned back. This approach was not adopted by the NHS, whose current strategy is focused on creating a central patient record database. The FIPR feel that the NHS should modernise their systems to protect rather than undermine patients' privacy.

Safeguarding the Environment

Dr Klaus Toepfer, executive secretary of the United Nations Environment Programme and an assistant UN secretary general feels that the world needs safeguards to protect the environment in a similar way to the Geneva Convention. He feels that "the environment is often neglected as 'the long term casualty of war'". He recognises that loss of human life, suffering and homelessness must be the first

concern, but that we should not ignore the impact on the Earth's life-support systems. He says, "we have the Geneva Conventions, aimed at safeguarding the rights of prisoners and civilians. We need similar safeguards for the environment. Using the environment as a weapon must be universally condemned, and denounced as an international crime against humankind, against Nature".

New Standard – ISO15706, Information and documentation – International Standard Audiovisual Number (ISAN)

This standard provides a system for assigning a unique international identification code to all audiovisual work, including films, commercials, television programmes and news. It will provide for AV work the same sort of identifier as the ISBN code for books and the ISSN code for magazines. An ISAN number will be made up of 16 hexadecimal digits divided into two segments: a 12-digit root segment followed by a 4-digit segment for the identification of episodes or parts when applicable. The number would be included in all documentation, advertising and packaging of the AV work. The ISAN code should assist in allocating royalties, help in information retrieval and even combat piracy by allowing work to be tracked throughout its life. For more information see www.iso.ch

ISO and Social Responsibility

An advisory group has begun to analyse whether work by the ISO in helping organisations in meeting their "social responsibilities" would give added value to the programmes already operating. The group must decide whether ISO should launch work on social responsibility and, if so, what and how. A report on the group's progress will be issued in March 2003. For further details visit www.iso.ch