

The 8 Quality Principles

ISO9001 is underpinned by 8 principles of quality (as defined in ISO9000) which emphasise a systems approach to management and continual improvement, and moves the business away from only focusing on nonconformity prevention.

Principle 1: Customer focus

Companies need to understand and focus on customer requirements and strive to exceed customer expectations. By focusing on customers' needs you can create fast and flexible responses to market opportunities, increase revenue and market opportunities, enhance customer satisfaction and improve customer loyalty leading to repeat business.

Principle 2: Leadership

Top management should create a culture in which people understand and are motivated towards the company's goals and objectives. Effective leadership should ensure there is a clear vision with realistic targets.

Principle 3: Involvement of people

People at all levels are the essence of your company. You need to keep them motivated, committed to furthering your objectives and contributing to continual improvement. To do this well you need to provide staff with the required resources, training and freedom to act with responsibility and accountability.

Principle 4: Process approach

Desired results are achieved more efficiently when activities and related resources are managed as a process. You can lower costs and shorten cycle times through effective use of resources as well as create improved, consistent and predictable results. You need to focus the business on and prioritise improvement opportunities.

Principle 5: System approach to management

Identifying, understanding and managing interrelated processes as a system will contribute to your company's effectiveness and efficiency and help it achieve its objectives. You need to give stakeholders confidence in the consistency, effectiveness and efficiency of your business.

Principle 6: Continual improvement

Continual improvement of your company's overall performance should be a permanent objective and you need to align improvement activities at all levels towards this strategic intent. But make sure the business is also flexible enough to react quickly to new opportunities.

Principle 7: Factual approach to decision making

Effective and informed decisions are based on the analysis of data and information. By collating and analysing process data and records you will increase your ability to demonstrate the effectiveness of past decisions and an increased ability to review, challenge and change opinions and decisions.

Principle 8: Mutually beneficial supplier relationships

Your company and its suppliers are interdependent and a mutually beneficial relationship enhances the ability of both to create value. In addition to the optimization of costs and resources, you need the flexibility and speed to make joint responses to changing market or customer needs.