

## The New 9000

There is a new 9000 about to hit the streets and it isn't a Saab. It is causing much more of a stir around the world than any new automobile. The new ISO9000: 2000 series of standards is due to be published during the fourth quarter of this year. Never before has a revision of a series of standards attracted so much attention. This is because, up until the end of December 1998, at least 271,966 ISO9000 certificates had been awarded in 142 countries worldwide making it the most prolific standard yet. The fifth largest industrial sector for certification was wholesale and retail according to the *ISO survey of ISO9000 and ISO14000 Certificates, 1998*. So it is highly probable that most of the readers of Retail Today already know that the ISO9000 family of standards represents international consensus on good management practices with the aim of ensuring product and service quality.

It has been hard to remain neutral on the subject of ISO9000. It was only a few years ago that my country of origin, the United Kingdom, had more certified companies than the rest of the world put together. I certainly didn't see much direct impact on service and profit. Many companies implemented it solely because an important customer demanded. It was passed down the supply chain like an infection. Many organizations complied with the old standards ISO9001, 9002 & 9003, but there was no sense of excellence. Initiatives, such as the European Quality Award and Investor in People, were far more significant in achieving deep-rooted improvements. If poorly implemented, the Standards could discourage innovation and become costly bureaucracies. This could explain the significant numbers of companies deciding to discontinue certification in both the UK and Australia.

As a long time cynic of ISO9000, I have to confess that a lot of the limitations of the old standards have been designed out in this latest revision. The influences of the US Baldrige and European Quality Awards are obvious. The ISO9000 family has been rationalized to ISO9001 and ISO9004. They are both based on the same principles and have the same structure and terminology.

ISO9001 is the Quality Management Requirement Standard. It will be used for certification and may be used for contractual requirements.

ISO9004 will be the Quality Management System standard designed to go beyond quality management requirements to a holistic approach to quality, in pursuit of improvement of organizational performance. ISO9004 contains an appendix on self-assessment and it is anticipated that this is how it will be used.

The underpinning principles of the revisions are very heartening to a believer in continuous improvement. They are as follows:

- Customer focused organization
- Leadership

- Involvement of People
- Process Approach
- System approach to management
- Continual improvement
- Factual approach to decision making
- Mutually beneficial supplier relations

The structure of the standards has also been improved. It now comprises four main sections:

1. Management Responsibility
2. Resource Management
3. Product and / or Service Realization
4. Measurement, Analysis & Improvement

It is anticipated that the co-existence period of the old and the new standards will be a minimum of a year and a maximum of two years. This means that by the end of 2002, well over two hundred thousand organizations will have to upgrade. Many more just starting the ISO journey will have to be supported through the transition. ISO is doing everything possible to support organizations in the transition and their website contains very useful information ([www.iso.ch](http://www.iso.ch)).

This is probably going to be the biggest event in global quality. Thankfully the new ISO9000 should encourage many of those organizations that think quality is solely about compliance to progress to the next step of never-ending improvement based on people as well as processes.

If you would like to explore this subject further or have any other subjects you would like to see covered please email me at [john@marshj.demon.co.uk](mailto:john@marshj.demon.co.uk) or visit my website at <http://www.tqp.com>.

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