

# ISO 9001

for Small Businesses

## What to do

Advice from ISO/TC 176





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# ISO – the International Organization for Standardization

ISO has a membership of some 160 national standards bodies from countries large and small, industrialized, developing and in transition, in all regions of the world. ISO's portfolio of more than 18 100 standards provides business, government and society with practical tools for all three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, environmental and societal.

ISO standards make a positive contribution to the world we live in. They facilitate trade, spread knowledge, disseminate innovative advances in technology, and share good management and conformity assessment practices.

ISO standards provide solutions and achieve benefits for almost all sectors of activity, including agriculture, construction, mechanical engineering, manufacturing, distribution, transport, medical devices, information and communication technologies, the environment, energy, quality management, conformity assessment and services.

ISO only develops standards for which there is a clear market requirement. The work is carried out by experts in the subject drawn directly from the industrial, technical and business sectors that have identified the need for the standard, and which subsequently put the standard to use. These experts may be joined by others with relevant knowledge, such as representatives of government agencies, testing laboratories, consumer associations and academia, and by international governmental and non-governmental organizations.

An ISO International Standard represents a global consensus of the knowledge of a particular subject or process, be it the state of the art in that subject, or what is good practice.

# The International Trade Centre (ITC)

ITC is the joint agency of the World Trade Organization and the United Nations.

As the development partner for small business export success, ITC's goal is to help developing and transition countries achieve sustainable human development through exports.

We partner with trade support institutions to deliver sustainable and inclusive capacity building services to achieve “Export Impact for Good”. We have five core business practices to deliver on this goal: business and trade policy, export strategy, strengthening trade support institutions, trade intelligence and exporter competitiveness.

Through strategic development and capacity building based on these business services, ITC connects opportunities to markets. As a result, we achieve long-term, tangible benefits at both national and community levels.



# Preface

Small business is the world's biggest business. More than 95 % of the world's businesses are small to medium sized and many countries look to small and medium businesses to power economic growth and employment. Therefore, International Standards need to assist small business just as much as they do global enterprises, government and society at large. In particular, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) should be able to share in gains in efficiency and effectiveness offered by ISO 9001.

This standard, which gives the requirements for quality management systems, is among ISO's most well known and widely implemented standards ever. ISO 9001 is used in some 176 countries by businesses and organizations large and small, in public and private sectors, by manufacturers and service providers, in all sectors of activity to achieve objectives such as the following

- Establishing a framework for continual improvement and customer satisfaction
- Providing assurance about quality in supplier-customer relationships
- Harmonizing quality requirements in sectors and areas of activity
- Qualifying suppliers in global supply chains
- Providing technical support for regulators
- Giving organizations in developing countries and transition economies a framework for participating in global supply chains, export trade and business process outsourcing
- Assisting in the economic progress of developing countries and transition economies
- Transferring good managerial practice
- Encouraging the rise of services.

The management system approach pioneered by ISO 9001 and further developed by ISO 14001 (environmental management systems) has since been followed by other standards for the needs of specific sectors, or to address specific issues. They include : information

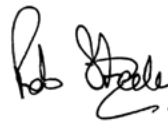
security (ISO/IEC 27001), food safety (ISO 22000), supply chain security (ISO 28000), energy management (ISO 50001 – under development) and road traffic safety management (ISO 39001 – under development).

This third edition of *ISO 9001 for Small Businesses* has been updated to take account of the latest edition of the standard, published in 2008. In plain language and through numerous concrete examples from a wide range of sectors, it aims to help SMEs to understand and implement ISO 9001.

This handbook is the latest example of the fruitful cooperation between ISO and the ITC. The two organizations hope that it will enable small businesses – in developing, transitional and industrialized economies – to draw the maximum benefits from ISO 9001, a standard which has become an essential tool of the world economy.



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