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## ISO 9000 Close-up: Project Management

**This is one in a series of The American Quality Resource articles examining applications and processes critical for achieving ISO 9000 registration.**

Successfully achieving ISO 9000 registration requires the application of good project-management techniques. It also requires several project phases, each with specific steps; some should be completed in sequence and others in parallel.

ISO 9000 registration requires managing five project phases:

### **1) Planning:**

- Establish teams and assign responsibilities based upon “gap analysis” results
- Determine the amount and “levels” of documentation required
- List and establish schedules for significant project milestones

### **2) Creation of the Documentation System:**

- Team meetings and “brainstorming”
- Process mapping of company business processes
- Write, review, revise and approve procedures
- Implement document “traceability” and controls

### **3) Internal Audits:**

- Train internal quality auditors
- Prepare an audit plan and schedule
- Assign and schedule auditors
- Conduct audits and report results

### **4) Management Monitoring of Quality System Status:**

- Collect, analyze and evaluate quality data
- Conduct formal management reviews
- Direct corrective actions
- Revise documentation and correct as required

**5) Prepare for Registration Assessment:**

- Interview and select the registrar
- File applications
- Schedule system and facility audits
- Perform preassessment and rehearsal as required.

**Applying project management steps**

The techniques and processes used to manage the ISO 9000 system to successful registration are useful for any business project. Managers must plan and schedule the required actions; assign staff and make resources available; provide effective employee training when necessary; monitor data to determine project status and progress; direct appropriate corrective actions; and test new processes before final implementation.

ISO 9000 documentation requirements also provide important support for a variety of business projects. General Spring of Nashville, Tenn. (80 employees, \$7.5 million in annual sales, ISO 9002 registered) provides a typical example.

According to the president of General Spring, “Prior to our quest for ISO registration, most everything in the plant was done by verbal instructions. The certification process forced us to write and document everything. This meant the company had to set standards for every aspect of the manufacturing process, from paperwork to quality control. It also taught workers how to be more responsible for their jobs ... now the company is a more tightly run, coordinated organization.”

A systematic, program management approach to conducting business activities is required to assure continued product or service quality. The ISO registration preparation process, when conducted as a managed project, provides a model to apply to other projects. And implementing an ISO 9000 quality-management system provides the structure and control mechanisms necessary to help the company manage other business projects.