Quality Organisation Structures: Requirements in ISO 9001 and TickIT*plus*

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Abstract

ISO 9001 and TickIT*plus* define requirements for the Top Management of a Company to demonstrate their support for the Quality Management System. To assist them in meeting these requirements, there will be a number of Quality Professionals.

This Management Summary looks at those requirements in ISO 9001:2008 and the changes in ISO 9001:2015 and at the requirements within TickIT*plus* and considers the various types of Quality Organisation Structures within Software Companies or Divisions that can support the Top Management in achieving them.

Keywords: ISO 9001, TickIT*plus*, Quality

1.0 Introduction

ISO 9001 and TickIT*plus* define requirements for the Top Management of a Company to demonstrate their support for the Quality Management System (QMS). To support them in meeting these requirements, there will be a Quality Organisation, i.e. a hierarchy of Quality Professionalsand the experience of the people within it. This Management Summary selects four examples from Software Companies or Divisions and then considers the advantages and drawbacks of these Structures.

2.0 The Standards

ISO 9001 is the International Standard for the requirements for Quality Management Systems. ISO 9001:2008 was the current standard until late in 2015, when the new version

responsibility as well as the QMS. TickIT*plus* expects these to be done by 'the Organisation'; ISO 9001 assumes they are already in place.

Top Management are mentioned in BP.4 where they ensure that all the financial, material and human resources are available to meet the requirements of the Business Plan and that activities are undertaken in accordance with the Integrated Management System (IMS) (TickIT*plus* uses this term as there may be more than one certified Management System, e.g. Quality (ISO 9001), IT Service Management (ISO 20000), etc.).

In BP.5, again Top Management have a requirement to monitor the performance of the Management Framework and the effectiveness of the IMS and to plan actions where performance or effectiveness is inadequate.

3.0 Top Management

But what is Top Management?

Top Management will be the top of the Organisation that has or wants the

Support can vary from advice for a development project to attendance at the formal testingof the product

4.1 Process and Compliance

Having the QMS and the Process and Compliance teams locally means that the processes in the QMS are more likely to reflect the actual practices of the projects and any changes (from audit findings and improvement suggestions) can be made quickly. The Local Certification would be unaffected by problems in other Divisions.

On the other hand, having a company-wide QMS means that when someone moves from one Division to another they do not need to learn a new set of processes. With a large QMS and having the Process and Compliance Team remote from most of the Divisions means that the changes happen slower and have to be agreed by more people. For a Large Company with a diverse Company profile, e.g. from large hardware manufacturers down to small software producers, the one size QMS may not fit all the Divisions and will require tailoring of the QMS, which will also need to be managed. The UK-wide Certification will reduce the overall costs with the Certification body, but may spread out the period of the assessment.

4.2 Auditing

While the QMS Audits will be performed by the Process and Compliance Team, local or remote, the project and business risk audits will be done at a local level. The auditors in a Central Quality Team may be considered as more independent and will be more able to compare the practices of different projects.

Where project audits are conducted by the Project Quality Engineers on their own projects, there can be an advantage as they are more familiar with the processes as performed by the project and any changes suggested are more likely to be accepted by the project. In contrast, raising non-conformances may be difficult as it would reveal failures to people outside the project.

4.3 Support

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4.4 Funding

Process and Compliance teams will usually be funded from a central budget or from overheads, but Project Quality Engineers will be funded by their projects.

A Central Quality Team may be funded from the Central Budget/overheads which makes them free as far as the project is concerned, so are more likely to be consulted. Alternatively they may be funded by projects when they ask for support but that means that projects may be reluctant to ask if there is little money left in the budget. Projects may also be only willing to pay for what is of value to them and not everything that the Quality Team or Quality Engineers believe they need, e.g. audits, checking delivery paperwork.

4.5 Role of the Quality Manager

In all the variants, the Quality Manager will communicate the Company's Quality Policy and Objectives and Business Strategy down to his Quality Engineers. In the small company and the autonomous division, the Quality Manager may have been involved in the setting of the Quality Policy and Objectives. In the Large Company, the decisions will have been made at a higher level.

With a Central Quality Team, the Quality Manager is more involved with the team, sorting any resource issues, including conflicting project requirements and providing an escalation path to the Senior and Top Management in the Company.

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Promoting a Quality Engineer to Quality Manager also has advantages, as they will often have a broader understanding of the product side of the Business and it may n