Policy, Objectives & Indicators

ISO 9001:2015

Contents

1 Introduction 2

1.1 Foreword 2

1.2 General Approach 2

2 Quality Policy 3

2.1 Align the Quality Policy with Strategy 3

2.2 Establish the Quality Policy 4

2.3 Communicate the Quality Policy 5

2.4 Implementation Checklist 5

3 Quality Objectives 7

3.1 Develop the Quality Objectives 7

3.2 Establish Quality Objectives 8

3.3 Communicate the Quality Objectives 8

3.4 Achieve the Quality Objectives 9

3.5 Implementation Checklist 10

4 Performance Indicators 12

4.1 Establish Indicators & Targets 12

4.2 Link Indicators & Targets to Objectives 12

4.3 Implementation Checklist 13

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1 Introduction

1.1 Foreword

Your organization's Top management is responsible for implementing and developing the quality policy, quality objectives, and customer focused project-specific plans. The governance structure should provide support for creating and establishing appropriate processes that are important for maintaining the quality objectives and policies.

This document does not intend to add to, subtract from; or in any way modify the stated requirements of ISO 9001:2015, but to provide practical examples and a greater understanding of the general requirements that relate to your organization's quality policy, objectives, and management review processes.

1.2 General Approach

We suggest that you use the familiar Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) methodology to manage a risk-based approach to developing your organization's quality policy and quality objectives. Using an approach that ring-fences processes into 'risk themes' or groups such as 'business planning and strategic direction', you can see how the PDCA cycle facilitates the development and evolution of any organization's quality policy and quality objectives.

Figure 1: Business Planning & Strategic Direction PDCA Model

Stage	ISO 9001 Clause	Activity
Plan	4.1	Has your organization identified internal and external issues that are relevant to and/or support its **strategic direction**?
	4.2	Has your organization identified interested parties and their requirements that are relevant to and/or support its **operational direction**? (Operational direction, although not expressed in ISO 9001:2015, is used as a general term meaning '*an organization's ability to consistently provide products and services that meet customer and applicable statutory and regulatory requirements*'.
Do	5.2.1	Is the strategic direction being utilized as an input to the QMS and its **policies** and **objectives**, *risk management* and *management review* processes?
Check	4.1, 4.2, 5.1.1, 9.3.2	Is the QMS assessed and reviewed in accordance with the strategic direction, the **policy** and **objectives**?
Act	10.3	Are the QMS, **policy** and **objectives** updated as necessary in response to changes in any of the above?

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3. Ensure that objectives are established and suitably cascaded at various levels across your organization structure e.g. Top management, middle management, supervisors, departments, projects, groups, individuals.

Figure 5 below shows how aspirational statements can be taken from your quality policy and linked to the related quality objective(s). The table also provides ideas for KPIs and targets that in turn may be used to measure the achievement of each quality objective.

Figure 5: Linking Objectives to KPIs & Targets

Quality Policy	Quality Objectives	Types of Indicator/KPI	Possible Targets
'We will achieve customer satisfaction'	Achieve a high level of service user satisfaction	Survey results	Achieve an overall rating of > 5.5 in 2025
		No. of customer complaints	Less than 2 complaints submitted in 2025
'by providing reliable systems'	Maintain a high level of system reliability	Time system is down during regular work hours	Systems downtime < 5% during working hours
'that meet customer requirements'	Ensure systems provided are fit for purpose	Survey results	Achieve "fit for purpose" rating of > 5 on survey
		User agreement after completion that the request meets the original specification	100% of completed requests signed off to indicate customer agreement
'We will respond as quickly as possible when contacted by a customer and we will work to meet agreed deadlines for all data requests'	Provide a responsive customer service	Compare actual request completions against the targets agreed with users	95% of work requests completed within deadline
'In the event of a serious incident, we will restore full system operation in the quickest possible time'	Maintain the ability to recover the systems in the event of a disaster	Time taken to recover from disaster (conduct annual or bi-annual test)	Recover system operation within 6 hours of a disaster

4.3 Implementation Checklist

Use of process approach by your organization to identify sources of input, activities, output, receiver of output, performance indicators to control and monitor processes, the risks and opportunities associated with them and action plan to address them. The use of indicators needs to be audited in detail:

1. Are objectives and subsequent indicators based on sound information?
2. Are indicators really related to the corresponding objectives?
3. Are statistical tools needed to define and monitor objectives?
4. If the indicators reach expected values, how does your organization assure the objective has been achieved?

The performance indicators should be audited by your organization in detail to establish whether the objectives are based on sound information and whether the indicators and targets are really related to the corresponding objectives. Make sure that your organization uses statistical tools to define and to monitor objectives.

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Certification Auditors will expect to review a set of interrelated objectives, ensuring that they are mutually consistent and that they are aligned with the strategic direction of your organization. Documented information of objectives typically is in the form of a description or matrix of the objective and corresponding means and timeframe to achieve them.

Often Certification Auditors will interview members of Top management to determine whether your organization has established and ensured the continued relevance of its quality policy, related objectives, indicators and targets, as well as how performance measures are established, whether they are aligned to your organization's context, and the requirements of your interested parties.

Figure 6: Performance Indicators Implementation Checklist

Ref.	Management Review Requirements	Yes/No	Evidence /Documents
4.4.1d	Has your organization determined and applied the **criteria and methods** (including monitoring, measurements and related **performance indicators**) needed to ensure the **effective operation and control of these processes**		
9.1.1	Does your organization determine what needs to be monitored and measured?		
	Does your organization determine the methods for monitoring, measurement, analysis and evaluation needed to ensure valid results?		
	Does your organization determine when the monitoring and measuring shall be performed?		
	Does your organization determine when the results from monitoring and measurement shall be analysed and evaluated?		
	Does your organization evaluate the performance and the effectiveness of the QMS?		
	Does your organization retain appropriate documented information as evidence of the results?		
9.1.2	Does your organization monitor customers' perceptions of the degree to which their needs and expectations have been fulfilled?		
9.1.3	Does your organization analyse and evaluate appropriate data and information arising from monitoring and measurement?		

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