

Embracing the storm – ISO 9000 implementation in Pakistan

by Murad Salman Mirza and Asad Ullah Faiz

In brief

What happens when modern quality management techniques like ISO 9000 meet traditional work cultures? In Pakistan, according to the authors, the answer was, first, resistance, then, second, “embracing the storm”.

AEG Pakistan Ltd. was the first locally based company to break the quality system barrier by gaining ISO 9001 certification, awarded by the German system certification body DQS¹. This opened the floodgates for other businesses to do likewise. Unfortunately, many companies were unaware of the implications, nor did they foresee the transitional problems caused by switching to an ISO 9000-based quality management system. This was particularly true of family-owned businesses.

Only a few years ago, quality management system implementation in Pakistan met with considerable resistance due to deeply rooted forms of management based on authoritarian production-oriented work ethics. At that time, there was no place for a system that went beyond the traditional notions of product-related quality.

Then, the ISO 9000 era arrived like a thunderbolt and many European countries, and companies, began placing restrictions on organizations lacking ISO 9000 certification. This rocked the very foundations of Pakistan exporters who were forced to align with such modern quality concepts.

However, multinational companies and their subsidiaries were quick to recognize the benefits of certification and worked hard to conform to the international quality standard. Many already had well established systems and needed little re-alignment to satisfy system requirements. Their successes prompted other local businesses to adopt a more posi-

Course certificates are awarded to participants at the end of a two-day seminar entitled ‘Preparing quality manuals for ISO 9000’, organized by the Pakistan Institute of Quality Control (PIQC), in collaboration with the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB).



About the authors and PIQC



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Murad Salman Mirza and Asad Ullah Faiz are quality system engineers with the Pakistan Institute of Quality Control (PIQC)⁸⁾, a private organization established in 1991, that provides training courses, consulting services, conferences, research and quality promotion campaigns throughout Pakistan. The organization employs 25 people, of which 13 are consultants and quality system engineers. Its quality promotion campaigns are held in collaboration with the Export Promotion Bureau and National Productivity Organization.

According to the authors, PIQC has trained some 12 000 people to date in ISO 9000 implementation, techniques and methodologies, and in related quality management subjects

through seminars, in-house training courses and long-term projects. In 1995, the Institute established the annual International Convention on Quality (ICQC).


PIQC recently upgraded its own organization, particularly in internal quality audit and corrective and preventive actions services. The Institute was successfully audited and certified by AIB-Vinçotte in July, 1997.

ISO 9000 is seen by PIQC as a stepping-stone towards Total Quality Management (TQM). The organization is also studying EQA, Deming and Baldrige with the intention of adopting these quality and quality award models into their own programmes.

tive attitude towards modern quality practices.

There is now renewed determination in the Pakistan business world to excel at the international level. As a consequence, many hundreds of companies are now "embracing the storm" by contemplating ISO 9000 certification.

Currently, there are about 40 certified local companies in industrial sectors including electrical, oil, defence, steel, shipbuilding, tobacco, textiles, food and beverage, and pharmaceuticals,

and in services such as telecommunications and banking. ISO 9002 is the most frequently selected standard, followed by ISO 9001. Among certification bodies actively offering ISO 9000 certification in Pakistan are SGS²⁾, BSI³⁾, AFAQ⁴⁾, DQS, BVQI⁵⁾, AOQC⁶⁾ and AIB-Vinçotte⁷⁾. 

Quality system implementation in Pakistan met with considerable resistance from deeply rooted authoritarian production-oriented work ethics

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