INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Awareness Briefing

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Policies

The requirements of the quality, environmental, information security and health & safety policies can be met either by combining them into one integrated policy, or by having separate policies. The important thing is that they are compliant with the requirements of the standards, appropriate to the purpose and context of the organization, aligned with the strategic direction, provide a framework for setting objectives and include a commitment to continual improvement.

The differences are that the quality policy includes a commitment to satisfy product and service requirements, the environmental policy includes commitment to protect the environment and fulfil compliance obligations, and the occupational health & safety policy includes a commitment to eliminate hazards and reduce risks, to prevent workplace injury, and to consult with workers. The requirements for communicating the objectives is the same in all standards.

Objectives for improvement

The requirements for the quality, environmental, information security and occupational health & safety objectives are pretty much the same; they need to be consistent with the organization's policy, measurable, monitored, communicated effectively, and updated when needed.

Again, the company may use a single document to record the objectives or make separate documents. Having them in one place will enable the company to monitor them as part of one process and review them easily as part of management review. It will also be much easier to manage the resources needed for planning actions if all the information is in one place.

Context of the organization

This is a new clause that is found in all ISO management system standards, and it requires the organization to determine all internal and external issues that may be relevant to the purpose and strategic direction of the company.

These issues must be applicable to quality, environmental, information security and health & safety elements which are, and may be capable of, affecting these objectives and outcomes in the future. If one standard is already implemented, the scope of this process needs to be expanded to cover all standards.

Although a documented procedure is not required to address this clause, it might be a good idea to have one if this process is new for your company.

Understanding the needs and expectations of interested parties

The standard now requires the company to assess who the interested parties are within the context of the organization. Interested parties are those relevant to the quality of products and services, and customer satisfaction, environmental protection and compliance obligations. They also include occupational health & safety performance and compliance obligations.

The process must include the needs and expectations that may be related to the IMS and, consequently, if any of these should become compliance obligations

Leadership and commitment

Top management needs to demonstrate leadership and commitment by taking accountability for the effectiveness of the management system, establishing the policies, setting objectives, and complying with other requirements prescribed in clause 5.1 of the standards. Without top management commitment, the management systems will not work properly.

Risks and opportunities

This requirement is new for all the standards and the purpose is the same: to enhance a proactive approach to the management system. None of the standards require a formal methodology or a documented procedure for addressing this requirement. The purpose is to mitigate risks that affect the organization's ability to meet its objectives, and to seize the opportunities for improvement. The only difference is the focus of the standards.

Environmental aspects and OH&S hazards

There is an obligation in ISO 14001 to identify the methodology for the evaluation of environmental aspects, and the criteria for determining their significance in the EMS. This obligation is very similar to the one in ISO 45001 to identify the occupational health & safety risks present in your company, and each can use a similar methodology.

Compliance obligations

This is a relatively straightforward, but obviously vital part of both ISO 14001 and ISO 45001. The company must decide what legal and other requirements are related to its environmental protection and occupational health & safety hazards and how to best assess them and decide how they apply to the organization. This can easily be merged into the process for identification and evaluation of interested parties and their needs and expectations, since documented evidence needs to be recorded for these obligations.

Operation

This is the core of the standard, the "Do" phase of the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle, and this is where integration can pay benefits. If the company has integrated the ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and ISO 45001 standard, operational planning and control will not be conducted separately and will not triple the use of resources in some phases.

It might seem easier to have separate operational information, however if you keep these process instructions separate, then the people who need to perform the processes will need to look for the information in different places to do their job. This is why it is important to include the requirements of all standards when developing a procedure for a single process. When defining the process required to provide products and services, establishing criteria and resources, it is vital that you also include the operational controls for the environment and health & safety. By doing this, you can create one workflow for the process that includes everything employees need to know.