QUALITY IN SERVICE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM ACCORDING TO ISO 20000

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Abstract

ISO 20000 is a service management system standard. It specifies requirements for the service provider to plan, establish, implement, operate, monitor, review, maintain and improve an service management system. The requirements include the design, transition, delivery and improvement of services to fulfil agreed service requirements.

Key words

service management system, ISO 20000, standard, processes, certification, integration, the best practices, quality, service provider, service requirements, specification

Introduction

Organization must be able to demonstrate quality of service to new and existing customers in order to obtain commercial value in a highly competitive marketplace.
Service delivery grows in importance, as customers require increasingly advanced facilities (at minimum costs) to meet their business needs. It also recognizes that services and service management are essential to helping organizations generate revenue and be cost-effective. The ISO 20000 series draws a distinction between the best practices of processes, which are independent of organizational form or size an organizational names and structures.

Integration ISO 20000 Standard to Quality Management System

Over the past few years, organizations have worked hard to address these challenges. Many have embraced the ISO 9000 standards for quality management, which are increasingly required for based operations.

ISO 20000 comprises two distinct documents: a specification for a service management system, and a code of practice. Together, these form a top-down framework to define the features of service management processes that are essential for the delivery of high quality services.

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Achieving ISO 20000 certification demonstrates to other organizations, suppliers, customers, staff, partners and industry bodies that the service provider organization is a knowledgeable, competent supplier. They have shown they have the practices, procedures and management system controls in place to ensure services are provided effectively with to customer satisfaction.

ISO 20000 offers clear financial and operational benefit. It is no surprise, therefore, that over 600 IT service provider organizations throughout the world have already become certified, with a multitude of others preparing for certification. These service providers come from all sectors – not just IT outsourcers providing external services, but internal service providers in finance, manufacturing, logistics, government, utilities and so on.

This is all contained within a quality management system which itself aligns with other pertinent standards such as ISO 9001, ISO 27001 etc.

For companies that have already achieved ISO 9001 or ISO 27001 certification, the management system of ISO 20000 will be familiar. It follows the same plan-do-act-check methodology, linked to customer/business requirements using business metrics and reinforcing continual improvement. It demands the implementation of a management structure and system to provide accountability for every element of service management including a strong reporting structure, clear personal responsibility and supporting documentation. As well as similar standards, it addresses the planning and implementation of the service management system aimed at achieving the goals of improving efficiency and effectiveness, customer satisfaction and continual improvement.

The ISO 20000 series comprises several parts:
Part 1 is the formal specification and details the requirements for a service management system that enables the service provider to fulfill service requirements and provide value for both the customer and the service provider. It defines the requirements to deliver managed services of an acceptable quality for its customers. This specification is suitable for businesses, that are going out to tender for their services or that require a consistent approach by all service providers in a supply chain. It may be used by service providers to benchmark their level of service management, as the basis for an independent assessment. Organizations need to demonstrate the ability to provide services that meet customer requirement, and they aim to improve services through the effective application of processes to monitor and improve service quality.
Part 2 provides guidance on the application of service management systems. It describes the best practices for service management within the scope of ISO 20000-1. It provides more detail about the processes organizations should follow to achieve the requirements laid out in Part 1.
Part 3 gives guidance on scope definition and applicability of the standard. This is required to help understand the often complex supply chains involved in service management, particularly where many process areas and functions are outsourced.
Various other parts supplement these three with guidance and information on specific aspects and uses of the standard.

For those companies that have achieved ISO 9001 or similar certification, this core part of ISO 20000 should be reasonably straightforward, with demonstrable, proven management processes and structures already in place. This does assume that the existing system encompasses the activities of service management (especially in the area of IT services) to some degree.

These organizations will then have to consider implementation of the actual service management processes, much of which will already be familiar with. ISO 20000 requirements integrate these service management processes into a service management system and define precise requirements which must meet to giving 'best practice advice' which may or may not be adopted in a particular organization. It is essential that service provider organizations will put in place a good project management plan with accurate timelines and costs for implementing the service management system and associated processes.
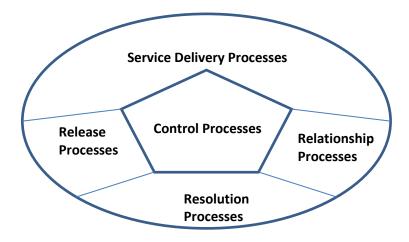

Fig. 1   Service management processes

Many organizations will have already gained benefit from adopting some or all of the best practice processes, that provide an ideal grounding for implementing of ISO 20000 service management system. Organizations must implement every one of the service management processes within the context of an integrated service management system and be able to demonstrate to their external, independent auditors that policies are established, processes are documented and that these are followed consistently.
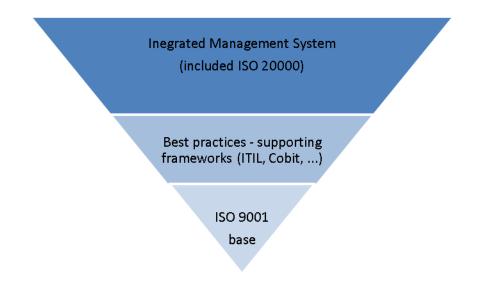

Fig. 2   Implementation of Service management system

It typically takes organizations up to two years to achieve ISO 20000 certification, although this depends on their existing level of capability. The more advanced and mature the existing processes, along with existence of a relevant quality management system, the less effort will be required to integrate them into an ISO 20000 quality management system. Certified service providers are subject to annual surveillance audits and are required to be recertified every three years to ensure ISO 20000 conformance is retained. It is therefore essential to attain buy in and commitment from service management personnel at all levels. Individuals need to understand the value of the proactive culture, to embrace opportunities to improve the relevance and timeliness of provision to the business and, critically, they need to understand why the business is taking this route.

Transforming performance and benefits

Since only companies that have demonstrated they have implemented all of the service management processes within a quality management system framework can become certified, achieving certification provides clear competitive advantage for companies across many sectors including: internal service provider organizations in any sector Outsourcers Application service providers (hosted/cloud solutions) Government contractors. Improving processes, control, audit and documentation of these processes is a key requirement for the many sectors now subject to tight regulations, including: banks, retailers, insurance companies, regulation on insolvency and corporate governance or organizations needing to conform with Sarbanes-Oxley requirements, etc.

For a business, ISO 20000 certification enforces a measurable level of effectiveness and creates a culture of continual improvement. It delivers a multitude of benefits:
Conformance activity - Organizations that adhere to the policies and processes of ISO 20000 especially the management procedures have a strong foundation for conformance activity.
Improved Merger & Acquisition - Leveraging practices to achieve ISO 20000 certification means that companies have a far better insight into the resources in place and what will be required to support both organic growth and any merged organization. The result is that the right resources can be put in place in time, to maximize the success of the Merger & Acquisition activity.
Continual improvement - Companies in this economic downturn want efficiencies now that can be leveraged to support expansion and profitable growth in the future. By enforcing conformance to the requirements, ISO 20000 drives highly effective and efficient management of services and promotes a culture of proactive service delivery that supports continual improvement.
Demonstrable best practice - Internal service provider organizations that have achieved ISO 20000 certification are increasingly being heralded as market leaders, with competitors now encouraged to follow suit.
For the individual - ISO 20000 qualifications provide an opportunity to build up skills; to evolve beyond generic service management expertise and take companies through the ISO 20000 process. It enables individuals to develop new competencies. There is a demand for skilled ISO 20000 implementers in the market at the present time.

Conclusion

In this marketplace, organizations need to drive down costs. But they also need to build a solid foundation for the future and achieve competitive differentiation, maximize the opportunities provided by merger and acquisition and ensure access to key markets.

For most organizations the people cost is the biggest burden on the budget. Trained staffs who understand the value of a process-oriented culture and work in tightly integrated teams within a recognized quality management system bring great value to the organization. It is the first step to becoming highly effective. The ISO 20000 professional qualification will give the organization a head start in achieving company certification and realizing true value from improved efficiencies and effectiveness.

References

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