

Key Concepts of Quality Assurance

Planning

The Standard requires planning at all stages of development and supply of the product (or service): at design, manufacturing, and selling; its labelling, identification, inspection, handling and servicing are also planned.

The underlying reason is that the earlier a problem is detected and corrected, the cheaper and less traumatic it will be. It will not be just half the cost, but ten or a hundred times cheaper.

In addition, the process of developing a Quality System is in itself a planning activity—planning the organisation.

Communicating

Once established, the plans need to be put into effect. This means that the plans must be made known to those who will execute them, but also they must be translated into means (procedures, instructions). These must be communicated to the relevant people.

To ensure clarity and to standardise the communicating, much of it needs to be documented. This provides a confirmation of normal, spoken communication processes (but

does not replace them), as well as adding detail.

Managing

Some would suggest that the entire Standard is about Managing. In this context however, Managing refers to the steps necessary to ensure that the plans are put into effect, and their success monitored.

This will include:

- ✍ Assessing resources.
- ✍ Detailing and passing on instructions.
- ✍ Supervision.
- ✍ Record keeping

Improvement

Finally, whenever a plan or its output (designs, procedures, specifications, products, services, etc) is found inadequate, the standard requires the situation to be corrected and a permanent improvement made to prevent repetitions.

This improvement is not only directed at the output, but also at the system that created it.

A mind stretched to a new idea
never returns to its original
dimension.
(O. W. Holmes)