## Product Certification

In this time of economic uncertainty, organisations are looking at many ways of increasing their sales and all parts of an organisation can have a role to play. Are quality managers or sales and marketing personnel overlooking a great opportunity for a market differentiator in not making a better use of product certification?  Product certification is the certification of the product or service rather than the management system and  though it can have legal or safety connotations, these are necessarily primarily drivers for certification.   Certification demonstrates that the product or service meets in all respects the relevant national or international standard and having the correct certification for your market can be critical to ensuring your success.

Product certification differs from system certifications in the sense that system certification is to do with ISO 9001 Tick IT, AS 9100 etc. in the general, software, aerospace etc. industries respectively and there are obviously many others.

Management system certification is important, as it demonstrates the organisation can meet the relevant standard. However, product or service certification can be equally important as it demonstrates to potential clients and customers that the suppliers can meet the national and international standard.

Some certification schemes are mandatory depending on the intended market for the product or service, for example CE marking is mandatory if your product falls within the scope of the one or more of the New Approach Directives and your intended market is somewhere in the European Economic area. Others are voluntary schemes and are undertaken by manufacturers to demonstrate that a product or service meets or exceeds the relevant standard. For example, in the UK the Kitemark is highly recognised and trusted and creates a distinct market advantage.

This product certification is not restricted to products such as beds, electrical plugs, seat belts, etc. which all have obvious safety connotations, but can also be extended to many others, for example software products.  One of our clients who is a well known organisation providing software for the drugs discovery industry has recently gained product certification for one of their software products. They have had the product certified by an organisation called SVS (Sociedad de Validación de Sistemas).  Now in this instance there is no strict product standard available and so they have used a guide namely GAMP5 which is the food and drug industry guide for software.  In spite the fact that it is a guide it has been successfully been used as a product standard.

You may find that that there are areas in your business or industry where guides or standards could be successfully employed to demonstrate that you (and not your competitors) have met a standard.   This can also help drive the organisation in areas such as:

- Quality improvement – because it means that work may be necessary to ensure that the product or service in all respects meets the product or guide standard
- External audit – it can be used during second party audits to demonstrate that the product or service complies to the recognised standard or guide.
- Marketing or sales – as a differentiator from your competitor's products or services.
- Executive Level– meeting a standard is useful in marketing and sales negotiations and discussions to demonstrate product and service confidence, quality and reliability.

If you have views about where product certification maybe successfully employed please let us know.

## World Standards Day

14th October marked World Standard's Day and saw the opening in Dubai of the 31st General Assembly of the International Standards Organisation.

The theme of World Standards Day was "Intelligent and sustainable buildings" and this was reflected during the Assembly by a session on "Buildings for a sustainable future". The keynote address to this event was delivered by Mrs Louise Cox, President of the International Union of Architects, who presentation was titled "Sustainable building for the global village: the vision and standards needs for architects and designers"

There are specific contributions made by ISO standards in meeting the challenges of sustainability and Mr Alan Bryden, ISO Secretary-General said, "Important new standards have been published on issues as diverse as food safety, greenhouse gas emissions accountability and verification, information security, security management in supply chains, water services or information processing. We have also opened some important new frontiers, from risk management, societal security and social responsibility to nanotechnologies, biofuels, water services, tourism, and aquaculture and fisheries."

For more information on the ISO General Assembly and Mrs Cox presentation please visit www.iso.ch

## Two years of Success for Train to Gain

Train to Gain was launched in 2006, and since that time it has helped over 570,000 employees in England get training and over 291,000 learners have achieved a qualification. This scheme aims to help organisations to get the best from their employees and 78% of employers say they would recommend the scheme to other employers.

Lord Young, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills said, "Successful employers see up=skilling the workforce as one of the most powerful things they can do to drive their businesses forward. Employers who have invested in the skills of their people in the past will be better placed to respond to the economic challenges, and they will also be better placed to take advantage of the opportunities in the next period of growth."

For further information on Train to Gain please visit www.traintogaon.gov.uk

## Climate Change

The UK now leads the world with its commitment to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 80% on 1990 levels by 2050. This commitment was announced by Ed Milliband the new Energy and Climate Secretary. He also out lined the goals that the new department would be working towards.

- Ensuring that the UK has energy that is affordable, secure and sustainable
- Bringing about the transition to a low-carbon Britain
- Achieving an international agreement on climate change at Copenhagen in December 2009

Mr Milliband said " I am looking forward to the responsibility os running the new Department of Energy and Climate Change and working with colleagues across government, including Hilary Benn, who has lead Britain's work in climate change with skill and dedication. My job is to make sure that our policy on climate change is fair for ordinary families and our policy on energy is sustainable for future generations."

For further information, please visit www.decc.gov.uk

## IP Crime

A database of e-crime prosecutors has been set up to provide a forum for exchanging advice and material. The UK Intellectual Property Office (UK-IPO) is playing an active part in establishing this Global Prosecutors' E-Crime Network (GPEN) and is providing a portfolio of IP training material. It is hoped that the Network's activity will lead to more successful prosecutions in the fight to overcome the current multi billion intellectual property crime business.

David Lammy, Minister of State for higher Education and Intellectual Property said: "IP crime os a serious economic crime which needs

to be tackled on a worldwide basis. The GPEN initiative provides an ideal opportunity to address this. This will ensure prosecutions are effectively managed and enforcement agencies can take informed decisions on targeting the criminal network."

For further information, please visit www.ipo.gov.uk

## World Quality Day

World Quality Day is 13th November 2008, and the Chartered Quality Institute have several suggestions for illustrating your commitment to quality on 13th November.

- Raise internal awareness e.g. staff workshops. (A world quality promotional pack is available from the CQI)
- Introduce quality professionals to your organisation. Why not appoint a quality champion and give them the opportunity of joining the CQI
- Promote your commitment to quality. Use your company website and newsletter to publicise your quality endeavours and achievements
- Quality Initiatives. Use the day to celebrate successful quality initiatives
- Improve business management systems. Consider using IS0 9001 or ISO 14001 to improve your management systems.

The CQI are also holding the first CQI World Quality Day Conference on the 13th November, This conference will focus on supporting UK Plc to develop their business objectives from improvement to innovation.

Further information on the CQI and its World Standards Day Conference, please visit www.thecqi.org

## Fire Safety Guidance

A new standard has been published that gives recommendations and guidance on the design, management and use of buildings to achieve an acceptable level of fire safety for all people in and around buildings.

BS 9999:2008 Fire Safety in Buildings supersedes DD 9999 and the entire BS 5588 series (with the exception of BS5588-1), which will be withdrawn on 6 April 2009.

The new standard covers the four main areas that influence fire safety measures:
- Fire safety management
- The provision of means of escape
- The structural protection of escape facilities and the structural stability of the building in the event of a fire
- The provision of access and facilities for fire fighting

For further information please visit www.bsi-global.com

## QMT Training Courses

A wide range of training courses are available from Quality Management and Training. As well as their well known distance leaning course for the CQI Diploma and Certificate qualifications, the topics covered include ISO 9001, ISO 14001, Six Sigma, Root Cause Analysis and many others. A full timetable of courses is attached. If you would like further information please visit the web-site **www.qmt.co.uk** or contact edda@qmt.co.uk