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## ISO9001:2000 Transition

A recent study carried out by a well known and respected ISO9001 certification body has shown that approximately 70% of their clients have still not completed or not even started their ISO9001:2000 transition. This is particularly concerning, especially when considering that the old ISO9001:1994 standard will be discontinued in December this year (2003). Some Certification Bodies concerned at the potential loss of revenue have been offering consultancy services to bring their clients inline with the new standard. This blurs still further the role and distinction between the certification body independence and QA consultants support and guidance. QM&T has been successfully providing ISO9001:2000 transitional support in a number of different ways:

- **Training courses** (both in-company and open) for ISO9001:2000 transition programme and auditing are available.
- **General in-company support** for ISO9001:2000 transition; internal audits, gap analysis, documentation creation, placing the QMS online and implementation.
- **Down loadable files** on QM&T's website [www.qmt.co.uk](http://www.qmt.co.uk), to help managers when creating documentation reflecting the new ISO9001:2000 standard.
- **CD Rom** "Essential ISO9001 - Guide to Quality Management" is available free.
- **Customer satisfaction**, specifically measuring levels of customer satisfaction and customer feedback service is provided.
- **Software** to support the ISO9001:2000 record maintenance (including; auditing, documentation, human resources and much much more).
- **Books** providing guidance towards meeting ISO9001:2000 standard.

If you find any of this of interest to you please contact us either via e-mail ([help@qmt.co.uk](mailto:help@qmt.co.uk)) or call 01483 453512 for more details.

On another ISO9001 certification bodies front - stories abound of certification bodies setting training revenue targets for their assessors i.e. setting targets of number of training days sold to their clients. Have you heard any similar stories? If so please contact QM&T.

## QM&T's January Special offer – Free Essential ISO9001 software

Learn about quality management and the principles of the ISO 9001:2000 standards. Whether you are thinking of developing a quality system, updating an existing one, or just have an interest in the subject - **Essential ISO 9001** will provide you with an invaluable reference tool. As a special New Year's promotion, we are offering this software for free. To find out more about our special offers or any of our other products please visit [www.qmt.co.uk](http://www.qmt.co.uk) or call 01483 453511 and place your order.

## Natural cork crisis

The demand for natural cork has slumped due to wine growers using alternative materials such as synthetic plastic or screw top stoppers for their wine bottles. This has affected the local people of the Mediterranean region who have either left the countryside or have cut down the forests and planted more profitable crops. It is thought that some of the new plants can cause widespread ecological damage as they can take too much of the nutrients from the soil. The wildlife organisation has also warned that if the cork forests are not properly managed, they will eventually become deserts and this could risk the survival of the local wildlife, especially, the Iberian lynx, whose numbers have already dwindled. Harvesting



cork is considered environmentally friendly and does not cause any damage to these forests.

## **EU emission trading**

According to a recent report, the European Union will not be able to meet its greenhouse gas reduction target without the proposed scheme of emission trading. Emission trading allows EU members to buy and sell their agreed allowances of gas emissions. Therefore high polluting countries could buy unused credits from low polluting countries that would be producing less than they are allowed to emit. The high polluting countries gain by not having to reduce their emissions and the low gas emitting countries receive a source of revenue. The only drawback is that this may encourage high polluting countries to off load their responsibilities. This EU proposal it thought would help set a global standard and open the way for others. For more information please see BBC news.

## **Text messaging for businesses**

It is estimated that around 50 million text messages are sent every day in the UK alone and according to a survey carried out by Mobile Data Association (MDA), text messaging is no longer just for youngsters, it is fast becoming an essential tool for many businesses. It is thought that in the future, a large number of businesses will use text messaging for marketing and promoting their products. Already some companies in the market place are using this approach. For example, First Direct (Internet Bank) offers its customers, via text messaging services such as statements and balances. Some retail companies, such as Argos, launched a 'Text and Take Home' service in October 2002, allowing their customers to check availability or price using their mobile phones, and they are then sent a reservation number via text message. On the down side, text messaging has been used by some unscrupulous companies sending scams which are targeted at youngsters, encouraging them to use premium phone numbers.

## **Sub-standard care at pet shops**

A survey carried out by the Consumers Association showed concern about many of pet shops they had investigated. It was reported that there were a number of breaches of standards mostly due to inappropriate storage of pets. It was also reported that in some

cases, the pet store staff were not knowledgeable enough to sell the pets.

The investigation was carried out by sending vets to some pet shops, all over the country, chosen at random, to assess their standards. Some pet stores were found to be smelly, dirty and over crowded. In some cases, a few pet shops were found to be so bad that they were reported to the RSPCA directly. The pet shops that the vets considered to be bad enough were advised that if they did not make improvements, their annual licence would be taken away. For more information please see BBC news.

## **Air pollution causing cancer**

Recent US research into air pollution and cancer, has found strong evidence that the fine particles contained in gas emissions from cars and industry caused cancer. The finding adds to growing concerns that the threat to public health posed by air pollution may have been overlooked as many scientists chose to focus on smoking instead. For more information please see BBC news.

## **Sturgeons are disappearing**

The fish beluga that produces the caviar for the luxury trade is one of the seven species of sturgeon living in the Caspian Sea. An estimated 95% of the world's caviar comes from the Caspian. The fish can live up to 150 years, weighing up to 1,200 kg, growing up to six metres in length and can swim up to 1,500 km upstream to spawn. It becomes sexually mature at about 12 years old. But nowadays, especially since the Soviet break-up, poachers have been taking increasing numbers of young sturgeons that have not yet spawned. Another problem has been the arrival, in the Caspian Sea of a foreign species - the comb jellyfish (*Mnemiopsis leidyi*), which competes for food with the sprats (*kilka*) on which the sturgeon depends on. Also the problem of exploitation of oil reserves in the Caspian Sea has put this fish in danger of extinction.

## **Quality Meals in Cornwall**

Newquay is aiming to improve the quality of its food by opening a new catering school. The Atlantic Culinary Centre has been set up in Cornwall to improve the standard of food for sale in Newquay and the organisers would like restaurants and hotel owners to attend demonstrations on how to improve the quality of their cuisine. The school will be looking at



culinary best practice, menu development and local sourcing of produce. Their aim is to encourage chefs to provide quality meals from local produce. The centre was established with funding contributions from the South West Regional Development Agency and the Devon and Cornwall Learning and Skills Council. For more information please see BBC news.

## **Hospital superbug**

Researchers have found a sharp increase in the number of deaths linked to the hospital superbug - MRSA - *methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus*. The drug resistant infection is caused by poor hygiene, such as medical staff not washing their hands in between patient treatments. Public Health Service's researchers say although the number of deaths is relatively small, they could have been prevented by using the basic hygiene of washing hands. Earlier this year, the National Audit Office estimated infections acquired by patients while they were in hospital could be killing up to 5,000 people a year in England. For more information please see BBC news.

## **Japan protecting the planet**

Japan recently hosted an Eco-Products Exhibition in Tokyo, where thousands of environmentally friendly products were on display. One of the biggest attractions was Toyota's fuel-cell car. The Japanese Government has just leased 4 of these vehicles hoping to improve its green credentials. However, it is very expensive, costing £6,000 per month to lease, therefore, it may be a while before we see these kinds of vehicles on our roads.

Another interesting exhibit was the electric car-sharing scheme. The scheme operates in much the same way as the bicycle-sharing schemes already used in some European cities,

where the registered user picks up the car from a parking bay by unlocking the car with a special card. The car is then left at a similar parking stand at the other end of the journey. The costs were more reasonable than the fuel-cell car, starting from around 50 pence for a 15-minute trip, plus a monthly membership fee of approximately £100. The scheme is currently only running in Yokohama, but it is hoped to be running in many other cities.

Other interesting products exhibited included, a range of eco-friendly kitchen appliances, such as hobs, kettles, microwaves etc. Also gadgets such as pocket size solar power charger for mobile phones, and other solar powered goods, such as garden fountains, fans and domestic lighting.

The eco-products shown in the Tokyo exhibition reflects how serious the Japanese businesses are towards environmental issues. They lead the world in the ISO14001 certification for reducing environmental impact. The country has approximately 10,000 certified companies whereas UK has only 3,000. For further information please see BBC news.

## **Royal Bank of Scotland gets fined**

The Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) was fined in December 2002 for £750,000 by the Financial Services Authority (FSA) for failing to keep adequate controls over money laundering. This was FSA's first financial penalty given for a failure to implement money laundering controls since it acquired its powers about a year ago. This can be quite worrying because of the present political climate, and tracking money movements from terrorist organisations. For more information please see The Times news.