

QUALITY SYSTEMS



UPDATE

A GLOBAL ISO 9000 & QS-9000 INFORMATION SERVICE

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ISO9.COM GOES ONLINE TO GET QMS'S IN LINE FOR REGISTRATION

Just two months after the first dot-com achieved ISO 9000 registration, another dot-com heralds itself as the first Application Service Provider (ASP) geared specifically for companies registering to ISO 9000.

"We assign [our clients] an individually unique URL...that they can tailor to suit their own needs," says Glenn McCrae, vice president of sales and marketing for ISO9.com.

However, ISO9.com is not merely a bestower of web sites — their sites come complete with training to the new standard, an online catalogue of procedures, internet-quality manual, e-mail routing of Corrective Action Reports (CARs) and new procedures, consultation services, automatically generated quality policies and more.

Glenn Kohner, founder of ISO9.com, started the company in 1997, after spending eight years helping companies build automated quality management systems (QMSs). Kohner leads the ISO9.com's team of consultants, web designers, engineers and technical writers.

While each ISO9.com customer is assigned a consultant who has completed a two-month in-house training course, McCrae says that ISO9.com's strength is in "the application itself."

"We actually have more outside ISO experience in our engineering and technical writing departments than in our consulting group. Why? Because our goal is to build as much ISO training that a client could want within the application itself. Ideally, we would like our consultants to act more like customer service representatives and help the clients understand how to navigate and use our online solution."

The ISO9.com "online solution" is based on the concept of a "fully automated and integrated quality management system," says McCrae. All of the service's web modules (training, procedures, how to choose a registrar) are merged into one site.

"The Quality Policy is automatically generated based on the responses that are provided in our online 'interview'," says McCrae.

Presently, ISO9.com's online training is text-based and comes with direct reference to the points of the new standard. "We actually have the complete, official text of ISO 9001:2000 integrated into our application," says McCrae. "When a client is in a specific module, say Calibration, they can click on instructions and find specific ISO requirements for that module."

McCrae says that soon the training offered by the system will come

with streaming video components. Another of ISO9.com's features is the "paperless" QMS, where each QMS-related document is available to employees online 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

"The advantages of a paperless QMS are tremendous and are generally intuitive to anyone who has had to manage a paper-based system," says McCrae.

McCrae points out some key benefits to the ISO9.com paperless documentation system:

- Every employee will have his or her own copy of the most up-to-date procedures, master control list, corrective actions, etc..
- The risks and failures that can occur in a paper-based system, such as losing CARs or follow-up falling through the cracks, is nearly impossible due to the secure, permanent location of all quality documents online and the e-mail notification system available through this application.
- There will always be complete continuity within the system regardless of employee turnover in a company's quality department.
- Instant availability and accessibility of reports.
- Preparing for registration and assessment audits will no longer require the "work entailed in determining that training, internal

audit, management review, calibration, CARs, vendor records have been updated, cross-referenced, indexed and completed," eliminating much time and frustration, says McCrae.

While many other companies offer "automated" solutions, McCrae says that "client server environments in the marketplace today have their limitations." Mainly, cost, operating environment (or software) limitations and the need for IT support. Also, Windows-based systems do not offer the same accessibility and flexibility as an online, Internet platform-based QMS, says McCrae.

Smaller companies can hope to gain ISO 9000 implementation without hiring consultants or an in-house "ISO expert," and large companies can gain cost savings by "streamlining their quality department" and IT needs, says McCrae.

Overall cost of using ISO9.com depends on the size of the organization. There is a one-time implementation fee and a recurring annual subscription cost. According to McCrae, "We are competitively priced with other full-service providers."

To find out more about ISO9.com, go to www.iso9.com. ■

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— Glenn McCrae
Vice President of Sales and Marketing