

BY ROGER FROST



Editorial

There is nothing permanent except change

A major revision of the ISO 9000 series is three-quarters complete. An overhaul of ISO 14001 has begun. More than 430 000 ISO 9000 or ISO 14000 user organizations worldwide face the challenge of continual change to meet the requirement for continual improvement which both families of ISO's management system standards now explicitly include. Not that continual change was invented by ISO; as the Greek philosopher Heraclitus observed some 2 500 years ago, "There is nothing permanent except change."

With change being both part of the human condition and a consequence of implementing an ISO management system standard – *ISO 9000 + ISO 14000 News* too has to conform. The publication first saw the light of day – as *ISO 9000 News* – nearly 10 years ago in 1992. Begun as a newsletter, the content of the publication evolved to the point where it had outgrown its initial format. The time for change had come.

An opportunity and a framework for that change have been provided by the partnership struck between ISO, AFNOR – ISO's member for France – and the French publisher SOGI Communication to relaunch our French edition, which had been stood down in 1999. We are using the occasion to revise the formula for the English edition too, and for the Spanish edition translated and distributed since 1999 by AENOR, ISO's member for Spain.

Today, *ISO 9000 + ISO 14000 News* is relaunched as *ISO Management Systems* which is available in English, French and Spanish editions, all with the same title.

What's the same – what's new and different

Like *ISO 9000 + ISO 14000 News*, the tone of *ISO Management Systems* is resolutely international. It is unique in offering readers a truly worldwide panorama of management systems and related developments. Whether the problem is that of a small business looking for ideas in how to implement a management system for the first time, or a multinational enterprise with major decisions to make about its certification policy, *ISO Management Systems* aims to provide both the little nuggets of information that can make a big difference, as well as the kind of overviews that strategic planners need.

Compared to *The News*, what is new is the use of full colour throughout – a magazine is seen before it is read and black-and-white alone cannot do justice to the myriad facets of management system implementation on an international scale. New too is the introduction of a magazine structure with regular columns to help readers navigate through the contents.

The upgraded content includes expanded coverage of new ISO work items, giving readers advance alerts of developments long before they reach the status of International Standards or Guides. To the work of ISO technical committees ISO/TC 176 and ISO/TC 207, responsible, respectively for ISO 9000 and ISO 14000, is added increased attention to ISO/CASCO, Committee on conformity assessment, reflecting the growing cross-fertilization and synergy being developed among these committees whose work plays such an important role in world trade.

Management system standards are not implemented in a vacuum. Therefore, to balance the ISO 9000 and ISO 14000 coverage, *ISO Management Systems* will also be including articles on useful, related subjects, such as the series which begins in this issue on the management of organizational change.

While conformity or nonconformity to standardized requirements may seem a black/white, either/or affair, the development and revision of those requirements demand discussion, debate, confrontation of opposing views and validation in actual use. For this reason, *ISO Management Systems* introduces “Viewpoint” and “Debate” columns, expanding the opportunities of protagonists and readers to share their perspectives on management systems. And as readers can confirm from this first issue, those perspectives may not always be positive ones.

Exchange

As an ISO publication, readers will reap the benefits of the proximity of *ISO Management Systems* to the source of new developments. At the same time, *ISO Management Systems* is not a mere mouthpiece. One of the main aims of the magazine is to facilitate the implementation and optimize the operation of management systems by sharing the experiences of users. When these users contribute case studies of their ISO 9000 and ISO 14000 implementation programmes, their articles are usually overwhelmingly favourable to the standards. However, critics and opponents will also be able to get their views aired in *ISO Management Systems*. While the mission of the magazine includes the sharing of knowledge and the spreading of understanding, it has no vocation to impose a monolithic, “politically correct” understanding, usage or viewpoint.

ISO Management Systems will provide a forum for the developers of the standards to present and communicate their work, for users to give feedback from the “real world” and for critics to vent their alternative views. I believe that encouraging such exchanges can contribute to reducing misunderstandings and misuse, and influence positively the further development and improvement of the standards and their utilization.

ISO Management Systems aims to be a platform where all who are concerned with, or concerned by management systems can meet, declaim, decry, describe, dialogue, discuss and debate. I encourage readers to make use of the magazine by addressing your letters for publication, by participating in the “Debate” column, by sending your news and by putting forward themes for articles and debates, and by proposing contributions.

Thank you to all who have contributed to this new venture.

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