



What will be the role of management system standards as we move into the 21st century? Are they outmoded? Will they aid or hinder organizational development and ability to compete? Are standards important for all sizes of organization – from multinationals to small and medium-sized businesses, and for businesses in the developing countries as well as the developed world? I approach these questions as someone with almost 30 years' experience in industry, taking on the added responsibility of chairing an international standards committee.



Management system standards are important because they guide alignment and ensure conformity of policy deployment

After completing undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in chemistry in Southampton, England, I worked for Kodak there until 1977. Following emigration to Canada, I continued with the company and am now Director, Quality, for Kodak Canada, Inc., having occupied roles in technology development, technical production and quality assurance management, with some environmental, health and safety responsibilities.

Since my appointment in April 2002 by ISO's Technical Management Board as Chair of ISO/TC 176, *Quality management and quality assurance*, (for which I assumed responsibility on 1 July) I have been busy understanding the work of the committee, meeting the sub-committee chairs and secretaries and learning from Pierre Caillibot,

The future of management system standards

BY DR. TREVOR SMITH

Photo: Jennifer Gauthier



Dr. Trevor Smith took up the post of Chair of ISO technical committee ISO/TC 176, which is responsible for the ISO 9000 family of quality management standards, on 1 July 2002.

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the outgoing Chair, whose shoes I will find difficult to fill.

Although new to a full time role in TC 176, I am certainly not new to standards work, having previously participated as a national delegate to quality and environmental management technical committees. I have been very much looking forward to my new responsibilities.

Best practice

Management system standards are important because they guide alignment and ensure conformity of policy deployment. They are being increasingly recognized as best practice guides and even as potential frameworks for regulators. However, the voluntary nature of management system standards makes them particularly compelling. In the case of ISO 9001, for example, it is the best practice and the demonstrated common sense framework proven by over half a million certified users worldwide that makes it relevant and adaptable to any business need.

In a world of increasing competitiveness, complexity and rapid change, it is impossible to regulate organizations to excellence! Standardization becomes the table legs on which to build excellence – locking in to the foundations of quality management.

As I begin to occupy my new role as ISO/TC 176 Chair, I realize that I bring certain perspectives to the job:

- **Relevance:** as a user – Quality Manager for Kodak. Kodak is committed to ISO 9000 registration worldwide. Kodak Canada has been ISO 9001 registered since 1992 for its manufacturing and service businesses.
- **Best practice:** as a standards writer – serving on ISO technical committees and national

committees for more than ten years. In 1992, I joined the Canadian “mirror” technical committee on environmental management and subsequently became a Canadian delegate to ISO/TC 207, the ISO technical committee responsible for ISO 14001 and the other environmental management system (EMS) standards. These experiences have helped me to recognize fully the important consensus criteria for standards writing.

- **Alignment:** as a member of both ISO/TC 207 and ISO/TC 176 – working to increase compatibility of their standards. In 1998, I served as a liaison delegate from ISO/TC 207 to ISO/TC 176 to help strengthen compatibility and alignment of ISO 14001 and ISO 9001. My experience on both committees has given me a deep understanding of liaison and alignment issues and the importance of commonality of management systems standards. These principles are very relevant as we consider sector needs for standards.

An aerial view of Kodak Canada's plant in Toronto which holds certifications to both ISO 9001 and ISO 14001.



Photo: Jennifer Gauthier



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Promoting ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 at Kodak Canada.

The job of any Chair is to ensure that views are freely shared and that the mandate of the organization is achieved. For me, it is very much a serving and facilitating role, made strong through the rules of the committee process, the ISO/IEC Directives governing the technical work and the tradition of membership participation and fine leadership.

The ISO standardization process applied to quality management systems in business and society at large makes so much sense as our world becomes smaller and more accessible. We need a common “language” to

facilitate communication and understanding, and to promote business and societal growth and improvement.

The path ahead

What, though, is the future of management system standardization? With the publication of the ISO 9000:2000 series, we have strong consensus standards and guidelines in place “on paper”. I see the next few years as a time of promotion of the application and understanding of these products for the users who represent the width and breadth of society, and who span culture and business complexities and size.



The voluntary nature of management system standards makes them particularly compelling

A continuing opportunity for the role and functioning of ISO, its committees and working groups is the realization that improvements to committee, balloting and administration processes will in turn result in better products. ISO/TC 176, for example, has very strong international leaders and I have been looking forward to working with them so that our users and members will see increased value in all that we do.

Kodak's experience

I would like to comment on my experience as a management system standard user. At Kodak, our quality journey starting from the early days of statistical process control (SPC), has progressed and

become more encompassing – from “small q” quality control to “Big Q” quality assurance and customer delight.

Initially, the introduction of ISO 9001:1987 resulted in the incentive to become registered on account of trade issues in the European Union. In the midst of that process for a particular customer base, however, we decided to broaden our quality system from a collection of scoped business “silos” to the concept of a single quality system and one quality manual for the entire company.

The lean enterprise and quality management

At Kodak, we have also learned that progress becomes more challenging the further we go. Our quality journey, which has embraced SPC, ISO 9001, Manufacturing Resource Planning (MRP II), Six Sigma Quality and Lean Thinking have opened our eyes to the value of each programme. The challenge is to see the contribution of each to the total system and even their effect on the culture of the organization.

Even before I became involved in standards writing in the mid-1990's, there was something I noticed in ISO 9001 that made so much sense – the concept of a living, aligned, interactive system of quality management which, if implemented effectively, is self-regulating, sustaining and flexible for business growth.



The shift in thinking was taking place: from procedures to processes

Paper roll being loaded on a coating machine at Kodak Canada, whose quality journey has embraced SPC, ISO 9001, Manufacturing Resource Planning (MRP II), Six Sigma Quality and Lean Thinking.

‘At Kodak, our quality journey... has progressed and become more encompassing – from ‘small q’ quality control to ‘Big Q’ quality assurance and customer delight.’

Interestingly, areas of the company that were not nominally covered by the scope of ISO 9001 followed and benefited from the best practices as outlined by the 20 elements of the 1987 standard. It is now perhaps no surprise that the approach worked and people recognized the best practices of common management systems. Of course, what we were starting to see those ten years ago was the move to the process approach for business based on a number of foundational principles of quality management. The shift in thinking was taking place: from procedures to processes.



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The challenge for us at Kodak has been the journey over the last three years towards “the lean enterprise”. Lean is all about eliminating waste and has at its heart a zero defect mind set. Quality management principles have to be at the heart of any such organization attempting Lean. These guiding management principles form the basic philosophy of the ISO 9000:2000 series:



The 2000 version focuses on processes, not procedures and simplicity has to be the way

- Customer focus
- Leadership
- Involvement of people
- Process approach
- System approach to management
- Continual improvement
- Factual approach to decision making
- Mutually beneficial supplier relationships.

What does the future hold for organizations?

What are the challenges in the next five years and beyond? Here are some personal opinions:

1. ***In some ways, there are no short cuts.*** Remember the old adage: “If something seems too good to be true...it probably is!” Time and time again at Kodak, we have found that when a new approach or process fails, it is because one

of the foundations has cracked – such as change management, corrective action or customer focus. To build high and strong, one has to dig the foundations deep.

2. ***Strive for simplicity.*** ISO 9000 should be a “fit” for sustaining growth and it does perform this function as long as we remember that the system must work for the business and not vice versa and we have to remain vigilant to the dangers of complexity and bureaucracy. The 2000 version focuses on processes, not procedures and simplicity has to be the way – although old habits die hard.

3. ***Struggle out of your cozy silos and strive for alignment across businesses by common processes.*** It is essential that top management sets an example of leadership and commitment, and that measures and reinforcement systems encourage people to think “process” rather than “function”.

4. ***Remember the values on which everything is built.*** In an age of uncertainty, violence, corporate fraud and opportunism, there is much to be said for strengthening the standards for any organization, whether the management system is corporate governance, environmental management, human resources management or quality management:

- Behind an effective quality management system is a strong management system.
- Behind a strong management system is a strong vision and purpose that are communicated to and understood by the whole organization.

- Behind a strong vision are solid values of integrity, trust, reliability and accountability.



We need a common ‘language’ to facilitate communication and understanding, and to promote business and societal growth and improvement

The roles of ISO and ISO/TC 176

ISO has a key role to play in facilitating dialogue, consensus building and publishing best practice guides and standards. There are many ISO best practice guidelines and guidance documents and, in addition, there are a number of certifiable standards like ISO 9001 and ISO 14001, as well as sector guides for areas such as medical devices, the automotive industry, and testing laboratories. In my role as Chair of ISO/TC 176, I am committed to help facilitate the work of alignment and maintain the integrity of these standards according to the ISO/IEC Directives, and to ensure their usefulness for all stakeholders.

A key aspect is the application of these quality standards to organizations of all cultures and countries. ISO/TC 176 is made up of the national delegations from more than 80 countries, plus the representatives of 46 international organizations with liaison status. Alongside the standards for organizational registration/certi-

fication are standards and guides for those organizations that carry out the certification and for those who, in turn, accredit the latter as competent to operate.

Beyond these, the national standards bodies in each country play a key role in adopting and implementing regulations and ensuring "fair play". I would suggest that the next five years are crucial in establishing international consensus on the application of standards and the integrity of their use, as well as the implementation in full of ISO 9001:2000, the ISO 19011 joint quality/environment auditing standards, related sector guides and best practice standards for quality practices and processes.

I have been asked what I see as the greatest challenge facing

ISO/TC 176 in the next three to five years. I feel that the integral application of the 2000 version of ISO 9001 will be key, together with full understanding of different user needs. ISO 9001:2000 addresses the total management structure in greater measure than the 1994 version and as a result, the transition for some organizations may cause some difficulty on account of its wider scope.

I shall be monitoring the transition of ISO 9001:2000 by the half a million registered users of the 1994 versions of ISO 9001, ISO 9002 and ISO 9003 by the 15 December 2003 deadline and working closely with the conformity assessment community.

Finally, the ISO/TC 176 organizational structures and processes will need to be effectively managed to meet ever-changing stakeholder needs. One of my roles as Chair will be to facilitate continuing open and constructive dialogue and monitoring of committee processes.

Perhaps the greatest objective that should be a "creed" for all involved with International Standards is the commitment of continual understanding of stakeholder needs and striving for excellence. ■

A Six Sigma 'green belt' certificate class at Kodak Canada.



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