A Quality Policy Statement - How They Can Help Your Business and How to Write One

What is quality management?

Quality management, put in simple terms, is ‘doing exactly what it says on the tin’. In general, it is about an organisation’s ability to consistently provide a product or service that meets the needs and requirements of its customers.

What is a quality statement?

A quality policy statement needs to be a short declaration that states how an organisation ensures the quality of its product or service. It is not in itself a quality management system (QMS) but details what processes are in place to ensure that an organisation delivers what it says it can.

What a quality management policy statement should say

• It needs to describe management’s commitment to maintaining standards of the company’s product or service.
• It will need to identify the ownership and involvement within the organisation of all staff and specifically those with key roles in maintaining the quality of the company’s product or service.
• It will need to state how the company’s product or service is monitored to ensure that it continues to meet customer and market place needs.
• State how the importance of meeting the customers’ needs is communicated within the organisation.
• State how the company ensures customer satisfaction is achieved.
• Detail how the company provides adequate resources to enable the above to happen.
• State that the company systems or processes will be reviewed periodically to ensure that they remain effective in delivering customer satisfaction.

What to think about when writing the statement

The statement needs to provide a general framework on how the company ensures targets and objectives are met and that the aim is to continually improve its product/service through management review and stakeholder involvement.

Think about how the maintenance of plant and equipment enables the company to deliver its product or service. Think about what financial controls are in place and other internal processes that enable the company to deliver within financial constraints. For example, systems for ordering materials and/or stock control.

Think about how the training and development of staff has affected the quality of the product/service and what effect this has had on the business. For example, IT training improves staff abilities when using software systems and computers etc. Also think about how this addresses statutory and other requirements and how this has improved their skills and knowledge.
Think about how the company works with its customers, clients and stakeholders. Are regular meetings held? Is feedback obtained? How are issues resolved?

Think about the quality of the materials used and/or the quality of components supplied to the company.

Think about what statutory requirements are imposed on the product / design and how the company conforms to these.

Think about how issues of non-conforming products or services are resolved. What happens when it goes wrong? When writing a quality policy statement, state what is done to ensure the above. Do not be afraid if this process raises issues, look at it as an opportunity to improve and develop the organisation to become more efficient.

Where to start
• Look at how the company’s health and safety or environmental policies statements have been produced.
• Lay it out in the same way – use corporate headings/logos.
• Identify the policy (eg AIS QPol 001), the owner of the policy, its approved and review dates. This identifies a system of document control which is part of any QMS.
• Make sure it is signed and dated by the person identified as having overall control and responsibility for quality.
• Generally, keep it simple and clear, but ensure it details the company’s internal management controls.

Why companies should have a quality management policy

Managing quality, and how an organisation is able to demonstrate that its internal controls are effective, is becoming more widely required by clients and others who need to be assured that the company can deliver the product to them, to their specification, on time and on budget.

It is becoming more widely included in many pre-qualification questionnaires (PQQ’s) as deliverability is becoming core to gaining work.

There is no legal requirement to have a quality policy statement or implement a QMS. However, it is good business practice to control internal affairs and use of resources.

Having a quality management statement or developing a QMS does not absolve a company from its legal or other requirements under statutory legislation where these are applicable to the products or service.

A good policy will:
• Be clear, simple and concise.
• Be relevant to the size and nature of the organisation.
• State what it does and how it aims to improve.
• Be about one side of A4.
• Be balanced with general statements that detail what the company does.
• Not commit the organisation to things it does not do or cannot achieve.
• It needs to belong to the company and state what the organisation does. Do not copy and paste someone else’s.

Other tips
• Don’t waffle.
• Don’t include sweeping statements that say nothing.
• Don’t include internal jargon, names of sections or individuals.

Developing a Quality Management System (QMS)

Having written a quality policy statement, should the organisation decide to devise and implement a QMS, then the following core principles need to be addressed:
• Customer focus – understand their needs and how the organisation will meet them.
• Leadership – establish, unify and commit to the purpose and direction of the organisation.
• Involvement of people – people at all levels need to be involved in the development and implementation of the system - this will ensure that it works.
• Process approach – look at how things are done and how effectively resources are used to achieve desired results.
• System approach to management – identifying and managing interrelated processes within the organisation and how they affect each other.
• Continual improvement (commitment to) – should be a permanent objective to achieve perfection.
• Factual approach to decision making – business decisions are based on the analysis of factual information gained from auditing and reviewing process and the system as a whole, this enables management to change the way things work to prevent non-conformance issues arising again.
• Mutual customer/supplier benefits – ensuring value to customers, clients and stakeholders. Benefits of implementing a QMS include:
  • Customer loyalty.
  • Repeat business.
  • Operational results such as revenue and market share.
• Flexible response to market opportunities.
• Reduced costs through the effective and efficient use of resources.
• Alignment of processes that will achieve desired results.
• Competitive advantage through improved organisational capabilities.
• Understanding and motivating people towards achieving the company’s goals/objectives which leads to continual improvement and improve morale.
• Confidence of interested parties in the effectiveness and efficiency of the business and reputation.
• Ability to create value for both the organisation and its customers.

Acknowledgement: This information has kindly been provided by ICSolutions. If you need assistance preparing your quality statement or devising a QMS, please contact Ian Cleary at ICSolutions on 01202 762659 or email icsolutions@sky.com