

STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD

Earn ISO certification
to show your customers
you are quality focused

By Briana Jones, Digital Editor
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Have you considered becoming ISO (International Organization for Standards) certified? Now might be the time. With more and more service companies popping up every day in the burgeoning gas and oil industries, ensuring you stand out could boost your customer base and revenue. While there are many ISO standards, we will focus

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Scott Radeker—Vice President of Operations, CRS REPROCESSING SERVICES

on the ISO 9000 family, which outlines quality management systems.

ISO certification is not a quick fix for companies just looking to check a box to receive a piece of paper, and if quality is not already the foundation of your business structure, the process can be daunting. As company owner, you have to



CRS continually monitors results to ensure quality. A technician checks a centrifuge that minimizes solids to meet customers' specifications.

lead your team to successful completion of the certification process.

“It requires real commitment by the leadership team,” says Scott Radeker, vice president of operations for CRS Reprocessing Services. “You cannot do this if the CEO or top management person wants to delegate this down, but doesn't

want to pay attention to it.

If that's the case, the chances of being successful will be dramatically diminished. It helps if that person keeps the leadership team supportive of it so the whole organization continues to rally around the cause of preparing for and executing the audit.”

FROM BEGINNING TO END

The certification process begins by choosing the standard or standards for which the company is to be certified. In this case, the 9000 standard includes numerous substandards, such as 9001:2008, which focuses on the requirements of the quality management system, and 9004:2009, which focuses on how to make the system more efficient and effective.

You can choose to achieve company wide certification for every site and every function of your business or narrow it to a specific scope, such as one site or one strategic area.

The ISO 9000 standard is based on eight quality management principles to guide performance:

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

The certification process is multifaceted. “You have to understand what your customer requirements are, you have to plan for them, react to situations both planned and unplanned when they occur, and have a plan for and execute a plan for continuous improvement,” Radeker says.

AUDIT GUIDANCE

After the standards are chosen and understood, companies select a registrar, which is an accredited company or agency that awards certification. ISO develops the standards, but they do not certify. Outside agencies or organizations monitor and audit your company to ensure you are meeting the ISO requirements.



“The registrar assigns you a lead auditor who helps you through the process,” says Radeker. “Then you take care of document preparation and execute at least one, preferably more, internal audits, where you essentially act as your own auditor and give yourself marks against the standards to ensure you are meeting all the criteria.”

The first year involves a complete audit from your agency and lead auditor, with abridged audits the following two years. The re-audits focus on a sampling of areas within the standard to make the auditing process more efficient. In the fourth year, the entire audit process begins again and all sites and sections of the standard are tested.

PUBLICIZE IT!

Some industries are beginning to require companies become ISO certified, but you can take your support services company to the next level and show

customers you are focused on quality even if it’s not a requirement for your operators.

“In areas of high-growth like the Marcellus, there is a wide variety of people offering services,” says Deb Reese, CRS director of marketing. “But it’s the quality and consistency of that service that really matter to the customer.”

Once you earn certification, marketing the achievement via your website and media outlets is the next step. “ISO certification is a good way to convey to our customers our quality focus because it’s a standard so it’s not just us saying we’re quality focused,” says Reese. She says ISO certification sends a powerful message because few contractors pursue it.

With safety regulations for gas and oil companies becoming more stringent, ISO certification would allow your business to be recognized as a true competitor. The real value is the experience gained in the process to become certified.

Final Thought

Are you ISO certified or considering certification? Do you see value in becoming certified? Drop me a message to brianaj@colepublishing.com and I promise to respond.