



Management Commitment—performance measures are the key



Managers will rarely admit that they are not committed to management systems. To show they are committed they attend management review meetings, they also allow some of their staff to conduct audits. Some managers even stay in the office when an audit is being conducted! This may be a cynical view of a senior manager's commitment to a management system but all too often it is a reality.

Senior managers are genuinely committed to customer satisfaction, improving environmental performance and reducing health and safety risks. It is just that the management system can be all about detail, and they don't deal in detail, they want to be seen as the strategist, providing leadership and moving the business forward. Their success is measured in hard quantifiable results, not whether everyone followed documented procedures.

If management systems mean anything to a senior manager they need to contain performance measures. And not just any performance measures, particularly those made up to satisfy an external auditor! The performance measures should include those upon which a senior manager's success is judged. Obviously, the measures have to be in context; it is pointless including financial performance measures which have no direct bearing on the management system, whether it be a QMS, an EMS, etc.

If the measures which drive your business are not the measures used in your management system(s) then it is little wonder that senior managers do not give it the attention it deserves. How can you continually improve the effectiveness of your management systems when there is no real focus?



Performance measures are the bridge between business results and management systems

Meaningful Performance Measures

Identify

Measures should always be developed from a top down perspective. Start by reviewing senior management performance measures which relate to your management system(s). These measures may be too high level and therefore you need to look at measures which contribute to the high level measures. The aim is to use those which are available and used to run the business.

The list of measures should relate to elements of the management system e.g. for a QMS the measures should be used with specific processes. The difficulty comes when there is a mis-match between these measures and the elements of the management system. These issues need to be resolved, but we suggest that fewer more meaningful measures are better than a plethora of incidental measures.

Use and review

The measures should be used to monitor and improve performance. Don't be afraid to eliminate or change performance measures if they are not providing the information you need.



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