



nanoQuest
QUALITY SYSTEMS

Helping organizations achieve performance results through the development of their people, processes and management systems.

Frequently Asked Questions

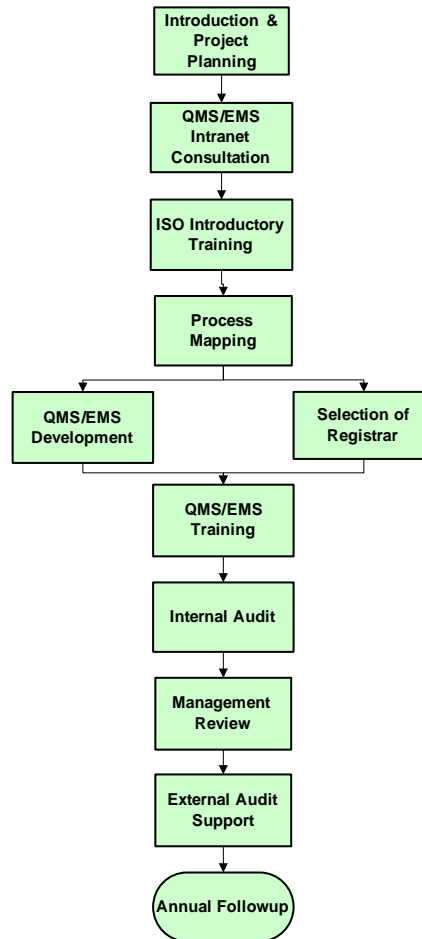
These are the most commonly asked questions from our clients. Should you wish further clarification or if these don't address your inquiry please contact us at: info@nanoquestinc.com

1. [What does an ISO Consultation and Implementation look like?](#)
2. [How can process maps help our organization?](#)
3. [What is the purpose of a Needs Assessment?](#)
4. [What is the difference between brainstorming and focus groups?](#)
5. [How do we know our job descriptions are descriptive enough?](#)
6. [Should an Employee Policy Manual or Handbook include "everything"?](#)
7. [Is there a difference between objectives and improvement objectives?](#)
8. [We do financial audits so why bother with internal operational audits?](#)

What does an ISO Consultation and Implementation look like?

Our solutions are based on current best practices. There are a number of steps to our processes which vary by your organization's requirements. For example a typical turnkey ISO 9001:2008 or 14001:2004 implementation involves these steps.

1. Introduction and Project Planning
2. Advice to your IT on Intranet Installation and Setup of the QMS/EMS Document Structure
3. ISO 9001/14001 Introductory Training
4. Process Mapping
5. QMS/EMS Development
6. QMS/EMS Training
7. Selection of Registrar
8. Internal Audit
9. Management Review
10. External Audit Support
11. Annual Follow up on Request



How can process maps help our organization?

Process maps are flow charts that picture work flow. The most complex systems can be simplified into a series of processes and then mapped. Procedures and work instructions are also excellent opportunities for process mapping. A picture is worth a thousand words they say. A process map does that and more. Because they are visual they are easier to understand than pages of description. They eliminate misunderstanding, remove difficulties due to literacy levels or language differences and facilitate onboard training of new employees or those moving between processes. Auditors now expect to see process maps.

What is the purpose of a Needs Assessment?

A Needs Assessment has four essential components. The current situation of the organization is established first. Through brainstorming or focus groups the desired results are then decided. The “gap” between the present and desired states is quantitatively and qualitatively measured. Finally measurable objectives and action plans to achieve those objectives are set and monitored. It is essentially a mapping exercise. “We’re here and we want to get to there. What are the most effective, efficient and least costly ways to get there.”

What is the difference between brainstorming and focus groups?

Brainstorming is an exercise or method to get ideas into the open. It can stop there or those ideas can be formulated into a hierarchical list or depending on the initial intent, a solution. A focus group is a task oriented structure. Brainstorming can be a method used by the group at various points in the process. A focus group has a defined task or mandate. There is an issue to be solved or goal to be achieved. The focus group essentially performs a needs analysis, sets objectives and establishes action plans.

How do we know our job descriptions are descriptive enough?

A job description clarifies the expectations of the employer for the employee. They define duties, essential functions, requirements of the position and the means for achieving them. The primary purpose is informative and they therefore should be specific, concrete and inclusive. They contain title, primary responsibilities, working conditions, duties, tasks, educational requirements and required skill set or other competencies. They may contain additional information such as location, pay scale, or hours. The writing of job descriptions begins with a task analysis to break out the specific tasks and sequencing of the job function. They may also reference guidelines for recruitment, training requirements, performance appraisal, HR planning, compensation, compliance to legal requirements, improved work flow, elimination of duplication and assist in the evaluation of the employees’ job performance. Job descriptions are a powerful tool when properly written.

Should an Employee Policy Manual or Handbook include “everything”?

Simply stated, No! A policy manual is a broad document which is essential in the onboarding of new employees. It is also a reference document for all existing employees, reflecting legislative requirements. It outlines the expectations of the organization and day to day “what I need to know” information. It does not include job descriptions, procedures and work instructions. It does include vision, mission, quality policy statements, general hours of work, benefit structure, H&S, training or Professional Development processes, and the variety of rules and regulations the organization expects its employees to follow. It is concise, definitive and references other key documents and manuals which are more expansive in explanation.

Is there a difference between objectives and improvement objectives?

Yes and No! An objective is a generality such as, “We will repaint the room.” This is simple but it is not an improvement objective. It is not SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound. An improvement objective would be, “We will budget to repaint the conference room green by August 15th.” Assuming relevancy and finances we have an improvement objective. Relevancy and achievability may be assumed decisions of management review. Management decides whether and where

improvement is necessary according to available data and financials. Targets are steps within the improvement objective. In this case who chooses the colour of green, whether to use internal or external painters and so on with the measurable being dates. The overall objective is measurable by completion date as are the individual target dates which should be aligned with key performance indicators.

We do financial audits so why bother with internal operational audits?

Operational audits act as leading indicators just as the amber traffic light signals the soon to come red light. Financial audits act as lagging indicators – the red light. They tell what has already occurred. Organizations run by the study of only financials are much like the coroner who tells of the cause of death after the fact. Organizations run by the study of leading indicators assessed through operational audits are the Doctors who diagnose, prescribe and hopefully prevent. Properly planned continuous operational audits uncover concerns before they develop into issues and signal the need for corrective action. Successful organizations then seek to prevent similar future concerns from arising through preventive actions.