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Working Party on Technical Harmonization and
Standardization Policies

Eleventh session, 29-31 October 2001

Item 8(c) of the provisional agenda

COORDINATING UNIT FOR OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Expert Meeting on Best Practice in the Creation of
Quality Assurances Systems for Enhancing Competitiveness
of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

Geneva, 25-26 October 2001

CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT

Quality Policy Issues

This paper has been submitted by the Polish Committee for Standardization.

It contains information on the Polish experience in promoting quality management standards with national companies.

This document is presented for information to delegates. It is reproduced in the form in which it was received by the secretariat.

POLISH EXPERIENCE IN PROMOTION OF QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM POLISH ISO 9000 FORUM CLUB

Each enterprise should have an effective management system. It has been proven that organizations that implement Total Quality Management principles and ISO systems, create more effective programs, making the company more profitable in this way and at the same time more operational and competitive. However, it does not mean that one needs a certificate to be effective. But we have to admit that more and more enterprises perceive the need to obtain such a certificate.

Currently, we have over 1000 companies that have obtained such a certificate. Mostly, however, they are big and medium-sized businesses. Small businesses do not have certificates or implement new systems since they simply cannot afford it. Unfortunately, in Poland there were no programs that would allow groups of companies in regions to be established to apply for certificates, participate in training and exchange experience together.

At this very moment, the economic structure is undergoing change in Poland. Many big, state-owned enterprises collapse and, on the other hand, small and medium companies emerge that need assistance. They need access to information of any kind. All of this information about quality systems is of great necessity for them. They also must know who is competent to provide them with this information. Most often these companies employ two, three people. They need to be helped as a priority.

Existing organizations, i.e. enterprises, hospitals, schools, banks, state administration offices must also implement pretty soon a new, pro-quality management philosophy, i.e. Total Quality Management or, as one may wish, complex management through quality. What for? Primarily, to participate in globalization and Europe. The whole process of system transformation requires companies to be restructured. This is clear from Club activity.

In 1991 around 100 representatives of enterprises, scientific and research bodies, institutes and universities interested in the implementation of ISO 9000 series of standards established the POLISH ISO 9000 FORUM Club.

The Club is an independent, non-profit organization, operating on a voluntary basis. The Club unites not only suppliers of products and services but also other institutions and organizations interested in implementation, improvement and development of management systems and conformity assessment

The vision of the Club is to sustain the creation of a competitive position by Polish organizations in the free world market.

The mission is to assist Polish organizations to adopt world requirements, including those of the European Union with regard to the development and improvement of application of systems in the field of quality, environmental and safety management.

The Club's activities so far have been conducted in the following forms:

- ✓ organization of symposiums, conferences and other meetings for Club members,
- ✓ publishing guides, information and occasional materials, periodical Newsletter,
- ✓ co-operation with state and self-government organizations organs,
- ✓ co-operation with other organizations operating in the field of quality (e.g. Polish Centre for Testing and Certification, Polish Centre for Accreditation, Supreme Measures Office, National Chamber of Economy, Committee of Polish Quality Prize),
- ✓ international co-operation in the field of problems that are of interest for the Club Members,
- ✓ co-operation with mass media to promote Club activity and issues that it deals in and with.

- ✓ Since the creation of the Club in 1991 the number of its members has risen to around 700.

Several members are Polish Quality Award Prize Winners and this is recognized as a proof of the importance of the Club.

The Club co-operates with the Polish Committee for Standardization (PKN). The forms of this co-operation are as follows:

- ✓ participation of Club members in standardization work,
- ✓ promotion of standards concerning management systems,
- ✓ participation of PKN's representative in the Club's Programme Committee.

Club events - symposia, conferences, and seminars are held in several thematic cycles:

- ✓ Implementation of quality systems,
- ✓ Metrology in quality systems,
- ✓ Integrated Management Systems,
- ✓ Quality Improvement Methods and Tools.

It is necessary to mention two of these events:

- ✓ ISO 9000 Forum International Application Symposium (Warsaw 1996);
- ✓ "Our common future" - ISO 14000 Environmental Management International Forum (Warsaw 1999), under the patronage of ISO, with participation of representatives from ISO, EOTC, EQNet, etc.

The objective of all Club events is to provide participants with the most up-to-date information on quality, environment and security management systems implementation, certification and improvement along with local and world news.

During conferences the most prominent specialists present their achievements in fields that are of interest to participants. Altogether, over 6000 participants took part in Club meetings held so far. One of the Club's tasks is to facilitate the participation of its members in world/European quality congresses as well as access to conference materials. The Club is also active through its branch and regional sections as well as task forces.

After ten years of activity, the Club is recognized as a social movement towards better quality, integrating many circles gathered around the areas of quality management. The Club has created new directions in management, promotion and clarification of rules for quality management standards usage. It has become a forum for the exchange of experiences and mutual assistance in the development of better management.

Club Board

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