



AQA INTERNATIONAL NEWSLETTER

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Featured Client:



VASCOR is an automotive logistics company based in Georgetown Kentucky. VASCOR was created in 1987 when Toyota opened its first manufacturing facility in North America. It is a joint venture owned by APL Logistics (50%) and FUJITRANS Corporation (50%), which is based in Nagoya, Japan. Although VASCOR was originally formed to provide logistics services and support for Toyota Motor Manufacturing in Kentucky, (TMMK), the relationship quickly grew as Toyota opened additional manufacturing facilities in North America and tapped VASCOR to increase their service offerings to accommodate these additional plant openings.

“Initially we were asked to provide end of line vehicle inspections at TMMK; from there we were asked to add container movements and logistics support from Tier 1 suppliers to the manufacturing plants,” says VASCOR President and CEO Jim Dunn. “Through this relationship, we have expanded our capabilities and customer base as clients, who heard of the work we provide to Toyota and were told they were pleased with our performance, asked us to provide them with automotive supply chain management services.”

Today, those services offerings have expanded to include transportation management services, supply chain consulting and finished vehicle services. They also include some impressive statistics: VASCOR ran approximately 40 million miles last year and inspected more than 5 million vehicles-all with the help of over 200 employees in 60 cities throughout the United States, Canada and Mexico. “Our list of services and activities is undoubtedly diverse and somewhat unique in that we support both assembly parts and finished vehicle supply chains,” said Jim Dunn. “However one thing that’s not diverse is the industries we serve— and intentionally so. At the end of the day, we are all about automotive logistics here in North America and in the future, beyond North America.” “We believe there are opportunities for VASCOR to partner with APL Logistics globally to offer the same value added customers solutions we provide in North America to companies that operate in India, South America and other strategic global markets.”

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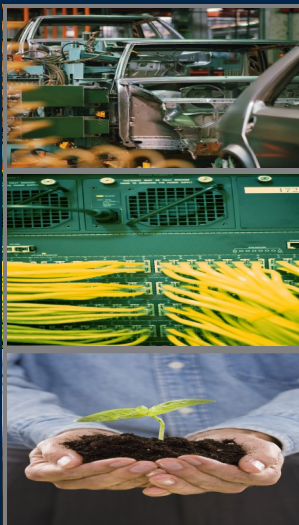
Continuous vs. Continual Improvement

Article Written by: *Bill McCalla, AQA Auditor*

When the ISO 9001:1987 version was issued, there was some disagreement in the TC 176 committee about whether continuous improvement should be included in the next version. The problem was that once registered to the standard, an organization could basically say “freeze everything” in the Quality Management System (QMS) and not make any changes. This problem was circumvented with the introduction of preventive action in the ISO 9001:1994 version, where now management had to review relevant information on (preventive) actions taken in management review. However, preventive action as implemented in many did not prove to be a main driver for improvements in the QMS. Some forward thinking organizations dealt with this by adding continuous improvement as a 21st element. The automotive version of ISO 9001:1994; QS-9000, added a section on Continuous Improvement.

When ISO 9001:2000 was introduced, continual improvement was shown in the process approach section 0.2, figure 1 as Dr. Deming’s Plan, Do, Check, Act (PDCA) cycle for driving improvements. Instead of PDCA, the continual improvement cycle of the QMS in this figure is shown as Management Responsibility, Resource Management, Product Realization and Measurement, Analysis and Improvement, which are sections 5,6,7 and 8 of the ISO 9001 standard. It is not like continuous improvement, which was treated as a separate requirement in addition to the standard.

Although there is only a subtle spelling difference between continual improvement and continuous improvement, the meanings are truly different. Continuous improvement covers the efforts to improve. Showing a list of projects of kaizen events in the past would meet that requirement. However for continual improvement, the requirement is to demonstrate through monitoring, measuring and analysis, that the changes are for the better. This could be accomplished through continuous improvement efforts, but the proof will be in the results.



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Dunn believes that focus is one reason VASCOR has earned so many service awards from loyal clients like Toyota, Chrysler and Hino as well as top—quality certifications like ISO 9001 over the years. “I’m extremely proud of the top notch team and processes we’ve built here over the past 23 years,” he said. “Just as important, I’m proud of the growth and success we’ve managed to achieve even in these trying economic times. VASCOR may not have the brand recognition that some of our competition who are 50 times our size may have. On the other hand, we do have something more important; a quality name in the world’s most demanding industry.”

For more information on VASCOR be sure to check out their website: www.vascorltd.com

Reviewing Internal Audits at Management Review

Article Written by: Richard Everhardt, AQA Auditor

Last month the topic of improving the quality management reviews was introduced with the promise to look at each of the “inputs” and “outputs” of these review. One of the required “inputs” for inclusion in your management review is a review of internal audits. Many auditors have found that, in many organizations this means a review of the previous findings and an approval of the upcoming audit schedule. This management discussion can include much more in-order-to really review internal audits. Let’s explore a few ideas.

- **Establish Audit Objectives**— An excellent way to increase the value of the internal audit process is to establish objectives for it. Before the quality of the internal audit process can be evaluated, one must establish what to evaluate it against. While most audit programs meet the requirements of the International Standard, they do not appear to add much value to the organization. Is the purpose of your audits to prove conformance or to assess effectiveness of processes? After a system has been in place for a while, most processes do conform— but may not be the truly *effective and/or efficient*. Have your auditors assess progress on accomplishing the metrics for the process being audited and actions taken if current results do not match plan. Have your auditors determine not only are auditees following their documented process, but why is the process being followed and can (or should) it be improved upon. Make your auditors the catalysts for monitoring continual improvement.
- **Use Audits to Investigate Problem Areas**— If you are not accomplishing stated objectives or metrics in a given area, assign a team of auditors to investigate activities in the process prior to and as a part of a formal corrective action.
- **Review the Actual Questions Asked During the Audit**— Many organizations continue to use audit checklists, even though they are not required. These questions often are conformance oriented. An alternative to checklists is to provide time to your auditors to develop turtle diagrams and then questions that they will use to assess the effectiveness of the interactions between the processes. Focusing on internal suppliers and customers can yield some interesting results.
- **Carefully Evaluate Root Causes and Verifications of Nonconformances**— If the audits have generated nonconformances, a careful review of root causes can yield important information. Have the process owners applied a disciplined approach to root cause or have they rushed to find blame. What type of objective evidence did the auditors evaluate prior to closing them? Did this objective evidence really prove that the corrective action was effective? Without a thorough root cause analysis and robust verification process, it is likely that nonconformances will reappear.
- **Evaluation of Opportunities for Improvement**— You do encourage your auditors to find Opportunities for Improvement don’t you? This is another set of eyes reviewing processes and can, many times, ask probing questions that lead to these improvement ideas.
- **Audit of the Audit Process**— Management review time can be used to audit the audit process. In too many instances, internal auditing itself is not audited, as required. Performing internal audits is a process like any other in your organization and must be audited. Use members of your management team who are qualified to audit perform this audit on a periodic basis. Through this activity you will not only assure yourself that the audits meet the requirements in the International Standard but are truly of value to your organization.

Internal Audits can be of tremendous value to an organization or they can be something that is done because “ISO says so”. Using the management review to perform an in depth analysis of auditing activities and driving improvements in auditing will be a valuable use of management review time.



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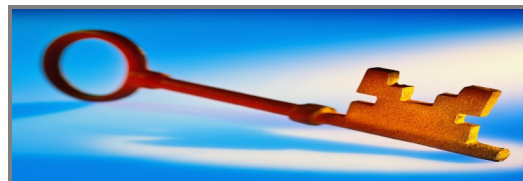
Receptionist
Chris Gillan
Ext. 221

Meet the Staff:

After more than a decade of experience as the CEO of the Gillan household, Chris decided to open a new chapter in her life by accepting a position with AQA International on January 25, 2010 as the receptionist. Chris' husband and their two boys Martin (15) and Brendan (12), along with their lovable Labrador retriever Fella, reside in the Long Creek community in Blythewood, South Carolina. Chris and her family moved to Blythewood 5 years ago after spending 7 long winters in Chicago, Illinois. She enjoys many outdoor activities including running, dog walking, swimming and golf. She is also an active member of her church. Chris has previous sales and administrative experience which she is bringing to the AQA team and we are very excited to have her on board as part of our staff!



AQA Training ...The Key to Success



Come join us for public training courses geared to meet your needs. Course flyers and registration forms are available upon request!

AQA 2009 PUBLIC TRAINING SCHEDULE

<u>Month</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Days</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Location</u>
March	8-9	AS9100:2009 Rev C Internal Auditor	2.0	\$995	Huntsville, AL
April	22	AS9100 Rev C Full Standard Review	0.25	\$525	WebEx
	22	ISO/TS 16949 Full Standard Review	0.25	\$525	WebEx
	26-30	ISO 14001 Lead Auditor	5.0	\$1600	Columbia, SC
May	6-7	AS9100:2009 Rev C Internal Auditor	2.0	\$995	Columbia, SC
	10-11	AS9100:2009 Rev C Internal Auditor	2.0	\$995	Columbus, OH
	24	AS9100:2009 Rev C Change Overview	0.25	\$350	WebEx
June	7	ISO/TS 16949 Requirements	0.25	\$525	WebEx
	16	AS9100 Rev C Full Standard Review	0.25	\$525	WebEx
	22-23	ISO/TS 16949 Internal Auditor	2.0	\$995	Columbus, OH
	30-Jul1	OHSAS 18001:2007 Internal Auditor	2.0	\$695	Columbia, SC
July	2	Legal requirements associated with OHSAS 18001:2007	1.0	\$195	Columbia, SC
	19	AS9100 Rev C Overview	0.25	\$350	WebEx

Any of the above referenced courses can be customized to fit any of your training needs with on-site training. For more information regarding any of our classes or how to sign up, please contact Ansley Rhodes at 800-281-4384 or check out training updates on our website!