

Quality Management in Training Organisations

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Abstract. The demand for quality management in training organisations is not to ignore. Standards, costumers and governmental organisations ask for a certificate according ISO 9001. But this is not only a bureaucratic demand there are a lot of benefits for the training organisation, the employees and the processes.

Introduction

The German Society for Nondestructive Testing has a long experience in organizing trainings. From the beginning the organizers had the problem to assure a good quality of the courses. In the centre of their activities where the lessons, the practical exercises and the examinations. But it became clear that there is also a need to say something about the training environment. During the years they defined requirements for trainers, rooms, equipments and documentations. This was sufficient until quality systems according to European standards became a normal part of the work of our costumers and our examinations and certifications where organized by accredited certification bodies. Today a growing demand for a modern quality system in training organisations is not to ignore.

Formal Reasons

German Agency for Work

One important reason for DGZfP to implement a good quality system was a new requirement of the German Agency for Work. In days of more than 4 Million unemployed people in Germany, the money for qualification of these people is becoming short. In 1992 the Agency paid for further qualification 9 Billion Euro, in 2006 only 3 Billion Euro. The German government changed the system and supports today only qualifications by certified training organisations. They have to fulfil ISO 9001 plus some additional requirements. This has to be certified by official authorized certification bodies. Training of unemployed people was always a part of our business and so it is important for us to have this certification.

Costumers

Another important point is that some of our big costumers require quality systems from every supplier. Sometimes it is very difficult to get an order for an in-house training or to sign a long-term contract for training without a formal QMS. And if it was not a question

for the first order during the next formal check of suppliers we are faced with questionnaires about our quality system.

Standards

The third reason is that the standard CEN ISO/TR 25108: 2006 is on its way. This standard describes requirements for a quality system of a training organisation and will be a reference in the new EN 473. So we expect this TR to become a requirement of our certification body.

Beside from these formal reasons: a formal accepted quality system has a lot of benefits and by the way it is a heavy statement for marketing.

Benefit

Training Organisation

- The first benefit is that we think, talk and write about quality. So it comes in the mind of every employee: Customers are the most important people in our business. This thinking is changing behaviour, if people searching for help are calling us, if there are problems or wishes. It is a very real experience in our organisation that the people feel our service orientation.
- The training organisation is able to fulfil the formal requirements of the costumers. This produces participants in courses, because we are formal accepted and booking is easy for the employees of our costumers. Very often we are able to get a place in internal qualification catalogue witch is also a very good marketing tool.
- The implementation of the quality system is connected with a check of the whole organisational structure, every process, every working step. And during the draft of the documents a lot of questions arise, a lot of discussions and proposals are optimising the work. This optimisation is continuing trough the system of audits and the annually interviews. This means in practice for us, that we measure, how long it takes, till the costumer gets his examination report. We measure the costumer satisfaction with trainers, rooms, equipment. And year by we are pleased to see that things are going better, faster, free of trouble.
- Another very important benefit is the description of the processes. It can help to survive problems if important employees are sick for a longer period of time, if one is leaving the company or if there is a complaint and you have to find the problem.

Employees

- The benefit for the employees is their involvement in the design of processes. They are responsible for their work and know the responsibilities of their neighbours. So they are able to design a sufficient work environment and they are able to like the work they do day by day.
- The difference between the past and today is that they get more information about the work of their neighbours and about targets and reasons for processes.
- The annual schedule for further qualification and the employee interview are opening possibilities.
- During the implementation of our QMS we got a lot of very positive response from our people.

Costumer

- The benefit of the costumer is the fulfilment of normal requirements of his Quality Management System. The selection of suppliers without QMS is complicated and often connected with audits and a long supplier qualification.
- Another benefit is the Statement of the training organisation, that quality is important. During every problem you can remind them about this statement, you can expect a system for complaints and so on. A quality manual is offering the possibility to gain basic information's about the training organisation.

Problems

- The transparency of the work is a problem for some employees. They are afraid, that they are easy to replace. They are afraid that every failure is traceable. It is process of communication to teach them, that every employee is needed.
- Another species is also in danger, the free trainer, the training artist. The organisational target for a comparable course level everywhere limits the freedom. But our idea is that if the basic work is done, there is enough additional time for the specialities of the trainer. We need a minimum level of knowledge and skills to be trained, that's what our costumer pays for. A good entertainment is nice, but not the main target of a course.
- Our business figures show, that QMS is not significant increasing the number of bookings. To have a system is not really a big point in the fight for costumers.
- The systems costs money and time every year. You have to pay for audits, meetings, software. The external costs for DGZfP are in the range of 5000 EUR per year. The internal work is to calculate with at least 20 working days.
- Last but not least: You have to find a certification body for the QMS with fitting auditors. A lot of auditors are claiming a good experience in the field of training organisations. In practice their experience is very limited on the public sector and if they are faced with a private unsupported organisation doing technical training problems are sure. These problems are useless discussions about forms and processes, but the audit is no help to improve the organisation. It is only an training for the auditor, we pay for. We where searching a long time, till we got the right certification body with the right auditors.

The future

- For DGZfP: no question, it is a need and has more benefit than problems for us. We try hard to be the best, so we have to do our homework.
- For costumers on the NDT-Market price, place, time and training quality are the main reasons to buy. If there is also a QMS it is nice and the order is easier to place.
- There will also be in future a market for training organisations without official QM. But, they are excluded from orders of some big costumers and they take a higher risk to survive problems.
- The main point in our business is the talent of the trainer. If he is really good, the costumer accepts problems and bad organisation.