

# IMSM Guide to ISO Certification

# INTRODUCTION



“**ISO certification if implemented correctly can produce numerous benefits for a business. An ISO certified company can meet the requirements of its customers in a more professional way; it can attract new customers which can result in increased revenue streams, improved promotion of its brand which can lead to improved market share.**

With the help of ISO certification, you can improve your business through increased customer satisfaction. Nowadays, it has become a highly significant aspect for any business, and the reason why many organisations will only do business with companies that have ISO certification. To survive the tough competition, you need to establish long term relations with your customers and, in this regard, ISO certification can play a highly significant role.

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# SELECTING THE RIGHT CONSULTANT

To obtain ISO certification, many businesses choose to use the services of consultancy organisations, such as IMSM Ltd. Consultants play an important role in getting a business ISO certified. It takes a lot of informed decision-making to select the most suitable Consultant. While selecting and finalising your expert, the very first thing to take into account is their experience and their capability to meet your requirements. After experience and capability, look at the variety of products and services the company offers.

Should an organisation choose to implement an ISO management system alone, it may prove to be time consuming, difficult and ineffective. The right ISO Consultant can ensure that your ISO is delivered in budget and on time.

The implementation of an ISO management system can be broken down into a number of manageable steps; these steps are described in this document and IMSM will assist you through each phase of the implementation process, to ensure that your organisation reaps the rewards to be gained from having an ISO management system embedded into your organisation and culture.



# KEY CONSIDERATIONS WHEN SELECTING YOUR CONSULTANT

**Choosing the right ISO Consultant and Business Partner can mean the difference between success and failure. Experience backed by a solid track record is of utmost importance. A consultancy that thoroughly understands the industry and has comprehensive knowledge of certification requirements can help you avoid costly pitfalls and circumvent obstacles on your road to ISO certification.**

The most important question to ask your ISO Consultant is how can ISO add value to your company's overall goals and help achieve its corporate objectives. IMSM Consultants draw from a pool of knowledge and experience with ISO across many industry sectors, helping to identify key areas for improvement during the implementation process.

## 1. **Ask for references.**

Can the Consultant provide you with evidence of previous customer successes? Choose a Consultant with a proven track record.

## 2. **Do they have the capabilities to meet your requirements?**

Satisfy yourself that a consulting firm has the background, expertise and resources to meet your unique needs.

## 3. **Are you a good match?**

Make sure the Consultant's approach and style are a good fit for your company's culture. The relationship with your ISO Consultant should form the foundation for a business partnership.

## 4. **Additional services.**

Does the Consultant have resources available and experience in order to supply you with internal training with measurable results that fall to the bottom line?

## 5. **How flexible can they be?**

Select a consulting firm that provides onsite implementation assistance and training in order to minimise operational disruptions. In order to gain a thorough understanding, your Consultant needs to spend time in your business.

## 6. **Thorough planning.**

Choose a Consultant who presents a realistic timeline and fully explains the responsibilities of your organisation during the implementation process.

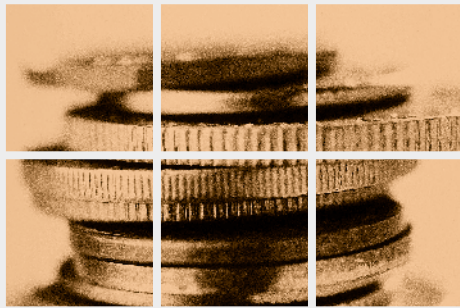
## 7. **Established and reliable.**

Confirm that the Consultant offers a choice of well-established certifying bodies. Ensure the Consultant has a close working relationship and will work closely with the certifying organisation to ensure a successful certification audit.

## 8. **Marketing.**

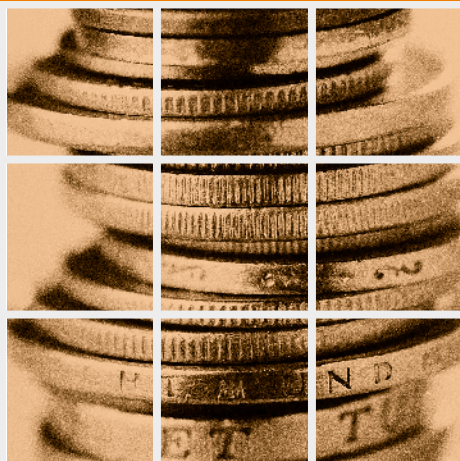
Do the Consultants have the resources to help you promote your ISO status after successful certification? Your ISO certification should not be your best kept secret.

# THE IMSM APPROACH



The IMSM approach is based on a key set of principles in order to create balanced and sustained results for our clients:

<b>Fixed Fee</b>	IMSM ISO implementation is priced at a fixed rate from day one. No hidden charges, no unexpected invoices. The price you see is the price you will pay.
<b>Flexible Implementation</b>	ISO implementation with IMSM will be bespoke to your organisation, designed to fit around your business requirements and schedule.
<b>Expertise</b>	All IMSM Assessors have been successfully trained to the highest standard by an IRCA, or equivalent, approved training body and have earned a reputation of integrity for contributing value and best practice. IMSM guarantees that your Assessor will be highly qualified and trained to assist your business to ISO certification.
<b>Full Service</b>	IMSM offers full implementation; we will produce the manuals and make the process as simple as possible by improving systems already in place.
<b>Training</b>	IMSM offer training to supplement your ISO; training with IMSM is flexible and delivered by experienced IMSM Trainers.





# CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT AND TRANSPARENCY

Corporate shenanigans have plagued organisations and shaped businesses and economies throughout the ages and, in the wake of recent failures in corporate governance, the emphasis on the need for businesses to operate a programme of continual improvement and disclose corporate information quickly and effectively continues to increase due to pressure from industry regulators. Irregularities in financial management, ethical dealings, disclosure, natural disasters affecting entire economies and transparency of decisions becoming commonplace has meant that organisations have an obligation to follow certain guidelines in how they conduct their business. The implementation of ISO standards addresses these directly.

ISO standards enable organisations to work to a methodology, a systematic approach, aligned with organisational objectives and strategies. Adopting the standards demonstrates a proactive approach addressing the increasing demand by regulators to provide corporate information in good order and in good time, additional tangible proof that an organisation is operating under the most effective and ethical circumstances.



## THE ROAD TO IMPLEMENTATION

-   Learn about the Standard
-   Perform a GAP Analysis
-   Prepare a Project Plan





Train your Employees



Document your Management System



Implement your Management System



Audit your Management System



Preparing for your Certification Audit



Prepare for Certification



# 1

## Learn about the Standard

**Selection of the most appropriate standard for your business requirements: there is a vast array of ISO standards available but the most commonly adopted is ISO 9001: 2015 Quality Management Systems.**

Other ISO standards cover more specific areas of your business such as the Environment (ISO 14001), Information Security (ISO 27001) and Business Continuity (ISO 22301).

Click on the tab below to read more about the particular standards offered by IMSM:

ISO 9001: 2015	Quality Management System
ISO 14001: 2015	Environmental Management System
OHSAS 18001: 2007	Health & Safety Management System
ISO/IEC 27001: 2013	Information Security Management System
ISO/IEC 20000-1: 2011	Information Security Service Management System
ISO 22301: 2012	Business Continuity Management System
ISO 22000: 2005	Food Safety Management System
AS 9100: 2009	QMS Requirements for Aviation, Space & Defence Organisations
ISO/IEC 17025: 2005	QMS Requirements for Testing & Calibration Laboratories
ISO 13485: 2016	QMS Requirements for Medical Devices
ISO/TS 16949: 2009	QMS Requirements for the Automotive Industry
ISO 50001: 2011	Energy Management System

For more information on which one would best suit your organisation please [contact IMSM](#).

# 2

## Perform a GAP Analysis

**One of the first steps that would be performed by your IMSM Consultant is to compare your current 'management system' to that of the requirements of the applicable management system standard, this process is most commonly called 'performing a GAP Analysis'.**

The GAP Analysis investigatory series of questions and examples covers all the requirements of the particular standard; the IMSM Consultant will note your current position as it relates to each of these

requirements, making recommendations on where improvements need to be made or additional information provided, to meet the standard.

This GAP Analysis can then be used by both Consultant and Organisation to plan the work schedule involved in proceeding with implementation; it can provide a basis on which potential costs can be calculated and give the Consultant and Organisation an idea of suitable timescales for implementation.



# 3

## Prepare a Project Plan

**In order to start planning you will need to determine your goals in relation to the project outcomes; you'll need to be able to answer such questions as when to start the project, when do you need/want to complete it, how are you to communicate this to your organisation and/or the wider community.**

One way to determine the starting point of your project is when you complete a GAP Analysis of your current business operation. This will give you a greater understanding of where your company is in relation to the requirements of the management system standard you're wishing to implement.

Your IMSM Consultant will help to guide you through this process to make the impact on your business as minimal as possible. Your IMSM Consultant can also assist you in communicating your intentions to your employees so they feel as comfortable as possible with answering their questions.

How long you take to complete the implementation is entirely down to your own business needs, IMSM will assist you in that process. How long you could expect ISO implementation to take would firstly depend on the resources you make available to aid in the implementation process, secondly the size and complexity of your operation, and finally the management system standard selected for implementation. Your IMSM Consultant will be able to give you more of an understanding once they have the relevant information.

An important part of project planning is to identify the responsibilities of members of your organisation. Who will be Project Leader? Who will be on the 'Project Team'? Identifying the Management Representative at this point would enable them to start to work with your IMSM Consultant in putting together the project plan and to identify those areas where they have to focus available resources.

# 4

## Train your Employees

**All management systems have a requirement that all employees understand their role within the organisation and how that role relates to the effective performance of the management system. To achieve this level of understanding, the provision of awareness training is necessary for each employee.**

Some employees will have a more direct effect than others on your organisation's management system. Your IMSM Consultant can assist you in categorising these employees and then in providing the relevant training and instruction required. They can assist in training your Management

Representatives, Internal Auditors, Project Team members and if necessary, all other employees to the level required by the management system standard.

Records of such training will be required to confirm compliance to the particular clause of the selected management system standard; your IMSM Consultant can assist you in this task.

IMSM can also assist you in your future training requirements, for more information on the training packages available please contact [IMSM Training](#).

## 5

### Document your Management System

Begin by outlining broad categories or departments such as purchasing, production control, marketing, transport, storage etc. Then describe the processes that operate in these departments and how they inter-relate to one another; your IMSM Consultant would be able to assist you in this task. A simple way of demonstrating this would be through the use of diagrams or process flow charts.

All management systems require a certain level of documentation to enable an organisation to conform to the requirements of the particular standard. Certain management systems require a set of documented procedures, others require a manual detailing how compliance to the clause requirements are met and most, if not all, require a number of other documents, records and forms to enable an organisation to demonstrate compliance to the standard.

During the implementation process, your IMSM Consultant will work with you to produce the manuals, procedures, documents, records and forms necessary to enable you to operate and maintain the management system as required by the particular standard and so providing most benefit to your organisation.

Part of the clause requirements of most management system standards is to control your organisation's records; your IMSM Consultant can assist you in understanding these requirements in more detail and how to put the requirements into day-to-day practise.

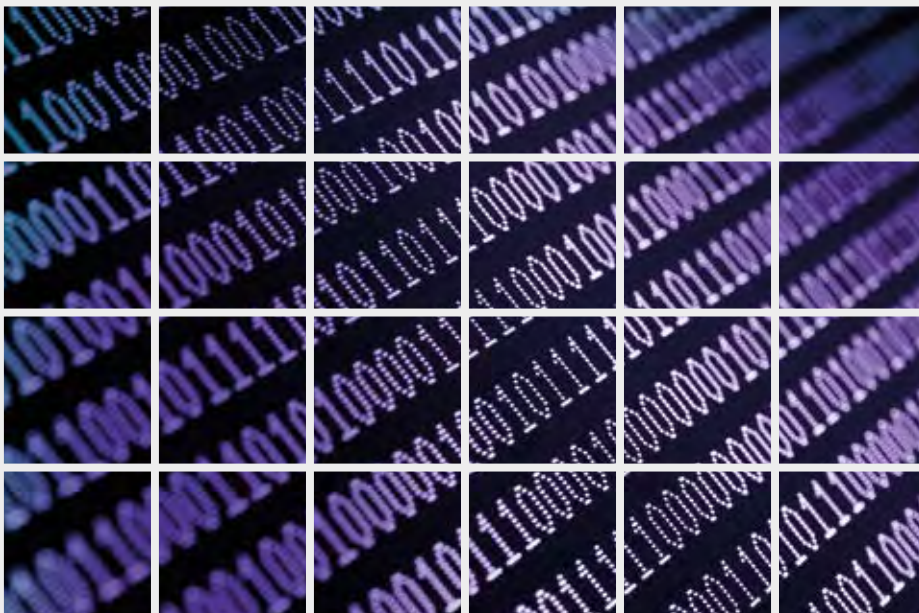
## 6

### Implement your Management System

Now you have created the documentation and trained your employees, you are in a position to start to implement your management system in full. Everyone in your organisation should be working to your documented procedures and work instructions. Many of these procedures and instructions will be new and may require improvement over time to ensure they meet with your business requirements. **Involve your Management Representatives, Internal Auditors and other members of your organisation in reviewing these procedures and instructions; where necessary document any such improvements or changes.**

This is the time when you can hold your first Management Review meeting and review information collected from your Internal Audit Program (see step 7), from any current corrective and preventive action reports and from results of any monitoring and measuring activities. Initiate corrective and preventive actions to fix problems and make improvements to your management system.

Again, most management systems require records to be kept of such meetings and these should be controlled using the relevant clause procedure; your IMSM Consultant will guide you through these requirements.





## 7

### Audit your Management System

**Part of the requirements of any management system standard is to assess conformity, evaluate effectiveness and identify opportunities for improvement; this is achieved by conducting Internal Audits. Internal Audits involve the organisation carrying out a series of audits on its own operations over a given period of time and is often called an Audit Program. It should be conducted by trained individuals employed by the organisation but who are independent of the process or system being audited.**

When selecting your Internal Auditors or your Audit Team, ensure that you have enough to cover all areas of your operation; you require enough to be able to cover all areas without asking an Auditor to audit their own area. Look for employees that have an enquiring mind and that are good communicators; the better the people skills, the better the audits will be performed.

Before you are able to apply for an external audit, you will need to have demonstrated that you have conducted a number of Internal Audits in line with the requirements of the management system standard.

Using trained Internal Auditors ensures that your organisation can fully comply with the requirements of the standard, as well as gain the benefit of reviewing the effectiveness of the management system and in highlighting those areas of the system that could be improved.

IMSM offer Internal Auditor awareness training to your selected Internal Audits as part of your implementation package or if you require a more prescribed course through IMSM Training.

More details can be obtained by contacting [IMSM Training](#). Alternatively, utilise IMSM to undertake your internal audits for you. For more information on how IMSM can ensure your company Internal Audits are completed, please contact [IMSM](#).

## 8

### Prepare for Certification

**If your organisation has taken the decision to formalise its management system and obtain third party certification it is at this point, if you haven't already done so, that you'll need to select a Certification Body to carry out an external assessment on your management system.**

Your IMSM Consultant can provide you with further information on the types of Certification Body available to enable you to select the most appropriate to your business needs.

## 9

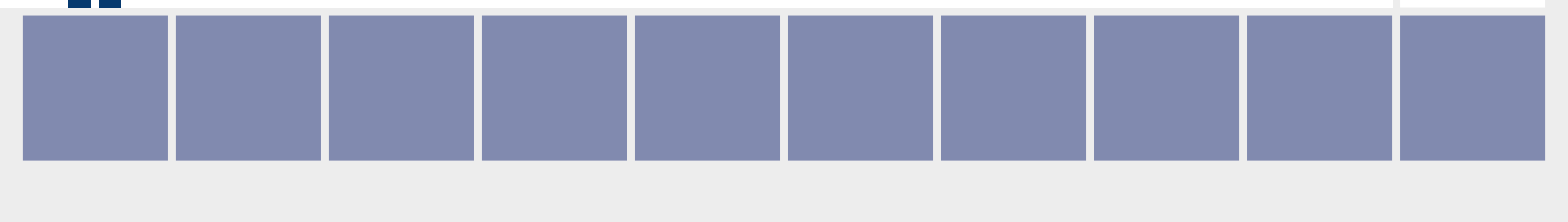
### Preparing for your Certification Audit

**Before the audit, ensure that all your employees are aware that the audit is to take place and the purpose of the audit. You need to ensure that your employees respond honestly and openly to the Auditors questions.**

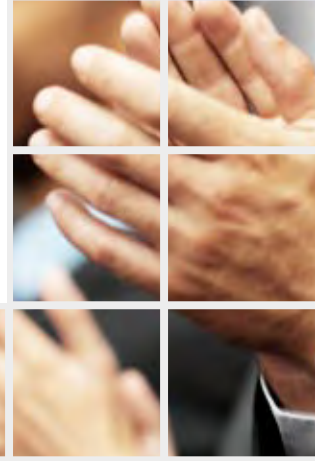
You need to ensure that all of your system documentation, records, reports and forms are readily available and up-to-date; those that need to be signed and dated are and those that need to be displayed have been.

Your premises should be neat and tidy, check bulletin boards, counters, cupboards etc. for un-controlled documents, un-calibrated measuring equipment or un-identified parts or supplies.

Your IMSM Consultant can provide you with further helpful hints and solutions to prepare you for your certification audit.



# UTILISING YOUR CERTIFICATION



## Achieving ISO certification demonstrates an organisation's commitment to do business to the highest of international standards.

If your organisation takes the decision to become ISO certified, make sure your customers and supply chain know about it. IMSM makes it easy for you by offering our services to help you publicise your achievement. IMSM will work with your organisation to produce publicity material, or even simply to assist you when you are stuck for words, whether it is for your website or a paragraph or two for your latest brochure.

There are several ways in which IMSM works with clients to help them market their ISO, including:

### Press Release Service:

IMSM's team of copywriters are on hand to write a publicity piece on behalf of your organisation, celebrating your ISO certification. Whether you need a short press release or detailed case study, this will be available to your organisation free of charge.

### Website News:

Your website is your shop window to the rest of the world - a very powerful and effective marketing tool. Posting a news item with an accompanying photo is a great way of connecting with visitors to your website, highlighting your recognised efforts thus raising your reputation and appeal. IMSM can put together a short piece of copy that can sit anywhere on your website.

### Website Badges:

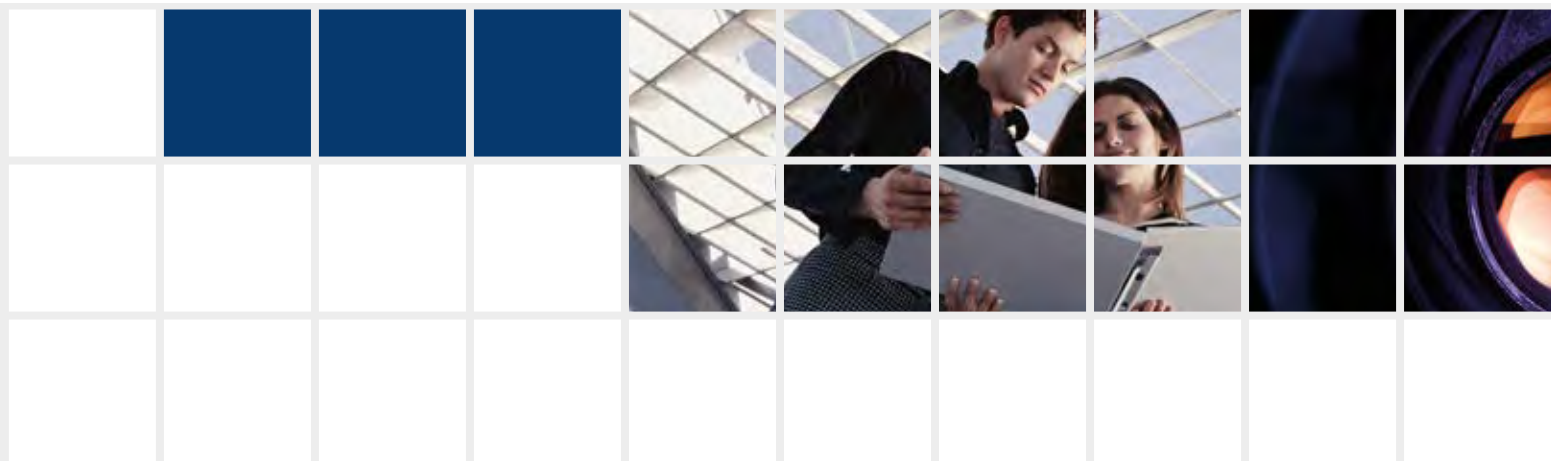
IMSM's customised ISO certification badge can sit on pages throughout your website, placed discreetly at the bottom, or displayed proudly on the homepage. IMSM has also designed a badge for our clients that are working towards ISO certification - demonstrating that you are currently putting quality frameworks in place to reach certification to the standard.

### IMSM Website and Twitter:

IMSM use [imsm.com](http://imsm.com) to help publicise our clients ISO certification by posting case studies along with their logo, as well as actively Tweeting about the case studies. Follow IMSM on Twitter (@IMSM\_Ltd to find out more.

### Flags and Banners:

In addition to announcing their certification status, some organisations choose to advertise their ISO credentials with a flag or banner for their premises. IMSM can provide these for you at a competitive rate. Also, don't forget: if you are on Facebook, post a short news item on your wall, if you are on Twitter, why not tweet about your ISO experiences? And don't forget to advertise your ISO status in company collateral, on company correspondence and email signatures.





FOR ALL IMSM MARKETING SERVICES, PLEASE CONTACT THE IMSM MARKETING DEPARTMENT ON **01793 688990** OR EMAIL **marketing@imsm.com**

### Certification, Registration and Accreditation

**After your organisation's management system has been independently audited and confirmed as being in conformity with the requirements of a particular ISO standard, which term is correct to use – certification, registration or accreditation?**

All three terms are sometimes used interchangeably; however, they are not synonymous.

Certification is the auditing of your management system by an independent external body and verification that it conforms to the requirements specified in the standard.

Registration means that the auditing body records your certification. There are many Certification Bodies in existence, some operate independently and some are members of what are known as Accreditation Bodies. Both types are obliged to operate in line with the requirements of ISO/IEC 17021: 2015 Conformity Assessment - requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems.

Accreditation refers to the formal recognition by a specialised (accreditation) body that a certification body is competent to carry out ISO certification in specific business sectors i.e Medical and Aerospace.

### A Brief History of ISO

**The International Organisation for Standardisation or ISO is a global, non-governmental standard-setting body composed of representatives from various national Standards Organisations.**

Founded in 1947 and based in Geneva, Switzerland the organisation promulgates proprietary, industrial and commercial standards. The bulk of the work is undertaken by technical committees, subcommittees and working groups whose aim is to standardise management system practises throughout the world.

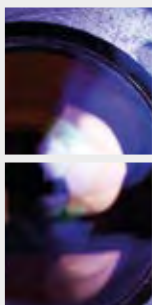
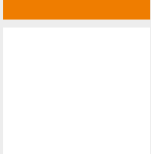
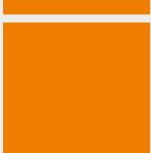
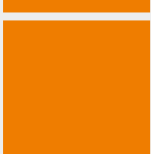
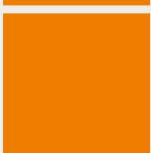
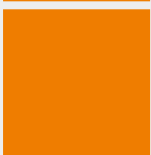
ISO has a worldwide membership from countries large and small, industrialised and developing; their purpose, from its portfolio of standards, is to provide governments and businesses with the practical tools for sustainable development.

The standards make a positive contribution to world trade, the spread of knowledge and aid in the dissemination of advances in technology as well as sharing good management and conformity assessment

practices. Each standard will go through a rigorous implementation process involving six separate stages prior to publication; each separate stage involves a lengthy review process by national bodies, this is to ensure that once the decision has been made to publish, all affiliated national bodies are in approval of the standard in question.

ISO9001 is the organisation's most well-known management system standard, however, ISO is involved in much more than management systems; there are standards that cover everything from technological connections to ink colour.

Standards produced by ISO are not regulations; rather they are a method of getting a standard set of criteria for specific management systems into an organisation. An outside agency, a certification body, can then audit the business to see that all the required elements of the particular standard are in place.





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