

THANK YOU for the extremely positive feedback we received in response to the launch edition of Out of the Box. It certainly sparked your interest and the two case studies we featured, showing that ISO in

to ISO 9001 certification, have prompted many of you to contact us.

ISO in a Box offers two routes towards getting that all-important UKAS tick in the box – either through the Full System Build, where Equas consultants do the entire job for you, or by choosing Assisted Build, which kicks off with an interactive workshop.

In this edition of the newsletter, we look at what you can expect to get out of the workshop and what some of our clients thought about it.

We also invite you to visit our website at www.isoinbox.co.uk where you can register on line to be kept up to date with the latest news and development. We now have the Standard Requirements for ISO 14001:2004 available as an information download that explains the scope and requirements of this internationally recognised Environmental Management System.

As always, we look forward to receiving any ideas or suggestions you may have for future editions of Out of the Box – please email them to m.dowd@equas.co.uk

Reap the benefits of a good day's work

Have you ever come out of a 'workshop' feeling it was a complete waste of time?

If you're looking to implement ISO in a Box through the Assisted Build option, one of the first steps will be to attend a full day workshop. So – what will you get out of it?

Beforehand, you'll be sent your ISO in a Box manual and CD. The only homework involved is to load the CD onto your laptop, flick through the manual to familiarise yourself with the format, and bring it and the laptop with you on the day. Typically, there will be a maximum of six clients at each workshop – although clients are welcome to send a second delegate.

The first session examines the history of ISO 9001, its current structure and the business benefits of the standard. Clients approach ISO with different agendas – some are 'demand driven' in that they need it to achieve or retain their Preferred Supplier status, whilst others are 'benefits driven', recognising that it will help them organise their business. Increasingly, it is the latter of these two camps that comprise the majority of attendees.

By lunchtime (refreshments are provided at regular intervals!), you will have learned that ISO 9001 is not purely about organising the way in which the business carries out what it does for a living, i.e. delivering products or services. It also covers the non-operational processes: management of your company towards achieving its goals and objectives, and the management of



its resources, which are people, equipment and business infrastructure.

How the company delivers its products and services is the focus for the afternoon session and you will work on a one-to-one basis with an Equas consultant, going through your own job management process and capturing it in an ISO-compliant format.

By the end of the day, you will have the framework of your own tailor-made Quality Management System on your laptop and will know exactly what you need to do to complete it. You'll also have a date in your diary, perhaps three weeks ahead, for an on-site working day with your Equas consultant, who will carry on with the work that was started at the Workshop. At the end of this second day the finishing post will be clearly in sight. At an agreed point in the near future the Equas Consultant will return to carry out a complete system review, dot the 'I's' and cross the 'T's' in preparation for the visit from the UKAS accredited auditor.

All in all, a good day's work.

Don't miss out on new franchise opportunities ...

With an increasing number of organisations enquiring about ISO in a Box, Equas is now in the process of creating a franchise network so we can establish local bases and give our clients national coverage.

A Franchise Opportunity Information Pack is currently

being produced and will be available soon. Mike Dowd, Equas Director, said: "ISO in a Box is becoming the popular choice because of its simplicity and cost-effectiveness. To meet growing demand and increase our level of customer service, we are recruiting individuals with the right skills and experience, providing them with in-depth training and support

to enable them to operate as part of the Equas team."

E-mail m.dowd@equas.co.uk if you would like further details or to receive a copy of the Franchise Opportunity Information Pack.



Peak performance

Simon Shuttleworth is the MD of Peak Collections, an asset recovery company that works on behalf of banks and finance companies. Although they already a quality management system in place, they wanted the ISO 9001 badge.

"It's not a common certification within our industry and we thought it would demonstrate good practice to our clients," said Simon.

"I found ISO in a Box on the web – I also found lots of spurious ones as well. But ISO in a Box looked reasonably priced and had the all important UKAS certification."

With a lot of pressure on his time, Simon's first thought was to go for the full system build but with a degree of scepticism, decided to attend one of the assisted build workshops – "I thought I'd give it a couple of hours to see how it went," he said.

"I ended up staying the whole day. I had expected a lot of red tape and bureaucracy but it was very straightforward, interesting and enjoyable. I took what I learned from the workshop and together with colleagues, we streamlined and improved our existing processes.

"The Equas consultant then came in for a day and was extremely helpful. I was surprised how quickly he got to grips with our systems because it's not what I'd call a 'routine' business. By the end of the day, it was finished and he carried out the internal audit there and then. He then arranged the external UKAS audit and we sailed through it.

"When I first looked at the ISO in a Box website, it did say that certification could be achieved in as little as three months and gave examples. I thought that would be the exception rather than the rule but to be fair, they were absolutely right. I would recommend ISO in a Box to other businesses without any shadow of a doubt."



Hands-on approach with Assisted Build option

As a small company with just six staff, going for a Full System Build by Equas consultants might have looked the easier option for Milestone Communications in Nottinghamshire, which specialises in the project management of mobile telecoms site construction.

But it was the 'hands on' approach of the Assisted Build that appealed as Laura Warren explained: "My role is Compliance Manager and in a small company there needs to be a degree of flexibility and multi tasking.

"Part of my responsibility will be to manage our quality system and I felt that I needed to fully understand why we had to do things in a certain way. It was important that I developed our quality management system with the assistance of Equas, rather than having their consultant build it for us. I've worked in other companies where they had quality systems in place for the sake of having the ISO badge but for us it's all about having a quality system to improve our business and the certification is the bonus."

Before attending the workshop, Laura studied the information sent out by Equas in depth. "All of it was pretty clear and understandable," said Laura. "My agenda for the day was to learn how to transfer the documented system we already had in place into one that would be UKAS compliant.

"The first part of the day gave a really good overview of ISO 9001. I had been quite diligent in my preparation but for people who hadn't had time to go into the ISO in a Box manual in any detail, this session would have been incredibly useful.

"In the afternoon, it was time to sit down with the Equas consultant on a one-to-one basis to start building our system. Although I knew our existing system inside out, it was the objective and expert advice

on what needed to be changed and what the important elements were that proved to be the real value of the workshop.

"You can get overawed and think it's really complex but by the end of the day, I realised it wasn't going to be as difficult as I thought – I had a clear understanding of what I needed to do and it was manageable" .

Just seven weeks after attending the workshop, Milestone Communications had received their visit from the UKAS accredited auditor and been recommended for ISO 9001 certification.

"Before going down the ISO in a Box route, we had some QMS consultants in but they were really unwilling to actually give us any information – it was more a case of leave it up to us and you don't have to get involved," said Laura.

"I found ISO in a Box on the web and it gave me a good overview of what I could expect. The Assisted Build option was ideal because I wanted to be involved. I was the one who was going to implement the system, manage it, make sure everyone in the company understood it and know how to improve it in the future.

"I don't think I would have been able to manage that by taking the 'hands-off' approach," concluded Laura.

Laura Warren , Compliance Manager, in telephone inset



Further information available from:
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