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Added Value Software Consultancy in an ISO 9001 Environment

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When thinking of combining ISO 9001 standards and software implementation or improvement projects, most companies seek to search for the best financial, commercial and operational results. Nowadays, many prestigious consulting firms/teams can offer such solutions to assist the search. The key is to choose the right value adding consultancy service for your organization.

If you are a Maintenance, Finance, Materials or Human Resources team player in an ISO 9001 company, and want to implement/improve an ERP or EAM solution, this article will outline some of the writer's ideas as a Productivity Consultant. It offers some tips for analyzing the proposal of any consulting or software team, at any stage of your software implementation project; in order to find the added value solutions that need to be offered by the consulting company/team you decide to work with, in order to obtain the best results for your company.

ISO official documentation, APICS fundamentals, as well as personal experience are the base of this article, which is divided into:

Concepts
Premises
Risks
Recommendations
Conclusion

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Concepts

EAM (Enterprise Asset Management) Software: This kind of software is designed to attend the companies who work based on the Management of the Assets. This means, organizations that pursue for obtaining the highest plant availability indices, through Maintenance Plans that ensure the operation is always running efficiently and effectively. This philosophy is ideal for intensive capital industries. This kind of software is a derivation of the CMMS (Computer Maintenance Management Systems). The two basic elements of this kind of software are: Maintenance Plans and Inventory Management.

ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) Software: This kind of software is ideal for manufacturing organizations, who base their finite and rough capacity planning on the sales forecasting and market conditions. The three basic elements of this kind of software are: Bill of Materials, Item Master and Master Production Schedule.

ISO 900 Official Quality Standard: This standard regulates companies in the following elements:

- Management Responsibility
- Quality System
- Contract Review
- Design Control
- Document and Data Control
- Purchasing
- Control of Customer Supplied Products

- Product Identification and Traceability
- Process Control
- Inspection and Testing
- Control of Iinspection Measuring & Test Equipment
- Inspection & Test Status
- Control of Non-Conforming Product
- Corrective & Preventive Actions
- Handling, Storage, Package, Preservation & Delivery
- Control of Quality Records
- Internal Quality Audits
- Training
- Servicing
- Statistical Techniques

Premises

ISO means productivity, not more paperwork

ISO should be the way of living (operating) within a company

Your software should be aligned with your ISO requirements and not to be a separate tool

ISO 9001 should follow a cost reduction philosophy

- Inspection, Purchasing and Operational Costs
- Time Response
- Transaction Time

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Risks

Some consequences of not having a complete/integrated (software-ISO) scope are:

ISO 9001 can become bureaucratic and documentation becomes excessive, instead of an improvement tool

Software can be misused

Duplicity of activities can be present

Operational costs can increase

Company results may not be achieved

A predominance of Independent Projects may exist within the company

ISO 9001 audits may be done only "1 day before" an urgent document update

Personnel lack of interest and/or credibility in quality programs can be expected

Recommendations

Never consider ISO 9001 a short term operational project

Even after achieving your ISO certification, periodical internal audits are vital for follow-up to continuous improvement and align your operations to company objectives

Training personnel is vital. Not only in ISO and software, but in business integration

Day to day procedures should be reviewed, looking for macro and micro processes and integration of tools and synergy

Utilize software analysis and decision making tools functionality. All ERP/EAM software should come with valuable KPI's (Key Performance Indicators) tools

See ISO 9001 as a cultural, not operational factor

Use benchmarking as a regular means of comparison of performance

Focus on Process Reengineering, which could be required at any stage

Suppliers, vendors and partners are part of the value chain and should be involved and synchronized with this philosophy

Consulting team should have software quality, business and company value chain culture knowledge

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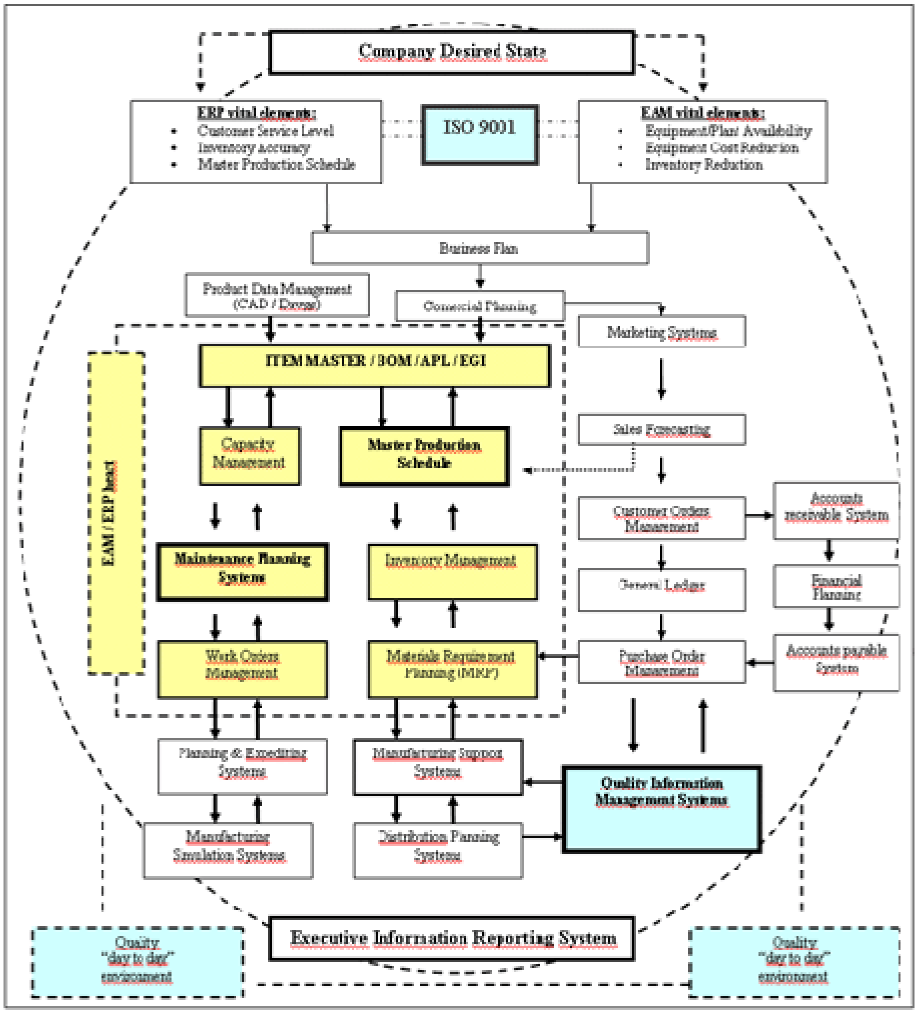
Conclusion

No matter if you are an EAM or ERP company, if you are about implementing or improving your software inside an ISO 9001 environment, what you need to require in a Consultancy Company / Team is the vision of not just acquiring software knowledge, but a real systematic tool that fits and gives the company the best utilization of resources and optimum accomplishment with your quality standards, bringing all financial, commercial and operational measurable benefits.

ISO 9001/software combination can be as flexible and successful or as bureaucratic and non-productive as we wish. The answer is dependent on us.



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