



Occupational health and safety specialist Salus shows how transition to ISO 9001:2015 benefits a service business

“This is not just more of the same. ISO 9001:2015 is different from the old standard. But don’t be apprehensive. If you adhere to it, without doubt your service will improve.”

Mark Kennedy
General Manager at Salus

Customer benefits:

- Better account management
- Improved risk management
- Integration with other management standards
- Sharper competitive edge
- Increased customer satisfaction
- Strategic focus – aligned quality with corporate objectives
- Strengthened leadership
- Improved internal communication

At a glance:

Occupational health and safety specialist Salus is one of the largest NHS-based multi-disciplinary teams of professionals in the country. They provide a wide range of commercial clients with services and solutions to manage occupational health and safety. Salus recently achieved certification to ISO 9001:2015, which has strengthened relevance for technology-oriented service sector companies.

For Salus, the process of transition from ISO 9001:2008 to ISO 9001:2015 encouraged a re-evaluation of the strategic direction of the business. By examining where it is now, and where it wants to be in the future, the revised format has led to real business and service improvements.

Client background

Established in 1996, with bases in west central Scotland and north west England, Salus is one of the UK's leading providers of occupational health, safety and return to work services across public and private sectors. It offers a comprehensive range of occupational health services from absence management advice, pre-placement health assessments, and health surveillance, to lifestyle screening, workplace visits and ergonomics. As a not-for-profit organization, Salus directs all surpluses it generates back into NHS services.

Why ISO 9001:2015?

Salus first achieved ISO 9001 in 1999, as part of its ongoing growth and development. The benefits of certification are to be found in the quality-driven environment within which the company operates, so the transition to the new version of the standard was seen as a 'no-brainer', according to Mark Kennedy, General Manager at Salus. He particularly welcomes new additions to the standard, including input on managing risk within an organization, and increased emphasis on strategic vision flowing down through the company. As he explains, "ISO 9001:2015 is so progressive in nature. We no longer view our organizational charts in terms of accountability flows or line management flows, but as a 'quality map'. This map shows us how strategic direction travels up and down the company, but always with the goal that our customer requirements are met – that is key."

ISO 9001:2015, being very customer-focused, has helped Salus examine its systems and processes and look for ways to improve them. Mark elaborates, "We now ask ourselves, 'Do we have the right people in the right roles for our customers?', whereas before we looked at roles from an operational point of view."

Implementation

Transition from ISO 9001:2008 to the new version required dedication and team effort. It took Salus about two months to complete,

but it was clear to the management team that the new standard was a good match for the company, concentrating as it does on aligning quality with corporate objectives.

The route to certification required focusing efforts on the strategic direction of the company and communicating that vision, as Mark explains: "Our challenge was to ensure that those people delivering our services knew the rationale for doing what we were asking them to do."

As a result, the organizational structure was reviewed and communication processes were revised, so that quality measures and productivity measures could be easily cascaded throughout the company. "It made our team understand more about their contribution, and how what they did linked in with customer satisfaction," says Mark.

Benefits

For Tom Gibb, Operations Manager at Salus, the new version of ISO 9001 has really helped Salus integrate its objectives into the corporate strategy. He explains: "The standard is more customer-focused and it's helping us be more customer-focused too, by marrying up all the elements of the organization. In essence, it reflects how people do business in the real world."

Customer feedback since certification to the new standard has been positive and encouraging, and Mark certainly feels that the company now has more of a competitive edge; it's even offering more services as a result.

"ISO 9001:2015 has helped us refocus for the future and offer a more finely-tuned service to customers," continues Mark. "The great thing about the revised standard is that it allows you to stand back and create a framework from which you can communicate with the wider workforce and, ultimately, with customers."

In addition, he welcomes the opportunity the standard has given the company to profile its risk better, not laying all risk responsibility in the hands of the leadership

team but encouraging consideration of risk throughout the organization and reviewing the competencies of staff to deal with risk more efficiently. "We have always had robust risk management structures in place", he says, "but these are clearer now, thanks to the new standard."

BSI's role

Achieving certification to ISO 9001:2015 has been a welcome journey for Salus, and it regards BSI as a trusted partner. "BSI has always given us a really good level of support," says Tom. "The transition readiness review was particularly helpful, because it enabled us to consider the main requirements of the standard for us and how far we were meeting them."

The quality of information and communication from BSI was so good that the Salus leadership team was on board right from the start. They played a key role in making sure the new standard was adopted and encouraging the rest of the team to embrace it.

Words of advice

Mark offers some simple words of advice to other organizations considering transition to ISO 9001:2015:

"Do some preparation, because this is not just more of the same. It is different from the old standard. But don't be apprehensive. If you adhere to it, if you take the compliance issues seriously, without doubt your service will improve," he concludes.

Start your transition to the new standards and find out how BSI can help your business make excellence a habit.

Call: **+44 (0)345 080 9000**
bsigroup.com/isorevisions