PERGAMON

World Patent Information 22 (2000) 19–22

WORLD
PATENT
INFORMATION

www.elsevier.com/locate/worpatin

Certification of a patent information centre according to DIN EN ISO 9001

Heidrun Krestel

LGA Landesgewerbeanstalt Bayern, Technisches Informations Zentrum, Tillystraße 2, 90431 Nürnberg, Germany

Abstract

The certification of quality management systems is currently one of the key topics in the industrial and tertiary sector. More and more companies are having their systems certified, and are demanding that their suppliers also obtain the appropriate certification.

For the Landesgewerbeanstalt Bayern (LGA), as one of the leading undertakings in the fields of examination, review and consulting, certification of its quality management system is therefore a must. The Information and Innovation Division, which includes the patent information centre in Nuremberg, was one of the LGA's first divisions to undertake this task. This paper describes the requirements specified in the DIN EN ISO 9001 standard and the approach taken by the patent information centre to implement and accommodate these requirements.

Zusammenfassung

Die Einführung von Qualitätsmanagement-Systemen sowie deren Zertifizierung ist derzeit eines der Schlüsselthemen in Industrie- und Dienstleistungsunternehmen. Immer mehr Betriebe lassen sich zertifizieren und fordern auch von Ihren Zulieferern entsprechende Zertifikate.

Als Lieferant von Informationsdienstleistungen stellt sich auch für Patentinformationszentren die Frage nach der Einführung eines Qualitätsmanagementsystems.

Das Patentinformationszentrum Nürnberg hat diesen Weg bereits beschritten und die Zertifizierung nach DIN EN ISO 9001 erlangt. Im PATLIB-Beitrag wird der Inhalt der Qualitätsnorm beschrieben und es wird dargestellt, wie die einzelnen Elemente auf ein Patentinformationszentrum zugeschnitten werden können, welche Anforderungen die Norm DIN EN ISO 9001 stellt, wie diese im Patentinformationszentrum implementiert wurden und wie sich die Umsetzung konkret gestaltet.

Résumé

L'introduction de systèmes de gestion de la qualité et leur certification est actuellement l'un des thèmes-clés au sein des entreprises industrielles et de services. Un nombre croissant d'entreprises se font certifier et exigent également des certificats correspondants de leurs fournisseurs. Fournisseur de service d'information, les centres d'information brevests se posent également la question de l'introduction d'un système de gestion de la qualité.

Le centre d'information brevest de Nuremberg a déjà emprunté cette voie et obtenu la certification selon DIN EN ISO 9001. Cette communication à PATLIB décrira le contenu de la norme sur la gestion de la qualité et montrera les possibilités d'adaptation de ces éléments individuels à un centre d'information brevets, les exigences requises par la norme DIN EN ISO 9001, la façon dont les centres d'information brevets peuvent y satisfaire et les possibilités de réalisation concrètes.

1. DIN EN ISO 9001 – 20 elements for quality assurance

The DIN EN ISO 9001 standard is titled "Quality systems – Model for quality assurance in design, development, production, installation and servicing". This title immediately indicates that the standard is not necessarily rooted in the tertiary sector but in the manufacturing industry. However, if the provision of a service, e.g. a patent search, is viewed as a product, then the requirements specified in the standard can quite reasonably be transposed to the tertiary sector.

E-mail address: idkr@lga.de (H. Krestel).

0172-2190/00/$ - see front matter
PII: S0172-2190(00)00022-3

Closer examination of the standard reveals 20 "quality management elements" which are elaborated in the standard and which can be seen as stages in the quality assurance process.

1.1. Top management responsibility

The management of an undertaking defines the quality policy and the responsibilities and powers of the personnel, and ultimately reviews the quality management system at defined intervals.

1.2. Quality assurance system

The consequence of this is that quality assurance is carried out on a systematic basis and is not random or incidental. This is normally to be achieved on the basis of a quality management manual which comprises documented procedures and work instructions defining the key operations, and mandatory forms and other documents.

1.3. Contractual review

The purpose of the contractual review is to define the quality requirements for each order, to verify that the requirements can be met, and to ensure that the customer is provided with the expected service on the agreed conditions.

1.4. Design control (verification of product design)

The purpose of design control is to plan new services (products), to define development activities, to document, verify and release output, and to allow any necessary changes to be incorporated into this process.

1.5. Document control

This quality management element defines how documents and data are handled, where they are stored, and the procedures for their production, review, authorisation, amendment and distribution.

1.6. Purchasing

This process ranges from ordering products which are to be purchased and defining their quality requirements, through selecting suitable suppliers, to the examination of the products supplied and regularly assessing the suppliers.

1.7. Control of customer-supplied products

This comprises inspection on receipt, marking, storage and handling of the products supplied and also regulates the warrantee.

1.8. Product identification and traceability

This ensures that products can be identified and classified during and after production.

1.9. Process control

This comprises the planning, control and monitoring of production processes, which are normally defined in appropriate work instructions.

1.10. Inspection and testing

Inspection and testing serve to ensure that the products supplied to the end customers meet the specified requirements. The receiving, in-process and final inspections and tests are defined and documented in appropriate form. They ensure a reduction in the number of non-conformities and the optimisation of production processes.

1.11. Inspection, measuring and test equipment

Inspection, measuring and test equipment used to determine the quality characteristics of products must be selected, inventoried, marked and calibrated as appropriate. The personnel must be trained to handle this equipment properly.

1.12. Inspection and test status

The inspection and test status of each product must be identifiable and documented at all times.

1.13. Control of non-conforming products

The control of non-conforming products provides for the recording and notification of non-conformities, the segregation and identification of non-conforming products, and the evaluation, disposition and reinspection of such products.

1.14. Corrective and preventive action

The cause of faults or non-conformities is analysed using, inter alia, the quality records. Action to eliminate the causes is defined, documented and monitored.

1.15. Handling, storage, packaging and delivery

Procedural instructions normally lay down how products are to be handled, stored, packaged and delivered in conformity with the specified quality requirements.