

7.1 Completing a QM Manual

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Integral QM

ISO 9001 Quality Management is built into **iProjects** at every level. A design firm need only add a formal statement of Quality Policy and Quality Objectives, and a Quality Manual to meet structural requirements of ISO 9001:2008. The other requirements – documented procedures and records, and quality documents, are integral to **iProjects**.

Because all of the quality tools are in the system, the Quality Manual need only refer to them, and cross-reference them to corresponding requirements in the Standard.

We have prepared a proforma template suitable for design firm Quality Policy and Quality Manual statements, available for downloading under the Resources tab, for **iProjects** subscribers to use in setting up their formal quality systems.

iProjects includes an updated version of all of the tools used in the “ABC Architects” quality system, which was the basis for certification for more than 200 Australian design firms in the 1990’s. As all of these tools serve other important project management functions, there is no “extra overhead” for having an inbuilt quality system.

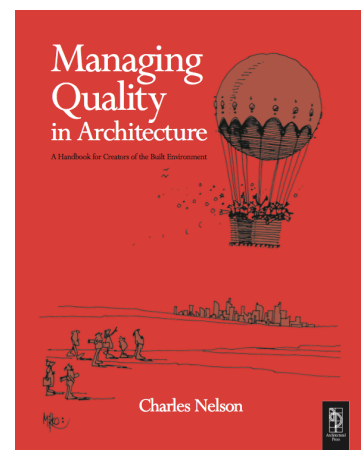
Of course, to obtain and maintain certification, the firm must demonstrate that it is using the system as intended – but the tools are all there.

Caution on customization

The **iProjects** QM system is specific for use for design disciplines in built environment consulting, but within that, generic. That is, it satisfies the minimum requirements of ISO 9001:2008.

When it comes to quality, “one size fits none”. This means that some degree of customization is appropriate, to suit the unique way your firm works. This does NOT mean that you can start changing anything in it you think should be different – do that and you’ll quickly discover that your system no longer complies with the standard. If you want to change something, be sure that your proposed changes do not affect your ability to get your system certified.

If you want to make significant changes, you should obtain Charles Nelson’s book *Managing Quality in Architecture* (Elsevier, 2006), and study Sections 2 and 3 – these will guide you through the logic of the standard and keep you on the right track.



Understanding the certification process

Certification is described in some detail in Chapter 3.5 of the above-noted book. Rather than repeat it all here, review that information if you aren’t familiar with the process.

Alternatively, contact **iProjects**, and we’ll send you a reprint of that chapter.

Completing the Quality Manual

If you haven’t already done so, download the template for the Quality Manual from the **iProjects** website: www.iprojects.net.au > What’s Hot? > iProjects Quality Management.

You will see that you have to complete sections marked in blue text. Among them are:

- ❖ **Quality policy:** Quality systems exist to serve three primary purposes:
 - To demonstrate the professional capabilities of your firm;
 - To prevent “service deficiencies” (eg errors of omission or commission); and
 - To facilitate continual improvement.

It is appropriate therefore to write a Quality Policy that describes (in your own words) your corporate aspirations regarding those three points. Don't write long, involved statements – apply the KISS principle (Keep It Simple, Stupid).

- ❖ **Quality objectives:** Discussed in detail in Chapter 2.4 of the above-noted book. Review before writing.
- ❖ **Quality Manager:** You must have one. See the above-noted book, page 42, Step 3 for guidance.

Things you must do besides having a Quality System

To retain certification, firm principals **MUST** carry out the actions described in Clause 2.5: **Management review** of the Quality Manual. The important part is that these reviews occur, are documented, and that planned remedial actions are carried out and documented.

Don't make the mistake of thinking that if principals find nothing requiring remedial action, auditors will be quite suspicious, and will start to dig deeper to find out how the firm **REALLY** works.