



How SME and cloud service provider Ribose found the new version of ISO 9001 better for their business

“In this newly revised version of ISO 9001, services are treated as first class citizens and this gives us a lot more clarity on how to improve our quality processes”

Ronald Tse,
Founder of Ribose

Ribose's objectives:

- Be one of the first organizations to achieve ISO 9001:2015
- Protect their reputation with certification to the latest international standards
- Align ISO 9001 with other management system standards

How Ribose benefitted:

- A more flexible quality management system suited to a service business
- Fewer documentation requirements meant reduced overheads
- Alignment of operational and leadership functions

At a glance:

Ribose was founded in 2008, employs 10 people and is based in Hong Kong. They are a technology service provider, providing cloud collaboration platforms that help people to work across different time zones in a secure and well protected environment. As an SME in a highly competitive market, where the clients' peace of mind is key, it is important to Ribose that they can show their commitment to upholding the highest standards of governance and transparency and protect their reputation. They believe that certification to ISO 9001:2015, which has been created with service providers in mind, helps them to demonstrate this.

Client background

When Ribose learnt that ISO 9001 was due to be updated in 2015 they were excited to find out what opportunities the new version would bring. With several management systems already in place they wanted to see if the new version could be aligned with these to deliver efficiencies and streamline business operations. They were also interested to see if the new standard would reflect the needs of a service company more than previous versions.

Implementation

The transition to the new version of ISO 9001 was well planned by Ribose. Their approach was to keep a close eye on the standards development process through BSI from the moment the Draft International Standard (DIS) was published in May 2014. As soon as the DIS was available they bought a copy which they reviewed and compared to the 2008 version of ISO 9001. This gave them an early indication of what the changes and the new requirements might be.

“This approach allowed us to plan early on our transition and to take advantage of the better quality management practices of the new standard.” Ronald Tse

An internal transition champion was assigned to ensure everyone in the organization was aware of the new standard and kept up to date. Regular awareness sessions were held so everyone understood what was required from them in new standard. This was beneficial to the whole organization as through these sessions the team at Ribose discovered how the new standard would be much more flexible and enable them to work in a more efficient and effective way which would better meet the organizational needs of the business. Empowerment of the entire workforce is a key element in the new standard and Ronald describes this as “the biggest motivator of all”.

Next the team at Ribose carried out a gap analysis between their current processes and the new requirements. After identifying any gaps, they carried out an effectiveness review to see if the changes that had been made to their processes would meet the requirements of the new standard. This also enabled Ribose to take advantage of what Ronald considers to be “better quality management practices” early on. It also helped them to streamline their operations which he feels has improved the way the business is managed.

This early preparation meant that Ribose were in a strong position to move forward and achieve certification shortly after the final version of that standard was published in September 2015.

The benefits

“The revised version of the standard is a great improvement as it allows us to better align our practices with business needs” Ronald Tse

Ribose were excited that new standard requires greater responsibility from leadership. Ronald believes that the new standard ensures that quality management is now completely aligned with leadership as it brings these two areas closer together. He also sees it as an excellent opportunity for leadership to get involved more with quality management and to drive quality objectives.

Risk based thinking is now a theme that runs throughout ISO 9001. Ronald sees this as a change for the better as it makes it “more explicit on how to address opportunities instead of simply preventing non-conformities”.

An unexpected benefit was the increased flexibility of documentation requirements. This meant Ribose could better tailor their documentation to their business, something that could be beneficial to other service

organizations. Also, as ISO 9001 was written in the new High Level Structure (Annex SL) it has helped Ribose to integrate it with other management systems, make efficiencies, and streamline their processes.

BSI's role

Throughout their transition journey, from gap analysis to implementation, Ribose kept in close contact with their local BSI office in Hong Kong. They kept BSI updated on their progress towards certification to the new version of ISO 9001 and found BSI to be helpful and proactive when working with them. As Ronald considers BSI a “pioneer in standards and the evolution of ISO 9001” they were a natural choice of certification body.

Words of advice

Ronald gives three key pieces of advice for other SME's in the service sector making the transition to ISO 9001:2015. First of all, start early with the implementation as it's a great opportunity to review operational processes and make your organization more efficient. Secondly he says, “take this chance to get leadership more involved in quality management”. The new standard requires top management to be more involved with quality management. And finally “use this as an opportunity to review your operational processes to see if anything can be improved”.

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

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