

Quality through standards

Why is quality important?



The most successful organizations are those that give customers what they want. Satisfied customers are loyal to those suppliers they feel best understand their requirements. As a result they will make repeat purchases and will recommend a business to their friends.

There are two main types of customers for a business:

- * end customers - people like you and me, looking to buy an iPod or plasma screen television
- * organizational customers - for example, a company recording audio CDs would buy in blank CDs, record music to them and sell them on as a finished product.

When you buy a piece of electrical equipment, you will want to know a lot of information about its specification. Obvious information that you will be looking for include:

- * Is it safe?
- * Does it do what I want?
- * Does it meet the required standards?

As a customer you will have a lot more confidence in products you know have been tested and meet British, European and International Standards. In the same way, your school will want to purchase gym and science lab equipment that meets the specifications of the safety standards.

Businesses therefore benefit from working with BSI to meet standards, because:

- * Standards protect consumers' fundamental right to safety, the right to be informed and the right to choose. These rights relate to products, services, processes and materials.
- * Standardization promotes effective research and development, and makes products easier to use.
- * Standardization relies on all sections of society being involved in standards, providing an opportunity for everyone to share knowledge and make their voice heard.

Businesses that do not focus on quality will quickly find that there are costs to be paid. Examples of these costs include waste due to products being badly made and therefore not being able to sell them. The reputation of a business will quickly deteriorate as a result of poor quality work.

It is very important for UK businesses to be associated with quality. Today, there is greater competition from abroad. Standards are continually changing so it is important for businesses to keep up. For example, ISO 9001 which is outlined in Section 4, started out originally as a British Standard, BS 5750 in 1979. It was developed as an international standard and became known as ISO 9001 in 1987. Today, the latest edition (2000) has been adopted by more than 400,000 organizations across the globe.