

Guide ROAD TO CERTIFICATION

A guide to ISO Certification





ABOUT IMSM

Based in Malmesbury, UK, in “The Gig House”, International Management Systems Marketing (IMSM) has been operating since 1994, providing full-service ISO consultancy to companies throughout Europe, Africa, Asia, North America, and Australia. IMSM has assisted over 15,000 companies worldwide in attaining industry-specific ISO certifications.

It is what we do. With trained consultants worldwide to present ISO in a logical, cost-effective, custom-tailored programme, and with an international team of expert area managers and assessors from diverse industry backgrounds, we help advise companies on achieving and maintaining ISO status. We take the hard work out of the process, saving your company precious time. Our IMSM approach is based on a key set of principles revolving around our core mission: making it simple.



Supporting businesses worldwide for over **25 years**



Over **15,000** successful implementations and satisfied clients



Full implementation offered for over **15** different management systems



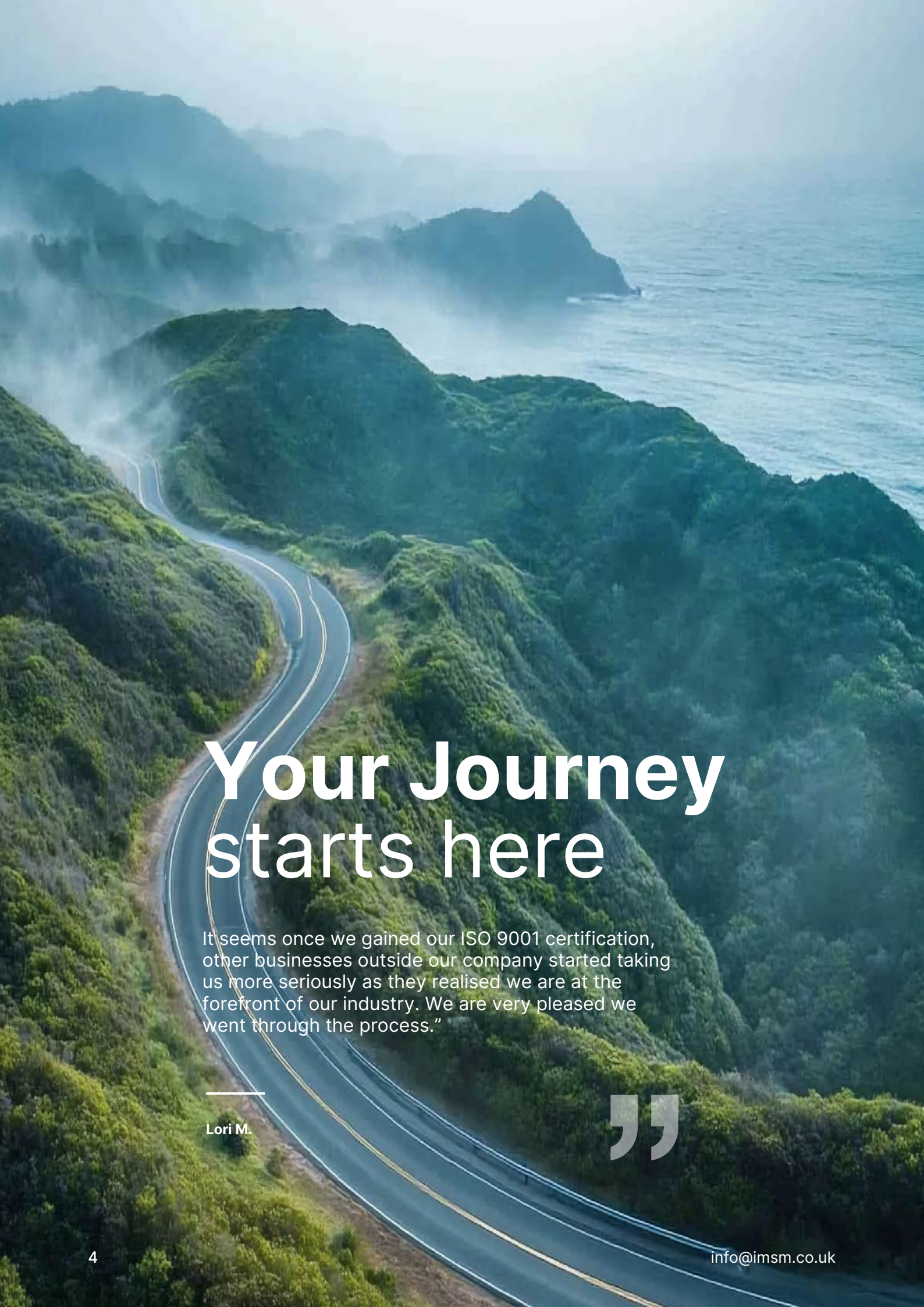
Operating in over **18** countries, with a presence on five continents



Experienced in over **90** industries



IMSM received **5-star** status and was recognised for excellence by the European Foundation for Quality



Your Journey starts here

It seems once we gained our ISO 9001 certification, other businesses outside our company started taking us more seriously as they realised we are at the forefront of our industry. We are very pleased we went through the process.”

Lori M.

”

1. Learn About The Standard

Before starting any journey, the first step is understanding where you are and where you want to go. The same is true when researching whether an ISO Management System is right for your business.

A comprehensive collection of ISO standards is available that can cover multiple areas of your business, such as the Environmental (ISO 14001), Information Security (ISO/IEC 27001) and Business Continuity (ISO 22301) standards. Therefore, understanding which standards are suitable for you and how they will benefit you is the first step of your ISO journey.

ISO 9001	Quality Management System
ISO 14001	Environmental Management System
ISO 45001	Occupational Health and Safety Management System
ISO/IEC 27001	Information Security Management System
ISO/IEC 20000-1	Information Security Service Management System
ISO 22301	Business Continuity Management System
ISO 22000	Food Safety Management System
AS 9100	QMS Requirements for Aviation, Space and Defence Organisations
ISO/IEC 17025	QMS General Requirements for the Competence of Testing and Calibration Laboratories
ISO 13485	QMS Requirements for Medical Devices
IATF 16949	QMS Requirements for the Automotive Industry
SO 50001	Energy Management System
ISO 22716	Cosmetic GMP
ISO 15189 (UK only)	Medical Laboratories
ISO 37001 (Canada only)	Anti-Bribery



2. Perform A Gap Analysis:

One of the first responsibilities your IMSM consultant will support you with is comparing your current management system to that of the applicable management system standard requirements; this process is commonly called a gap analysis.

The gap analysis is an investigatory series of questions and covers all the requirements of the particular standard. Your IMSM consultant will note your current position related to each of these requirements, making recommendations on where improvements need to be made.

The gap analysis can then be used to plan the work schedule involved in implementation, providing a basis for calculating potential costs associated with the requirements for implementation. For example, costs could be associated with environmental controls, health and safety controls or IT software. The gap analysis will also give an idea of suitable timescales for implementation.

3. Prepare A Project Plan:

Before you start planning, you should determine how your goals correlate to the project outcomes and create a project plan. You will need to be able to answer questions such as:

- When do you need to start the project?
- When do you need or want to complete it?
- How are you going to communicate this to your company and/or the wider community?

After your gap analysis, you will have a greater understanding of your current business operations and where your company is concerning the requirements of the management system standard you are implementing. Your IMSM consultant will guide you through this process and assist you in communicating your intentions to your employees, allowing your team to ask questions and feel comfortable about the project.

The time required to complete the implementation process depends on your business needs and resources, the size and complexity of your operation, and finally, the management system standard selected for implementation. Your IMSM consultant will give you a better understanding of the timeline.

Another essential part of project planning is to identify the responsibilities of the team members in your business. Who will be the project leader? Who will be on the team? Identifying the management representative at this stage will enable them to start working with your IMSM consultant to put together the project plan and identify those areas where resources will need to be focused.

4. Train Your Employees:

One management system requirement is to ensure that all employees receive training and understand their role within the company and how that role relates to the management system's efficiency. To achieve this level of understanding, IMSM offers awareness training led by your consultant. Some employees will have a more direct effect than others on your management system. We can assist you in categorising these employees and support you in providing the required training and instruction.

Your ISO consultant can provide the necessary training records to confirm compliance with the particular clause of the selected management system standard. IMSM can also assist you with your future training requirements.

5. Document Your Management System:

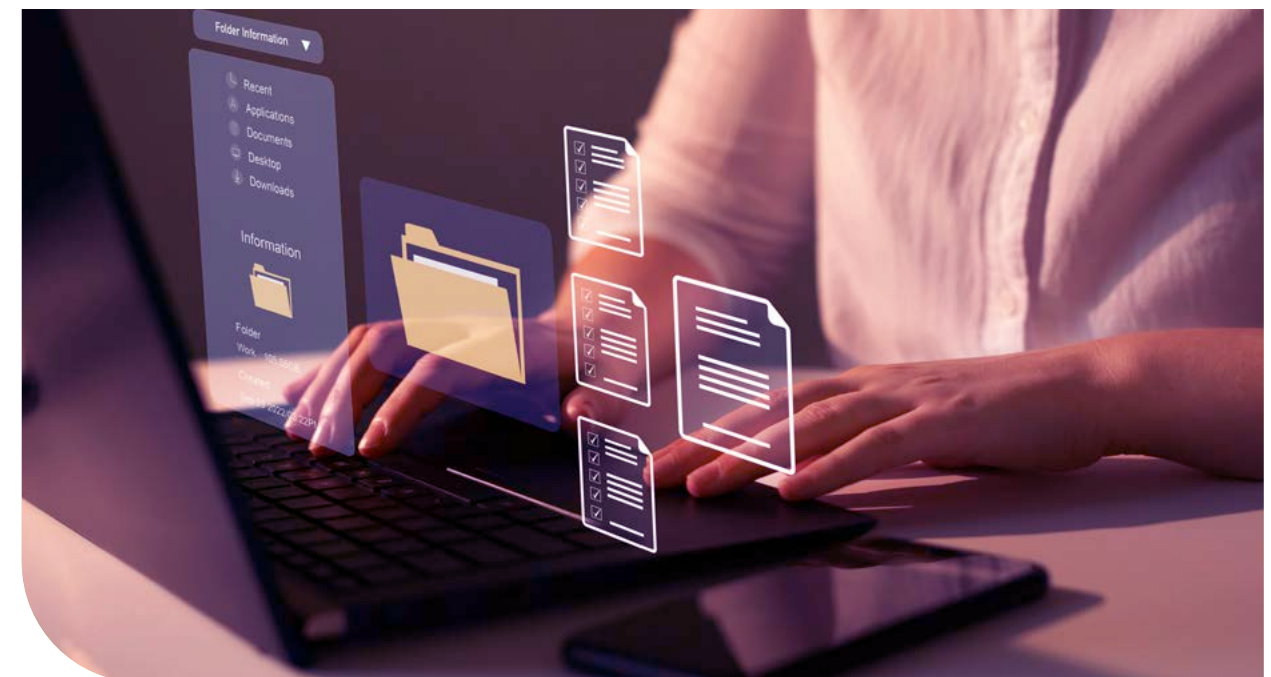
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6. Implement Your Management System:

Now that you have the necessary documentation and training, you can start implementing your management system in full. Everyone in your company should be working to your documented procedures and work instructions. Many of these procedures and instructions will be new and may require improvement over time to ensure they meet your business requirements.

Involve your management representatives, internal auditors and other members of your team to review these procedures and instructions; where necessary, document any improvements or changes. At this time, you can hold your first management review meeting and review information collected from your internal audit programme (see Step 7) and any current corrective action reports and results of monitoring and measuring activities. Then initiate corrective actions to fix problems and make improvements to your management system. Again, management systems require records to be kept of such meetings, which should be controlled using the relevant clause procedure; your IMSM consultant will guide you through these requirements.

7. Audit Your Management System:

Part of any management system standard is the requirement to assess conformity, evaluate the effectiveness and identify opportunities for improvement; this is achieved by conducting internal audits. Internal auditing requires the company to carry out a series of audits on its operations over a given period and is often called an audit programme.

Internal audits should be conducted by trained individuals who are employed by the business but are independent of the process or system being audited. When selecting your internal auditors or your audit team, ensure that you cover all areas of your operation without asking an auditor to audit their specific area or department.

Look for employees who have inquiring minds and are good communicators; the better their people skills, the better the audits will be performed. Before you can apply for an external audit, you must prove that you have conducted internal audits in line with the management system standard requirements.

Using trained internal auditors ensures that your business can fully comply with the requirements of the standard and gain the benefit of reviewing the effectiveness of the management system and highlighting those areas of the system that could be improved.

IMSM can instruct your selected internal auditors as part of your implementation package, or if you require a more comprehensive course, through IMSM Training, who can provide more details. Alternatively, you can utilise IMSM to undertake your internal audits for you. For more information on how IMSM can ensure your company's internal audits are completed, do not hesitate to get in touch.

8. Prepare For Certification

If you have not already done so, you will need to select a certification body to conduct the external assessment of your management system. Your IMSM area manager can provide you with further information on the types of certification bodies available, to enable you to select the body most appropriate to your business needs.

9. Preparing For Your Certification Audit:

Before your audit, ensure that your employees know when the audit will be conducted and its purpose. You need to ensure that your employees respond honestly and openly to the auditor's questions. You need to show that all your management system documentation, records, reports and forms are readily available and up to date; those that need to be signed and dated are, and those that need to be displayed have been.

Your premises should be neat; check bulletin boards, counters and cupboards for uncontrolled documents, uncalibrated measuring equipment or unidentified parts or supplies. Your IMSM consultant can provide you with further helpful hints and solutions to prepare you for your certification audit.

Did you know?

Implementing an ISO demonstrates to your employees, clients, and prospective clients that you have made an ongoing commitment to continually improve as a business.

This process is called PDCA (plan, do, check, act).

Plan

Create a plan to establish your management system that includes objectives, targets, and actions.

Do

Implement the standard based on your objectives.

Check

Monitor the essential characteristics of the management system to ensure the plan is working and report the results in the management review, showing commitment throughout your company from top to bottom.

Act

Take action to correct any failing areas to improve your management system continually.

IMSM

APPROACH



FIXED FEE:

IMSM operates as a transparent partner. Our ISO implementation is priced at a fixed rate from day one. There are no hidden charges and no unexpected invoices. The price you see is the price you will pay.



FLEXIBLE IMPLEMENTATION:

ISO implementation with IMSM will be tailored to your company and designed to fit your business requirements and schedule.



EXPERTISE:

All IMSM consultants have been trained to the highest standard by an International Register of Certified Auditors (IRCA) or equivalent approved training body and have earned a reputation of integrity for contributing value and best practices derived from their vast experience in a wide variety of industries and sectors. Knowledge is power, and our team have the power to deliver effective solutions that reflect your unique circumstances and aspirations.



FULL SERVICE:

IMSM offers full implementation; we will produce the management system documentation and make the process as simple as possible. We simply look to improve the systems you currently have in place by building the ISO framework based on your company's existing systems.



TRAINING:

IMSM offers training to supplement your ISO. Training with IMSM is flexible and delivered by experienced IRCA-qualified trainers.

"We decided to use IMSM to help and support us through the process. We were fairly new to this as a company and to have a company like IMSM guiding us through the requirements saved us time and gave us the confidence to present to the external auditors, knowing we had everything covered"

David S.



Making it simple:

Working with IMSM has clear benefits. We are tried, tested and true. We also pride ourselves on making it simple.

Working with IMSM gives you the freedom to know exactly what to expect. Our contract is famously one page long, with no fine print, no catches and no long commitments. We are here to help you, not to hold you hostage. With IMSM, you are not forced into a long contract because we know you will continue to see the benefits of partnering with us.

Selecting A Consultant

Knowing where to start on your ISO journey can be challenging. Therefore, many businesses choose to partner with the experts available through a consultancy service such as IMSM. When a company decides to implement an ISO management system alone, it can prove time-consuming, complicated and ineffective.

Presuming that an employee can undertake the complete ISO project while remaining impartial and objective can create confusion and frustration within the business, whereas an experienced ISO consultant can ensure you gain certification in the most cost-effective and time-efficient manner and get the most from your investment in ISO. Consultants perform an essential role in getting a business ISO certified; therefore, selecting the right consultant is fundamental.

One of the many benefits of using a consultant is that your employees work with the specialist, learning from them and leaning on their expertise, which can be invaluable to your business.

ISO is a vital investment, and working with a dedicated and experienced consultant can help you get the most out of your investment. Taking steps to implement ISO properly will set your company up for success from the start. The implementation of an ISO management system can be broken down into manageable steps. IMSM will assist you with each phase of the implementation process to ensure your business reaps the rewards gained from having an ISO management system embedded into your business and culture.

The most important question to ask your ISO consultant is how ISO will add value to your company's overall goals and help achieve its corporate objectives. IMSM consultants draw from a pool of knowledge and experience with ISO across many industry sectors, helping to identify critical areas for improvement during the implementation process.



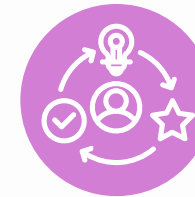
SAVE TIME

Working with a consultant will save your business precious time. At IMSM, our consultants create your management system documentation; they perform your gap analysis and take on approximately 75% of the heavy lifting, allowing you to work on your business, not in it.



REDUCE INTERNAL STRESS AND PRESSURE

Some businesses do not have the luxury of employing an ISO specialist, and often these responsibilities fall to unspecialised staff. Requesting an employee to remain impartial and objective throughout this task can cause issues, delays and frustrations, not to mention that while the employee focuses on the ISO project, the rest of their workload is neglected. By working with a dedicated ISO consultant, you remove these internal pressures and stresses.



INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

If you do not have someone on your team with ISO knowledge, then having a consultant will add significant value to your company and your team; you can lean on their experience, and your team can benefit from their knowledge.



GAIN CONFIDENCE FOR YOUR AUDIT

Enter your third-party audit with confidence, knowing an ISO consultant has prepared everything and set you up for success from the beginning.



STAY ON TRACK

Having a dedicated consultant can help keep you focused and operating to your schedule. It is easy to get distracted, so working with a consultant can help keep everyone focused and on track to achieve the goal on time.



Using Your Certification

Achieving ISO certification demonstrates a commitment to operate at the highest of international standards. If your company decides to become ISO certified, make sure your customers and supply chain know about it.

IMSM makes it easy for you by offering our services to help you publicise your achievement. IMSM can work with you to produce publicity material or simply assist you when you are stuck for words, whether for your website or a paragraph or two for your latest brochure.

IMSM works with clients in several ways to help them market their ISO, including:



PRESS RELEASE SERVICE:

IMSM's team of copywriters are on hand to write a publicity piece on behalf of your business, celebrating your ISO certification. Whether you need a short press release or a detailed case study, this will be available to your company free of charge.



WEBSITE NEWS:

Your website serves as a virtual storefront for your business, making it an effective marketing tool where a news article with a photo will engage website visitors and draw attention to your recognised efforts, raising your reputation and appeal. A short copy can be created by IMSM and placed anywhere on your website.



MARKETING:

Is it time to spread the news about your recent accomplishment by posting a short story or picture on your Facebook? Or, if you use Twitter, why not tweet about your ISO experiences? Remember to share the news with your business community page on LinkedIn, and mention your ISO status in company collateral, correspondence, and email signatures.



IMSM WEBSITE AND TWITTER:

IMSM use our website to share our clients' ISO success by posting case studies along with their logo. We actively share case studies through our social channels, and if you would like to participate in one, IMSM can promote you on both our website and social platforms. Follow IMSM on social media.

Your local area manager

Area manager notes:



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