

Is your Consulting Firm your ISO Business Partner? *“ISO Makes a Strong Business Case”*

Abstract

There are significant benefits of ISO registration, and marketing it is the key to accelerating short- and long-term growth of sales. Your marketing effort can be streamlined and inexpensive—just by following a few tried and proven guidelines. First, this article focuses on the benefits of registration; second it explores a number of creative actions you can take to promote your ISO registration.

ISO Registration—It Just Makes Good Business Sense

Whether you manufacture a product or are in the service sector - a private organization or a government agency - “ISO” is a fundamental business model. It is the foundation from which to build an enterprise. It focuses attention on organizational processes, your customers (internal and external), competency-based training, and continual improvement. *That translates to improved business results.*

ISO-based standards rely on eight quality management principles that can be used to lead and improve any organization. A pragmatic approach, however, is essential. It should ensure needed checks and balances, and a framework for operating efficiently and effectively. When your ISO initiative is integrated into your strategic business plan, it links strategy to execution. Attention is focused on doing the right job - right the first time.

ISO Benefits Abound

ISO helps an organization see itself from the customer’s perspective. And it makes a strong business case. It provides the framework for discipline and a formal, strategic approach to continual improvement. “So what,” you say. Consider this. Surveys have conclusively proven that organizations that adopt a formal and strategic approach to quality management:

- Outperform their industry sectors in profitability
- Outperform their industry sectors in shareholder value
- Enjoy higher levels of customer satisfaction & loyalty
- Experience reduced operating costs
- Enjoy lower rates of staff turnover

A recent five-year study conducted by UCLA, University of Maryland and Universidad Carlos III in Madrid concluded: US publicly held companies, traded on the NYSE that received ISO 9000 registration, show significant improvement in financial performance, compared to those companies that have not pursued the Standard. Not only did the ISO registered firms improve their performance,

but the Study further concluded that—the firms that failed to seek registration experienced substantial deterioration in return on assets, productivity and sales. *Registered companies avoided such declines.*

This presents an interesting paradox. There are typically three primary drivers for ISO 9000 registration. The first is customer and regulatory demand (about 45% of survey respondents). The second is the resultant quality benefit (about 30% of survey respondents). And the last significant driver is securing a competitive advantage—increased sales and market share (about 15%). Other categories account for the difference. Draw your own conclusions.

Marketing Overview

Although you may have embarked upon an ISO initiative because of external pressure, or simply to improve quality, leverage the certificate to improve business results. Since the “competitive advantage” driver is a distant third behind “quality benefits,” any organization that earns this registration should market it aggressively to accelerate growth of sales.

The key is to gain market visibility. *Broadcast it to the world and they will come.* The more clients and prospects who are aware of your achievement, and what it conveys in terms of product or service quality, the better your odds of capturing new business. And by its very nature, ISO registration is like the “Good Housekeeping Seal,” but better, since it is recognized around the world.

Respect ISO Guidelines

Be careful to follow ISO guidelines for promoting your registration. The ISO logo itself cannot be directly used in marketing promotions. Ask your Registrar if they have a logo you can use, or create one yourself. Be sure it includes the full ISO designation, such as “ISO 9001:2000 Certified.” And remember, only your quality management system (QMS) or environmental management system (EMS) is certified, not your entire organization—or your products/services.

Marketing Activities to Promote your Registration

Here are some proven ways you can get marketing mileage from your ISO registration:

- Display your ISO certificate in your lobby. Also, hang a banner inside your building, or fly an ISO flag. Your Registrar can also provide you with multiple copies of the certificate.
- Modify your organization’s logo to include reference to your ISO registration, and create a graphic promoting your ISO QMS or EMS registration.

- Promote your ISO registration in all communications, such as email signature blocks and stationery. And let your customers and prospects know of your ISO registration via direct mail or email campaigns.
- Write a press release about achieving your ISO registration. Send this to local and industry publications. Distribute it online, too, for maximum visibility, and don't forget to include a link back to your Website.
- Publish an article about how ISO registration is expected to benefit your organization, and your concerted effort to gain customer loyalty. Later, prepare a case study about how ISO registration has benefited your organization or helped you grow your customer base.
- Promote your ISO registration in newsletters and on your Website. Likewise, promote your ISO registration in print, or online pay-per-click advertising. Make sure your marketing collateral materials contain the proper ISO designation.
- Use banners to promote your ISO registration at tradeshow, and include your ISO graphic in handouts.
- Train your sales people about how to leverage ISO registration to win more business in competitive situations.

If you think about it, you can probably identify other opportunities to let your marketplace know that your organization takes quality and/or the environment seriously. Also, clarify how this translates to direct benefits for those choosing to do business with you.

Marketing Assistance is Available

A few customer-centric ISO Registrars now offer marketing assistance and guidelines to help customers promote their registration. Some management consulting companies take marketing assistance even further. [Change Management Consulting \(CMC\)](#), for example, develops a free press release for each customer who earns ISO registration.

CMC also provides clients with their book, "15 Ways to Promote your ISO Registration." Strategy sessions, to leverage the ISO certificate, are always part of the ISO implementation process. Additionally, CMC offers exclusive access to discounted marketing services through an affiliate company.

Be Proactive

One thing is clear - you must be proactive in promoting your ISO registration. Unless you develop and implement a marketing plan, your organization will not gain the full advantage of this strategic initiative. So, incorporate ISO registration into your brand identity and broadcast it to the world. Make ISO part of your organizational culture.

Once you begin to promote your ISO registration to the marketplace, you will be surprised how quickly the word spreads. Organizations just feel more comfortable working with a company whose QMS or EMS meets rigorous ISO standards. And satisfied customers give the best referrals. In short, ISO registration gives you a unique value proposition.

Choose a management consulting firm that not only has practical implementation experience, but also, an established firm that has a proven track record in helping organizations leverage their certificates. The hand that guides must be steady and sure. Change Management Consulting has helped hundreds of organizations accelerate short and long-term growth of sales, and build a sustainable competitive advantage. That's the CMC difference.

The good news is that leveraging your ISO registration for competitive differentiation doesn't cost a lot of money. All it takes is your imagination and staying within ISO guidelines. With the right consulting partner, and a little creative work, your organization can enjoy improved earnings, enhanced customer loyalty, and a sustainable competitive advantage.

About the Author

Stanley Cherkasky is the Managing Partner of Change Management Consulting, Inc. (CMC). Founder of the firm, Stan is the principal architect of the *Performance Improvement Breakthrough* methodology, and the *Six Sigma Lean Advantage* - innovative and proven strategies that accelerate ROI and net income improvement, build customer loyalty, and create world-class recognition.

Stan has more than three decades of business and consulting experience, in both the private and public sectors, in the United States and abroad. Stan specializes in building high-performance teams, and working closely with senior leaders to achieve breakthrough financial, organizational, and operating improvement. He has been quoted in many business publications, including Fortune, Business Week and the Wall Street Journal.

Founded in 1993, CMC provides worldwide management consulting, training and research for companies of all sizes. The firm has a proven track record in helping public and private sector clients implement continuous improvement systems, improve performance, achieve goals and manage human resources

more effectively. Headquartered in Wayne New Jersey - with offices in San Diego, Dallas and Detroit - CMC has extensive experience is obtaining grants and funding assistance for its clients. Learn more at www.cmc-changemanagement.com; contact CMC at 877 268-2440.

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