



WhitePaper

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The quality management system
has not been accepted
What to do?



Contents

Introduction	04
Difficulties with using a QM System	04
>> Obstacles in day-to-day work	05
>> A practical example	06
>> Excursion — the unused QM System	08
How to gain more acceptance	08
>> Excursion — The QM System in the consciousness of the employees	10
>> Five tips for practical use	10
Recommended action and summary	12
>> Do you have further questions?	17
>> Background of ConSense GmbH	17

Introduction

Every company and every organisation, for which quality management and its respective certification is important, usually develops its own system with which it can assure compliance with the relevant standards and sets of regulations - whether in hard copy or in the software-supported form. However, even the most sophisticated system has its pitfalls: Is it logically structured? Does every employee have insight and access? Is it “too theoretical” and perhaps not used by the employees at all?

In the following, we present you difficulties of dealing with a **quality management system (QM system or QMS)** and what you can do to address them.

“In the past, our employees created forms they needed - and were not provided by the system - by themselves.

This resulted in **great time expenditure** and led to a flood of **mixed templates**. Additionally, anyone who routinely referenced documents saved to his computer was possibly working with **old and invalid versions...**”

*Dipl.-Ing Peter Kandlbinder,
Munich City Utilities – SWM*

Difficulties with using a QM System

In practice, can the desire to have a complete and especially realistic description of the corporate objectives, procedures, and responsibilities, unfortunately not always be fulfilled. However, if a management system is not accepted and used within a company it also cannot be used for the optimal improvement and organisation control.

The complexity of documentation in quality management that needs to be mastered is expanding ever more rapidly. This depends on several factors, for example, the amount of information that needs to be documented. The system is also not static but it is a subject to a constant process of testing and alteration, which must be organised, implemented and documented. The corresponding alterations must be communicated to the employees and transparently presented, so that the required measures can be implemented in the company. Last but not least, leads this a way to the continual improvement.

If the company is located on several sites, or must ensure conformity to diverse standards, it will be even more complex to guarantee functioning quality management.

“If they keep Excel lists on one **site** and the next intended measures are administered on the Intranet, it is extremely **laborious, to maintain an overview**. It can easily happen that planned activities simply ‘fall under the table’ because they just aren’t recognized by anybody ...”

*Adrian Spörri,
Condair Group AG*

Obstacles in daily work

- >> **Preparation and continual updating of information stored in the system is time-consuming and demands many human resources.**
- >> **Changes or improvements that have become established in practice are documented with a time delay.**
- >> **Changes that have been implemented reach employees with delay.**
- >> **The specific standards defined in the documentation are incomprehensible to employees.**
- >> **Simultaneous use of various versions of document templates - some of which are obsolete - in a company.**
- >> **Documentation is perceived as “a tiresome duty” and not as a real chance for improvement.**
- >> **Documentation does not reflect reality.**
- >> **Employees recognize the discrepancy between the QM documentation and the reality and do not identify themselves with the QM system.**

A practice example

An employee searches for a piece of information from the QM system during his daily work (e.g. a template, a document, an operation or a process), that he rarely needs. After a short search, he asks his colleague in the next office, where he can find the document. The colleague in the office next door, who usually knows the file location, no longer does, since he seldom uses the document or perhaps even the QM system.

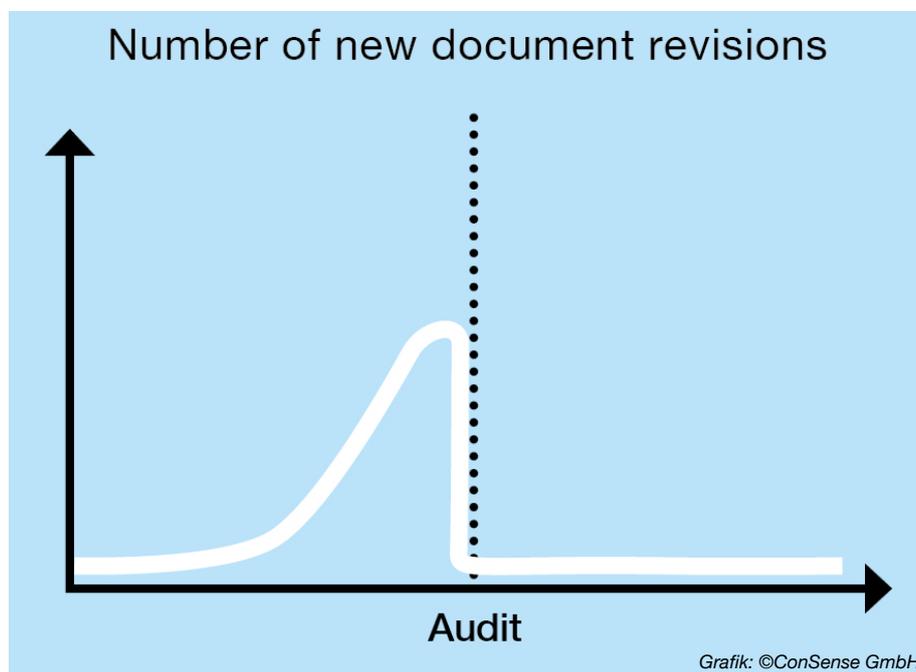
In our case there is only one employee who is well versed in the QM system and is responsible for it: Let us call him Peter Müller. Since both colleagues cannot find the document, the QM expert Peter Müller is brought into the search.

Now there are already three employees busy with the search and for the QM expert Peter Müller this means that a significant part of his work time is occupied with answering questions such as “Where was that again?”, “What is that called again?” or “Is that still up-to-date?”. He would much rather be dealing with quality parameters instead, which would also be more sensibly.

“Previously, the colleagues had to search for the documents in many files. Now the system structures **everything clearly** according to departments. Above all, the **search function is very practical and accelerates finding.**”

*Daniel Köning,
Marangoni Retreading Systems Germany GmbH*

Exkursion – The unused QM System



If, in the course of the year, the QM system changes only in the last months before the external audit, this is a sign, that the QM system is not actively used in the company. It is highly unlikely that reality changes only few months before the audit. This means there is a long period of time in which the QM system does not correspond to the reality and is therefore neither used nor accepted by the employees due to the outdated information.

How to gain more acceptance

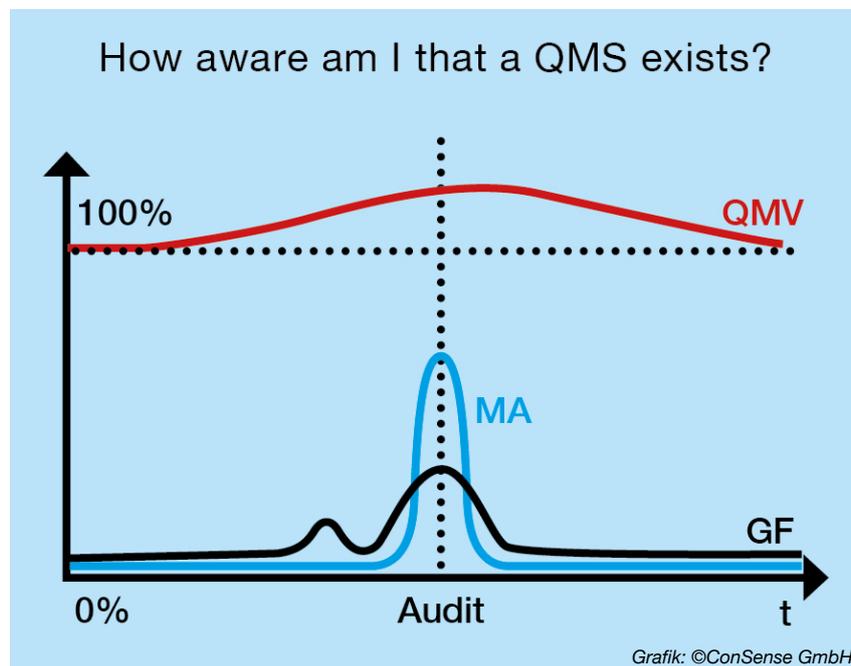
When setting up and maintaining quality management documentation you should consider many factors that go beyond the mere description of the business processes. In following, we describe how not only content-related aspects but also the **active co-operation of the employees** can be included in order to establish truly used and effective QM system in the company.

It is common that QM systems disappear in the background and are only retrieved shortly before the next certification. The **potential for a sustainable quality improvement** in the company is therefore often wasted!

To develop the optimal use of a quality management system should every employee have an access to the information, relevant specifically for him, in the best case with the simple and quick access. The information should always be up-to-date and correspond reality.

This only works in the long-term if needed effort and administration of the QM system are as low as possible for all involved parties and if the stored documents together with processes reflect the employees' daily work. If this is not the case, a QM system turns out to be a "dry theory", or is in the worst case even rejected by the employees as an alleged monitoring tool.

Excursion – the QM System in the consciousness of the employees



How aware are the various groups of persons in the course of a year that yours QM system exists? In the worst case, employees (MA) and management (GF) are only aware of its existence shortly before and during the audit. With the management, there is at most one further small spike, when the audit for the management review is hastily prepared. Only the person responsible for QM has made the QM system so obvious to himself that it can easily give his colleagues the impression that he might have overdone it a bit. Whereas in the best case scenario the entire staff is aware throughout the year that there is a QM system and they regularly use it.

”When having so much information it comes down to quickly find what you are looking for. The great thing about ConSense is that you can **access your information in various ways.**

With the so-called ‘process map’, you can click your way through pictured symbols. Alternatively, you can choose the systematic way by using the process structure and individual process steps. It is also possible to search by keyword and search engine.

The employees use it quite differently — **everyone in a way that suits him best to manage the system ...”**

*Sabine Klee,
muva kempten GmbH*

Five tips for practical use

1. Personalisation of the system - drawing attention to the basics.

Primarily should the employee see only those documents and processes that are actually relevant for his field of work.

2. Automation - reduces time-consuming maintenance and routine work.

Many company procedures repeatedly run according to a particular pattern. Approval procedures, reporting, and information about changes in the organization are regularly used. The more automated they are, the easier it is.

3. Simple navigation and searching - increase the motivation of the employees to use the system. Processes and documents are up-to-date and the employees are always informed about current changes.

4. Applicability of the process modelling - should be intuitive to use, without exhaustive trainings. It is beneficial to have a software that does not only map processes, but permits the employees to model new processes easily and in a user-friendly way.

5. Integrated document management - links documents with processes.

Documents - such as revised specifications - and processes belong together and should be interdependent. Therefore, it is recommended to link and revise them together.

Recommended action and summary

To establish a lively quality management, two basic requirements should be met:

- 1. The administration and maintenance of the system** should be designed in such way that the status of procedures and processes can be quickly and easily displayed. If the maintenance is too complex is the reality - meaning the actual method used in the company - often not regularly transferred into the system by those responsible for QM and is therefore not displayed there.
This in turn means that a look into the system from the viewpoint of the employee or user reveals out-dated or inaccurate information. As a result, his acceptance of the system decreases and in the worst case he stops using it altogether. This is understandable because without regular updates the system will not describe the information or processes that he is seeking, which is needed for his daily work. For him the system offers no support when seeking suitable process sequences and documents and it does not benefit him.

>> Therefore, always remember that the individual should remain in the centre and that he or she is of the highest importance for a successful QM system. The content and maintenance of the system should not be detached from the human factor. This ensures that the (early) involvement and active cooperation of the colleagues is supported from the beginning. To that end, the goal and use of the QM system should be communicated and demonstrated throughout all levels.

‘We have [...] a boss, who supports the decision for ConSense. That way, the information stored in the system enjoys high status and is binding. That makes it difficult to bypass the system...’

*Michael Kraus,
Lebenshilfe für Menschen mit Behinderung
Rhein-Wupper e.V.*

- 2. Access to the relevant information** should be intuitive. The biggest problem with management systems is the development of parallel worlds. That means that beside the official management system there are important and frequently used processes and work instructions or templates, which are stored in the local network or on the desktop of an individual employee to shorten the “annoying search” and to guarantee quick access.

The problem is, however, that it becomes complicated - if not impossible - to convey revision changes (e.g. altered procedures/processes, new instructions or templates) to the employees and to ensure that nothing but the current and valid versions are used and that local copies are replaced.

- >> If there is no quick and simple access to the system, numerous different and outdated versions will eventually be used in active daily work. Therefore, quick system access including a simple search function should be available. A clear system and the training of all colleagues, particularly regarding the possibilities, goals, and functionalities of a QM system are strongly recommended. If there is a lack of understanding of the system requirements or if there is even no sense in having one, there will usually be little motivation to actively cooperate in its design or to store the documents and processes clear for all colleagues and to keep them up-to-date.

“The introduction of ConSense IMS was a complete success. All employees accepted the system because the **design of the processes is so simple and user-friendly**, that we were able to achieve a **great gain in transparency**. Additionally, the introduction of the audit and action modules in the last two years has guaranteed that database-oriented secure processes could stay applicable and that insecure applications based on spreadsheet calculations were replaced step-by-step...”

*Dipl.-Ing. Bernhard Ritzenhoff,
Stadtwerke München GmbH*

The motivation to introduce a QM system often involves the desire to improve internal processes or to receive a certification for marketing purposes and to ensure customer loyalty. However, the significant potential of continual improvement (e.g. product quality or elimination of mistakes in organizational procedures) is wasted by the use of systems that are difficult to manage or by a lack of cooperation and motivation from employees.

A **software-supported QM system** can make a valuable contribution to the company success. It offers, among others, the following **benefits**:

- >> A user-friendly operation contributes to the simple handling of the system.
- >> Processes can be modelled quickly and individually.
- >> Every employee has an access to the latest information at all times.
- >> Every employee receives only relevant information for his work procedures.
- >> Automated control and management of documents contribute positively to the alleviation of routine tasks.
- >> Required standard specifications for certifications are constantly maintained at a glance thanks to electronic administration.
- >> At the same time, the protection of the environment is supported by the reduction of paper usage.



Contact us!

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ConSense GmbH History

ConSense GmbH is a leading supplier of software technology for quality and integrated management systems. ConSense GmbH, based in Aachen (Germany), has been developing scalable solutions for all company sizes since 2003, with development work concentrating on the optimal support of organizational processes and user-friendliness. ConSense GmbH acts as a consultant for the technical, organizational and personnel introduction of ConSense software solutions with modern strategies and concepts from the start to the operational phase. ConSense software products have more than 750 customers and users in six figures in all types of industry.

