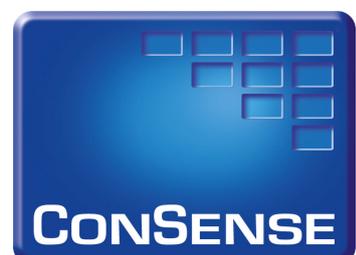


Technical Report

QM is for everyone:
With targeted internal marketing actions
to an accepted and lived quality management system



QM is for everyone: With targeted internal marketing actions to an accepted and lived quality management system

An electronic quality management system supports companies to achieve and maintain the required standards for their products or services in a controlled manner. In addition to ensuring quality, such a system uncovers potential sources of error before they turn into real problems. It also enables employees to concentrate on their core business by automatically taking over routine tasks. Clearly defined processes ensure that specifications are fully understood and followed by all employees. An effective quality management system (QMS) is therefore a real competitive advantage and thus a decisive factor for entrepreneurial success. This is proven by various studies¹ as well as the annual ISO Survey², which places the ISO 9001 standard in first place with more than one million certifications worldwide - more than three times as many certifications as the ISO 14001 standard on environmental management, which is in second place.



Dr Iris Bruns, managing director of ConSense GmbH, Aachen

In order to meet the complex requirements and comply with the relevant standards as well as to create an organisational framework, many companies and organisations today rely on a software-based quality management system (QMS), often under the umbrella of an integrated management system (IMS). The introduction of a technical solution alone brings considerable relief. However, for it to be successful and really fulfil the desired objectives, one thing is crucial: acceptance by those who are to use the system in their everyday work.

After all, a quality or integrated management system must be actively used – and this only works if the added value for the user is recognisable. Every organisation that requires certification will already have developed its own system of managing compliance according to relevant regulations.

However, even the most sophisticated system has its pitfalls: Is it logically structured? Does every employee have access to the QMS? Is it „too theoretical“ and is it perhaps even being ignored by the employees?

„It is very important to reach all employee groups in a company, because quality management is not only for quality managers or executives and department heads, but for all employees. Every employee - whether in production or in the office - should have the opportunity to actively participate and provide feedback. In this way, the system can be promptly adapted to reality. This increases the acceptance of the QM system, because the employees identify with it,“ says Dr Iris Bruns from the management board of ConSense GmbH in Aachen, one of the leading providers of software for quality and integrated management systems.

¹ Examples of studies on these topics:

Van Baal, S.; Volkmer, A.; Foot, A. (2014): „Quality - Made in Germany“. ed.: Institut der deutschen Wirtschaft Köln Consult GmbH (Institute of the German Economy Köln Consult GmbH), p. 29.
CMI 2017 Study (2017): „Quality awareness as a competitive factor“. von Wecus, Axel; Weber, Manuel; Willeke, Katja (2017): „Managementsysteme und das Management natürlicher Ressourcen (Management systems and the management of natural resources) [in German]“. ed. VDI ZRE, published febr. 2017

²ISO (2018): „ISO Survey 2017“. Published on: www.iso.org/the-iso-survey.html.

Typical hurdles on the way to acceptance

Effective quality management is an important management instrument in a company. However, if a management system is not accepted and used within a company, the tool's full potential for continuous improvement and organisational controlling cannot be tapped.

Typical hurdles that often arise in everyday work and that are detrimental to the acceptance of a QMS:

- >> Preparation and continuous updating of information stored in the system is time-consuming and demands many human resources.
- >> Changes or improvements are only documented long after they have already been established in practice, or not at all.
- >> Employees are not always notified about changes.
- >> The specific standards defined in the documentation are incomprehensible to employees.
- >> Different versions of documents, templates or work instructions – sometimes even outdated ones – are being used simultaneously.
- >> Documentation is perceived as “tedious” and thereby being neglected.
- >> Documentation and/or process descriptions do not reflect reality.
- >> Employees see a discrepancy between the QM documentation and work reality and do not identify with the QM system.

How can we overcome these hurdles and increase the chances of success?

User-friendly holistic concept

First, there is the challenge to find the right management system. The more noticeable the reduction in workload is for the employees, the higher the approval. It is therefore important to select a software that is easy to work with and that can be used to most effectively implement the QM requirements of an organisation. If a system manages to convince through a user-friendly and coherent concept, it is easier to make daily application a reality. Once the decision has been made in favour of a particular software, the challenge is to create a management system that employees will naturally and truly be committed to. Therefore, a well-accepted QMS is also a matter of successful „self-marketing“, i.e. internal marketing measures to advocate the advantages of the system. Such promotional action will help acceptance



Innovative QM marketing actions, e.g. football betting games, advent calendars etc., strengthen the sense of community and draw attention to the QM system

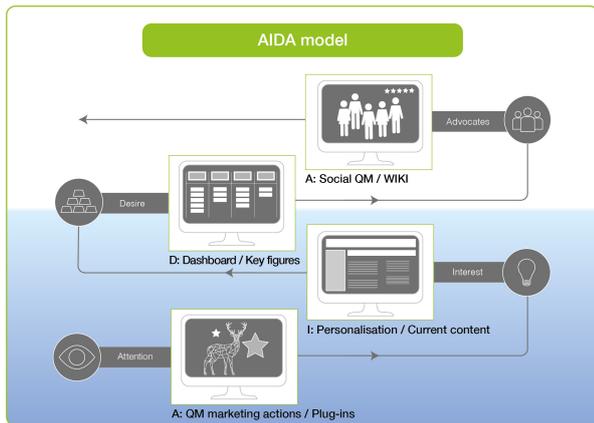
thrive. How can a management system be successfully positioned and established in the company?

Quality manager as intermediary

Quality managers have an important task: They need to make sure employees use the QMS with enthusiasm! To help achieve this, classical marketing strategies of target-group-specific communication and actions goes a long way in promoting its use.

Use of the established AIDA model

To create a positive atmosphere right from the start, the ConSense GmbH expert recommends to first de-



Internal QM marketing - based on the AIDA and customer journey marketing models

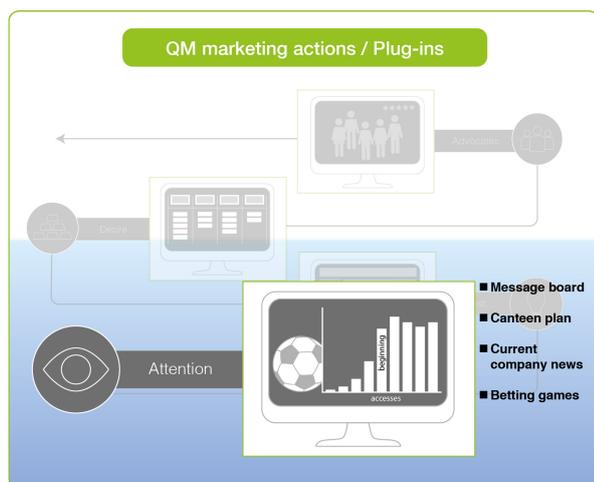
fine the various target groups in the company and their expectations, needs and wishes in connection with the introduction of the system in order to address them more specifically. „The interests are very different. For example, management would like to be convinced by a clear cost-benefit calculation, process owners would like transparent processes that reveal potential for improvement as well as clearly defined responsibilities and the monitoring of implemented actions. Employees who are supposed to use the system in their daily work want to quickly see how the system is making their jobs and routines easier,“ says Dr Iris Bruns.

The experts at ConSense GmbH see a variety of creative QM marketing opportunities that are most effective when addressing target groups. Experience has shown that established marketing models such as „AIDA“ or the „customer journey“ work best. To decide on a product or service, the potential buyer goes through the following phases:

- >> Attention
- >> Interest
- >> Desire
- >> Action

Creating attention and interest – new, innovative ideas

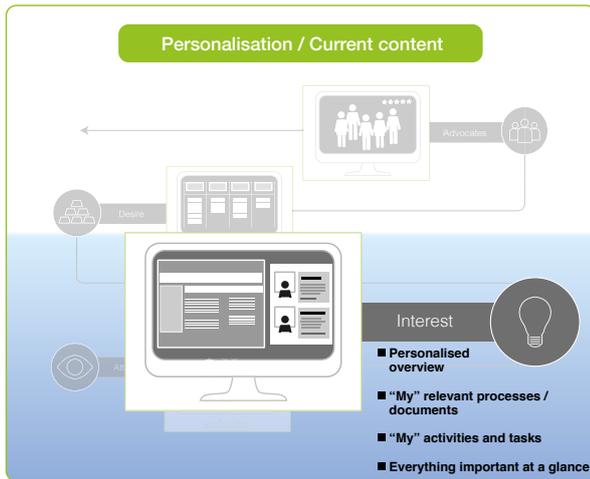
In classical marketing literature, a number of recommendations can be found on how to spark interest and attention among potential users of a management system, so that a need arises that ultimately leads to action - i.e. to the use of the system. These include personalised content to promote a sense of responsibility, simple and intuitive navigation and search, realistic mapping of processes and integrated document management. Additionally, it is possible to offer further incentives for the use of the system, which at first glance do not have to have



QM marketing actions attract attention and increase the number of accesses to the QM system

anything to do with quality management. These can relate to information and current events of general interest. Already the mere presentation of the canteen plan, the opening of a noticeboard or the distribution of current news from the company via the system increase attention and usage.

ConSense GmbH has developed further original ideas for its users, as Dr Iris Bruns describes: „We provide free plug-ins for our customers, i.e. small additional modules that can be integrated quickly and easily. These plug-ins can be used to create betting games for major sports events such as the football World Cup and European championship or advent calendars with 24 Christmas doors, scavenger hunts, company walking competitions and much more. There are no limits to creativity.“



By participating in plug-ins, users automatically move into the world of QM information and their interest in the content is awakened

The plug-ins, which initially offer entertainment, playfully generate attention for the quality management system, provide an incentive for use and significantly increase the number of accesses.

The expert explains the benefits using the example of a football betting game for the 2018 World Cup, which a whole number of customers installed. Among other things, the top rankings of internal company participants could be published on the QM entry page or the QM portal, and betting groups could be formed within the company, consisting for example of groups relevant to quality management, such as „all process owners“ or „all internal auditors“. With their participation, the employees automatically dive into

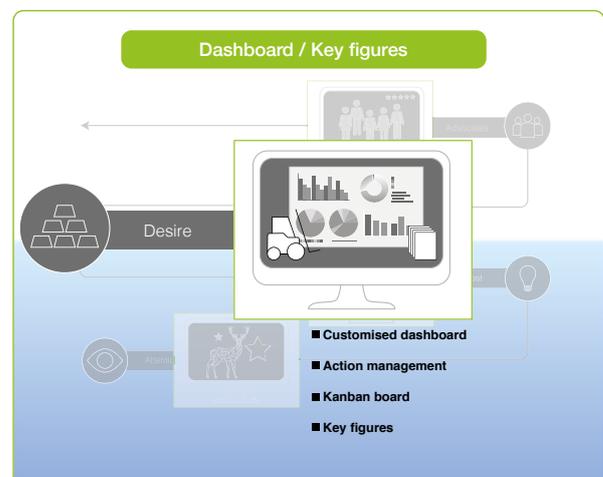
the world of their processes, documents and relevant QM information. The increased general outreach can also be used to position further relevant QM content. *„Such actions promote communication and team spirit. You can reach many colleagues without much effort and direct the focus to the system. In numerous customer projects in which we have used football betting games or similar content, the evaluations showed extremely positive effects in terms of use and acceptance of the QM system,“* emphasises Dr Iris Bruns.

Generate demand – through real added value

Once interest in the management system has been awakened, information should be prepared and made available to every user in such a way that they recognise added value in their everyday work. This is where the user-friendly basic concept of a software is most convincing. *„This includes, for example, the automatic compilation of the information relevant to the respective employee and providing quick and intuitive access to their most recent data needed for everyday routines, which is a very important factor for success. We ensure this with our ConSense software solutions. Otherwise, the company runs a real risk of employees not relating to the information being provided, jeopardising the success of the QMS. If the employees have the experience that the information or the described processes in the system are up to date, they also see a benefit in using it,“* says Dr Iris Bruns.

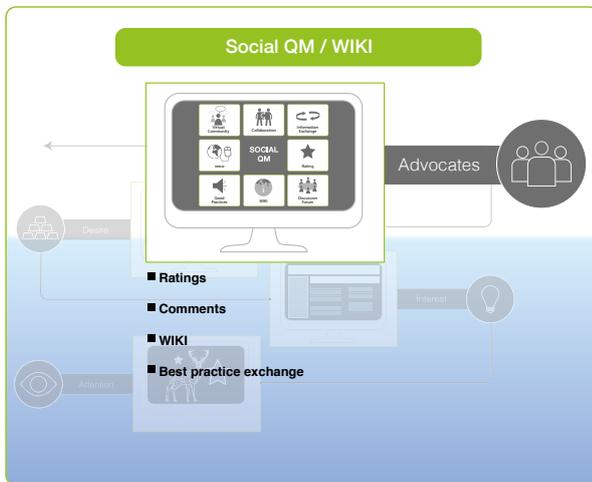
A further added value is the option to create customised dashboards that target specific user groups. This way, management and team leaders can easily access and effectively monitor their most important KPI, helping them to take informed decisions. Bookmarks can be set for frequently accessed documents and processes, as well as subscriptions to WIKI articles, all streamlining the use of ConSense in your daily work.

Another highly effective approach is to actively involve the employees in the design of the QM system. Here, the experts at ConSense GmbH rely on established social media technologies, such as *“the ability to evaluate or comment on*



Users can find important information for their daily work in the system, up-to-date on a daily basis: This way the perceived benefit for everyday work becomes a necessity

processes, documents, or subscribed discussion feeds“, says Dr Iris Bruns. The broad range of solutions covered by the term Social QM also includes, for example, the development of an in-house WIKI, i.e. a software-supported knowledge database. In this content pool, company knowledge can be collected, retrieved and further developed. A well-functioning, active WIKI, which is integrated into a social QM concept, motivates employees to take



The active involvement of employees in the design of the QM system through social QM motivates employees and creates advocates

the initiative and participate in the design of the management system. Dr Iris Bruns explains: „Virtual workspaces can be set up, in which employees directly exchange information on important topics and develop ideas together. This keeps the system alive, promotes communication among employees and broadens the knowledge base in the company. It also ensures the transfer and continuation of knowledge when key personnel depart the company.“ Simply put, employee participation drives the continuous improvement process. The result is a QM system that is alive, accepted and happily used.

Advocates promote success

Feedback from customers and the experiences from the above examples prove the positive effects after implementing a management system. Its users become advocates (influencers) who promote the system to their colleagues. *“The recipe to adding real value to your organisation is by bringing a QMS to life through full employee participation. Once this has been achieved, nothing stands in the way of user-acceptance. This contradicts the common belief that a QMS is tedious and boring”*, concludes Dr Iris Bruns.

Internal QM marketing for successful quality management

User acceptance is decisive for the success of a quality management system. Targeted internal QM marketing can be used to promote acceptance. Aachen-based ConSense GmbH recommends a procedure based on the classic AIDA marketing model and has developed original ideas that can be used on top of traditional models known from relevant marketing literature. The core of this concept is the creation of an accepted, daily used management system that benefits from the participation of the employees and convinces with real added value. The experience and feedback from ConSense customers prove that internal QM marketing actions effectively support the successful introduction of a quality management system.

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Do you have further questions?

Our experts are ready to give you more information at any time:

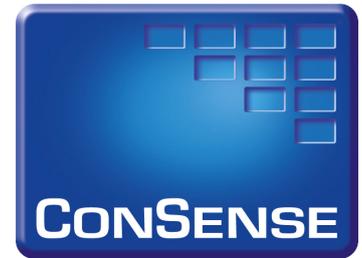
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About ConSense GmbH

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 companies of all sizes since 2003, with research and development focussing on the most effective support of organisational processes and optimised usability. ConSense GmbH acts as a consultant for the technical, organisational and user-oriented ConSense software solutions with modern strategies and concepts from kick-off to the operational phase. ConSense software products have more than 750 customers and users in six figures in all types of industry.



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