INTERNATIONAL STANDARD

ISO
10002

Quality management — Customer satisfaction — Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations

Management de la qualité — Satisfaction des clients — Lignes directrices pour le traitement des réclamations dans les organismes

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see www.iso.org/patents).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation on the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see the following URL: www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html.

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 176, *Quality management and quality assurance*, Subcommittee SC 3, *Supporting technologies*.

This third edition cancels and replaces the second edition (ISO 10002:2014), which has been technically revised.

The main changes compared with the previous edition are as follows:

— alignment with ISO 9000:2015;

— alignment with ISO 9001:2015;

— improved alignment with ISO 10001, ISO 10003 and ISO 10004.

Introduction

0.1 General

This document provides guidance for organizations to plan, design, develop, operate, maintain and improve an effective and efficient complaints-handling process for all types of commercial or non-commercial activities, including those related to electronic commerce. It is intended to benefit an organization and its customers, complainants, and other relevant interested parties.

The information obtained through the complaints-handling process can lead to improvements in products, services and processes and, where the complaints are properly handled, can improve the reputation of the organization, regardless of size, location and sector. In a global marketplace, the value of using an International Standard becomes more evident since it provides confidence in the consistent treatment of complaints.

An effective and efficient complaints-handling process reflects the needs and expectations of both the organizations supplying products and services and those who are the recipients of those products and services.

The handling of complaints through a process as described in this document can enhance customer satisfaction. Encouraging customer feedback, including complaints if customers are not satisfied, can offer opportunities to maintain or enhance customer loyalty and approval, and improve domestic and international competitiveness.

Implementation of the process described in this document can:

— provide a complainant with access to an open and responsive complaints-handling process;

— enhance the ability of the organization to resolve complaints in a consistent, systematic, and responsive manner, to the satisfaction of the complainant and the organization;

— enhance the ability of the organization to identify trends and eliminate causes of complaints, and improve the organization's operations;

— help the organization create a customer-focused approach to resolving complaints, and encourage personnel to improve their skills in working with customers;

— provide a basis for continual review and analysis of the complaints-handling process, the resolution of complaints, and process improvements made.

Organizations can use the complaints-handling process in conjunction with customer satisfaction codes of conduct and external dispute resolution processes.

The satisfaction of persons or organizations that could or do receive a product or a service from a public or a private organization is the focus of this document.

0.2 Relationship with ISO 9001 and ISO 9004

This document is compatible with ISO 9001 and ISO 9004, and supports the objectives of these two standards through the effective and efficient application of a complaints-handling process. This document can also be used independently of ISO 9001 and ISO 9004.

ISO 9001 specifies requirements for a quality management system. The process for complaints handling described in this document (ISO 10002) can be used as an element of a quality management system.

ISO 9004 provides guidance to achieve sustained success of an organization. The use of this document (ISO 10002) can enhance performance in the area of complaints handling and increase the satisfaction of customers and other relevant interested parties to facilitate the achievement of sustained success. It

can also facilitate the continual improvement of the quality of products, services and processes based on feedback from customers and other relevant interested parties.

NOTE   Apart from customers and complainants, other relevant interested parties can include suppliers, industry associations and their members, consumer organizations, relevant government agencies, personnel, owners and others who are affected by the complaints-handling process.

0.3   Relationship with ISO 10001, ISO 10003 and ISO 10004

This document is compatible with ISO 10001, ISO 10003 and ISO 10004. These four documents can be used either independently or in conjunction with each other. When used together, this document, ISO 10001, ISO 10003 and ISO 10004 can be part of a broader and integrated framework for enhanced customer satisfaction through codes of conduct, complaints handling, dispute resolution and monitoring and measurement of customer satisfaction (see Annex A).

ISO 10001 contains guidance on codes of conduct for organizations related to customer satisfaction. Such codes of conduct can decrease the probability of problems arising and can eliminate causes of complaints and disputes which can decrease customer satisfaction.

ISO 10003 contains guidance on the resolution of disputes regarding product- and service-related complaints that could not be satisfactorily resolved internally. ISO 10003 can help to minimize customer dissatisfaction stemming from unresolved complaints.

ISO 10004 contains guidance on establishing effective processes for monitoring and measuring customer satisfaction. Its focus is on customers external to the organization. Guidelines given in ISO 10004 can support the establishment and implementation of a complaints-handling process. For example, the processes described in ISO 10004 can assist the organization in monitoring and measuring customer satisfaction with the complaints-handling process (see 8.3). Likewise, information from a complaints-handling process can be used in monitoring and measuring customer satisfaction. For example, the frequency and type of complaints can be an indirect indicator of customer satisfaction (see ISO 10004:2018, 7.3.2).

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Quality management — Customer satisfaction — Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations

1 Scope

This document gives guidelines for the process of complaints handling related to products and services within an organization, including planning, design, development, operation, maintenance and improvement. The complaints-handling process described is suitable for use as one of the processes of an overall quality management system.

NOTE   Throughout this document, the terms "product" and "service" refer to the outputs of an organization that are intended for, or required by, a customer.

This document is intended for use by any organization regardless of its type or size, or the products and services it provides. It is also intended for use by organizations in all sectors. Annex B provides guidance specifically for small businesses.

This document addresses the following aspects of complaints handling:

a) enhancing customer satisfaction by creating a customer-focused environment that is open to feedback (including complaints), resolving any complaints received, and enhancing the organization's ability to improve its products and services, including customer service;

b) top management involvement and commitment through adequate acquisition and deployment of resources, including personnel training;

c) recognizing and addressing the needs and expectations of complainants;

d) providing complainants with an open, effective and easy-to-use complaints process;

e) analysing and evaluating complaints in order to improve the quality of products and services, including customer service;

f) auditing of the complaints-handling process;

g) reviewing the effectiveness and efficiency of the complaints-handling process.

This document does not apply to disputes referred for resolution outside the organization or for employment-related disputes.

2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 9000:2015, *Quality management systems — Fundamentals and vocabulary*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO 9000 and the following apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

— ISO Online browsing platform: available at http://www.iso.org/obp

— IEC Electropedia: available at http://www.electropedia.org/

3.1
complainant
person, *organization* (3.8) or their representative making a *complaint* (3.2)

[SOURCE: ISO 10001:2018, 3.2]

3.2
complaint
<customer satisfaction> expression of dissatisfaction made to an *organization* (3.8), related to its product or service, or the complaints-handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected

Note 1 to entry: Complaints can be made in relation to other processes where the organization interacts with the *customer* (3.3).

Note 2 to entry: Complaints can be made directly or indirectly to the organization.

[SOURCE: ISO 9000:2015, 3.9.3, modified — Notes 1 and 2 to entry have been added.]

3.3
customer
person or *organization* (3.8) that could or does receive a product or a service that is intended for or required by this person or organization

EXAMPLE   Consumer, client, end-user, retailer, receiver of product or service from an internal process, beneficiary and purchaser.

Note 1 to entry: A customer can be internal or external to the organization.

[SOURCE: ISO 9000:2015, 3.2.4]

3.4
customer satisfaction
customer's (3.3) perception of the degree to which the customer's expectations have been fulfilled

Note 1 to entry: It can be that the customer's expectation is not known to the *organization* (3.8), or even to the customer in question, until the product or service is delivered. It can be necessary for achieving high customer satisfaction to fulfil an expectation of a customer even if it is neither stated nor generally implied or obligatory.

Note 2 to entry: *Complaints* (3.2) are a common indicator of low customer satisfaction but their absence does not necessarily imply high customer satisfaction.

Note 3 to entry: Even when customer requirements have been agreed with the customer and fulfilled, this does not necessarily ensure high customer satisfaction.

[SOURCE: ISO 9000:2015, 3.9.2]

3.5
customer service
interaction of the *organization* (3.8) with the *customer* (3.3) throughout the life cycle of a product or a service

[SOURCE: ISO 9000:2015, 3.9.4]

3.6
feedback
<customer satisfaction> opinions, comments and expressions of interest in a product, a service or a complaints-handling process

Note 1 to entry: Feedback can be given in relation to other processes where the *organization* (3.8) interacts with the *customer* (3.3).

[SOURCE: ISO 9000:2015, 3.9.1, modified — Note 1 to entry has been added.]

3.7
interested party
stakeholder
person or *organization* (3.8) that can affect, be affected by, or perceive itself to be affected by a decision or activity

EXAMPLE   *Customers* (3.3), owners, people in an organization, providers, bankers, regulators, unions, partners or society that can include competitors or opposing pressure groups.

[SOURCE: ISO 9000:2015, 3.2.3, modified — Note 1 to entry has been deleted.]

3.8
organization
person or group of people that has its own functions with responsibilities, authorities and relationships to achieve its objectives

Note 1 to entry: The concept of organization includes, but is not limited to, sole-trader, company, corporation, firm, enterprise, authority, partnership, association, charity or institution, or part or combination thereof, whether incorporated or not, public or private.

[SOURCE: ISO 9000:2015, 3.2.1, modified — Note 2 to entry has been deleted.]

4   Guiding principles

4.1   General

Adherence to the guiding principles set out in 4.2 to 4.15 is recommended for effective and efficient handling of complaints.

4.2   Commitment

The organization should be actively committed to defining and implementing a complaints-handling process.

4.3   Capacity

Sufficient resources should be made available for and committed to complaints handling, and should be managed effectively and efficiently.

4.4   Transparency

The complaints-handling process should be communicated to customers, personnel and other relevant interested parties. Individual complainants should be provided with adequate information about the handling of their complaint.

4.5   Accessibility

A complaints-handling process should be easily accessible to all complainants. Information should be made available on the details of making and resolving complaints. The complaints-handling process and supporting information should be easy to understand and use. The information should be in clear language. Information and assistance in making a complaint should be made available (see Annex C), in whatever languages or formats that the products and services were offered or provided in, including alternative formats, such as large print, Braille, or audiotape, so that no complainants are disadvantaged.

4.6 Responsiveness

The organization should address the needs and expectations of customers with respect to complaints handling.

4.7 Objectivity

Each complaint should be addressed in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner through the complaints-handling process (see Annex D).

4.8 Charges

Access to the complaints-handling process should be free of charge to the complainant.

4.9 Information integrity

The organization should ensure that the information about its complaints handling is accurate and not misleading, and that data collected are relevant, correct, complete, meaningful and useful.

4.10 Confidentiality

Personally identifiable information concerning the complainant should be available where needed, but only for the purposes of addressing the complaint within the organization and should be actively protected from disclosure, unless the customer or complainant expressly consents to its disclosure or disclosure is required by law.

NOTE   Personally identifiable information is information that when associated with an individual can be used to identify him or her, and is retrievable by the individual's name, address, email address, telephone number or similarly specific identifier. The precise meaning of the term differs around the world.

4.11 Customer-focused approach

The organization should adopt a customer-focused approach with respect to handling complaints and should be open to feedback.

4.12 Accountability

The organization should establish and maintain accountability for, and reporting on, the decisions and actions with respect to complaints handling.

4.13 Improvement

Increased effectiveness and efficiency of the complaints-handling process should be a permanent objective of the organization.

4.14 Competence

Organization personnel should have the personal attributes, skills, training, education and experience necessary to handle complaints.

4.15 Timeliness

Complaints should be handled as expeditiously as feasible given the nature of the complaint and of the process used.

5   Complaints-handling framework

5.1   Context of the organization

In planning, designing, developing, operating, maintaining and improving the complaints-handling process, the organization should consider its context by:

— identifying and addressing external and internal issues that are relevant to the organization's purpose and that affect its ability to achieve complaints-handling objectives;

— identifying the interested parties that are relevant to the complaints-handling process, and addressing the relevant needs and expectations of these interested parties;

— identifying the scope of the complaints-handling process, including its boundaries and applicability, and taking into account the external and internal issues and the needs of interested parties noted above.

5.2   Leadership and commitment

Top management should demonstrate leadership in, and the organization should be actively committed to, effective and efficient complaints handling. It is particularly important that the commitment is shown by, and promoted from, the organization's top management.

A strong leadership in, and commitment to, responding to complaints should allow both personnel and customers to contribute to the improvement of the organization's products, services and processes.

This leadership and commitment should be reflected in the definition, adoption and dissemination of policy and procedures for the resolution of complaints. Management leadership and commitment should be shown by the provision of adequate resources, including training.

5.3   Policy

Top management should establish an explicit customer-focused complaints-handling policy. The policy should be made available to, and known by, all personnel. The policy should also be made available to customers and other relevant interested parties. The policy should be supported by procedures and objectives for each function and personnel role included in the process.

When establishing the policy and objectives for the complaints-handling process, the following factors should be taken into account:

— identification of any applicable statutory and regulatory requirements;

— financial, operational, and organizational requirements;

— the input of customers, personnel, and other relevant interested parties.

The policies related to quality and complaints handling should be aligned.

5.4   Responsibility and authority

5.4.1   Top management should be responsible for:

a) ensuring that the complaints-handling process and objectives are established within the organization;

b) ensuring that the complaints-handling process is planned, designed, developed, operated, maintained and continually improved in accordance with the complaints-handling policy of the organization;