

## **PLANNING TO ACHIEVE BS15000**

This article is about what has to be done to achieve a specific and measurable quality standard: it isn't about using a project management tool and nor is it about the well-understood stages of a typical project although that would be a sensible approach to adopt. Instead, it is an attempt to identify some of the fundamental issues that need to be considered as part of the planning process. It discusses some generic quality related issues and a number of standard-specific issues but I will not go through each process in detail: the most fundamental point to understand is the scoping requirement of the scheme and the approach that you will need to adopt.

To start with, a few words about the role of quality standards. The purpose of a standard is to establish a generally recognised level of achievement. As such, in a commercial environment certification can be understood to be part of a legal trade description if it is quoted and identified clearly, or even if only "compliance" or "conformance" is claimed, and it is important to ensure that any claims made or inferred in this way are not misleading to clients.

This is why it is important to be very clear about the role of a quality standard, the reasons for obtaining one and the way that it will be used or interpreted by clients and suppliers. The ISO9000 quality standard is a broad based standard and serves suppliers in various industry sectors well. It is primarily management focussed, being concerned to ensure that defined processes are followed and evidenced rather than ensuring that "best practice" processes are defined in the first place.

As a functionally based standard, BS15000 is different: it is specific to the IT Service Management industry and describes an industry consensus on what constitutes a quality service and, as a result, is becoming commonly specified as a contract requirement. The BS15000 Certification Scheme is managed by the itSMF, which means that the official BS15000 Certificates are issued by auditors on behalf of the itSMF and will feature an itSMF logo. This does not detract from ISO9000 but complements it.

This means that in order to achieve BS15000 Certification, an organisation has not only to conform to overall management quality standards to demonstrate appropriate management controls, but also needs to demonstrate industry best practice which is based around the ITIL guidelines. If an organisation is already ISO9000 certified, then much of the management requirement is likely to be met but you shouldn't assume that to be the case.

So the question is, what does best practice mean in relation to BS15000? While all of the ITIL processes are covered, it is a mistake to think that ITIL alone will be enough. BS 15000 is more extensive than the ITIL processes. It is also worth pointing out that the Service Desk is not identified as an auditable area – the concentration is on the processes wherever they are operated and this is an important scoping issue. Apart from process best practice, there are also management control areas to consider: so that we are clear about what has to be included in the scope, planning and eventual audit, the following are the specific auditable areas:

<b>MANAGERIAL AREAS</b>	<b>FUNCTIONAL AREAS</b>
Overall management system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management responsibility</li> <li>• Documentation requirements</li> <li>• Competence, awareness and training</li> </ul> Planning and implementing service management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan service management</li> <li>• Implement service management</li> <li>• Monitor, measuring and reviewing</li> <li>• Continuous improvement</li> </ul> Planning and implementing new or changed services	Service Level Management Service reporting Availability & Service Continuity Mgmt Budgeting and accounting for IT services Capacity Management Information Security Management Business relationship management Supplier relationship management Incident Management Problem Management Configuration Management Change Management Release processes

Now that we have a starting point we need to understand the scoping requirements of BS15000. Put simply, the Certificate can only be issued to a single legal entity and it follows that to achieve the Certificate, an organisation must be able to demonstrate that it is responsible for delivering all of the processes defined by the scheme. While some limited exceptions are possible, they will be subject to specific agreement with the auditing body (and confirmation with the itSMF), and are likely to be restricted to processes covered by external contract. Where an exception is allowed it will be identified on the Certificate when issued, this is similar to the approach taken under ISO9000: 2000. As an example, it may be possible to exclude resource capacity management but not all aspects of the process i.e. service and business capacity management.

Let's now consider some specifics: it is important to be realistic about what you are trying to achieve: in that respect it is important to discover where you are now by establishing a baseline. There are two main options for this: self-assessment against an appropriate workbook or external assessment. Whichever you choose, you have to be sure that the results will be realistic, objective and "fit for purpose"– you will need to be careful not to end up with an outcome which is inaccurate or incomplete, because the work done at this stage will be fundamental in defining the timescale for the standards project. I describe the assessment as being "fit for purpose" because the baseline must give you a comprehensive view: not only the traditional view of process maturity assessment but also an assessment of the extent to which suitable audit evidence and managerial controls exists.

The difficulty at this stage is to determine what constitutes conformance to the standard. The assessment of ITIL processes is mature and should present no difficulty, however, the additional processes may be less clearly understood and may not be as easy to define and demonstrate: in practice, it may prove difficult to identify where they are performed and who is responsible for them in the first place. As an example, consider Supplier Management: the objective of this process within the

standard is to “manage third party suppliers to ensure the provision of seamless, quality services”. To achieve this aspect, you must understand and document the full service delivery chain and this includes sub-contracted suppliers. To assess a baseline we must determine a standard to be assessed against

While the assessment is going on, you should select a Registered Certification Body (RCB) – this is your auditing partner and establishing this relationship at an early point is vital to the success of the project. The sooner that you can select an RCB, the sooner that you can define and agree the scope of the standards project. This is vital if you are considering an exception clause in the audit scope, as you must be certain that the scope is valid. You must be careful at this stage to be clear that your RCB is officially registered with the itSMF and that you are going to be certificated under the official scheme.

You do have to be careful to distinguish between the role of an auditing body and that of an implementation partner: the auditor cannot help directly with implementation of any aspect of the scheme and you should be cautious of any claim to provide an end-to-end service. Equally, while implementation partners can advise on any aspect of the project, they are not authoritative as far as the audit stage is concerned.

The assessment should give you a series of improvement recommendations and, as long as the terms of reference for the assessment were properly defined, those improvements should give you a roadmap through to an auditable standard of performance. The roadmap will identify improvement dependencies, groupings, and priorities and should link the improvements to identifiable areas of the standard. You may find that some recommendations can be achieved through fine-tuning in some areas while others involve more substantial work: this is where you need to start detailed project planning. It is probable that there will be work packages that can be handled as projects and that different projects can be linked: this naturally takes you into a programme of improvement, ie a CSIP.

Projects need to be resourced: the success potential of your certification project will be improved if you get this stage right. It is no secret that projects are often seen to have failed because objectives were poorly defined, expectations were unrealistic or resources were inadequate: you need to avoid these common failings. You must also remember that the general audit requirement of three months records is likely to be required and will need to be established as evidence of compliance. This might be an appropriate point to think about integrating the BS15000 project with other quality initiatives eg Six Sigma, Balanced Scorecard etc. These integrate well with process based organisations and can provide a significant contribution to the evidence required during the Certification audit.

As a final word, do not overlook the management requirements. It is tempting to focus on the processes alone because we understand them and evidence can be gathered relatively easily but the management requirements are central to success. These areas can be hard to assess but they are fundamental in establishing a culture of quality management by illustrating sustained commitment. These areas will be responsible for maintaining and improving standards over time, which will be critical to maintaining the Certificate. This is best demonstrated by identifying an overall “owner” for the Certification programme, perhaps an existing Quality Manager (QM),

and an overall Service Delivery Manager (SDM). Each role has specific responsibilities: the QM for providing objective internal quality audit services while the SDM for the process element of service provision.

Achieving a defined standard of performance is never easy and shouldn't be so. The points that I have raised will hopefully help to ease the path but there will be work to be done, even if you are already implementing ITIL, but it will be worth making the journey.