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MANUFACTURING AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

By: Ir. Mohd Rasid bin Osman

Manufacturing is an important activity for the Malaysian economy and most manufactured products are being exported overseas. It is a requirement for companies to be ISO9001 certified if they want to export their products to certain countries, for example those countries in the European Union. ISO9001 is an internationally accepted Quality Management System (QMS) that is widely practiced by numerous organisations locally and globally. In addition to this system, two other management systems that are gaining importance in the manufacturing world are related to environment and safety and they are known as the Environmental Management System (EMS) and Occupational Health and Safety Management System (OHSMS). The standards associated with these two systems are ISO14001 and OHSAS 18001, respectively.

In terms of the acceptance of these systems by organisations in Malaysia, ISO9001 is the most widely implemented. A survey conducted by the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) showed that at the end of 2002, 3733 organisations in Malaysia are ISO9001 certified. This figure is rather low compared to those in South Korea (14520), Singapore (5379) and Thailand (4556). In terms of the other two management systems, the number of organisations that are certified in Malaysia is rather low compared to the number of ISO9001 certified companies. ISO9001 has been accepted by a large number of organisations in Malaysia and there is a need to increase the number of organisations implementing the other two additional management systems.

The need to implement OSHMS is to ensure that safety of the workers and the internal environment are being protected. If the protection is extended to those outside the organisation, then EMS has to be implemented in order to safeguard the external environment. Greater encouragement should be given to manufacturing organisations to implement these two systems. These two systems may be integrated with the existing QMS. This type of system is known as an Integrated Management System (IMS). If the integrated system is implemented, organisations could benefit from the reduction of documentation required in comparison to running the three systems separately. In addition, organisations do not have to be certified for the additional two systems since they could always declare them in their documentation. Currently, only a few organisations in Malaysia have implemented this type of management system.

The Institution of Engineers, Malaysia (IEM) can play an active role in creating awareness about these management systems among organisations through its members. Seminars and training courses could be conducted to promote these two management systems. The implementation of these three (QMS, EMS, OHSMS) management systems separately or as an integrated system (IMS) can enhance and improve the effectiveness of organisations and can help organisations to be more competitive in the global market.