

Proof of competency

Assure success for your company by getting certified

When smaller or mid-sized organizations want to get the business of larger corporations, one of the biggest hurdles is perception of competency. Does the smaller business have processes in place to handle high order volume while maintaining security and safety measures? This is why it is so valuable to take advantage of recognized certifications.



HANNAH KAIN

Founder, president, CEO

ALOM, a leading global supply chain company headquartered in Fremont, California.

www.alom.com

When a company is vetting a supplier, one of the first questions asked should be, “Are you ISO certified?” While it may claim to be compliant, the only way to know for certain is to see the actual ISO certificate. Either the company is ISO certified or it’s not.

Nobody would believe somebody who said he or she knows as much as a graduate of Harvard master’s degree in business administration program if that person didn’t graduate from Harvard. In fact, the statement might backfire.

Certification assures quality

Recognized certifications substantiate competency. A third party has reviewed the competencies and found that the requirements have been met. Certification also demonstrates that the organization had the determination and dedication to complete the requirements.

Anytime you study something, there are new lessons to be learned. It is the same when an organization needs to meet a certification standard — the entire company benefits. Not only does the company come out of the certification with greater understanding, but the company also proved it is willing to learn and improve. With ever-increasing marketplace demands having a culture of learning is a huge asset for any organization.

With the correct project management and culture, creating and achieving the competencies for a certification can be a

valuable team-building exercise, because everyone is working toward a clearly defined goal.

This is not a team-building exercise where staff members are playing and relaxing together for the afternoon. This is a real-time, on-the-job, long-term effort creating confidence in the team and among team members.

For the team-building aspects to work, the goals must be clear to everyone involved. Having gone through and maintained well over 10 certifications in its 17-year history, my team appreciates the process and the competency gain.

The right stuff

Which certifications are right depends on the industry and markets served. Most companies would benefit from one of the ISO quality certifications. While this certification in itself will not open doors, it sends an unmistakable signal about the company and its dedication to quality.

For many government contracts, different security clearances and certifications may be required. As part of corporate social responsibility efforts, many corporations also require certain sustainability certifications.

Getting new business is not so different from a job interview. It is just a much easier interview when an applicant actually graduated and has credentials.

Granted, certifications will always have elements that represent obvious value to the organization and its customers, as well as elements that may seem irrelevant. That may be why many companies perceive that certifications just represent more paperwork.

But for most industry, sustainability and quality certifications, the paperwork just represents the final aspect in the famous saying: “Say what you do. Do what you say. Document it.” ●



SOCIAL MEDIA: Connect with Hannah Kain on LinkedIn at www.linkedin.com/in/hannahkain and follow her on Twitter @HannahKain.