



Bahrain service implements ISO

Although Ernst & Young Bahrain already had a well structured framework for training in place, it decided to be the first in the country to implement ISO 10015 to ensure the quality of its training, ROI and as a tool for improvement.



by **Kamal Al-Shihaby**

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Ernst & Young Bahrain is an independent member of Ernst & Young International, one of the "Big Four" providers of professional and business services. The firm was established in Bahrain in 1928, when it was considered to be the first external auditing firm in Bahrain and in other Gulf states.

There are some 350 employees distributed over its extensive services, including auditing and assurance, consultancy and training in various aspects of business and management.

Before our decision to implement ISO 10015, we already had a well structured approach, based on Ernst & Young's global policies and procedures for evaluating training needs, content and outputs.

However, we decided to implement ISO 10015:1999, *Quality management – Guidelines*

provider 10015 to ensure ROI on training

for training, because we wanted to conduct training based on an International Standard which could be used as tool for improving our existing training solutions.

In addition, we wanted to be the first to implement ISO 10015 in the region to give us a competitive advantage. Lastly, being certified to ISO 10015 is a “by-product” that can serve as a marketing tool for the firm.

Many organizations fail to define the link between training and strategic objectives

ISO 10015 itself is not a certification standard, but we chose to implement the “ISO 10015+” programme, which represents an evolution of the basic standard and includes certification, which was developed by the Swiss organization, Academy for Quality in Training & Education (AdeQuaTE – www.adequate.org).

It could be claimed that ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 are well known by many in the quality and environmental fields and even in the public at large. However, only a few had heard about ISO 10015

in Bahrain and probably in the region, until a workshop was organized in April 2006 by the Ministry of Labour. I was inspired by the idea of conducting training in compliance with an International Standard developed by ISO and to be the first to do so in our region.

Principal stages

The principal stages in implementing ISO 10015 were the following:

1. Conduct gap analysis.
2. Walk through all training processes, interviews with processes owners, drawing up draft processes, integrating HR policies, training programmes, Ernst & Young Middle East Office’s training policies, terms and conditions, and staff manual with the quality and training management system. This was made easier by the fact that although we are not ISO 9001:2000 certified, the standard’s concepts form the basis for our quality manual.
3. Prepare support documents and design training processes.
4. ISO 10015 awareness training.

5. Prepare training forms (or fine-tune the existing ones).
6. Issue all documents
7. Implementation.
8. Train internal auditors.
9. Conduct internal audit on the established system.
10. Corrective actions.
11. Certification audit.

To help with implementation, we hired a local consultant who has a vast knowledge and experience implementing ISO 9001:2000 and ISO 14001. The implementation programme took two-and-a-half months. It is a short period compared to the usual implementation time for companies like ours, which is around six months.

However, the enthusiasm of the Office Managing Partner to complete all certification requirements by the end of the fiscal year, that is 30 June 2007 and the dedication of the process owners



and the consultants shortened the implementation period remarkably.

Implementing ISO 10015 puts the Ernst & Young Bahrain office in the lead not only in the region but the first among the Big Four providers of business and professional services – in addition to Ernst & Young, the others are PricewaterhouseCoopers, KPMG and Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu.

Unlike ISO 9001:2000 which is a prerequisite for many manufacturing companies in order to bid for high-value projects, ISO 10015 is not yet a requirement in Bahrain. Nevertheless, taking the lead by running training based on ISO 10015 gives the firm the opportunity to align its training system to our strategic objectives and operational needs.

Strategic objectives

It is very obvious that strategic plans of any organization should consider training to gain new knowledge and to update and improve current knowledge and skills. However, as much as this is said, many organizations fail to define the link between training and strategic objectives, and to obtain management commitment for this.

ISO 10015 contributes to measuring the return on investment (ROI) of training. Having implemented the standard helps organizations in turning the amounts invested in training to measurable performances. •