

Insight aims to provide useful information, links and tips in the areas of Risk Management, Occupational Health and Safety, Business Continuity Management, and other areas relating to management systems and corporate governance.

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Streamlining WHSMS: Is your WHS Management System really helping the end-user?

Most organisations have WHS Management Systems implemented in one form or another in order to provide a safe system of work for their employees.

However, a growing number of industry leaders have raised concerns that the effectiveness of these Management Systems is being undermined by 'bloating' of the system's paperwork; documents full of verbose language and 'hot air' with an underlying disregard for the end-user who needs to apply the system requirements daily i.e. to actually use it.

In addition to these problems of wordiness and poor usability, larger and more operationally diverse organisations often mandate a tiered Document Framework with prescriptive layers of Policies, Standards, Procedures and Instructions; a prescription that disregards the pragmatic utility of the layered documents and whether or not they are actually needed or used. While the precise purpose for each document type is detailed at length within the organisation's Document Management Standard, this approach inevitably results in duplicated and overlapping information.



Given that time is a rare and precious commodity in the modern workplace, why do we require our time-poor Frontline Managers and Supervisors to read reams of Standards and Procedures, much of which provides them with no practical guidance relevant to their work tasks?

Management Systems need to be targeted to assist Managers and Supervisors while being conscious of the amount of time these personnel have to read and then apply these processes.

It can be argued that the increasingly common over-sized Management System does not position an organisation for improved levels of compliance, and in some instances it actually produces detrimental effects and undermines best practice, with Frontline Managers and Supervisors consciously disregarding the documented procedures due to their impracticability.

To be effective Management Systems need to be 'user-friendly', packaged for optimal understanding and uptake by the end-users, and it is this focus that serves to promote a compliant culture within the organisation.

Many WHS Management Systems require pruning to trim the procedural 'deadwood'. During this process there is a need to:

- Re-assess the organisation's operational context
- Assess the end-users and understand their operational context
- Critically assess the need for lengthy procedures, layers of duplication and redundancy
- Maintain the focus on the organisation's objectives and targets
- Maintain the focus on documents actually providing value in terms of safety

Something to always bear in mind is WHS Regulation Section 39, stating that the PCBU is to *"...ensure that information, training and instruction provided to a worker is suitable and adequate ... and provided in a way that is readily understandable by any person to whom it is provided."*

Please [contact QRMC](#) if you would like assistance developing a more effective WHS Management System.

ISO 9001:2015 Concept of Management Commitment

With the release of ISO 9001:2015 in September 2015 many organisations are in the process of implementing a transition plan and updating their approach to quality management during this three-year transition period from the old Standard.

A key change in the approach required by the new standard, one of the areas of greatest challenge in making the transition, is found in element 5 of the standard: Leadership.



The 2008 version of the standard required commitment to quality management from senior executive levels of the organisation. However, it also allowed for the appointment of a Quality Management Representative to whom responsibility for the management of quality in general, and the running of the quality management system (QMS) in particular, could be assigned.

In contrast, the new standard assigns the role of management representative to the top management of the organisation, and does not require a person to be specifically assigned as a Management Representative. This difference confers a level of responsibility for and understanding of quality management onto senior executive personnel and this responsibility can no longer be transferred to other positions in the organisation.

Element 5 of the standard refers to 10 key areas in which commitment can be demonstrated by management:

1. Taking accountability for the overall effectiveness of the quality management system;
2. Ensuring that the quality policy and quality objectives are developed in line with the organisation's requirements;
3. Integrating quality into the way the business functions;
4. Using the [process approach](#) and introducing risk-based thinking (refer *Insight* [issue 53](#));
5. Providing resources needed for the QMS;
6. Communicating quality requirements and the importance thereof;
7. Ensuring that the QMS achieves its intended results;
8. Ensuring that appropriate human resources are engaged to support and implement the QMS;
9. Encouraging improvement; and
10. Supporting other applicable management roles to demonstrate leadership.

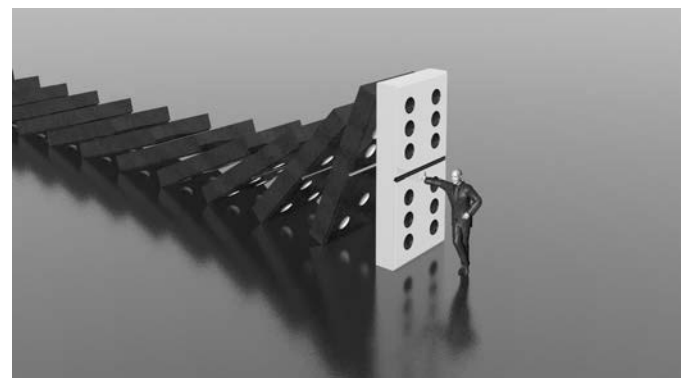
Whilst there will always be role for a Quality Manager, it is now clear that responsibility for quality is apportioned across the leadership of a business, rather than being placed primarily with one specific person or role.

Please [contact QRMC](#) if your management team would like assistance.

Prevent Business Continuity Plans from Failing

Effective business continuity management is essential to many businesses in this fast-paced modern world, in which being out of action for even a short time can have dire consequences for the organisation.

Being confident that you've done all that you can to prepare for unforeseen business interruptions is a great comfort, however there is a balance to be found between being sufficiently prepared, and how much of the organisation's time and resources are expended on the process. So it makes sense to give consideration to the ways in which your Business Continuity Plan might be made ineffective, so that you can avoid these.





Some of the reasons that Business Continuity Plans (BCPs) can fail include:

1. **Insufficient focus on the business impact analyses phase** – if this process is not done correctly, the organisation will not accurately identify the issues that are of sufficient risk to the organisation to require contingency planning, reducing the efficacy of the resulting BCP.
2. **Inadequate support from senior management** – if the BCP is prepared and implemented as a compliance exercise or because it sounds like a good idea, but without genuine understanding and support from the top, the resources required to make it really effective are unlikely to be allocated.
3. **Lack of ownership** – related to the above, someone needs to be responsible for the BCP who has the necessary authority to make organisation-wide decisions and authorise appropriate expenditure/resource allocation.
4. **Confusion between BCP and DRP** – the criticality of IT systems can cause organisations to focus their efforts on Disaster Recovery Planning (DRP) which is IT-specific, thinking that they have achieved Business Continuity Planning, which in fact focuses much more widely on the entire organisation. There's not much gain from recovering the IT systems in isolation from all other critical systems and resources of the organisation.
5. **Inadequate training** – all members of the organisation, not only the Business Continuity Leader/Team, need to be aware of how the BCP works and their role within it, so that there is no confusion in a real emergency.
6. **Inadequate testing** – without a regular and realistic testing process the efficacy of training efforts won't be known, and unanticipated problems with the Plan won't be identified and fixed until a real business disruption event occurs.
7. **“On the shelf” syndrome** – many organisations prepare systems documentation such as BCPs and consider the job done. The document goes “on the shelf”, potentially never to be seen again. To maintain effectiveness, BCPs must be live documents, regularly updated to ensure all information is still correct.
8. **Depth and breadth** – the development of an effective BCP can't be achieved overnight or with a shallow view of the organisation and its processes. A deep understanding needs to be developed of critical business processes, risk factors, impact analyses, realistic recovery time objectives, costs, logistics, and people issues, across the entire organisation, without any unchecked assumptions being embedded.
9. **Responsibility** – the clear assignment of responsibility is important for success, from BCP leadership at the top level down to distributed responsibility at the tactical level, so that confusion is avoided and there are appropriate and sufficient people assigned to all necessary tasks.

Consideration of these potential problems with the organisation's BCP can assist you to ensure the end result is robust but nevertheless cost-effective.

Please [contact QRMC](#) if you would like assistance with your Business Continuity Plan.



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QRMC NEWSLETTER



SNG Meeting



In 2005 QRMC founded the Safety Networking Group for senior safety professionals working in the greater Brisbane metropolitan area. QRMC coordinates and arranges for speakers to present at quarterly meetings and discuss information on contemporary WHS issues.

Group members also share information from their workplaces or industries, which other members frequently find interesting and useful.

The next Safety Networking Group meeting for 2016 will be held on 20 May 2016 and will include discussions on:

- Contemporary Legal precedents under the harmonised WHS Legislation
- Legislative and Policy update from the WHS Policy Branch, WHSQ
- Update & discussion on the upcoming international Occupational Health and Safety Management Standard, ISO 45001

In the interest of ensuring that the Group contributes to the development of the health & safety profession in South East Queensland and provides best value to its members, SNG membership is restricted to individuals in occupational health and safety positions at Managerial level. To express interest in attending, please [contact QRMC](#).

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**RISK MANAGEMENT
SAFETY MANAGEMENT
BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT
MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS**

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