



Managementsystems

Audits

Audits are one of the most powerful instruments for continuous improvement in any kind of organisation. Enterprises need to develop mechanisms to enable them to adapt continuously to the changing market and environmental conditions: usually this can only be achieved by instruments that help to react very quickly and appropriately to changes. This is the great potential offered by audits as instruments for continuous improvement.

Objectives

Audits must contribute to the identification of improvement potentials in organisations. To be accepted by all relevant participants and stakeholders as an instrument for positive development they have to focus on the needs and requirements of the enterprise.

Process

Clear audit targets are a prerequisite for their efficient and effective conduction. Audits can serve numerous purposes and can thus have various targets such as the identification of improvement potentials in:

- Legal compliance
- Process/sequence efficiency
- Interfaces
- Products (customer requirements)
- Problems with residents
- Process costs
- Environmental impacts
- Risk perception and solutions
- Compliance with standards (such as ISO, HACCP, EMAS, TS, etc.) ...

Therefore the first step in audit planning must be the definition of audit targets. These targets serve as a basis by selecting qualified auditors, defining organisational entities or processes to be checked and determining necessary preparatory steps in the detailed audit plan.

Audits have a long tradition and have proved to be valuable in the most diverse situations:

- As a support measure for training activities (e.g. to support the implementation of new processes)
- For the identification of new business potential (e.g. in connection with climate protection)
- For the reduction of liabilities (e.g. legal compliance or product use)
- As the preparation for external audits (e.g. ISO 9001, 14001, OHSAS 18001, SCC, TS 16949 etc.)
- For process optimisation (e.g. ISO 9001)

Besides planning, one of the most important success factors for audits is to work with experienced people who have the difficult task to convince their audit partners to cooperate and actively work on the further development of the topics under review.

There is no problem in finding a problem. Not to find it, would be a problem!

Benefits

With low internal and external expenses, significant savings and earning potentials can be identified.

References

Philips, SCA Laakirchen AG, VOEST ALPINE Stahl Linz GmbH, Borealis GmbH