

Gerald A. Matt

The Art of Museum Management

with contributions by

Axel Anderl, Chris Dercon, Robert Fleck, Max Hollein,
Irene Knava, Elke Peller-Kühne



4.9. Statement 4: Irene Knava, Audience Building

ISO FOR CULTURE

Quality Management as a Tool for Leadership

What is ISO FOR CULTURE?

ISO FOR CULTURE is a new management tool for cultural institutions based on the globally recognized ISO 9001:2015 standard. It was developed together with 60 executives from German and Austrian cultural institutions in a committee of the *Austrian Standards Institute* at the suggestion and under the chairwomanship of Irene Knava. **ISO FOR CULTURE** consists of the quality management standard **ONR 41000 – Quality Management for Cultural Institutions** and the novel **System for the Effective Management of Cultural Institutions**. Taken together, they make it easy to achieve the highest level of quality management, certification according to ISO 9001:2015.

KNOWLEDGE: Quality (Source: ISO 9000:2015)

A quality-oriented organization promotes a culture that leads to behaviors, attitudes, actions, and processes that create value by meeting the needs and expectations of customers and other relevant interested parties.

The quality of an organization's products and services is determined by the ability to satisfy customers, as well as by the intended and unintended impact on relevant interested parties.

The quality of products and services includes not only their intended function and performance, but also their perceived value and benefit for the customer.

What is Quality Management?

Quality management is oriented towards the needs and requirements of different stakeholders, such as employees, the public, lenders, donors, and owners or sponsors. The aim is to ensure the added value and satisfaction of these stakeholders. As a result, there is both an inward orientation towards the employees as well as an outward orientation towards visitors, sponsors, the art market, etc.

The purpose of a quality management system is not to assess the quality of an exhibition or workshop, but to ensure that it runs efficiently and smoothly and to minimize the costs of non-quality, for example, through missing specifications, untimely tenders, or a lack of planning.

KNOWLEDGE: Quality Management System (Source: ISO 9000:2015)

A quality management system

- includes activities by which the organization identifies its objectives as well as the processes and resources required to achieve the desired results,
- manages and controls interacting processes and resources necessary to create value and deliver results for relevant interested parties,
- enables top management to optimize the use of resources, taking into account the long-term and short-term consequences of their decisions,

- provides the means by which measures can be identified to address intended and unintended consequences in the provision of products and services.

What is a Certification?

As part of certification according to ISO 9001:2015, the management system undergoes confirmation by an independent third party. This is the big difference to the Austrian seal of quality for museums, which is based on a self-evaluation. The certification is an externally visible sign that the museum takes a goal-oriented approach and employs efficient processes. The certification creates trust for stakeholders as well as security for the management in regard to liability issues.

EXAMPLES of ISO 9001 Certified Museums

The German Mining Museum in Bochum, the Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, and the Swiss Museum of Transport in Lucerne are already ISO certified. The benefit for these institutions: QM is a positive signal to the outside world and at the same time creates a better internal understanding of operations. It is a tool for change that allows the transformation of corporate culture by means of an objective instrument. It leads to significantly shortened training periods for new employees and ensures much greater attention to employee satisfaction. Customers benefit from a continuous improvement process and, as a result, from a reliably high level of service quality, which is further enhanced by the systematic registering of their needs.

GOALS OF QUALITY MANAGEMENT

1. Goals and clear messages help internal and external stakeholders: The direction of the museum is determined and documented in writing. Marketing becomes more effective, sponsor acquisition more targeted, and (personnel) decisions are made faster.
2. Operational processes are documented in writing and a transparent process organization is created. Information is made available to all employees. Individual knowledge is secured and transformed into organizational knowledge. The result is a "learning organization."
3. The service for the public is improved by a regulated flow of information. Employees with contact to visitors can act confidently and competently. Professional feedback management deals constructively with both complaints and praise.

Prototypical Process Map

ISO FOR CULTURE offers a prototypical process map for the representation of processes in museums, which each institution can adapt to its own requirements. The process map provides an overview of the central elements of museum management and deals with the specifics of artistic respectively scientific together with commercial and organizational processes. The process map can be used to define processes, interfaces, and communication between the various departments.

A distinction is made between the following PROCESS GROUPS:

1. Leadership processes: creative profile, strategy, finance, financial management, controlling & compliance, organization, human resources management, quality management.
2. Core processes: Creative conception, program planning, creative production, mediation/education, communication/marketing, relationships with customers and users.
3. Support processes: IT, accounting, cleaning, mail room, among others.
4. Outsourced processes: Catering, shop, ticketing, supervision, hiring exhibitions, among others.

Prototypical process map for museums, © Irene Knava and Thomas Heskia

Orientation Towards Mission, Guiding Principles, and Goals Create Clear Messages

Quality management means a clear orientation towards the institution's mandate. What is the mission? What are the guiding principles? What are the museum's objectives? These clear messages create an internal goal-orientated approach: Every employee knows what he or she is contributing to the achievement of goals. Goal agreement discussions allow goals to be defined and their achievement to be reviewed. The knowledge of one's own contribution is a source of motivation and makes working more pleasant and meaningful. Clear goals also ensure an efficient use of resources, as the work focuses only on what matters while transparent processes help to avoid friction losses.

Instructions for Operational Processes Secure Knowledge

The process-oriented approach of the ISO standard provides an objective basis for questioning operational processes, discussing interfaces between departments, and restructuring cooperation. In museums, a long tradition of established structures meets with new challenges, such as an increased appeal to target groups and a wider range of events. It is precisely here that an objective approach of this kind can be used to consider operational workflows and implement change processes independently of individuals. How does the cooperation between curators, marketing, and sales work? Or between event management and museum guards? How does feedback from the supervisor flow to the exhibition organizers?

Structured Planning Reduces Stress and Saves Time

Clarity in processes removes stress from working relationships and improves the working atmosphere. Everyone knows what he/she has to do. This is also an advantage for managers: Leadership becomes easier. Instead of complaining one can work productively. There are agreed schedules within, but also between the departments. Employees retain their autonomy and individuality. When deadlines approach, they display a coordinated approach that has been jointly agreed upon. Employees know where they stand and can work more qualitatively with less time pressure.

Step by Step – Implementation in Practice

In a first step, mission statements and objectives are developed. Where are we going? Who are we here for? In the next step, the relevant processes are identified and described. “As little as necessary” should be the keyword here. Subsequently, the process organization is adapted and, if necessary, new job descriptions are written. The last step is certification, which can but need not be done. Depending on the size of the museum and the number of employees, the process can be expected to take one to one-and-a-half years. It is important to involve all – really all – employees. Support from consultants who moderate the process from outside is recommended. The added value of quality management immediately becomes visible in the implementation, as processes run more smoothly. An even higher added value can be achieved through certification, which “forces” institutions to regularly audit and continually improve its quality management system. Quality management is a living system and not a dead concept that has been filed away.

About the Author

Irene Knava is an expert for audience, cultural experience, and cultural performance management. She is a systemic organizational consultant, certified quality manager, business trainer and lecturer at universities in Austria and Germany. Since 2009 her agency AUDIENCING has provided cultural institutions with consulting, training, and co-creation in their change to visitor-oriented cultural organizations. Most recently her book *ISO FOR CULTURE: Qualitätsmanagement für Kulturbetriebe* was published by Facultas, Vienna. She studied theatre, film and media studies, art history, business administration, and cultural management in Vienna and served in management positions in cultural institutions for 15 years. www.audiencing.net