



# The Holy Grail of Quality

Visibility, measurable, real-time performance and the ability to go beyond compliance with EQMS



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# How do manufacturers keep up with the complexities of today's market?

## The Chasm

A giant chasm exists between organizations that 'do' quality and those that seek to leverage quality as a strategic advantage for sustaining growth. For many organizations, their quality management maturity can be considered an indicator as to their ability to adjust quickly to evolving markets. They pivot when competition threatens to be the disruptor rather than be disrupted. Lastly, where possible, they define their position early in the next wave of opportunity.

Manufacturers are all somewhere on the spectrum of quality management. One end of the spectrum is **conform-and-comply** to regulatory demands and customer mandates as a baseline. At the other end is **predictive analysis** of quality management processes across a global organization to anticipate potential failures. This allows for easily justifiable resources for improvement and brand reputational protection.

How an organization responds to a failure discovered in the field says a great deal. Not waiting for a negative compelling event to test that preparedness says volumes more. This is the primary reason regulatory oversight is necessary and enforced for industries such as life sciences, medical devices, food & beverage and aerospace. Organizations that ease the burden of compliance with EQMS are better able to allocate resources effectively and confidently to improvement initiatives.

## The Magic Ingredients

Unfortunately, there is no magic potion for achieving the maturity required where all the risks are covered and where the organization can reap the strategic benefits of mature enterprise quality management. However, the **ingredients** are known. These include **people** and excellence in **quality processes** throughout the organization as well as across the value chain – from suppliers to customers and back again.

People are a crucial ingredient in an organization's ability to face the challenges in today's complex market. Instilling quality as a responsibility and collaborating internally across silos is equally as important as partnering with suppliers, thus ensuring quality principles translate upstream. A culture of quality is absolutely key to achieving quality objectives.

Finally, supporting all processes from supplier quality through production and extending to the customer is where technology (namely enterprise quality management software) provides the framework for control, automation and visibility. All this leading to harmonized, interoperable tools to drive and monitor performance to stated targets and objectives. EQMS provides the means for opening the aperture for predictive analysis across the entire quality management landscape.

# Why do some organizations struggle to manage quality?

## Reasons Vary

Reasons vary but often quality is not a boardroom topic (not a strategic objective) and thus becomes a box that must be checked. Historically, the goal is conformance/compliance, and if some improvement is experienced, it is considered a bonus. The quality team within the organization is, in many cases, viewed as a type of police – there to enforce an order. In the very worst of scenarios, they are accused of getting in the way of production. One could be forgiven for drawing parallels with the notion of worker safety 50 years ago. The reality is, however, that organizations with this view will (if they do not change) face extinction.

## The Top Reasons for Failures

- Quality is not viewed as a strategic objective and a pillar of operational excellence.
- Quality culture is one of policing rather than responsibility.
- Organizations equip themselves to react to, rather than prevent, negative compelling events.
- Quality processes are built in silos that hinder cross-functional collaboration.
- Quality processes are built to end once compliance and conformance is achieved.
- Quality management is isolated and not connected to other business processes.
- Too much effort is expended maintaining the quality management system and not enough on improvement.

## The Struggles

Markets are in a constant state of flux, margins are squeezed, and yet many manufacturing organizations still insist on utilizing manual or disparate methods to manage quality processes. There exist pockets of significant effort dedicated to administering quality management systems (QMS). These are regularly duplicated across multiple plants. The tools used are often home-grown or a mix of paper and electronic document repositories. There is little or no continuity and almost no visibility as to the real-time health of quality management at an individual facility. This makes it impossible to manage risk for a plant and exponentially more difficult for multiple plants and, therefore, the organization.

# What is the root cause of this disconnect?

## It's Ironic

The root cause of the disconnect is ironically spending too much time on administration and fragmented tools, chasing email chains and creating blind-spots from poor processes and inadequate tools.

The quality management disconnect can manifest in several ways. A business can experience the fall-out of an adverse event magnitudes greater than the initial failure itself. For example, the process used to manage complaints or unwanted/unplanned product or service events in the field can present an opportunity or compound the problem. Meaning, the fact that a failure/issue occurred is a negative outcome but the process for capturing, investigating, mitigating and communicating throughout the lifecycle of the event is an opportunity in and of itself.

## The Keys

Acknowledgement of the issue plus maintaining excellent and timely communication with the customer (and customer-facing associates) throughout the phases of investigation and action are all key. Providing details of progress and actions, including how the issue will be broadcast to other parts of your business, all present an opportunity to illustrate not only that your organization cares about quality and customer satisfaction, but that you have a way to eradicate the potential for reoccurrence.

# What is the future of quality management software?

## Beyond Compliance

The future of quality management software is to clear the way for the quality maturity journey. EQMS is the vehicle for breaking through efficiency barriers and going beyond compliance. Minimizing compliance overhead and automating processes are real benefits of EQMS, but that's just the baseline. Organizations looking to make quality their advantage will demand much more from technology.

## Integration of Systems

Integration is one key requirement of EQMS. Connecting to other enterprise business systems such as ERP, PLM and CRM systems is required for efficiency and to establish a single source of truth. Also, the wave of smart connected devices brings with it vast opportunity for quality management intelligence. Feedback will be available in a volume and speed never seen before. Having in place an EQMS platform which is capable and ready to integrate with, consume and analyze this intelligence will be a significant advantage.

## Ability to Adapt

*"Change has never been so fast and it will never be this slow again." ~Graeme Woods, Digital Influencer*

EQMS must support manufacturing organizations that aim to flourish and grow. In some manufacturing industries like electronics and consumer goods, the velocity at which new products are demanded and, therefore, the pace of innovation must increase. This can only be supported by the very best tools for quality management – ones that support people and processes. EQMS is, for example, by its nature already able to consistently deliver better NPI performance.

# What are some misconceptions surrounding EQMS? How can manufacturers use EQMS to save time and money?

## It's a Big One

There is a traditional misconception that EQMS is simply a big quality management database ... that it serves only to capture quality related information. The view that EQMS is only a 'data-in' solution is limited and is only a small part of what EQMS can do for an organization. It is true that quality management software is information-driven. Data-in is just the beginning of the story though. Data capture has received a vast amount of attention to ensure that the user can interact simply and intuitively on the platform of their choice (PC, laptop, tablet or any other mobile device) in effect emulating their everyday real-life interactions with technology.

Automating processes drives efficiency and control. Harmonizing processes and presenting this information in whatever way is best for the consumer of relevant and timely information improves decision making, aids the identification and mitigation of risk and fosters collaboration with an objective view of performance.

## Examples

EQMS serves as a system of record. It also aids in problem solving, prompting, reminding and escalating issues automatically thus eradicating blind spots. EQMS provides visibility to all stakeholders in real-time. For example, IQS has seen companies revolutionize the way supplier charge-backs are managed and saved millions of dollars in a matter of months. IQS has delivered efficiencies that took a world class manufacturer from a poor performer with customer satisfaction issues to a top tier performer that uses its management prevention mechanisms and issue management processes as a competitive differentiator. All examples that are data-driven yet far beyond being a system of record.

# What are the benefits?

## Reduce Risk & Improve Visibility

When implemented, EQMS reduces risk, improves visibility and harmonizes key aspects of your business processes aiding in the transformation of quality to a mature, proactive state.

## At Scale: Data Visibility

EQMS acts as an intelligence gateway into global performance, showing you the who, what, where, when, and why of all things quality.

## Quality and Compliance for the Enterprise

Companies that prioritize cohesive quality have made great strides in reducing costs, winning new business and driving innovation. EQMS enables you to streamline, harmonize and centralize quality and compliance data and processes.

## Quality Management Throughout the Supply Chain

EQMS takes quality and compliance beyond the organization for the mission critical purpose of collaborating and building true partnerships with suppliers with tools to automate supplier data collection, maintain a digital traceability record, manage risk, and drive better performance from upstream partners.



# In your experience, what has the outcome been like when a company has implemented EQMS?

## The Bottom Line

Customers come to IQS when they need to transform the way they manage quality and compliance. IQS has helped hundreds of companies and thousands of users reduce the effort required to meet compliance and regulatory mandates. This enables them to go beyond compliance to improve performance and deliver tangible results in enterprise quality management.

The outcome is a transformation that affects the bottom line. This could mean saving millions by streamlining one or many processes (like supplier quality management) or making improvements with upstream partners (like advanced quality planning) to reduce the potential for nonconformances in a costly stage of production.

## Now and Future

Initial improvements in control and visibility are further enhanced by tangible improvements in the analysis of quality related information gathered over time. EQMS from IQS facilitates analysis of at least 12 processes to yield actionable insight thus ensuring the appropriate allocation of limited resource to mitigate the most critical risks and produce the best possible outcome. Decisions based on fact, to meet both tactical and strategic goals, are a result over and above the direct contribution to improvements in operational excellence.

When EQMS is implemented well, an organization sees a more robust, controlled and proactive approach to risk. The guess work is removed and confidence in brand protection increases. Businesses that look to dominate use the best available tools in quality management and, in turn, use these tools to support and enhance the culture of quality. People see quality as a responsibility, they rely on well thought out streamlined and effective processes, and they come to rely on and utilize insights only possible from a deployment of EQMS.



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