WHITE PAPER

8 ways to achieve higher ROI in quality

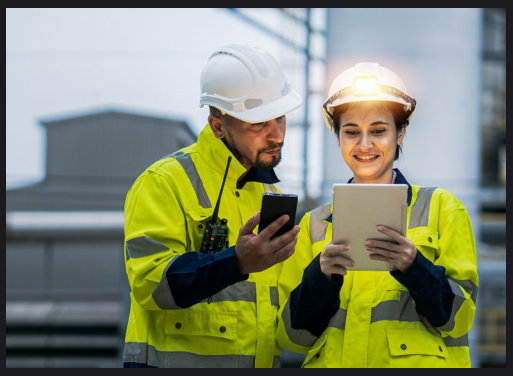
Eliminate paper and spreadsheet-based quality processes

Even seemingly minor changes can significantly impact your business and bottom line when running a mid to large-sized company. Recently, food and beverage giant SUBWAY® recognized the need to streamline the tracking of its vendor requests, submissions and negotiations, as they understood the implications of the cost of poor quality.

By implementing document control, SUBWAY® could quickly set up new suppliers, get products to market faster and improve business growth and franchisee profitability. This automation not only enhances operational efficiency but also addresses the cost of poor quality. Inefficient document control processes, such as relying on spreadsheets and paper trails, can lead to errors, delays and increased costs.

When businesses are looking for any possible competitive advantage, they must consider the cost of poor quality and identify areas for improvement. By prioritizing changes that streamline document control processes, companies can minimize errors, save time and reduce expenses associated with poor quality. Implementing an automated solution can provide real-time visibility, improve collaboration and mitigate risks, ensuring that businesses achieve their desired outcomes and avoid unnecessary costs.

In the pursuit of a competitive edge, investing in automated document control becomes a strategic decision that drives operational excellence, cost savings and overall business success.



Evolving from paper and spreadsheets

As the digital age continues to evolve, businesses must seek ways to innovate, automate and optimize. And while many cutting-edge companies might happily embrace the newest tech related to their specific industry, they are often mired in the Mesozoic Era in other vital aspects of their business, especially with their Quality Management System (QMS).

They may have automated top-of-the-line manufacturing processes and yet still cling to "pencil and paper" and spreadsheets for their QMS, especially regarding document control and management.

Does your company still rely on paper, spreadsheets, or SharePoint solutions? If so, it's time to evolve. You must leave paper and spreadsheet-based processes behind and embrace an integrated QMS.

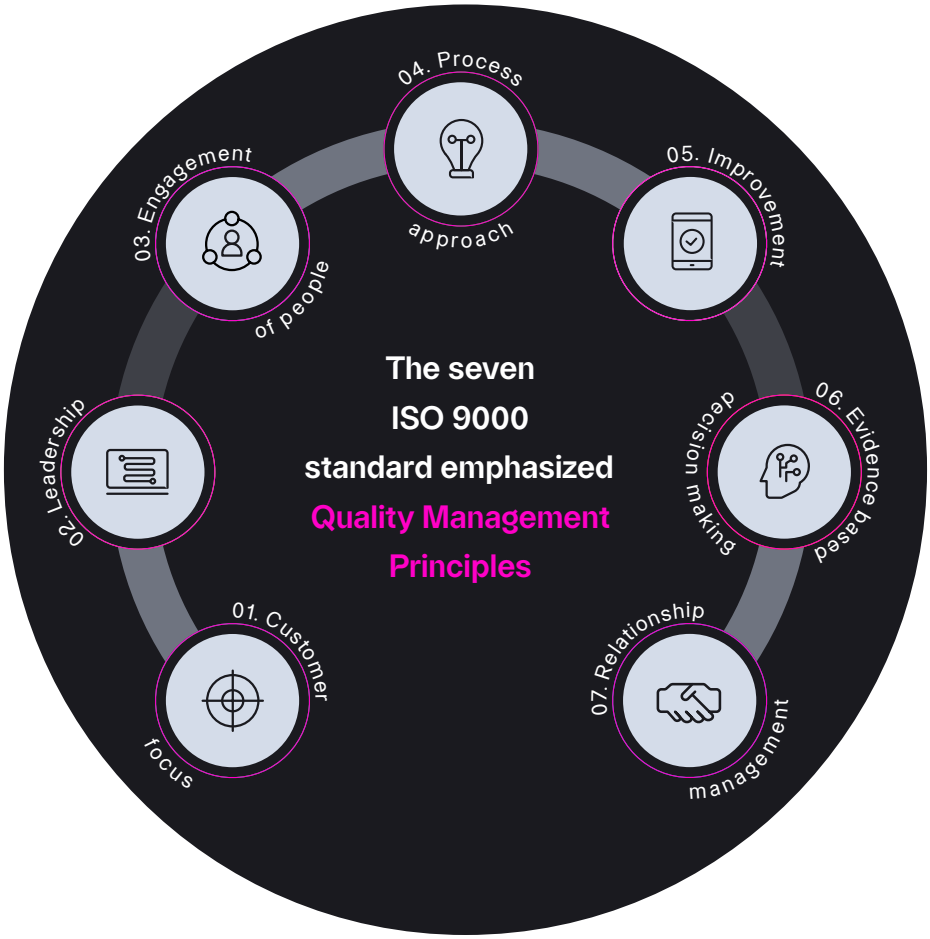
What is QMS?

A quality management system is a formalized operating procedure that systematically documents critical processes and workflows to help a company achieve its specific goals and quality objectives to ensure customer satisfaction. Such a system aims to help organize and optimize business practices and create a system that enables continuous improvement.

When Ken Croucher, the recognized father of Quality Management Systems, first developed his ideas in ‘91, the fundamental objective was to seek compliance by creating uniform procedures and processes, such as:



Quality goods or services make for happy customers. However, the quality in question can only maintain its integrity if it remains consistent across every facet of the organization. To that end, the ISO 9000 standard emphasized seven quality management principles:



Such standards dictate that a company must be able to do the following:

- Create fully developed and documented processes and procedures
- Fashion a robust outline of responsibilities and roles
- Comply with internal standards and industry regulations
- Track, manage and store data efficiently

In the past, these processes used rudimentary document control and tracking instruments like Excel spreadsheets and SharePoint — companies made do with the tools at their disposal. This method, however, lives in the past. And it's dying. Quickly.

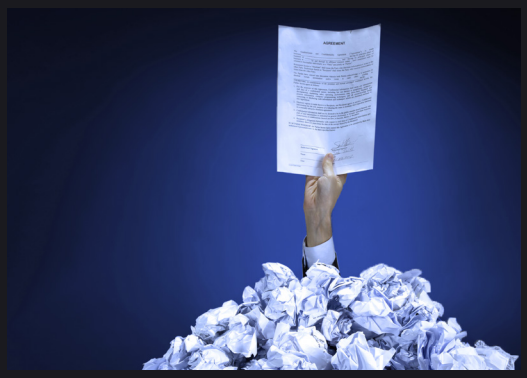
"Constant searching for documents during the workday is wasting time and reducing employee productivity... Organizations must ensure their employees have the tools they need to accomplish work quickly and efficiently, and not get lost in organizational rabbit holes."

The problem with paper

Many companies choosing to use a paper-based ISO 9000-compliant (or other industry standards) QMS system operate under the assumption that it's affordable and efficient. But that couldn't be further from the truth. Often, such an obsolete system adds to staff workload, creates inefficiencies and costs the company more in the long run.

Paper-based systems can tank employee productivity. In 2021, Wakefield Research surveyed 1,000 US-based office professionals. The survey found that more than half — 54% — say they waste time searching for necessary documents and files, with the vast majority (81%) admitting they can't find an important document when they're put on the "hot seat" by a boss or client.

A growing company will have to develop hundreds — if not thousands — of procedures to control quality operations. If this is done with a paper-based or spreadsheet-based QMS, it will require thousands upon thousands of documents.



On such a large scale, the document control process alone becomes incredibly unwieldy; reviewing documents, making revisions, filing records and storing paper and spreadsheet files end up requiring considerable time and effort to manage.

Remote and dispersed workforces

Whether by design or in response to a sudden disruption for any reason — like the recent pandemic — more companies are pursuing strategies that place workers outside of a central facility, either full-time, part-time, or on an as-needed basis. With no way to access, share and process documents and workflows, aside from a local database or, literally, through reams of files in cabinets, paper-based and legacy database systems are not up to the challenge of supporting teams who need to work remotely.

As a result, the work of the quality team is severely restricted, and quality and safety systems are compromised. Paper-based and legacy software systems cannot effectively meet quality and safety needs in these scenarios.

As a result, this hinders team and business performance and results in a host of critical challenges, including:

- Out of sync documents and records
- Obsolete documents remaining in circulation
- Missing documents and records due to misfiling and loss
- Inability to share documents and information between teams and team members
- Hampered audit preparation
- Lack of reporting and analytics ability
- No way to check progress
- Limited traceability
- Inconsistent employee training
- No way to track creation, editing and approval progress
- Slowed risk analysis and complicated risk management

Over time, such inefficiencies typically result in the following:

Loss of productivity
Due to the paper chase and inefficient links from one department to another.

Duplication
Waste resulting from lack of communication and visibility.

Employee turnover
Faulty or unnecessarily complicated processes thwart employees from maximizing their potential. Also necessary for any high-turnover business where employee training and re-training are critical.

Regulatory non-compliance
Arising from a lack of controls and oversight in response to potential problems. Companies are forced to be reactionary rather than proactive.

Audit failure
This can occur due to gaps in quality documentation, leading to increased compliance costs.

In the past, all companies had to work with paper- and spreadsheet-based QMS systems. They were the gold standard. But as is often the case, standards change. Now, these are no longer the status quo. They've been replaced by powerful software that delivers efficient and accurate document control, resulting in a paradigm shift within the QMS market.

Eliminating the paper chase with Octave

The two primary goals of Octave Reliance (formerly ETQ Reliance) QMS and EHS software are to help companies eliminate the "paper chase" and increase visibility and communication between departments by providing them with automated tools that handle:

- Document control
- Control for all document types
- Metadata configuration
- Integration with Microsoft Office
- Smart business rules for review and approval
- Employee training
- Change request and revision control
- Integrated reporting
- Intuitive filtering and data security
- Corrective action (CAPA)
- Risk management
- Nonconformance handling
- Supplier quality
- Environmental, health and safety (EHS)
- Centralized reporting
- Audit management

That's accomplished by cutting-edge compliance software utilizing built-in best practices developed by quality champions in various industries. Such a fully integrated QMS has several tangible ROIs, including:



Flexibility

The highly configurable and flexible software is capable of meeting the needs of any business or production environment, regardless of scope or size. This easy-to-tune, optimized and automated workflow capitalizes on the very nature of flexibility.



Time savings

Employees and departments waste less time thanks to improved document control, automated processes and heightened data



Corrective actions

Heightened visibility and accessibility make it simpler to implement corrective actions to ensure that standards are met and upheld.



Waste reduction

Completely eliminates the need for paper. That's good for the environment, a company's public image and the bottom line.



Cost savings

Electronic workflow decreases costs, both in labor and supplies. It also reduces mistakes, errors or other inefficiencies that could hurt the bottom line.



Increased visibility

Provides a centralized data and documentary storeroom that multiple users can access in real time in separate locations.



Better accessibility

Records are easy to edit, share, update or access, ensuring record retention compliance and more efficient retrieval processes.



Improved data management

Real-time management and organization of all recorded data make it easier to uphold or respond to industry standards and guidelines.

Naturally, these factors increase a company's efficiency, accuracy and throughput and, ultimately, improve product and service quality. As a result, leaving paper in the past for any QMS need allows a company to use its quality programs to create a significant and sustainable business advantage.

On such a large scale, the document control process alone becomes incredibly unwieldy; reviewing documents, making revisions, filing records and storing paper and spreadsheet files end up requiring considerable time and effort to manage.



Why Octave

At Octave, "Quality Creates Trust," and our customers trust us to deliver brand safety, product quality and competitive advantage. Over the past two decades, we have established ourselves as the vanguard of the QMS industry, helping hundreds of mid to large-sized companies take the next step forward.

We currently work with more than 550 companies around the world, from startups to Fortune 1000 global brands, in highly quality-intensive industries such as:

- Life sciences (medical device and pharma)
- Electronics and technology
- Food and beverage
- Heavy industrial manufacturing

We are certified or verified for compliance with ISO 9001, ISO 27001, Amazon Web Services (AWS), SOC 1 and 3, ITAR, HIPAA and FedRAMP.

Octave has pioneered the movement to leave paper-based and spreadsheet-based quality programs in the past and helped companies of all sizes transition to an automated QMS that transforms their business practices. And with QMS, it's not about losing an ounce; it's about picking up considerable speed.

About Octave

Octave is a leader in enterprise software, turning data into decisive action and intelligence into your edge. Our software solves for and simplifies complexity, from the design and build to operations and protection of people, property and assets – for any scope, at any scale. For decades, we've partnered with customers to sharpen performance, elevate efficiency, and amplify results. From factory floors to entire cities, our solutions are tuned to scale up what's possible from day one onward.

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