

Improving the quality and reliability of certification

Neil R Hannah
Director of operations development and compliance
BSI Group

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A paradox

Never have there been so many organisations in the world registered to management standards

Never has there been such a rich variety of services and schemes against which organisations can be registered covering so many different fields (quality, environment, health and safety, information security, business continuity etc etc)

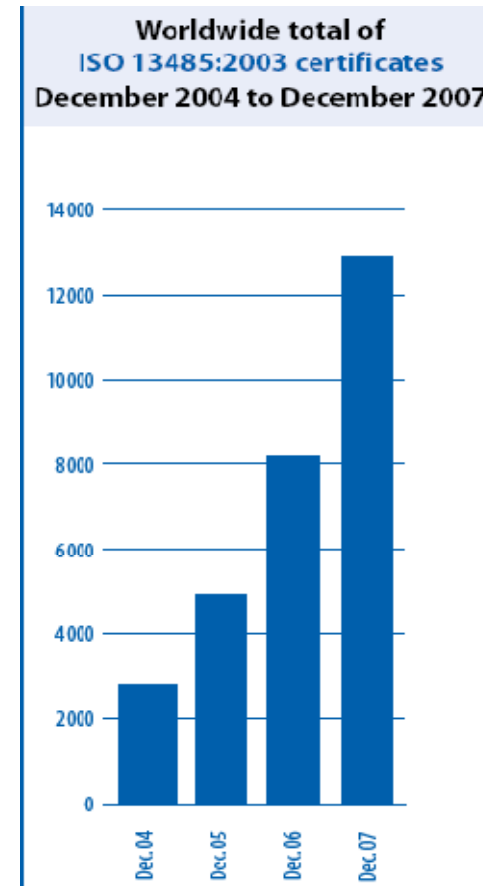
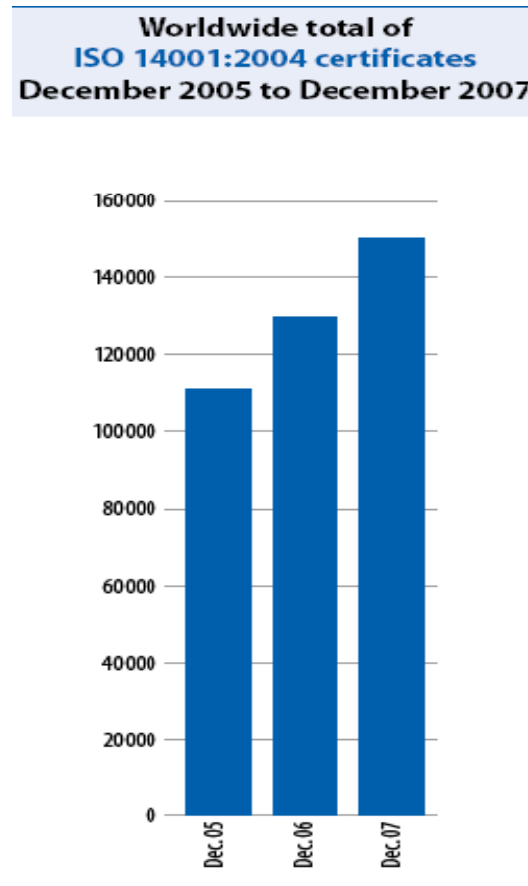
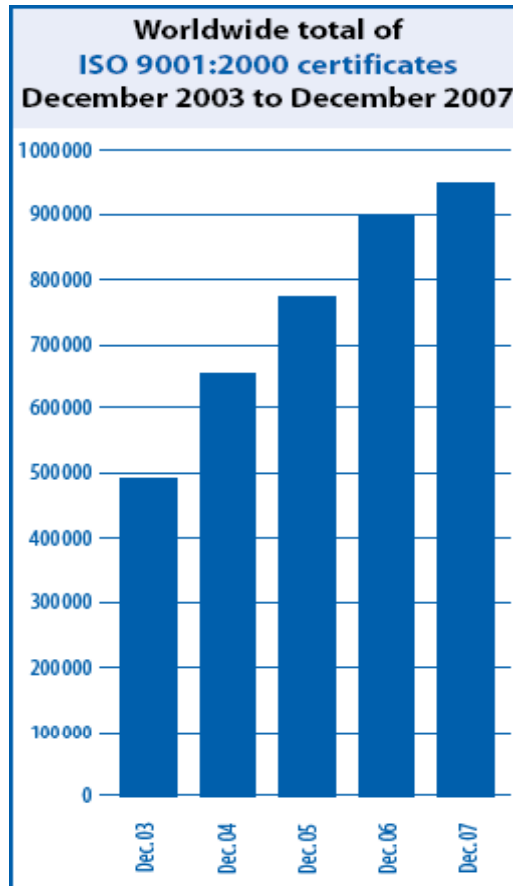
Never have there been so many sector specific schemes with such deep penetration in their markets (automotive, aerospace, medical devices, food, etc)

Never has there been more hard evidence of the benefits of registration/certification

...and yet never has there been such suspicion and doubt about the quality, reliability and value of the certification/registration process

Why is this?

Some facts about the numbers of registered organisations



All figures from ISO survey of certifications published October 2008

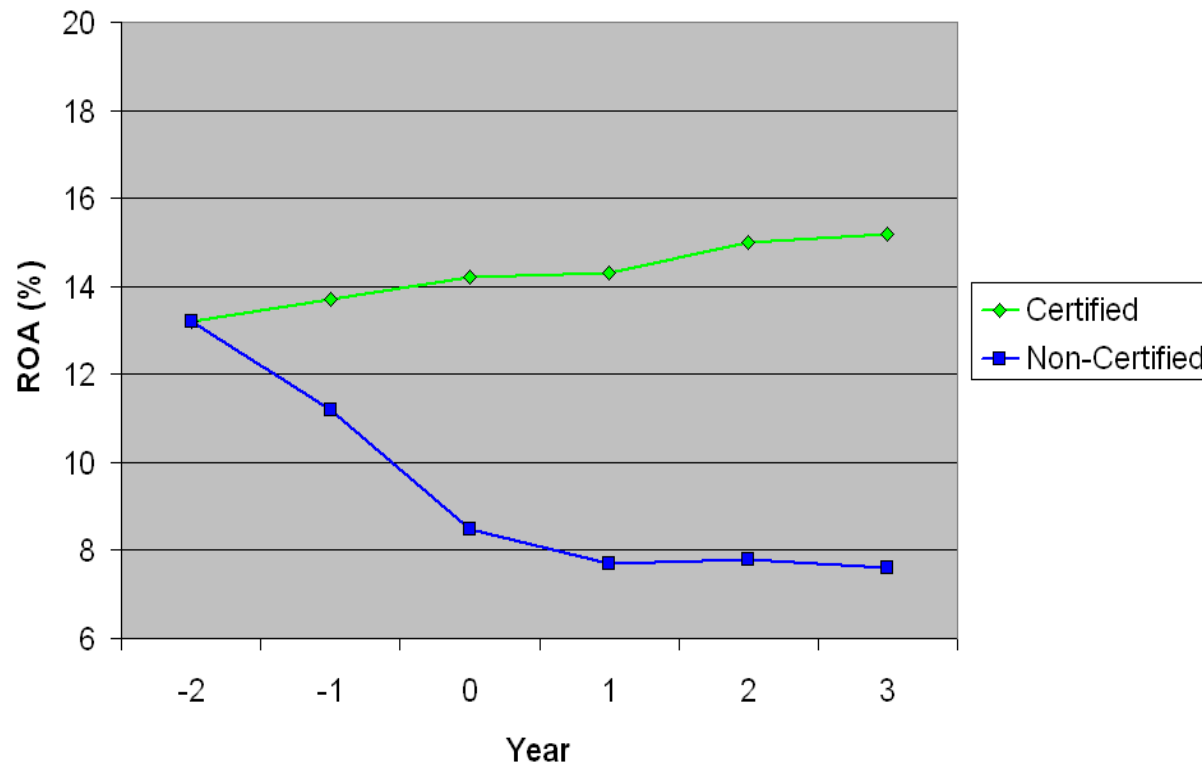
The benefits of certification

For the consumer ...quality of product, security of their personal information etc

For the wider community ...safer workplaces, less pollution etc

For the certified organisation ...better systems, fewer failures, healthier and safer employees. Lower costs of compliance...better bottom line results!?

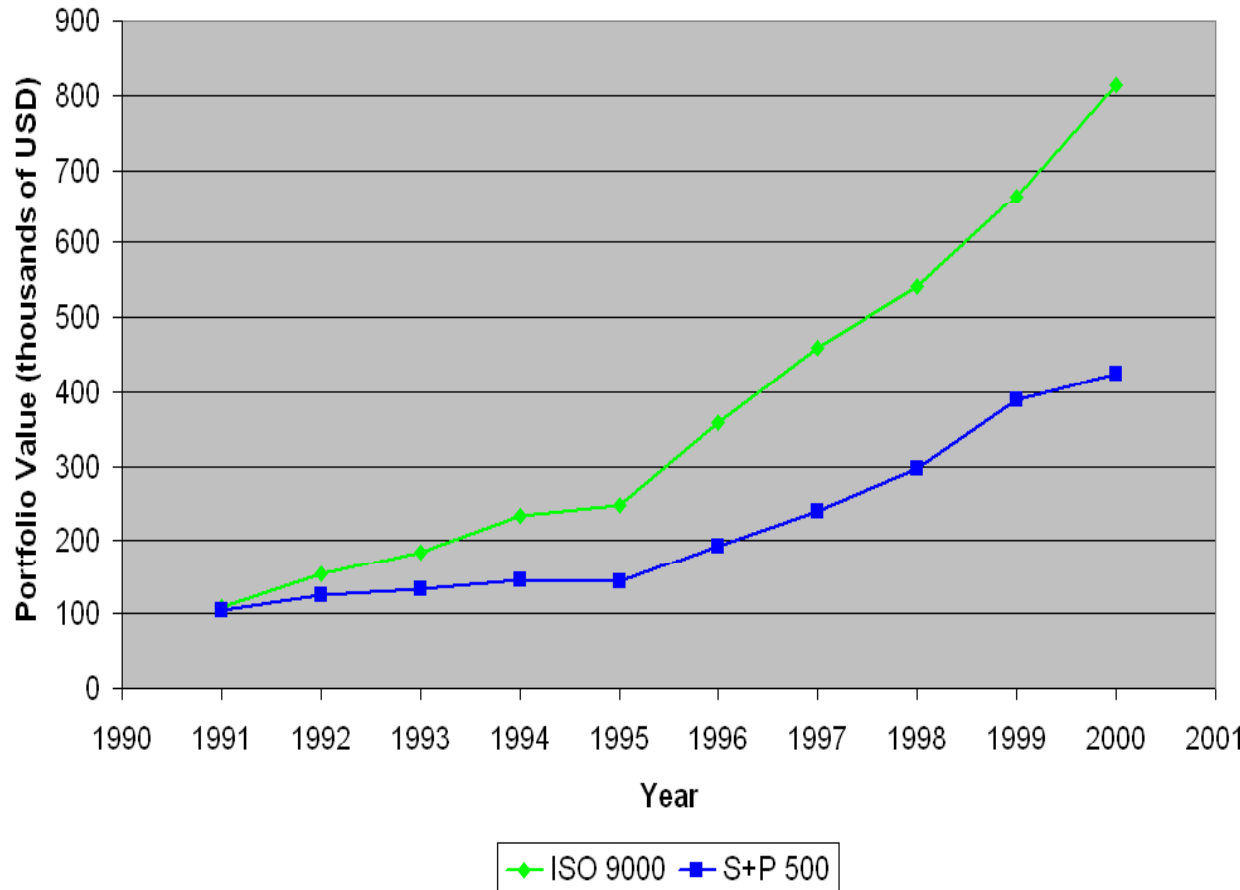
Return on assets of certified and non-certified companies in industrial machine sector (sic35)



We can answer the original question of, “Does it pay to seek ISO 9000 certification?” with a resounding **“YES”**

Corbett, C.J., Montes, M.J., Kirsch, D.A., Alvarez-Gil, M.J. (2002) Does ISO 9000 Certification Pay? Special Report, ISO Management Systems July – August. 2002.

What happens to \$100k invested in portfolio of ISO 9001 registered companies compared to the market average?



‘Our results show that long term investors are handsomely rewarded for investing in ISO 9000 certified companies.’

Rajan, M., Tamimi, N. (2003) Payoff to ISO 9000 registration. Journal of Investing. New York . Vol. 12, Iss.1

So what can conclude?

Certification is more popular than ever

There is objective evidence that organisations get benefit from certification in obvious and not so obvious ways

But there remains strong suspicion from customers of registered organisations, from regulators and from the wider community about how reliable it is

Why?

I suggest we have to face the fact that many organisations have been registered wrongly as a result of poor practice by auditors and by certification bodies

Some abuses of systems certification

Certification bodies offering to write their client's quality manual then assess it and certify against it

Certification bodies which promise "guaranteed certification/registration in 30 days or your money back!"

Certification bodies which cut the audit days down below acceptable standards and do not cover the whole system

Certification bodies which do not train their auditors adequately and fail to verify competence

There are lots more...

What can we do to improve matters?

My view is that certification is at a cross roads. We either raise the standard or risk certification becoming devalued

We have to raise the standard of performance of auditors, certification bodies and accreditation bodies

We have to put clear blue water between real, IAF-member accredited, added value certification and that offered by the charlatans of the industry...the problem is the distinction is not always as clear it should be today!

What can we do now to improve confidence in certification?

The key principles for inspiring confidence in certification (from ISO 17021)

Impartiality

Competence

Responsibility

Openness

Confidentiality

Responsiveness to complaints

Impartiality: what BSI does

Separation of sales and marketing activity from assessment activity; simply put “salespeople sell and assessors assess”

Separation of certification decision from assessment activity

Collection of data for statistical analysis (168,000 eReports facilitating detection of bias, “soft-grading” of non conformities etc)

Impartiality reviews by external experts not employed by BSI to ensure adequacy of controls

...and several other things that I cannot make public!

Competence: What BSI does

This has been an enormous challenge for all certification bodies, accreditors, training organisations and indeed for IRCA too

We all recognise that the old model (based purely on attending accredited courses and serving a set amount of time) is no longer appropriate

We all recognise the vital importance of auditor competence but how to measure it? In what terms? In how many dimensions?

The BSI approach is based on what we call the three legged stool

The three legged stool

A three legged stool is stable and safe provided all three legs can be relied upon!

Product / scheme knowledge eg 9001, 14001, 2700. This may be learned through BSI or other examined courses. When we confirm knowledge we grant a P (product) code to the assessor

Core auditing skills, from ISO19011-based approach.

NB: these are NOT product dependent but there are levels of seniority:
A (assessor)
LA (lead assessor)
etc



Sector / process knowledge (eg chemicals, aerospace, legal, finance etc defined by T (technical) code (similar to EAC codes)

Only when there is a match on all three codes for all three legs can the auditor be appointed to do the job!

In special cases a special fourth leg is needed for requirements of language, security clearance etc, defined by S code

The scale of the problem

BSI employs 600 auditors and has a further 1000 external (sub contract) auditors worldwide spread over 50 countries and speaking over 40 different languages

Typically an auditor will have 2 or 3 P codes and 12 T codes and for each (new) one a competency test is required

Our approach is to test assessors on-line to check their competence in a given product or technical area then check their auditing skills and ability to apply knowledge in a witness audit

The responsiveness principle and the BSI client satisfaction survey

BSI survey almost 100% of clients after every assessment to get their feedback

The survey is done by email in 17 different languages and we ask just a few questions

We get circa 40% response from our clients

Any dissatisfaction is immediately followed up by management and brought to a resolution

We can score satisfaction levels by country, sector, product, team, individual assessor and so on



ご意見をお聞かせください

CLICK [HERE](#) TO DISPLAY IN ENGLISH

BSI顧客満足度調査にご協力をお願い申し上げます。

拝啓

2008/05/20に実施されました、弊社審査員であるJAPAN - JAPANによる訪問につきまして、BSIに対するお客様のご意見が、継続的な付加価値を提供する上で大変重要なものになると考えております。

つきましては、13の質問により、貴組織の貴重なご意見を受け賜りたいと存じます。以前にも同様なご質問にお答えいただいているとは存じますが、毎回お客様からのフィードバックをいただくことに意味があると考えております。いただきましたご意見については確実に留意し、行動してまいります。

貴組織からのご回答をお待ち申し上げます。ご協力に感謝申し上げます。

敬具

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neil Hall'.

The survey questions

We ask clients about planning, assessor professionalism, closing meeting, quality of report and so on

We also provide the opportunity for clients to give us extra free text comments about any aspect of our service

...and we act upon their responses!

1. カスタマーサービス部による審査日程連絡に関する対応は十分でしたか？	とても満足	満足	普通	不満	とても不満
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. 貴組織からの電子メールなどのお問い合わせに関する事務所や営業担当の対応はいかがでしたか？	とても満足	満足	普通	不満	とても不満
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. 審査員は貴組織の事業と目的をよく理解していましたか？	とても満足	満足	普通	不満	とても不満
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. 今回の（もっとも最近に発行された）認証書発行のタイミングについて満足していますか？	とても満足	満足	普通	不満	とても不満
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. 審査訪問日は変更になりましたか？ 変更があった場合、それはBSI/貴組織のどちらによるものですか？	はい（BSIの希望により変更）		はい（お客様の希望により変更）		いいえ
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. BSIから前回受け取った請求書の内容は正確でしたか？初めの場合、「はい」を選択してください。	はい			いいえ	
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Summary

In terms of the principles of impartiality, competence and responsiveness BSI has developed processes that we believe will help to raise the standard

The BSI view is that this is part of giving clients (and in turn their clients) confidence that certification delivers

The client survey tells us that 98% of clients worldwide approve and would recommend BSI

We think the serious part of the certification industry worldwide need to work together to further raise the standard without being bogged in pettifogging detail and we all need to remember certification was invented to give clients, their clients and the wider community confidence in what goes on