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MINET KENYA'S ISO 9001 2015 JOURNEY

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Our ISO 9001 2015 journey began almost 3 years ago with the introduction of Minet Kenya's new strategic pillars. The Operational Excellence Pillar targeted our subscription and certification to the ISO 9001 2015 standard as a key performance indicator. A committee was constituted to steer this goal with at least one representative from each department as well as a representative from the executive committee. The business invested in, and embarked on, a vigorous training journey for the champions as well as the

lead auditors.

Once the training was done, a gap analysis of our processes was conducted, and the results were shared company wide. All teams were made aware of the gaps and what needed to be done for us to achieve the set goal of Operational Excellence and the enhancement of overall Customer Experience. All teams, with the guidance of their ISO champions, worked on their standard operating manuals and other documents as required by the standard with an understanding that an ongoing, sustained approach to set standards on operational excellence not only increases employee engagement and satisfaction, but also unlocks greater productivity and in turn, better financial results.

In November of 2020 we went through our Certification Audit and were recommended for certification. In May 2021, Minet Kenya officially obtained their ISO 9001 2015 certification. This marked the official beginning of our journey towards maintaining the standard.

The length of this journey towards official certification was impacted by several factors:

- The vast range of our products and services,
- The complexity of the processes we operate,
- The varying risks and opportunities as well as mitigations and matrix around measuring effectiveness of the actions taken
- The diversity of the requirements of the relevant interested parties, and
- Our culture – How well we accept, and adopt to, change.

There's no denying that the events of the past few months have shaken and stirred the customer



experience landscape - and as the economic situation remains volatile, building and maintaining customer trust is more crucial than ever before. It is for this very reason that our Customer Experience and Operational Excellence journey through our subscription to the ISO 9001 2015 standard has been at the center of our conversations and actions at Minet Kenya. To make the journey smooth for those interested in subscribing to this standard, I suggest that you:

- Identify a certification body, what advice can they offer?
- Make provision for a consultant
- Educate top management as the certification process will impact them directly
- Know the standard (read it carefully and recommend for the supporting teams to read it too)
- Work on a project plan as well as a communication plan
- Communicate on the steps required and the relevant documents and secure 'buy in'
- Undertake a gap analysis – produce and complete checklist documents, processes, resources, and records. Periodically re-run the gap analysis to check the gaps are reducing
- Carry out internal audits and act on their findings
- Allocate budgets, this change unfortunately doesn't come for free.

The truth is, the way organizations treat customers will be remembered long after the sales transaction has passed, and those who fail to offer a high-quality customer experience risk losing loyal customers in the long term. With our certification status comes an even bigger responsibility of ensuring we consistently walk in our clients' shoes and retain our clients' trust.

One of the ways we are improving our Quality Management System is by building Customer Empathy into our processes and policies, defining business rules with empathy in mind, and making it easy for the process owners to know how to translate that into functional specifications.

We are still navigating this journey and recently had our first successful surveillance audit. Some of the learnings we would like to share with those who would like to test the waters:

1. LEADERSHIP SUPPORT - We have had support from leadership all the way. Each team requires learning, re-learning, and pulling their weight with the support of the leadership team. There's a lot of change management with the adoption of this standard and support from the top down will make the journey a lot smoother.

2. PATIENCE - This is the kind of patience that can help you step away from the urgent issues to focus on the important issues that make a big difference. The standard requires that you embrace new approaches and new ways of thinking. Documentation needs to be done, possibly rewritten. Teams will question your consistency when you start speaking of new ideas such as, "risk-based thinking," "quality Objectives" and, "documented information." Patience with yourself and those around is very important to get you through.

3. COMMITMENT: - This Certification journey is not a walk in the park. You will need to be persistent working with top management and colleagues. You cannot meekly retreat in the face of resistance. You will need to demonstrate commitment and get the attention needed to make the necessary changes to support your Quality Management System. Committing to the principles and demonstrating persistence is key to a successful journey.

4. EXPERTISE - Don't sit around hoping the knowledge you need will land in your lap by itself. Get a copy of the standard and read a little bit every day. Also, relate the standard requirements with your processes that are currently in place



5. FOCUS ON IMPROVEMENT: Don't forget that a key part of your quality management system, clause 10, is continuous improvement

Effectively managing the evolving 'world of work' and working towards achieving Operational Excellence and Customer Satisfaction through maintaining the ISO recommended standards will be a large and difficult challenge - and it is clear that we still have a long way to go - but those organizations that do focus on challenging themselves to find new and innovative working practices that work for the needs of the business, employees, and customers, will be best placed to succeed. That's where we are positioning ourselves!

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