Procedure: Continual Improvement

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# Purpose

This procedure describes a system, provides instructions and assigns responsibilities for continual improvement of the QMS (Quality Management System) at [Company].

# Scope

The scope of this procedure includes all processes and related activities of the QMS.

# Responsibilities

Amend to reflect company structure.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Role | Responsibility |
| Quality Manager | Collates and presents identified opportunities. |
| Managing Director | Reviews and approves improvement opportunities identified. |
| All staff | * Identify opportunities for improvement * Carry out duties described in this procedure |

# Procedure

## General

[Company] is committed to a continual improvement philosophy. Continual improvement opportunities are identified by management review of audit results and analysis of quality performance data.

Improvement projects are defined either as corrective and preventative actions or as quality objectives supporting the quality policy. Interaction of these quality system processes to achieve continual improvement is defined in this procedure and in QM001 Quality Manual Section 8.5, Improvement.

## Identification of improvement opportunities

To identify opportunities for improvement, [Company] continually monitors its quality and operational performance in the following areas:

* process data and product characteristics and their trends
* product non-conformances
* customer satisfaction/dissatisfaction and feedback
* market research and analysis of competitor products
* feedback from employees, suppliers and other interested parties
* internal and external audits of the quality system.

Additionally, special assessment projects may be initiated to identify opportunities for improvement in other areas, such as:

* machine set-up and tool changeover times
* non value-added use of floor space and other facilities
* excessive testing not justified by accumulated results
* waste of labour and materials
* cost of non-quality
* excessive handling and storage.

Employee suggestions are a source of information for improving processes, procedures and work environment. All staff are encouraged to make improvement suggestions. Suggestions are submitted to, evaluated and prioritised by the Quality Manager.

Opportunities for improvement may be related to specific events or problems such as changed regulatory requirements, new technology, complaints, returned products or production interruptions.

Opportunities for improvement may be:

* continual - by departmental managers, based on daily feedback from operations, employee suggestions and in response to events or problems
* periodic - by management review, based on analysis of longer-term data and trends.

## Evaluation of improvement opportunities

Opportunities for improvement are evaluated. Where appropriate, they are implemented through corrective and preventative actions.

Improvements may be triggered by identification of non-conformances, review of complaints, audits, etc. (refer to Procedure QP809: Corrective and Preventative Action).

Opportunities for improvement based on longer-term data and trends are evaluated by management review. They are prioritised with respect to their relevance for enhancing customer satisfaction and achieving the quality policy. Improvement opportunities selected for implementation are defined as quality objectives and are implemented through special management projects (refer to Procedure QP501: Management Review).

Opportunities for improvement of products are evaluated by production, quality and senior management.

## Implementation of improvement projects

Improvements to address daily feedback from operations are implemented through corrective and preventative actions (refer to Procedure QP809: Corrective and Preventative Action).

Longer-term improvement projects to achieve quality objectives and the quality policy, improve quality performance or correct unfavourable trends are implemented through special projects (refer to Procedure QP501: Management Review).

## Review of continual improvement

The continual improvement system is reviewed periodically by senior management review (refer to Procedure QP501: Management Review) by review of this procedure.

Management review includes evaluation of current and completed corrective and preventative action projects for achieving quality objectives. These reviews assess quality performance data, identify new opportunities for improvement and new quality objectives.

Appendices

Amend as required or delete.

Definitions

Amend as required or delete.

| Term | Definition |
| --- | --- |
|  | Insert terms/abbreviations and definitions for those used within the procedure. Do not include any terms or abbreviations not used within the procedure. |
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Document Information

| Revision History | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Revision | Modified by | Change Control No. | Description of Change |
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Complete the above fields for each revision of this document. Ensure that there is sufficient description of changes so that the change history of this document can be followed. Additional columns can be added to include document/change tracking numbers generated by your company’s systems if required (eg. change control).

| Associated forms and procedures | |
| --- | --- |
| Doc. No. | Document Title |
| QM001 | Quality Manual |
| QP501 | Management Review |
| QP809 | Corrective and Preventative Action |

List all controlled procedural documents referenced in this document (for example, policies, procedures, forms, lists, work/operator instructions

| Associated records | |
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List all other referenced records in this document. For example, regulatory documents, in-house controlled documents (such as batch record forms, reports, methods, protocols), compliance standards etc.

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