



Chapter 16. Communications

Contents:

0) Introduction

1) 7.4 Communications (ISO9001)

2) 8.2 Requirement for products and services (ISO9001)

8.2.1 Customer communication (ISO9001)

3) 8.2.1.1 Customer communication-supplemental (IATF16949)

4) 8.5.5.1 Feedback of Info from Service (IATF16949)

5) SIs & FAQs

6) Supplementary Notes

7) Exhibits

0) Introduction

There are a few applicable clauses in this chapter. The focus of this chapter is on communications, which include internal, external and customer communications. Customer communication and internal communication had always been controlled. External communication is new.

1) 7.4 Communications (ISO9001)

(Clause Description-Paraphrase)

Organization shall determine the internal and external communications relevant to the quality management system, including: (a) on what it will communicate, (b) when to communicate, (c) with whom to communicate, (d) how to communicate, (e) who communicates.

(Highlights of the clause)

- (Ref to old Standards) There had been a similar clause, 5.5.3 Internal Communications, in the previous version of ISO9001.
- It is now expanded to cover external communications as well. It also emphasizes on the need of planning for communications. However, it did not say whether you need to plan how far ahead.

(Compliance best practice)

7.4 Communications

1. For internal communications, prepare a schedule on those subjects you need to communicate regularly. See **Exhibit 16-1**. Any other ad-hoc items can be added to the list, as and when
2. For external (interested parties) communications, it should be formal as communication of this nature could have legal ramifications. You should plan well, as given in a) to e) of the Clause Description. The nature is ad-hoc, and there is no requirement for a regular program. Records keeping, however, is important. See **Exhibit 16-3**.
3. External communication is a 2-way communication. Sometimes you inform and notify, sometimes you received input and complaints etc. A procedure is useful to guide internal staff how to handle this. See **Exhibit 16-2**

2) 8.2 Requirement for products and services

8.2.1 Customer communication



(Clause Description-Paraphrase)

Communication with customers shall include:

- a) providing information relating to products and services;
- b) handling enquiries, contracts or orders, including changes;
- c) obtaining customer feedback relating to products and services, including customer complaints;
- d) handling or controlling customer property;
- e) establishing specific requirements for contingency actions, when relevant.

(Highlights of the clause)

- (Ref to old Standards). There was a similar clause, 7.2.3. Customer Communication. in the previous version of ISO9001.
- It was much shorter then and represented by (a)-(c) above. Requirements (d) and (e) are new additions.

(Compliance best practice)

8.2.1 Customer communication

1. Consider to have a webpage for your organization, if you do not have one currently. The webpage should describe your products and services and contact details, as the minimum.
2. You should also have a list of contacts for the convenience of regular customers. Your telephonist and reception should have this list.

3) 8.2.1.1 Customer communication-supplemental

(Clause Description-Paraphrase)

Written or verbal communication shall be in the language agreed with the customer. The organization shall have the ability to communicate necessary information, including data in a customer-specified computer language and format (e.g., computer-aided design data, electronic data interchange).

(Highlights of the clause)

- (Ref to old Standards). There had been a similar clause, 7.2.3.1 Customer communication-supplemental) in the old version ISO/TS16949.
- Basically there is no change but reworded to clarify the meaning of the requirement. Notably the word 'agreed with' rather than 'specified' allows some room for negotiation.
- Customer-specified language, (Computer language and format etc. EDI, design software etc) continues to be a requirement

(Compliance best practice)

8.2.1.1 Customer communication-supplemental

1. On language to be used, it will be as agreed with the customer. I have even seen this specified in the business contract. However, there is generally no need to produce any evidence other than your disclosure.
2. Customer communications involving customer language, formats, EDI, design software etc, These are things you have to comply and use for the operations. Example, if a customer only releases P/O via its portal, and you need an EDI software to extract it. You either have the facility to complete the transaction or you don't get involved. Customer will not get out of the way send you a P/O by email etc.



4) 8.5.5.1 Feedback of Info from Service (IATF16949)

(Clause Description-Paraphrase)

The organization shall ensure that a process for communication of information on service concerns to manufacturing, material handling, logistics, engineering, and design activities is established, implemented, and maintained.

NOTE 1 The intent of the addition of "service concerns" to this sub-clause is to ensure that the organization is aware of nonconforming product(s) and material(s) that may be identified at the customer location or in the field.

NOTE 2 "Service concerns" should include the results of field failure test analysis (see Section 10.2.6) where applicable

Author's note: For exact wordings, please refer to standard indicated after the clause title.

(Highlights of the clause)

- (Ref to old Standards). There was a similar clause, 7.5.1.7 of same title, in the previous version of ISO/TS16949. Only minor changes occurred.
- New clause added logistics, material handling. Instead of outside the organization, it is specific to customer location.

(Compliance best practice)

8.5.5.1 Feedback of Information from Service

1. This kind of feedback will come from 3 sources, Sales department, planner and QAQC.
2. IATF auditor may ask how such issues are fed back to the organization, and how actions are taken to resolve issues with customers.
3. You need to have a process, not necessarily documented, so that the relevant departments know what need to be done

5) SIs & FAQs

No SIs & FAQs for this Chapter

6) Supplementary Notes

Legend: HOC= Highlights of Clause, CBP= Compliance Best Practice, S&Q= SIs & FAQ, EXH= Exhibits

Clause	Section	Clarification Subjects
7.4	CBP	SN16-1. Should I have a program with schedule for external communications?
7.4	CBP	SN16-2 How do we actually communicate internally, with the schedule given in Exhibit 16-1?
7.4	CBP	SN16-3. How to communicate externally? Can provide some examples?
8.2.1	CBP	SN16-4. Must I have a website to customer communication?

SN16-1. Should I have a program with schedule for external communications?

Although not stated very clearly, external here means interested parties. External communication should be ad-hoc, it should stay ad-hoc. Only when there is something important to communicate, then communicate. No one has time to hear your stories unless they are critical and urgent to them



SN16-2 How do we actually communicate internally, with the schedule given in Exhibit 16-1?

For internal communication, there is generally 2 categories. Category 1: Routinely matters e.g. order changes, rejects, customer spec changes, policy and object and risk changes. Non-quality matters such as risks, safety, environment and legal matters can also be included. Routine can be summarized in a table (**Exhibit 16-1**) as evidence. Most IATF companies have daily meeting, mostly morning. It is a good forum to disseminate such information. Communications can also go by email notification, but that can happen if everyone is into IT. Category 2 is ad-hoc, things that happen once in a while without warnings. This is probably done through a townhall meeting. Record shall be retained, such as attendance, minutes, reports etc.

SN16-3. How to communicate externally? Can provide some examples?

Having a procedure/process is useful, like **Exhibit 16-3** given. First thing when an event especially a negative one happen, Risk-Base Thinking has to be practiced, to foresee who are impacted and how, and decide if who need to be informed. The method to handle the fallout and response should be figured out. A good case in point is when the airbags of Takata was found to be defective, the affected OEMs notify the public and car owners of a pending recall program and implemented it. The recall program was tedious and there are car owners not responding. With legal implications, the OEM must still complete the recall, or face a legal risk later. Other situations may be less critical, unlike the above, planning is still needed, although simpler. Keep a record on the communications taken place.

SN16-4. Must I have a website to customer communication?

Website is a hardworking marketing tool. Besides existing customers, potential and new customer can also visit your site to see what you are offering. The website works for you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Having a website for business is no longer a novelty idea. Plus it is very inexpensive these day, there should be no reason not to get one.



Exhibit 16-1 Internal Communications

Regular Internal Communications

No	What to communicate	To Whom	When	How	Responsibility
1	Quality Policy	Internal-all employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First introduced • Orientation • And when revised 	Email, briefing Display	QMR/HOD/HR
2		Relevant external interested parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First introduced • And revised 	Website change Targeted email	QMR/IT
3	Quality Objectives/KPI	By department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First introduced • And when revised 	Email, briefing	QMR/HOD
4	Product Line changes	Internal Depts-all employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When changed 	Email, briefing	QMR/HOD/HR
5	Special processes that may affect some employees	Affected dept & onsite subcons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First introduced • During revised 	Briefing	QMR/HOD/HR
6	Statutory and regulatory changes	Internal-all employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First introduced: • And when revised 	Email, briefing Display	QMR/EHS Leader/ HOD
7	Customer requirement changes	Internal-all employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First introduced: • Orientation • And when revised 	Email, briefing Display	QMR/EHS Leader/HOD

Remarks given in this section explain on the exhibit. Do not include them as part of the form.

- This chart is not complete. There are also daily communications in the form of management meetings, daily production meetings, problem-solving and improvement project meetings
- The subjects shown are primarily for internal communication. There is one item (#2) also extending to external parties, as a matter of convenience; instead of creating another document.

Exhibit 16-2.External Communications Procedure

External Communications Procedure			
PIC	Flow Diagram	Description	
Management	<p><i>(A. Outbound Communications)</i></p> <pre> graph TD A1[A1. Issues to Notify External Interested Parties] --> A2[A2. Decide Method of Communications] A2 --> A3[A3. Implement the Plan] A3 --> A4[A4. Handle and deal with Response] </pre>	<p>Step A1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issues arises that external interested parties could be changes env hazards, activities that will cause inconveniences to external parties. <p>Step A2.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide Method of communications and prepare for it, 5W1H (What, why, where, when, who and how) <p>Step A3.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the plan actually <p>Step A4,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handle and deal with response, that could be an acknowledge or hostility or disagreement 	
Assigned Person			
Assigned Person			
Interested party	<p><i>(B. Inbound Communications)</i></p> <pre> graph TD B1[B1. Feedback from External, including Complaints] --> B2[B2. Investigate & Take Containment Actions] B2 --> B3[B3. Problem Solving] B3 --> B4[B4. Maintain Communications till resolution] B4 --> B5[B5. Update Records] </pre>	<p>Step B1.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from external may be product related or on other aspects e.g. environmental If feedback is complimentary. Thank the party and share with internal departments if appropriate If complaint or negative issues, pass message to responsible person to handle e.g. EMR <p>Step B2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate and take containment actions If valid, the case will be further investigated and permanent actions taken Promise to keep communication channels open <p>Step B3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take corrective actions <p>Step B4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain communications and provide feedback until resolve <p>Step B5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update records 	
Responsible person			
Doc Control			

Remarks given in this section explain on the exhibit. Do not include them as part of the document

- External communications is no longer about waiting for incoming messages. It is also about, probably more so, outgoing communications
- The above provides guidelines on how to conduct internal and external communications

