Purpose:	Provide answers to the most common questions about ISO 9000 registration
To Be Read By:	All staff
Total Time Needed:	20 minutes

What Is "ISO"?

"ISO" refers to the International Organization for Standardization, headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. It has issued thousands of international standards, among which there is a "9000" series.

What is "ISO 9000"?

Collectively, this term is used broadly to refer to the 20 some documents related to the quality assurance standards set by ISO for quality systems (not the quality of actual products/services). It is also used in a more restricted sense to refer to the three standards (ISO 9001, ISO 9002, and ISO 9003).

What Does ISO 9000 Offer?

There are some important benefits of the ISO 9000 system:

- A single set of standards applicable to all industries
- An internationally consistent set of standards (supporting globalization)
- An objective third-party verification of quality assurance
- An opportunity for continuous improvement

The relevance of any of these benefits to your firm will depend on your customers' expectations and the marketplace in which your firm operates. ISO 9000 is a tool for use in the continuous quality improvement process.

What Is Its Approach?

Instead of certifying the end product, the ISO 9000 series focuses on the process by which the product (good or service) is produced. The framework underlying the ISO 9000 standards is intended to provide assurance to your clients that the service they receive from your staff will be consistent. For professional service firms, consistency (and the sense of reliability it invokes) is an important component of service quality as perceived by clients. Whether or not you ultimately become registered, designing a quality assurance system to ISO 9000 specifications can result in more satisfied clients and more productive staff.

What Do You Mean by "Quality"?

The document ISO 8402 defines quality as "the totality of features and characteristics of a ... service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs." A more pragmatic definition would be meeting the appropriate expectations of clients.

What Is the Relationship Between ISO 9000 and Other Quality Initiatives?

Quality initiatives such as BPR (business process re-engineering), CQI (continuous quality improvement), or TQM (total quality management) help you identify what you need to do in order to improve quality ... or to provide a particular level of service ... or meet a particular level of client expectations. The ISO 9000 framework provides a strategic approach for how to implement the quality intentions of your firm, along with a "road map" for that implementation ... a way to document the what.

Does ISO 9000 Assure Excellent Service?

No, the ISO 9000 framework is designed to ensure consistency in your service process, not any particular outcome or level of service quality. You can become registered as long as you have a comprehensive, well-documented quality system that you implement. It is the structure of your system that will determine whether or not you provide the level of quality that makes your clients feel they have received value for money. Also, your firm will have to pass ongoing surveillance visits by the registrar.

Is ISO 9000 the Only Registration We Need?

The answer depends on your industry and your clients. For example, testing labs also have to conform to ISO Guide 25, and firms supplying the automotive industry will need a QS-9000 certificate.

Is There More Than One ISO 9000 Standard?

Yes, there are three standards — ISO 9001, ISO 9002, ISO 9003 — of which ISO 9001 covers the most elements of a quality system. All three have the same framework, but ISO 9002 and ISO 9003 have fewer elements:

ISO 9001	All 20 elements
ISO 9002	Minus element 4.4 (Design Control)
ISO 9003	Minus elements 4.4, 4.6, 4.9, 4.19

Unless your firm provides only inspection and testing services, you will need to register to either ISO 9001 (customized services with a design component) or ISO 9002 (standardized services without a design component). Note that a number of testing and inspection laboratories register to ISO 9002, not ISO 9003.

What Is the Purpose of the 20 Elements?

The 20 elements in the standard cover all of the aspects of business operations (organizational structure, responsibilities, procedures, processes, resources, etc.) necessary to implement and document your quality system for satisfying customer needs.

Which of the ISO 9000 Documents Do We Have to Use?

There are only two that you have to read carefully — the standard to which you are becoming registered (ISO 9001, ISO 9002, or ISO 9003), and ISO 9004-2 (for service firms). If yours is a software firm, you will also need to read ISO 9000-3 on the application of the standard to the development, supply, and maintenance of software. Others that you may find particularly helpful are:

ISO 9000-1	Quality management and quality assurance — Part I: Guidelines for selection and use
ISO 9004-5	Quality management and quality assurance — Part 5: Guidelines for quality plans
ISO/DIS 10013	Guidelines for developing quality manuals

When you are preparing for your on-site audit, you may find the documents on audit requirements (ISO 10011-1 and ISO 10011-3) helpful in understanding the auditor's approach.

How Much of Our Service System Will Be Audited?

The registration (and therefore the audit) only covers the scope to which you agree, provided that the scope does not omit any activity critical to quality assurance for services to your clients.

What Office Equipment Is Covered?

The matter of office equipment (its purchase and maintenance) should be discussed with your registrar when defining your "scope." In general, office equipment critical to producing quality services for clients (e.g., your computers) will be covered.

What About Confidential Client Material?

Registrars and their audit teams have all signed commitments to respect the confidentiality of the materials they review. With regard to your clients, you can either elect to inform clients that you will be audited and ask for instructions regarding sensitive/confidential client material (which could then be placed in a separate locked facility), or you can arrange ahead of time with your registrar an approach that allows the auditor to trace how client files are handled without involving the review of actual confidential client documents. Remember ... the auditor will be concerned with how your quality system is operating (as demonstrated by your documentation), not the particular service you provide to an individual client.

What About Confidential Personnel Records?

The only personnel records that auditors need to review are training records. By keeping staff training records with your other quality records, rather than in personnel files, an auditor can easily inspect these records without looking at confidential personnel data.

Why the Emphasis on Staff Training?

Quality is a personnel issue, and ISO 9000 recognizes this fact by putting a lot of emphasis on staff training. If your firm is one where staff development needs can get continually postponed under the pressure of daily work, the ISO 9000 system can help you make sure to devote the appropriate time and resources to your staff. And perhaps more importantly, it can help make sure you create time for peer review of your own professional work.

Why Is Management Required to Lead the Process?

No comprehensive quality assurance system can work for long without solid management support. Dedicated, skilled staff can only affect a portion of the system. Also, the professional staff have to be willing to standardize their approach to client work rather than "doing their own thing" ... and only the senior practitioner has the authority to make that happen. Finally, any quality assurance system takes resources, and management must be willing to allocate those resources.

Why Is There So Much Emphasis on Documentation?

ISO 9000 requires not only documentation of what you do, but also of how you know it has been completed correctly, what you do if there is a problem, and how you monitor (audit) yourself to make sure the quality assurance system is continuing to work well. Documentation serves several purposes:

- Clarify quality objectives and methods
- Ensure clarity about tasks and consistency of performance
- Ensure internal coordination in client work
- Provide feedback for preventive actions
- Provide feedback for your planning cycle
- Create objective evidence of your quality system's performance

Any documentation approach that you adopt should always provide value-added for the management of your quality system, not simply meet a registrar's requirements.

Will We Be Required to Change the Way We Do Business?

No, the ISO 9000 framework does not require that you conduct your business in any particular way ... just that you demonstrate conformance to the elements of the standard to which you get registered. In general, ISO 9000 requires that you "say what you do" and then "do what you say." You will find, however, that the emphasis on preventive and corrective action forces continuous improvement.

Practically speaking, you will probably find that you do make changes in your internal procedures in order to be more careful about not "skipping steps" in client work. You may also find that the process of preparing for registration helps to sharpen your focus on your client's needs. The ISO 9000 framework (as discussed in ISO 9004-2) assumes that client satisfaction, not esoteric requirements, is the focus of quality assurance undertaken.

What Do We Need to Do to Get Registered?

You need to select a registrar, agree on the standard and the scope to which you will be registered, submit a Quality Manual (and supporting written procedures) for a "desk audit" (document review), and pass an "on-site registration audit."

Who Are the Registrars?

Organizations that meet certain standards can become accredited as registrars for ISO 9000. In Canada, it is the Standards Council of Canada that accredits registrars — i.e., the registrar is "SCC" accredited. In some countries, there is more than one organization approved to accredit registrars (see Appendix E).

What Does the Registrar Do?

At the beginning of the registration process, the registrar agrees with you on the standard to be used, the scope of your quality system, and at least the date for the document review. You may ask the registrar to provide a pre-audit assessment if desired. The registrar then appoints an audit team to conduct your document review and your on-site audit. Once the audit process has demonstrated that you are in conformance with the standard, the registrar submits your name for registration and then publishes your name in a directory of registered firms.

Who Are the Auditors?

The auditors are persons trained to perform external registration and surveillance ISO 9000 audits, and they are certified by registrars as auditors or lead auditors. Your registrar will send to your firm a team of auditors, headed by a lead auditor, in order to do the on-site registration assessment or audit.

What Do the Different Terms Mean?

There is some inconsistency between Canada and Europe on terminology, but in general the key terms are as follows:

Accreditation	National bodies accredit registrars
Certification	Registrars certify auditors
Registration	Registrars register a firm's quality system to one of the three standards

How Much Will Registration Cost?

The cost will depend on the size of your firm, the type(s) of registration(s) you require, and the particular registrar with whom you choose to work. Some registrars now have discounted rates for small businesses and will negotiate a fixed fee (rather than a daily rate) so that you can budget more easily for the expense. You should assume a registrar cost (fee plus expenses) of between $5,000 and $10,000 as a small firm (1994 average fees).

How Long Will Registration Take?

The length of time required depends on the size of your firm and how much work you have already done on a quality system. If you have a documented quality system in place and only have to make minor changes to conform to the ISO 9000 standard, then you can probably complete the process in three months. If you have virtually no documented quality system in place, then you will probably need a minimum of 6 - 12 months as a small firm (longer if you are larger and/or more complex).

What About Staff Time and Training?

Again it will depend upon your particular circumstance and how much of a gap there is between your present practices and the requirements. In average circumstances, you will probably need a minimum of 20 days of management time and 50 days of staff time to analyze the existing gaps, develop the appropriate policies and procedures, design the supporting forms and records, train everyone to the revised system, and conduct the internal audits. In addition, there will likely be training costs averaging $500 per staff member.

Do We Have to Take Corrective Action for Every Non-Conformance?

No, the ISO 9000 allows that corrective action "shall be to a degree appropriate to the magnitude of problems and commensurate with the risks encountered" (4.14.1). If the nonconformance is not "material" and if the cost of change would be disproportionately high compared with the effect for the client, change will not be expected. However, this distinction must be in your documentation and agreed to by your registrar.

What If We Disagree with the Audit Team's Findings?

When you reach an initial agreement with a registrar, you should discuss openly the appeal process that is in place and any associated fees.

Is This a One-Time Deal?

Your initial registration is usually good for three years; however, the registrar will perform surveillance audits every 6 or 12 months to make sure that your quality assurance system is still working appropriately and perform a full re-registration audit at least every three years.

How Can We Make Sure the Benefits Outweigh the Costs?

Designing a quality system based on ISO 9000 should provide you with an opportunity to evaluate how you are conducting business and whether or not there are further opportunities for meeting the service needs of your clients. There are five benefits that any small service firm should experience from the process:

- Greater staff awareness about the factors influencing client satisfaction and quality assurance
- Better selection of qualified subcontractors
- A rational basis for identifying key staff training needs
- Reinforcement of good work habits
- Reduced cost from rework or last-minute panics

What Recognition Can We Gain from Registration?

Once you are registered, you receive the right to use the registrar's "seal" under prescribed conditions on your letterhead, business cards, and other marketing materials.

Purpose:	Decide whether or not to become registered
Output:	Reasons for registration; target date for registration
To Be Completed By:	Management
Total Time Needed:	15 minutes (1 session)

1. ***WHY GET REGISTERED?***

There are a number of reasons why firms elect to become registered. To help you clarify what your own reasons might be, check all of the reasons in Work Sheet #1 that apply to your firm (see Appendix F for clients who require ISO 9000):

Work Sheet #1
Reasons to Register Your Firm

A	**You want improvement in:**	
	- Overall service quality	_____
	- Consistency of service to clients	_____
	- Staff productivity	_____
	- Cost control	_____
B	**Your current clients (will) require ISO 9000 registration of you because of:**	
	- Legislation (government agencies)	_____
	- Company policy (private sector)	_____
	- Their own registration	_____
	- Needing reassurance on quality control	_____
C	**You want to enter new markets that:**	
	- Already require ISO 9000 registration	_____
	- Will require ISO 9000 registration	_____
D	**You need to maintain your market position:**	
	- As a "leading edge" firm	_____
	- As a firm competing based on "quality"	_____
E	**You have competitive pressures to:**	
	- "Stay even" by getting registered	_____
	- "Catch up" by getting registered	_____

2. *WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT REGISTERING?*

Review the reasons you checked in Work Sheet #1 for registering and indicate below any negative consequences if you decide not to proceed with registration (*check all that apply*):

_____ Inability to bid on selected contracts in Canada
_____ Inability to bid on selected contracts abroad
_____ Potential loss of major current clients
_____ Inability to attract major new clients
_____ Loss of market image as "leading edge"
_____ Loss of market image as "top quality"
_____ Loss of market share to registered competitors
_____ No negative consequences we are aware of

3. *SHOULD YOU REGISTER?*

DON'T REGISTER *if you only checked the last option in Item #2. You can still benefit from improving your quality assurance system, but there is little justification for expending resources on the registration itself*.

REGISTER *if avoiding the negative consequences you checked in Item #2 justifies spending a minimum of $5,000 plus 75 days of staff time*.

4. *SHOULD YOU REGISTER NOW?*

In order to benefit from the registration preparation process, there are several preconditions for success that you should consider. Please check any item below that is not true at this time:

	Not True
All senior professional staff support registration	_____
Lead support staff want registration	_____
Relations between professionals & staff are good	_____
Have some excess staff capacity	_____
Organizational structure is stable	_____

If you checked any items, you should reconsider whether or not this is the best time to press for ISO 9000 registration.

Purpose: Finalize an agreement with a registrar
Communicate your registration decision to staff

Output: Schematic of core processes (scope)
Questionnaire for surveying registrars
Initial memo to staff

To Be Completed By: Management
Total Time Needed: 30 minutes for Items #5-9 (Session 1)
30 minutes for Items #10-12 (Session 2)

5. ***WHAT IS YOUR OPTIMAL TIMING FOR REGISTRATION?***

Assuming that you will need a minimum of 6 weeks to get your quality assurance system in place for the document review and another 6 - 12 weeks to practice its implementation before the on-site audit, what would be your target date for registration in order to maximize the competitive advantage you could gain from that registration?

_____

6. ***REGISTERING TO WHAT STANDARD?***

You need to select the standard to which your quality system will become registered, based on the type of client work you perform. Does your firm provide customised services that must be designed to fit a particular client's specifications?

____ **NO** → *select ISO 9002 or ISO 9003*
____ **YES** → *select ISO 9001*

While most professional service firms will select either ISO 9001 or ISO 9002, you should select ISO 9003 if your firm is engaged only in "final inspection and testing" services. However, you should be aware that most customers are requiring registration to ISO 9001 or 9002.

7. *WHICH SITES TO REGISTER?*

If you have more than one office, you may begin by registering the quality system at one office only or you may have more than one site registered at once. Does your firm have more than one office?

_____ **NO**

_____ **YES**, and you wish the registrar to audit and register:

_____ only the main office

_____ all offices

8. *THE SCOPE OF SERVICES TO BE REGISTERED?*

You may define for the registrar the "scope" of activities ("core processes") in your office that will be "controlled" under your quality assurance system as long as you include all processes that affect your ability to produce quality work for clients. The following are typical processes that would normally be included:

- Bids or quotations for client work
- Contracting with clients
- Developing your work plan
- Designing the service [if you selected ISO 9001]
- Implementing the work plan, including review of work
- Client review/approval
- Work completion and storage of closed files

To help identify your "core processes" that will need to be included in the scope, try creating a flow chart in Work Sheet #2 similar to the example given in Table 1, using at least the following symbols:

Service needs; service results

□ Activities; client-related services

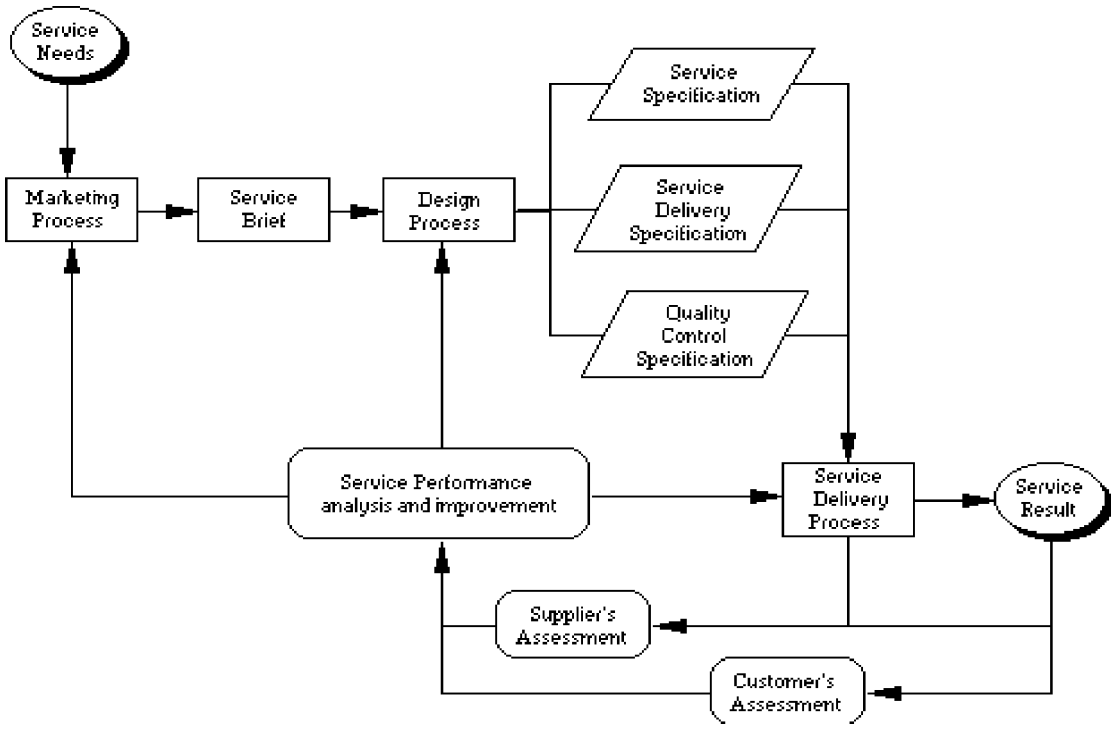
Service requirements

Review; inspection; decision

Think ahead to how you will implement your quality system -- for example, do you work on a "project" basis with business development as a project, or do you work on a "contract" basis with business development being the first stage?

If you have several lines of business, you may need more than one flow chart. You may also need to include related activities such as invoicing. For simplicity's sake, though, you may wish to begin with a minimum number of processes and then expand as your staff becomes more sophisticated in quality assurance procedures.

Table 1
Example of Service Quality Core Processes
(from ISO 9004-2)



Work Sheet #2
Your Core Processes Flow Chart

9. *SHORTLISTING REGISTRARS*

Before selecting a registrar, you will want to ask several of the accredited registrars listed in Appendix D to provide you with a cost proposal and present their approach to the registration process. If you fill in the blanks in Work Sheet #3, you will have a draft questionnaire that you can revise and fax to the registrars from whom you wish quotes.

Fill in the blanks as follows:

- **A** The name of your firm
- **B** The number of employees
- **C** The types of services your firm provides
- **D** The types of clients your firm serves
- **E** "Main office" or number of sites, depending on your answer to #7
- **F** "9001" or "9002" or "9003" depending on your answer to #6
- **G** List the countries in which you have clients or into which you intend to expand

10. *EVALUATING REGISTRAR RESPONSES*

The cheapest quote will not necessarily provide you with the best outcome. Work Sheet #4 has a form for comparing the responses you receive from various registrars, with the factors to consider in registrar selection explained below.

Work Sheet #3
Questionnaire for Potential Registrars

_____**[A]**_____ is a __**[B]**__-person firm that provides _____**[C]**_____ services to _____**[D]**_____. We are interested in having our ___**[E]**___ registered to ISO __**[F]**__ and attach a schematic of the proposed scope of processes to be registered. We would appreciate receiving a proposal from you that addresses the following questions:

1. How many firms in our profession have you registered? Who are they?
2. How many service firms of our size have you registered?
3. What flexibility (if any) do you adopt in standards interpretation when auditing small firms?
4. Our registration would need to be meaningful to clients in __**[G]**___. Is your firm an accredited registrar in those countries? Cost of co-registration?
5. What approach would you recommend for multiple registrations (or dependence on MOUs)?
6. How and where do you publicize the firms you register?
7. What would your initial fees be for our registration? Ongoing annual fee? Other related costs? Do you have a fixed fee option? Discounted rate for small firms?
8. What documents do you require for the document review (desk audit)?
9. Do you have any documentation requirements for registration other than those listed in the ISO __**[F]**__ standard? If so, what? Why?
10. Would we have an opportunity to review and comment on the qualifications of the audit team <u>before</u> it is finalized?
11. What recourse would we have if we don't agree with the results of the audit team?
12. How frequently do you schedule surveillance audits?
13. How soon could you schedule the document review? The on-site audit?
14. What is your hourly rate for on-site orientation workshops?
15. What is your philosophy regarding ISO 9000 registration? What purpose should it serve for us?
16. In your experience, what will be the most challenging for a small firm like ours in complying with ISO __**[F]**__?

Work Sheet #4
Comparing Registrars

Rating Item		Registrars Surveyed		
a)	Responded within 48 hours?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
b)	Answered all questions asked?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
c)	Experienced with our profession?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
d)	Experienced with small service firms?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
e)	Flexible in interpretation?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
f)	Covers all our markets?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
g)	Focused on our needs?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
h)	Publicizes registered firms?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
i)	Registration fee?	$	$	$
j)	Ongoing annual fee? Other costs?	$	$	$
k)	Fixed fee?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
l)	Discount for small firms?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
m)	Additional documentation requirements?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
n)	Review of audit team credentials?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
o)	Recourse if disagree with audit?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
p)	How many post-registration visits a year?	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2
q)	Good timing match?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
r)	Hourly rate for training?	$	$	$
s)	Respectful, supportive philosophy?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No

11. *SELECTING YOUR REGISTRAR*

Once you have completed Work Sheet #4, consider the following factors in making your final registrar selection:

a) **Promptness of response**
Remember that you will be establishing a long-term relationship with your registrar, and make sure you feel the registrar will be responsive to your needs.

b) **Completeness of response**
Again, how the registrar treats your questions will help you anticipate how they would deal with you as a client.

c) **Experience with your profession** (or a similar professional service)

The team of auditors should contain someone experienced with your business ... and the registrar should be able to assure you that they have such auditors available. It is also helpful if registrar staff are familiar with the particular quality assurance challenges faced by your type of professional service firm. You also want to know ahead of time if they will need to bring in an outside specialist whose travel costs might be high.

d) **Experience in registering <u>service</u> firms your size**
Wording of the ISO 9000 standards has been designed for large firms with discrete departments and a need for highly structured internal communications. You need to make sure that the registrar you select is familiar with the realities of operating a small service firm.

e) **Flexibility of approach**
You need to be sure that the registrar's audit team has adjusted their expectations for your size firm as discussed in the article in Appendix C. Otherwise, even though you define your quality system, you may end up with a very cumbersome documentation system just to satisfy the registrar.

f) **Market coverage**
If international clients are an important part of your business, then the ability to have your registration recognized in foreign markets will also be important (see matrix in Appendix D).

g) **Addressing your international needs**
Check the registration or co-registration approach suggested by the registrar against the listing of international accreditation bodies in Appendix E. You will need to be certain that your registration(s) are recognized in each of your markets.

h) **Publicity**
Most registrars publish a directory of the firms they have registered, along with a brief description of the firm. Some registrars will supply those directories free, while others charge. Some registrars take the initiative to supply their list to firms like CEEM that publish composite directories. You will want to select a registrar that gives your registration maximum visibility ... or remember to do so yourself.

i) **Registration fee**
You need to know not only the amount of the fee but when it is due ... lump sum up front? ... installments? What other expenses are there in addition to the fee?

j) **Annual fees**
Because registration is not a "one time" affair, you need to be able to anticipate ongoing expenses.

k) **Fixed fees**
Some registrars charge by the hour or day, while others will quote a fixed fee. It may be in your best interest to have a fixed fee so that there is no temptation to find nonconformances that would increase fees due to additional audit visits.

l) **Discounts based on size**
Some registrars offer up to a 25% discount to small firms.

m) **Additional requirements**
Beware of any registrar that requires additional, cumbersome documentation on your part or pressures you to conform to a predetermined quality assurance system design. Be sure your staff is well-trained on the quality system prior to your external audit and be prepared to challenge unacceptable requests.

n) **Audit team review**
The audit team has a great deal of power in evaluating your quality system. Most registrars will give you an opportunity to assure yourself that there are at least some members of the team that understand your business.

o) **Recourse or appeal**
While hopefully everything will go well, you should find out ahead of time how the registrar handles appeals.

p) **Post-registration visits**
While some registrars only visit once a year between registrations, it is becoming more common to visit every six months and audit only a portion of the quality system at a time. As long as you are on a fixed fee basis (so that more frequent visits do not lead to increased fees), more frequent visits can help you catch incipient problems before they create trouble.

q) **The flexibility to accommodate your time table**
Given a six-week lead time, a registrar should be able to arrange dates satisfactory to you ... the client!

r) **Rates for training**
You may find it useful to have the registrar's staff come to give an orientation session for your staff.

s) **A respect for your business**
Be sure that you sense from the registrar a genuine desire to make sure that the registration process helps you streamline your business to operate more efficiently and with greater client satisfaction.

12. *BRIEFING YOUR STAFF*

The wholehearted support and understanding of your staff will be critical to the success of your quality assurance system ... and so to the success of your registration. You will want to be sure that they are aware of the benefits of registration for the firm and for themselves.

a) Review your answers in Work Sheet #1 and list the starred items from Lines B to E that represent immediate need(s) for registrations:

_____
_____
_____

b) Based on your starred answers to Work Sheet #1, Line A, check the three most important potential longer-term benefits to your firm from registration:

_____ Not restricted in government bids
_____ Increased client satisfaction
_____ Increased repeat/referral business
_____ Fewer client complaints
_____ Reduction of duplicate tasks
_____ Better documentation of procedures
_____ Easier to provide backup for another staff member
_____ Streamlining of critical tasks
_____ More efficient use of staff time
_____ Less likelihood of forgetting critical tasks
_____ Less "rework" time needed to correct mistakes
_____ Less money spent on issuing revised deliverables
_____ Heightened staff awareness of quality variables
_____ Structure for continuous improvement
_____ Other: _____

c) Adapt the format in Work Sheet #5 to create a memo to your staff that communicates clearly what you wish to accomplish by pursuing ISO 9000 registration.

Work Sheet #5
Sample Memo to Staff

TO: All staff
FROM: ....
RE: ISO 9000 registration

After reviewing the costs and benefits of becoming registered under ISO 9001/2/3, we have decided to proceed and have selected _____ as our registrar. Our preparation process will require the following steps:

- Agree on the scope (minimum processes) to be registered
- Identify the issues to be addressed in documenting each process
- Develop a work plan
- Agree on the time line and resourcing needed
- Agree on our Quality Policy and its implications
- Draft/revise the necessary documentation
- Train ourselves in documentation and document control procedures
- Train ourselves in internal audits and corrective/preventive action
- Submit documentation for the registrar's document review
- Prepare for the registrar's on-site audit

In the short term, we believe that registration will help ensure that [**insert the items from #12a**]. More importantly, we believe that the ISO 9000 framework can provide us with an opportunity to strengthen our approach to quality assurance with the following direct benefits: [**list top items from #12b**]

In order for this registration process to be successful, we will need the input and cooperation of all of you. As a first step, we have scheduled an orientation meeting for _____ at which time we will review the requirements for ISO 9001/2/3 registration and agree on a time table for developing and implementing a work plan. To help you prepare for that meeting, we are attaching a draft flow chart of the critical client service processes that would need documentation under the ISO 9001/2/3 standard, as well as a copy of the ISO 9001/2/3 standard itself and a list of the forms we are currently using that would become "controlled." Please review each of these documents before our orientation meeting.