



TL 9000 EXPERTS



## TL 9000 Frequently Asked Questions: 2014

### General Questions

#### What Is TL 9000?

**A:** Created in 1998, TL 9000 is a global quality standard, designed specifically to meet the supply chain requirements of the communications industry. TL 9000 is built on the international quality standard known as ISO 9001 and its eight quality principles. It defines quality system requirements for design, development, production, delivery and service, in the communications industry. TL 9000 also specifies measurements for companies to help them evaluate the effectiveness of their quality program. QuEST Forum governs the TL 9000 standard.

#### What Is QuEST Forum?

**A:** The Quality Excellence for Suppliers of Telecommunications (**QuEST**) **Forum** is a global, nonprofit communications association, comprised of a unique partnership of industry service providers and suppliers. QuEST Forum was formed in 1996, to improve the quality and reliability of telecommunication services, through a single, consistent set of quality management requirements and standards. These requirements form the quality management system (QMS) known as TL 9000. QuEST Forum is a member organization. For QuEST Forum membership information visit: [www.questforum.org](http://www.questforum.org).

#### What is the value of implementing TL 9000?

**A:** By implementing TL 9000, you eliminate the need for multiple quality standards and your organization benefits from a consistent set of quality expectations that improve performance across the global telecommunications supply chain. By achieving and leveraging their TL 9000 certification, **our clients testify to these results:**

- Greater customer satisfaction due to consistent quality output
- Increased competitiveness and access to new markets
- Operational efficiencies and productivity that reduce costs
- Profitability that comes from continuous quality improvement
- Measurement capabilities that quantify performance
- Process standardization and complete documentation
- Improved employee teamwork and consistency of execution

## **How long will it take for my company to become TL 9000 certified?**

**A:** The entire process can take from 6 to 18 months. It varies with the size of the company, existing quality management systems, scope of registration (hardware, software, and service) and the amount of resources (staff) you can dedicate to the effort.

## **Where can I obtain a complete copy of the TL 9000 standard?**

**A:** Copies of the TL 9000 Quality Management System Requirements Handbook and the TL 9000 Quality Management Systems Measurements Handbook may be purchased through QuEST Forum by contacting them at: [www.tl9000.org](http://www.tl9000.org).

## **Do we have to be a member of QuEST Forum to register to TL 9000?**

**A:** No, membership is not required. Organizations can be TL 9000 registered independent of QuEST Forum membership. However, QuEST Forum membership offers additional benefits, like access to Performance Data Reports, sharing best practices and contributing to the improvement of the standard. In addition, there is no reporting fee (monthly measurements) for member companies. You also gain monthly access to benchmark data. We believe in TL 9000 certification so much, that our CEO, Sue Clancy, is the current Co-Chair of the Jump Start Mentor Program.

## **Category Questions**

### **Will TL 9000 registration allow for multiple locations and/or multiple categories?**

**A:** You can certify an entire company, a product line or location. TL 9000 is organized into product categories that cover over 100 products and services provided by communications companies. You need to obtain the handbook and look in Table A-1 to see which categories best describe your products and/or services.

### **We are a service company providing services. How does TL 9000 apply to us?**

**A:** TL 9000 includes requirements that are specifically written for Service companies. These requirements are indicated in the handbook with a **(V)**, where as those for software have an **(S)** and for hardware have an **(H)**. These requirements were developed to allow the TL 9000 standard to meet requirements of various product or service offerings, unlike the generic requirements of ISO 9001 alone.

Additionally, TL 9000 has measurements for service product categories that apply to companies in these areas: Engineering, Installation, Maintenance Service, Repair Service, Customer Support Service and others. Product categories may be combined to cover the full range of services provided by a company. The metrics for service companies are specific to the categories and are different from OEM and Network Operations metrics.

### **What if we are an OEM providing hardware and software products?**

**A:** There are many product categories under which a company may register. A company can choose to register all products or only designated products. Because there are specific ways in which these rules apply, we recommend discussing your strategy with your TL 9000 consultant.

### **Do organizations that distribute or integrate products for other organizations, need to be registered to a hardware or software product category?**

**A:** No. Organizations that distribute or integrate other suppliers' products still register as a service registration. If integrating a final product however, they may be required to report hardware return measurements for the finished goods.

## Do companies that do Engineer, Furnish and Install (EF&I), need to include design and development in their registration scope?

**A:** Not necessarily. EF&I Organizations provide engineering services defined in product categories 7.2.1.1 Fixed Engineering and/or 7.2.1.2 Mobile Engineering, including specifying locations and placement of equipment and many other activities. Activities that stem from a customer provided specification most likely do not qualify as design. However some aspects of mobile engineering such as original network design may qualify. For further information we recommend you contact a qualified TL 9000 consultant or QuEST Forum at: [www.questforum.org](http://www.questforum.org).

## The Handbooks: Requirements and Measurements

### What is the latest version of the TL 9000 standard?

**A:** The TL 9000 standard is contained in two handbooks, Requirements and Measurements. The handbooks change periodically and the best way to determine the latest release is to go to the TL 9000 website, [www.tl9000.org](http://www.tl9000.org).

## The Handbooks: Requirements and Measurements

### 2014: Current Handbooks

### Requirements R5.5 and Measurements R5.0

### What are some of the major changes in TL 9000 Release 5.5 Requirements and where can I learn more?

**A:** One significant change is the **addition of a requirement called product security, 7.1.C.3**. Organizations need to determine, evaluate and address security risks and vulnerabilities relating to the product or service they deliver. These considerations need to include external factors such as accidental or deliberate acts to gain customer information or facilities. Organizations will need to demonstrate how the controls or measurements they put in place will help them maintain adequate protections.

7.2.3.C.1 Notification About Problems **was split into two requirements** so that they pertain more directly to applicable organizations. The first of the resulting clauses 7.2.3.HS.3 pertains to organizations that certify in H and/or S specialties, and will require them to notify affected customers of a critical problem with their products. The second clause 7.2.3.V.1, requires Service Providers that provide end-user services (Product Category 9) to notify them of critical service disruptions. You can learn more by emailing us at [info@bizphyx.com](mailto:info@bizphyx.com).

### When must we start using Release 5.5 Requirements for certification audits?

**A:** Release 5.5 Requirements must be used for audits conducted on or after 1 January 2015.

### When may we use Release 5.5 Requirements for our Quality Management System?

**A:** You may begin using 5.5 Requirements on or after 1 January 2014.

### How am I going to be affected by Release 5.0 of the Measurements Handbook?

**A:** There are numerous **clarifications in the counting rules** made in the new handbook. There are several new measurements such as **On Time To Promise Date**. The best way to become familiar with the new requirements is to take the TL 9000 Release 5.0 Measurements Delta Course, which can be found at [www.tl9000.org](http://www.tl9000.org).

## Do you have any tips on upgrading from one version of TL 9000 version to another?

**A:** The process is similar to implementing TL 9000 in the first place. Put together an implementation team and map a strategy and project plan that includes key milestones for various departments and your registrar. Meet often to track progress. **BIZPHYX** can help you assess the differences between the two standards and implement a successful project.

## Implementation, Registration and Maintenance Questions

### Does BIZPHYX certify or register companies to TL 9000?

**A:** **BIZPHYX** provides implementation and consulting services (preparation, documentation and training), and therefore cannot provide *certification audits*. Third party registrars approved by QuEST Forum can complete these audits. **BIZPHYX** can refer you to an authorized registrar and we do this as part of our implementation service. Please listen to a very important MP3 overview on the internal audit page of our website: [www.bizphyx.com](http://www.bizphyx.com).

### What preparation is involved before implementing TL 9000?

**A:** Before contacting a registrar to do a certification audit of your quality system, you need to **learn the requirements and reportable measurements**. You are required to document a quality system to meet those requirements including a quality manual, document and record control procedure, internal audit procedure and others depending on your business. You must implement the requirements and train people on them.

Additionally, you need to conduct an internal audit of your entire quality management system and report a sample of QuEST Forum data to QuEST Forum through their data repository. You must conduct a management review of the quality management system. There are many details behind each of these major milestones and **BIZPHYX** can help through turnkey consulting or webinar based implementation services.

### Are there maintenance costs once we obtain TL 9000?

**A:** Costs of maintaining your certification can vary on the size of your company and the complexity of your quality management system. You will have recurring registrar audit costs. This expense is typically a per-day rate, based on several factors including the number of employees, number and complexity of processes, whether you include design and number of locations. These factors are used to calculate the number of days the registrar will need to audit your organization.

You will be required to perform an internal audit of all your TL 9000 clauses once a year. You may also choose to outsource your internal audits to a company like **BIZPHYX**. Finally, if you are not a QuEST Forum Member there are costs to report data as part of your TL 9000 certification.

### What are the different types of audits and how often do we need them?

**A:** First, there are certification audits and surveillance audits, which are performed by a third party registrar. Once you have successfully completed your certification audit, you are issued a certificate that is good for three years by the registrar. Each year thereafter for two years, the registrar will conduct one or more surveillance audits of your system, depending on your contract with your registrar.

In addition to your registrar reviewing your system, ISO 9001 requires your system be *internally audited* as well. You should do an internal audit of all of the TL 9000 clauses at least once a year. You can conduct these audits internally with your employees once they are trained or you can outsource this to a consultant. For many companies outsourcing is most effective, as *you must be independent of the process you are auditing*. **BIZPHYX** conducts **internal audits** for clients.

### I've heard that you must report data prior to being certified to TL 9000. Is that true?

**A:** Yes. In addition to other key milestones such as a complete internal audit and conducting a management review, you must go on line and register on the TL 9000 website and report a 90-day sample of the required data for your particular product category. Product categories are found in Table A-1 of the TL 9000 Measurements Handbook.

## If we submit the required data will it be monitored by QuEST Forum or published so that it is available for viewing by others?

**A:** No. The data reported to QuEST Forum is never associated with any particular company. It is reported by product category only and is used by TL 9000 certified and QuEST Forum member companies to benchmark their own product and service performance. **ALL DATA is blind data.**

## Where is the TL 9000 data stored?

**A:** TL 9000 data is stored in a repository held by the University of Texas, Dallas on a contract basis for QuEST Forum. UTD is TL 9000 and ISO 27001 certified.

## Why should we use BIZPHYX?

**A:** We are the nation's leading TL 9000 quality management consulting firm. Nationally recognized as **TL 9000 Experts**, we are a global QuEST Forum selected training provider and **BIZPHYX** is one of only two companies in North America with the distinction of a **TL 9000 Master Trainer** and a Supervisory Master Trainer (**SMT**) on staff. Unlike other consultants, **BIZPHYX** is also certified to both ISO 9001 and TL 9000.

All **BIZPHYX** consultants, trainers and auditors have specific telecommunications quality experience. Find out more about the team that can deliver the results you need. **Contact us at 972-429-5560.**

**BIZPHYX** is  and  **ISO 9001 Certified**