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BENEFITS OF IMPLEMENTATION AND CERTIFICATION OF MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS IN THE FOOD INDUSTRY ENTERPRISES

Abstract: *System compliant with ISO 9001:2008 is considered to be most common standardized management system in organizations. This article presents internal and external benefits of implementation and certification of the system. The most important benefits of functioning of the management system include opportunities to improve the company's external brand as well as to adjust to customers' expectations. Some trends have been identified in certification of management systems in the Polish food industry enterprises. One of them is a tendency to resign from the quality management system certification in accordance with the ISO 9001 standard for voluntary certification of the HACCP system, or other voluntary standards to ensure health safety.*

Keywords: *ISO 9001, ISO 22000, IFS, BRC, organic food, certification, food industry.*

1. INTRODUCTION

System compliant with requirements of ISO 9001:2008 (QMS) are considered to be the most common standardized management system in organizations. The number of issued certificates, which in 2009 exceeded one million valid certificates, indicates the success of this standard. Also, the territorial scope of organizations that have implemented and certified quality management system is large. In 2009 the system has been certified in 178 countries around the world [17]. Such popularity of QMS results from its universality and possibility to be adapted to characteristics of various organizations, regardless of their size, nature of business or legal status.

Due to the specificity of food industry, organizations operating in this sector

implement other systems besides quality management system. Food health safety system (HACCP) should be regarded as the most popular. This is mainly due to the fact, that HACCP is mandatory in the countries of the European Union. In accordance with Article. 5. EP and the EU Regulation No 853/2004 of 29.04.2004 organizations operating in food sector are obliged to implement the HACCP system [15]. Such organizations may also apply for certification of the HACCP system, which is voluntary. Reference documents in the process of certification can be Codex Alimentarius requirements or the requirements of ISO 22000:2005. Apart from the principles of HACCP, the requirements of ISO 22000 include items such as interactive communication, system management, and prerequisite programs. This standard is intended for

implementation by organizations, where a more focused, coherent and integrated food safety management system is needed than it is normally required by the law [8]. There were 13881 organizations certified in 2009 for compliance with requirements of ISO 22000. Poland is one of ten countries with the largest number of certified systems (549 companies) and with the most dynamic growth which proves the popularity of this system in Polish organizations.

Certification of compliance with suppliers' standards is also very popular in food industry. In Poland, due to the relatively large number of retail chains certification market is developed. Most organizations are evaluated for compliance with the standards of the IFS (International Food Standard) and BRC (British Retail Consortium) standards. Currently, more than 16,000 organizations worldwide have a valid certificate of BRC, including 419 companies from Poland [5].

Also Regulation 834/2007, setting out requirements for organic food producers, can be included in the group of food industry standards. Compliance with this standard in Poland is increasingly common [2].

In addition to the standards outlined above, related to the food industry, organizations can also implement and certify other management systems such as environmental management system ISO 14001, information security system ISO / IEC 27001, or Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Series system (OHSAS) 18001.

All these systems can be implemented and certified in the food industry companies.

Each of the systems is different, serve different purposes and allows to achieve different benefits (table 1). Therefore, when choosing systems to be implemented and certified in an organization, the objectives and benefits associated with each of the standards should be

considered.

Standard	Objective
ISO 9001:2008	Providing the stability (repeatability) of production and meeting customer requirements through continuous improvement of the quality management system.
HACCP and ISO 22000:2005	Food health safety assurance.
Standards for suppliers (IFS, BEC)	Meeting the requirements of suppliers.
Council Regulation 834/2007	Fulfillment of the requirements for organic production.

Table 1- The main objectives of the standards implemented in food industry organizations

2. BENEFITS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Considering the costs incurred, implementing management standards is expected to bring visible benefits – either internal or external. The most frequently indicated internal benefits, resulting from implementation and certification of management systems include: improved internal documentation, increased customer orientation, improved internal communication and increased food health safety. Interestingly, companies do not always indicate an increase in productivity and process efficiency. This is a puzzling result, which may be explained by short time of quality management operation. At this stage it is easier to see an improvement of management standards or the quality of products. Improvement of product quality in the first stage may result from an increase in expenditures,

introduction of statistical process control, or the fact, that some activities are more carefully performed than before system implementation. In consequence, such activities lead to increased product quality and a drop of productivity at the same time [7].

Benefits of preparation and implementation of internal documents are: increased awareness of procedure problems faced at the stage of preparation of documents. As a result, such problems may be eliminated and processes improved [12].

Increased satisfaction of employees is rarely reported. At the implementation stage more common are rather difficulties related to overcoming the resistance against change or additional duties, such as register of critical control points. It does not mean, however that the system brings no benefits in this area. As an advantage employees consider documentation such as job descriptions and procedures clearly defining scopes of responsibilities [7]. According to Karaszewski induction of new employees is easier in organisations with existing internal documentation. Correctly implemented system increases the awareness of quality problems among the staff and their engagement in quality improvement [10]. Correctly implemented and certified quality management system ensures legal compliance in the area of food safety in the organisation.

The most important external benefits of certification of management system compliant with ISO 9001 are improvement of the company brand and using quality management system in marketing [1]. However the analysis of changes in time and external benefits indicated shows, that the marketing role of a certificate decreases in Polish organisations. This is confirmed by the decrease in the meaning of quality management system as a way of increasing the advantage against competitors, better access to domestic market as well as foreign markets [11].

One of external benefits resulting from certification of compliance with Regulation 834/2007 is the right to sell products branded as organic in the EU. An obvious benefit of food safety system and suppliers' standards certification is the possibility of selling products to some retailers or producers, since a certificate such as IFS or BRC is required by many companies when starting cooperation. Experience gained by organisations operating in food industry makes them resign from certification of quality management system compliant with ISO 9001 and implement HACCP or suppliers' standards instead.

Regardless of the type of certified system, is widely used by organisations to increase sales to individual customers. The customers however usually do not see a difference between HACCP and quality management system and are not prone to the use of brands and information of implemented and certified standards in marketing.

Influence of such information on customers' decisions can be noticed only in case of organic products.

Main objective of company operations is making profits. Implementation and certification of management systems should be followed by financial benefits. Research in the area of financial benefits of implementation and certification of management system described by [3,4,8,12,13,14] are ambiguous. Most of results obtained suggest that better financial results are achieved by companies, where quality management system had been implemented and certified. It should be noted that the research most often confirm there is statistically significant correlation between management system and financial results, but no cause and effect relation has been proved between these phenomena.

3. SUMMARY

Most common standardized management systems in organisations are: system compliant with ISO 9001:2008 and ISO 22000:2005 standards. Other important standards are IFS and BRC as well as requirements set by the Regulation 834/2007 for organic production. Among internal and external benefits presented in this article, improvement of the company brand and better adjustment to the customers' expectations have been

considered as the most important. Current trends among companies operating in Polish food industry, such as implementation of voluntary certification of HACCP or other voluntary health safety systems instead of quality management systems compliant with ISO 9001 have been indicated. Understanding of real benefits resulting from implementation and certification of management systems may be a motivation to further improvement of these systems in the companies.

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