

## QUALITY – a simple definition, a complex implementation

What does “quality” mean to you? For many of us, when we think of quality, we think about a car that runs for years and requires little maintenance or perhaps a new computer that has all the various components that are easy to install and are user-friendly. Quality is directly linked to many of the decisions we make in our daily lives. Whether it’s eating lunch at a favorite restaurant or staying at the same hotel every time while traveling to a certain city, we do so because these businesses have demonstrated their reliability and commitment to quality. Whatever your definition, quality is likely to represent a product or service that has exceeded your expectations.

Commitment to quality has always been a primary focus of the HID Global organization. HID Global adheres to Lean manufacturing principles and strives to create out-of-the-box products and solutions that work well in the hands of customers. The company has implemented what it calls the “technology of quality” throughout the product lifecycle; this begins with R&D and continues on through adherence to manufacturing and technology standards, and rigorous testing. At heart, this approach is about weaving quality into every product and solution offered to customers.

### A Complex Implementation

As simple as it may sound, implementing an effective Quality system can be complex. All functions, processes, and business rules must be aligned.

The highlights of HID’s Quality system exist in the following key areas:

- New Product Development
- Testing
- Supply Chain
- Manufacturing
- Product Delivery
- Service & Support
- Quality System

### Phases of New Product Development

For many years, HID has used a world-class product development method known as a Phase-Gate. Phase-Gate is a formal, disciplined process that helps prove and validate a product’s: 1) Need, 2) Feasibility, 3) Planning, 4) Design Intent & Robustness, and 5) Manufacturability.

Running a product idea through each distinct “phase” ensures that the resulting new product is connected to corporate strategy, rooted in a strong business need, well-designed and ready for efficient, high-volume production. Numerous checklists are in place to make sure that cross-functional teams are involved and that every detail of a product launch is in place. Along the way, there are formal “gate” meetings in which approvals are required and consensus, which is key to a new product’s quality, is built.

### Testing

Rigorous testing of new and existing products is another important factor to quality. Many layers of testing are used, including regression testing, life-cycle testing, environmental testing, safety testing, emission testing and even a thorough test of the packaging to ensure that products are delivered in good condition.

One highlight of the testing process is Usability tests, also known as Alpha and Beta testing. This takes several forms, but primarily consists of internal personnel and external associates testing a product as a customer would use it. “Real world” usability testing compliments traditional lab testing and serves as a thorough and comprehensive program to identify product weaknesses. These weaknesses are quickly addressed so that the product is as solid as possible upon product launch.

### Supply Chain

After a product is developed and tested, components are sourced in preparation for volume production. Alignment is established with suppliers who have similar high quality standards. Balance is sought while sourcing components to focus on price and delivery, as well as quality.

An important partnership relationship develops with suppliers, including open, regular communication and sharing best practices, . A system of corrective actions and continuous improvement is also sought out from supplier partners.

## **Manufacturing**

Quality in production is another key to success. HID is dedicated to the principles of Lean manufacturing and follows the implementation systems, tools, techniques and technologies defined by the Lean program. With the implementation of Lean, the company is able to drive efficiencies that help to streamline processes and increase productivity while directly benefiting customers and their businesses by saving them time and money.

Another key is to create a production environment conducive to quality. When employees “own” the quality of their workmanship, the need to “inspect in” quality is minimized.

## **Product Delivery**

The next step in the process is product delivery. Quality doesn’t stop with the production of the final product. It carries over to the delivery process, ensuring that what is delivered is exactly what was ordered and that products are delivered on-time and to the right place. Successful product delivery entails coordination across departments – manufacturing, customer service, sales, etc.

## **Service & Support**

Even when all protocols, process, and assurances are followed, the pursuit of quality would fall short without exceptional service and support for customers. This focus on delivering customer value and exceeding customer expectations is the core of HID’s “CUSTOMER FIRST” philosophy.

“CUSTOMER FIRST” goes beyond service to customers. It means having a process in place to listen to what customers say when things do not go according to plan. Employees must be thoroughly trained and empowered to assist customers and service requests. Even more, a closed-feedback loop should be in place. This means listening closely to each scenario when a product or service misses customer expectations and having a process in place for engineering or other departments to make corrections. Additionally, a large-scale Voice of Customer (VOC) survey is regularly conducted so that customer satisfaction can be measured and benchmarked.

## **Quality Systems**

In order to ensure quality, environmental friendliness, safety, reliability, efficiency, interoperability, and overall cost-effectiveness, including ISO 9001, HID Global has adopted the standards set forth by the International Standards Organization (ISO). ISO standards provide a framework for quality processes as well as an independent assessment of corporate practices. All the above-mentioned quality processes, from new product development, to manufacturing, to service, etc. are all woven into HID’s ISO system.

The key to a successful ISO program lies in “say what you do, do what you say.” Processes are created with an eye towards being both practical and value-added. This means that ISO is a critical quality step that becomes part of daily habits; it is not a documentation burden to the organization. The Quality department itself strives to become less of a “policeman” and more of a business improvement “coach.”

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the “technology of quality” is the core of HID’s quality system. This system is practical and integrated into the daily fabric of the organization. It impacts product development, supplier relationships, manufacturing processes, product delivery, and “CUSTOMER FIRST”. HID’s quality system allows the company to focus on delivering value to customers and ensures that all products and solutions are designed to exceed customer expectations.