

# ISO 9001 survey: Auditors give their verdict

IRCA Certificated Auditors are confident ISO 9001:2015 will deliver what it promises, according to a new study by Nigel Croft, Luis Fonseca and Pedro Domingues

With transition to ISO 9001:2015 now well underway, we undertook a survey of IRCA auditors to gauge their opinion on the changes. Our findings show that respondents believe the new edition of ISO 9001 is well aligned with both modern business management practices and quality principles.

In addition, the results suggest that ISO 9001:2015 can provide significant added value to the companies that choose to implement it.

These summarised results, obtained as part of a wider academic research project aimed at assessing the impact of ISO 9001:2015, suggest that (according to the opinions of IRCA Certificated Auditors) the new edition of the standard promotes and facilitates an improved alignment between quality and business best practices, thereby adding value to certified organisations.

## Shifting focus

The changes introduced in ISO 9001:2015, published in September 2015, reflect an increasingly complex, demanding and dynamic business environment.

At the same time the new version of the standard continues to provide assurance that organisations who meet its requirements are able to consistently provide products

and services that satisfy their customers' needs and expectations and meet the relevant statutory and regulatory requirements.

The 2015 edition of ISO 9001 has new or reinforced approaches for managers to demonstrate their leadership at all levels of the organisation; improved integration with the organisation's business and other management system components; and consideration of the organisation's context (including its internal culture, external factors and the needs and expectations of relevant stakeholders).

It also focuses on the adoption of a combination of a process approach to quality management, coupled with risk-based thinking, use of the PDCA cycle (plan, do, check, act) and new concepts of organisational knowledge and change management.

This has led to the standard having more pragmatic, non-prescriptive requirements, with greater emphasis on achieving results and less on documentation.

## The findings

The survey was carried out throughout April 2016 among IRCA Certificated QMS Auditors. Thousands of auditors were contacted in order to ascertain their perceptions and experiences with regard to ISO 9001:2015.

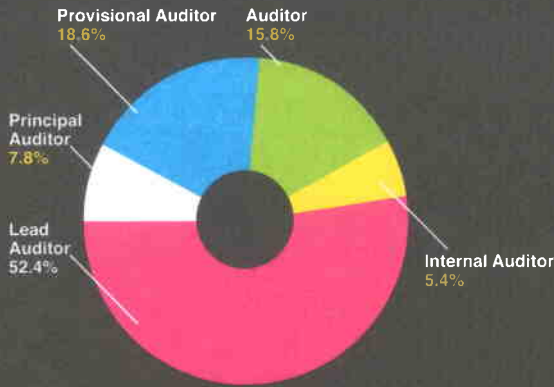
A five-point Likert scale (1: totally disagree; 5: totally agree) was adopted as the assessment tool. Some features of the demographics of the targeted population are displayed in the top two graphs shown overleaf on page 39.

Among the topics included in the wider survey, three specific questions were designed to evaluate the perceptions of the auditors regarding the added value that ISO 9001:2015 may provide to organisations in the current macro context:

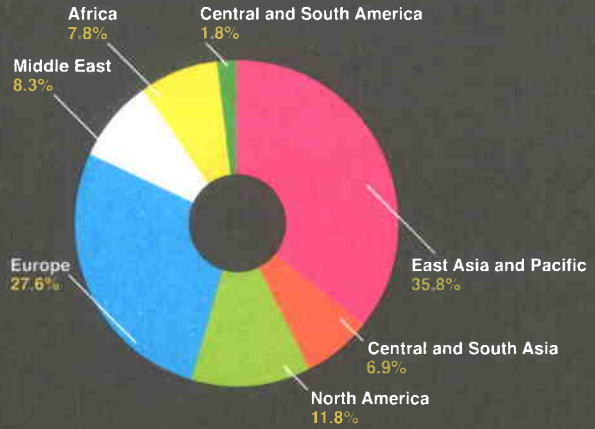
- **Q2:** Do you agree that ISO 9001:2015 is in line with modern business management concepts?

**“Although there is a clear positive assessment by the respondents when considered overall, there is some variation if the results are broken down by geographic region”**

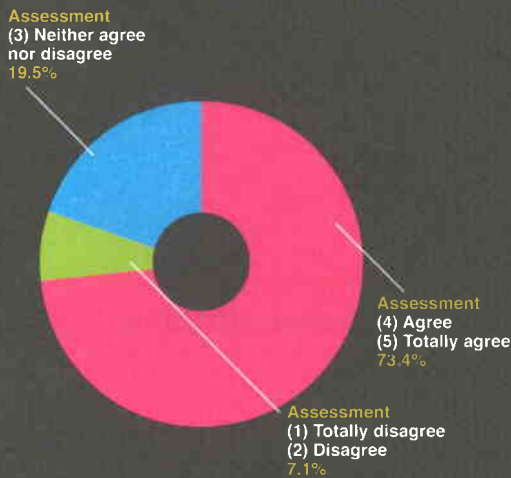
Breakdown of auditors surveyed by IRCA grade (total population)



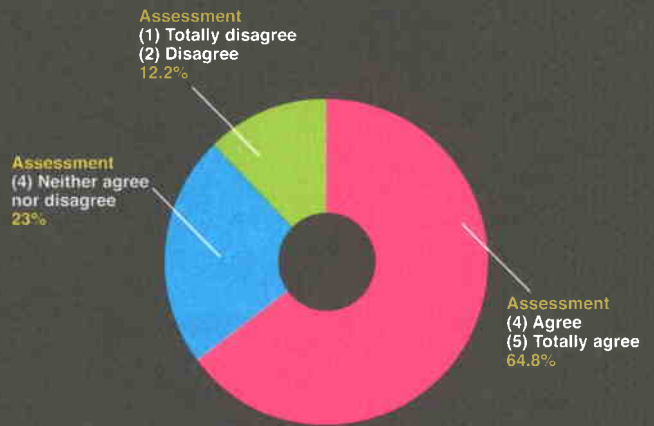
Breakdown of auditors surveyed by geographic area (total population)



Q3 – ISO 9001:2015 is in line with modern quality management concepts



Q6 – ISO 9001:2015 will add value for certified organisations



- **Q3:** Do you agree that ISO 9001:2015 is in line with modern quality management concepts?
- **Q6:** Overall, do you agree that ISO 9001:2015 will add value for certified organisations?

More than seven per cent of auditors completed the survey, from more than 70 countries. Analysis of the results suggests the demographics of the respondents aligned well with the overall survey population. Europe and East Asia/Pacific were the main regional contributors for the responses while, at a national level, the US, UK and France were the top three.

**“This new edition of the standard promotes and facilitates an improved alignment between quality and business best practices, thereby adding value to certified organisations”**

Although there is a clear positive assessment by the respondents when considered overall, there is some variation if the results are broken down by geographic region. In particular, it was observed that auditors from North America (Canada, Mexico and the US) seemed to rate the new standard systematically lower than auditors from other regions. It should be noted that according to the latest ISO Survey (2015), North America accounts for less than 4.5 per cent of the total number of ISO 9001:2008 certificates issued worldwide.

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