Problems Embedding ISO?

When we present to a business who are looking to implement ISO 9001:2015, we use the opportunity to get to know a bit about the potential client. So we have a list of questions, one of which is:

'What worries do you have about implementing ISO 9001?'

The 2 most common replies we get back are;

> *"The time it takes to implement it"*
> *"The cost of the whole thing"*

However, we recently presented to a company and this time we got this response;

"In the past we've paid for management systems to help us in areas of our business. They cost a lot. The consultant comes in, stays for a while, implements the systems, does some embedment, then leaves. But, when we look at the system a few weeks later it's not being used! I think the same is going to happen with the ISO."

Actually it is a great worry. One I think can be answered with 3 words –

Leadership and Commitment

As a consultant our job is to use our experience and knowledge to successfully guide a business to ISO accreditation, which we do quite well, if I do say so myself.

But the answer to his response actually lies in the ISO standard., If you look at the Section 5.1.1 Leadership and commitment for the quality management system, it states:

Top management shall demonstrate **leadership and commitment** with respect to the quality management system by:

a) Taking accountability of the effectiveness of the quality management system
b) Ensuring that the quality policy and quality objectives are established for the quality management system and are compatible with the strategic direction and the context of the organisation
c) Ensuring that the quality policy is communicated, understood and applied within the organisation
d) Ensuring the integration of the quality management system requirements into the organisation's business processes
e) Promoting awareness of the process approach
f) Ensuring that the resources needed for the quality management system are available

g) Communicating the importance of effective management and of conforming to the quality management system requirements
h) Ensuring that the quality management system achieves its intended results
i) Engaging, directing and supporting persons to contribute to the effectiveness of the quality management system
j) Promoting continual improvement
k) Supporting other relevant management roles to demonstrate their leadership as it applies to their areas of responsibility

To put it simply, ISO 9001 and for that matter, any management system, is driven by the MANAGEMENT. The failure to embed a management system is a failure of the managements' commitment to it.

Even though the management will select a member of staff to be the 'Management Representative' that doesn't mean they abdicate all authority to him or her. Senior Management must remain the driving force behind the embedment and continual review for improvements.

Personally, having spent 22 years in the armed forces, I believe in leading by example. If your staff see management using the management system, then they will be more inclined to use it. That is why it is vitally important to engage the staff right from the start of the ISO process, even before deciding on whether you are going to implement the ISO yourself or find a consultant to help. Because, by *'Engaging, directing and supporting persons to contribute to the effectiveness of the quality management system' (see i above)* you show your commitment to the management system.

So, if you are serious about attaining the globally recognised business Quality Management System, you must be serious about your role as a leader and your commitment to the management system. This will drive the embedment of the system within your business. This will help embed the Management System!