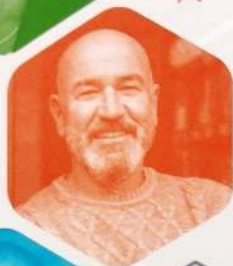


QUALITY WORLD

WINTER 2024

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Navigating your career pathway

How our new Typical Competence Profiles and Career Pathways Map can help you plot a successful and satisfying career in quality

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tomorrow. Renew today.

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FROM THE EDITOR



There has been a significant shift in recent years in the way we work, not least because of technological advances that are fundamentally changing the nature of work, as well as many aspects of our lives outside of business hours.

As the commercial landscape changes, we must adapt to ensure our organisations, in whichever industry or sector, are ready to face the challenges and opportunities ahead.

A key factor in this is ensuring that individuals and their teams have the right skills for the future. Turn to pages 21-25 for insight from CQI members on which skills will be required to future-proof the profession, as well as how best to attract and retain people to the quality and audit professions.

The recently launched Typical Competence Profiles and Career Pathways Map, which build on the CQI's Profession Map, now offer quality professionals assistance in managing their professional development and navigating their careers. Learn more about these important tools, and how they can help your own quality career, on pages 26-31.

In this, our final issue of the year, I want to thank each and every one of you who has contributed to *Quality World* and our online Knowledge articles during the past 12 months. Your insight, experiences and knowledge offer valuable learning opportunities for other members working in industries around the world.

I wish you all a peaceful festive season and a very happy new year.

Amy Bennett

submissions@quality.org

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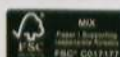


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ISO 56001

A modern odyssey in innovation management

Published in September 2024, ISO 56001 offers a framework for organisations seeking to implement an innovation management system. Frédéric Sauzet takes a closer look at the standard and its implications for creating innovation

The new *ISO 56001:2024 Innovation management system – Requirements* standard, published on 10 September 2024, serves as a beacon for organisations embarking on their innovation journey. It offers not just

a framework, but also a narrative arc to guide them through the implementation of an innovation management system.

When American author Joseph Campbell published his essay *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* in 1949, he had no idea that it would profoundly influence the Hollywood industry.

Campbell argues that all great myths, from antiquity to the present day, adhere to the same pattern: “A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: there he encounters fabulous forces and wins a decisive victory. The hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man.”

Perhaps the implementation of the new ISO 56001 standard resembles such an adventure.

Defining the innovation terrain

Innovation is defined as a novel or modified entity that realises or redistributes value. An entity, in this context, can take various forms, be it a product, service, process, business model, method, etc. The term ‘value’ encompasses a spectrum of aspects, including financial and non-financial dimensions, revenue, savings, productivity, sustainability, satisfaction, empowerment, involvement, experience and trust.

ISO 56001 now offers a blueprint for establishing an innovation management system and its subsequent certification following an audit. This standard aims to:

1. Inspire confidence in customers, contractors, boards of directors and personnel regarding the organisation's ability to anticipate future changes and prepare.
2. Reassure shareholders and private and public investors about the proper management of allocated funds.

3. Establish the organisation as a driving force in creating a solid frame of reference, working with partners, customers, suppliers and members.
4. Internally balance relationships between operational departments and teams responsible for developing new activities.

While these objectives are important, they prompt a key question: what does this new standard truly offer? One might question the need for a new innovation standard when ISO 9001 already covers design and development requirements.

“Investigation and exploration of possibilities are crucial, embracing a multitude of trial-and-error processes”

Navigating the current landscape

The latest edition of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Oslo Manual (bit.ly/49PZ8Wj) broadens its definition of innovation significantly compared with the one in force until 2005. On this basis, all sources of innovation must be considered on an equal footing, whether they originate from technology or other areas, such as management, design, product lifecycle, business model transformation, and social needs fulfilment. Innovations often take multiple forms simultaneously; the iPhone, for example, was not just a new product with new uses, but also relied on the innovative business model of the iTunes Store.

Today, the escalating challenges in health and climate underline the increasing complexity of economic models, emphasising the need for resilience and the management of the unknown. Simultaneously, in an intensifying competitive landscape, businesses are relentlessly seeking new avenues for growth and exploring fresh markets.

The official narrative portrays businesses' capacity to innovate as a direct driver of sustainable growth, economic viability, enhanced wellbeing, and societal progress. Innovation is touted as a panacea, but what exactly do we mean by this?

Addressing legitimate reservations and concerns

The literature focusing on new product development often revolves around cost, quality and time. These three factors serve as a measure of development efficiency – its capacity to bring products swiftly and economically to market with the required quality. This approach, aligned with ISO 9001 requirements, has successfully tamed innovation, making the design of new products routine and fostering stabilised product development with incremental improvements.

However, this method has limitations when dealing with novelty. How can one set a predetermined goal in a situation of extreme uncertainty? How can a company design a product when the market does not yet exist?

In unknown situations, an idea is merely a trigger and often contains only part of the solution. As French poet and dramatist Paul Claudel noted: “Nothing is more dangerous than an idea when you only have one.”

Instead, investigation and exploration of possibilities are crucial, embracing a multitude of trial-and-error processes.

In essence, an innovation initiative (a term established by ISO 56001) must create scenarios as it progresses, slowly obtaining additional information.

In this perspective, it is no longer possible to predefine the project's result or the path to follow, as data is acquired progressively.

Confronting challenges

Perhaps the most crucial point, and possibly the farthest from the ingrained thinking induced by current management systems, concerns the management of the unknown.

ISO 56001 underscores that innovation activities involve high uncertainty, especially in early exploration phases. Not all initiatives yield successful innovations, and discontinuing projects is all part of the process. ►

This reality often poses an uncomfortable challenge for many companies. Despite these challenges, ISO 56001 provides a universal approach to innovation.

The standard encourages teamwork, helping different organisations work together on new ideas. It allows businesses to assess how innovative their partners or suppliers are, and gives confidence in an organisation’s ability to innovate. Finally, it aids government bodies in encouraging innovation at local, regional and national levels.

Moreover, to ensure compatibility and ease of integration with other management systems, ISO 56001 follows a familiar structure, as it mirrors other management standards. This close alignment with other management systems can be misleading, however.

The fundamental uniqueness of innovation activities rests on their nature of exploring the unknown, which requires a cognitive software update to approach this new mindset.

The second challenge could be what we will term the ‘illusion of process omnipotence’. The first temptation is to standardise the conduct of an innovation project. This forgets that innovation rarely follows a predictable process. According to ISO 56001, the core of innovation management lies in establishing flexible processes tailored to each innovation initiative.

Steve Jobs’ perspective on opportunity identification resonates: “There’s a tremendous amount of craftsmanship between a great idea and a great product. And as you evolve that great idea, it changes and grows. It never comes out like it starts because you learn a lot more as you get into the subtleties of it.”

The third challenge is the plethora of available tools. The standard introduces various tools, such as retrospective analysis, ethnographic research, scenario planning, foresight and brainstorming. It is crucial to note the total freedom granted to each organisation to choose from this vast array – a smart approach.

Beyond tools, collective intelligence often makes the difference. While the listed tools are predominantly analytical, encouraging traditionally undervalued intuitive approaches could

be beneficial. Artistic practices and creative expressions can stimulate new ways of thinking and generate ideas within the innovation process.

The fourth challenge is disseminating the solution. Enthusiasts adopt innovation early, but their enthusiasm does not always spread quickly. Next, ‘realists’ join if the benefits are clear, playing a key role in reaching critical mass. The ‘majority’ follows once many others have adopted.

Each group has different needs, requiring the company to adapt the product. The danger is adding unnecessary features. Instead, it is often better to focus on simplifying and stabilising the product for users who prioritise reliability and cost over novelty.

The fifth challenge is evaluating the solution’s impact. Innovations typically create value while redistributing or even destroying value within a chain, network or ecosystem. Some stakeholders might be negatively affected by disruptive innovations, which should be considered.

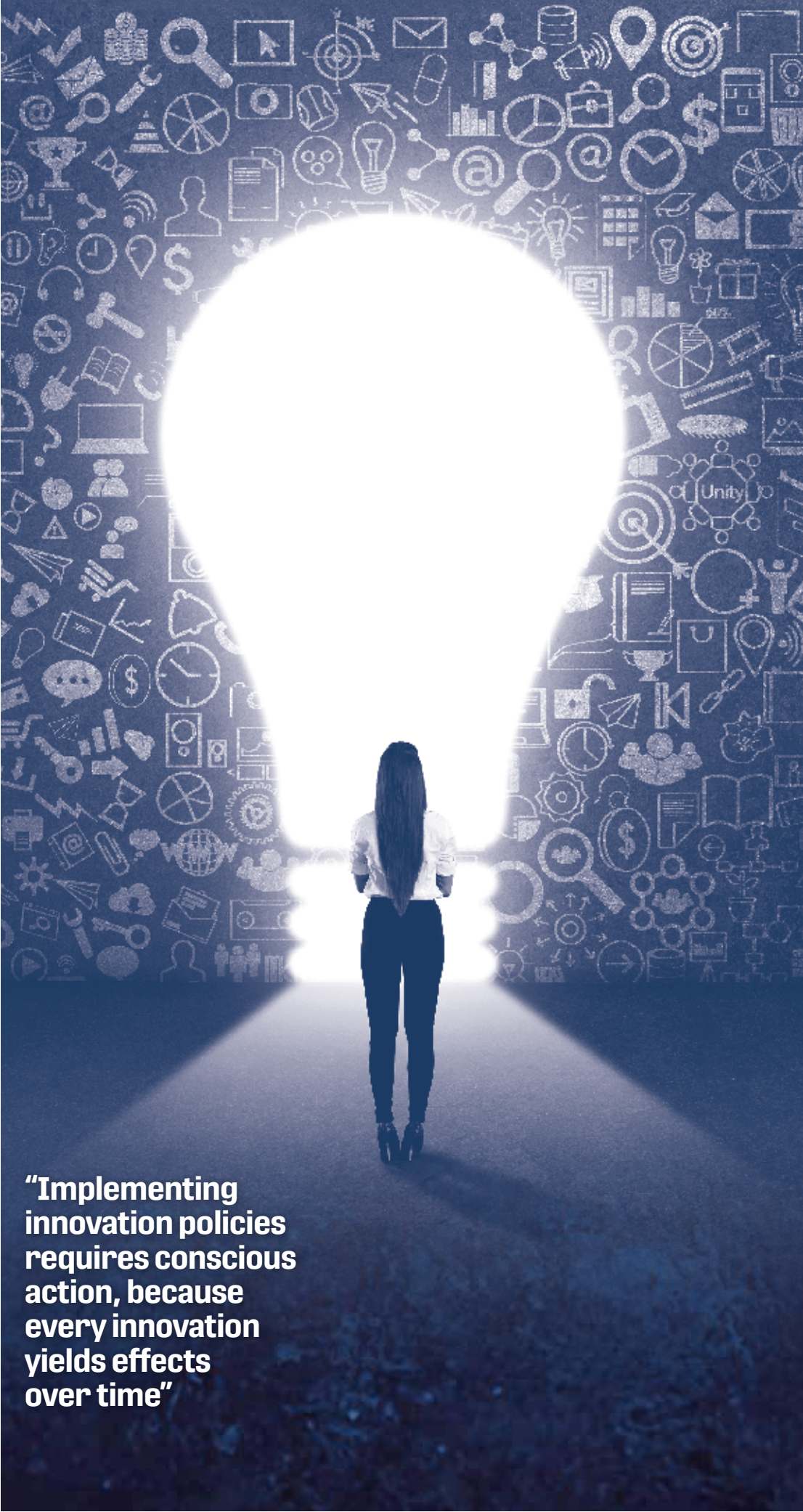
But I have not yet mentioned the most ambitious challenge of an innovation approach.

The peril of innovation management implementation

All chief financial officers seek a comprehensive business case for every project initiated within the company – innovation programme included. After all, the impact of a project, whether financial, societal or environmental, is paramount.

Yet, innovation endeavours often entail encountering numerous closed doors, leading to setbacks and, potentially, uncovering the path forward. In the realm of innovation, one must be prepared to take multiple risks to discover what truly works. It is akin to making numerous bets, understanding that only a fraction will yield successful outcomes. In essence, when dealing with innovation, traditional metrics such as return on investment on a project-by-project basis may not adequately capture success.

The key lies in shifting focus from evaluating individual project returns to assessing the return on the entire innovation portfolio. Rather than fixating on the outcomes of failed



“Implementing innovation policies requires conscious action, because every innovation yields effects over time”

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endeavours, attention should be directed towards determining if the returns from successful projects outweigh the collective investment made.

ISO 56001 suggests evaluating an innovation portfolio considering aspects such as risk-benefit balance, value relative to effort, novelty degree, types of innovation, and time horizons.

This approach highlights the importance of embracing failure as part of the innovation process. By spreading investments across multiple projects, organisations can increase their chances of success, knowing that most innovation projects do not reach fruition.

But evaluating a failed project is often either wisely avoided or undermined.

Unveiling the elixir

Strategic business consultant and author Rita McGrath concludes that: “An overly swift termination of a project may be financially sound, but detrimental to the construction of new skills and know-how.” Faced with an innovation project, she advises us: “To evaluate it as comprehensively as possible and to seek out gems among the ashes.”

Innovation projects inherently foster the development of new insights, concepts, skills and capabilities, which can be transferred across different parts of the organisation or to other projects. But are you prepared to conduct retrospectives regularly throughout the project phases?

Integration with established management standards

Management standards such as ISO 9001 for quality, ISO 14001 for the environment, and ISO 45001 for health and safety at work are well established. Although each standard can be used independently, they are all compatible with each other because of their similar structure and adjacent requirements, allowing for the consolidation of various mechanisms.

To coexist within the same company with these different standards, my proposal is to rely on the concept of ambidexterity – a balance between the exploitation of existing offerings (today) and the exploration of new products, services, processes and business models (tomorrow).

Beyond this sometimes-subtle distinction, the success of ambidexterity lies in maintaining a close link between exploitation and exploration, through knowledge/skill/learning transfer.

While this might not be explicitly named as a requirement in ISO 56001, it constitutes a success factor for integrating these different standards, and ensures long-term success.

Insights from ISO 56001 experience

While the current ISO 9001 standard was established in 2015, it is undergoing a revision process. It is projected that the next iteration of this standard will be unveiled in 2026 and the upcoming revision is anticipated to prioritise aspects such as change management and sustainability.

Even now, ISO 56001 introduces terms such as ‘impact’ (mentioned three times), ‘sustainable’ (five times), and ‘uncertainty’ (13 times). This underscores the alignment of standards with the evolving landscape. Emphasis is placed on fostering positive impacts on society, practising resource stewardship, and considering environmental implications.

Nurturing awareness and competence

Implementing innovation policies requires conscious action, because every innovation yields effects over time. Recognising this imperative is crucial for all innovators, whether inventors, researchers or experimenters. Acknowledging the ethical dimensions of innovation is not only a moral obligation, but also a practical necessity for guiding progress toward a sustainable and conscientious future.

Just as the hero returns from the realm of the unknown enriched with newfound wisdom, organisations that embrace ISO 56001 embark on a transformative journey towards progress. ■



Frédéric Sauzet

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