

January-March, 2011 Topic Thread The Value of TL 9000 In All Communication Segments

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[The Value of TL 9000 In The Wireless, VoIP and Cable Communication Segments \(Post 1\):](#)

This past week, I was preparing for a QuEST Forum Executive Board Presentation on TL 9000. It became clear to me while preparing this presentation that a current review of **TL 9000 and its benefits in other communication segments** would be an excellent topic to begin our blog/support desk for 2011. Even though I have published two articles on this topic in the past, there have been substantial gains made with TL 9000 in recent years.

Most of my familiarity with TL 9000 adoption has been in the traditional Local Exchange Carrier segment of the industry. **I started thinking—what TL benefits would be applicable or unique to the wireless, VoIP and cable segments of the communications industry?** What is QuEST Forum doing to promote penetration of TL 9000 in these segments? What is the chance that TL 9000 will gain adoption among all segments of communications? The next few paragraphs will hopefully wet your appetite by presenting some general facts about TL 9000 and the very real possibility of this adoption trend.

QuEST Forum published some performance data results that are important to highlight. **At the end of 2010, QuEST Forum recorded approximately 1900 TL 9000 certifications, with the majority of them in Asia Pacifica and North America.** The standard, in two Handbooks covering requirements and measurements has been updated through release 5.0 of requirements and 4.5 of measurements. It has matured significantly, as volunteer representatives of major service providers, OEM suppliers and service companies improved the standard through lessons learned and by bringing in best practices from other frameworks such as the Capability Maturity Model (CMMI) and the automotive standard, TS16949.

Initially, the **benefits of TL 9000 that we hoped to see were the development and use of a common quality language throughout the telecommunications supply chain, greater network reliability, a higher rate of on time delivery and a reduction of customer problem reports.** Since the inception of QuEST Forum in 1998, many of these benefits have been realized.

As I mentioned before, QuEST Forum released results of a compilation of industry data based on the standardized reporting of certified companies. Data for 8 of about 32 different product categories was studied for the period 2007-2008. **The data revealed among other things that for on time delivery, the linear average of the averages of the 8 product categories had risen from 75% to 81%, while certain product categories had improved as much 130%.** This is important, since many of the product categories studied deliver critical network services every day for users of the public network. These improvements were realized by simply applying the time-honored principle of measuring what you want to manage.

In addition to the benefits outlined previously, I believe that there are at least three more that have recently been introduced into the TL 9000 standard, **risk management, sustainability and additional emphasis on testing**. That's a big scope of impact. In the next 4 installments of this series, I will highlight how these areas of impact are just as critical to the delivery of service in wireless, VoIP and cable market segments. **TL 9000 is proving its worth as a “communications” industry standard and its migration—may be an inevitability**. Stay tuned for this series, as it may get you to think about your product or service in a more strategic way! For more information contact bclancy@bizphyx.com.

[TL 9000 Benefits For Wireless Providers \(Post 2\):](#)

As we mentioned last week, there are demonstrable benefits to implementing the TL 9000 Quality Management Standard. Since the benefits are viable across all segments of the telecommunications landscape, it is difficult to pick out one or two that are particularly useful for a particular space.

Cost reduction is a general benefit that can be realized by all, as are the improvement of customer satisfaction and the use of industry data for benchmarking purposes. So you have to think about what one benefit might be really important to one industry segment, such as the wireless space.

One clear benefit is having a specific “risk management” plan for the deployment of wireless service (service providers) or of product to wireless service providers, by their suppliers. Risks such as labor shortages, single source suppliers, supplier shortages and others are common and lead to late and/or poor quality deployments.

Management is now challenged by the TL 9000 standard to identify such risks and to have a plan to eliminate or mitigate these risks. **An example of a “risk” for a wireless provider may include not enough broadband backhaul. What about copper thieves preying on remote tower sites?** Risks like this can be mitigated if there is a plan in place ahead of time. Think about it. Are there risks that could easily cause you to lose customers? The key is to identify them in advance and plan to reduce the risk! The TL 9000 quality management standard clearly addresses this aspect of service management, especially in the wireless space.

Next week, we will review a third segment of the communications industry and provide another example of how TL 9000 can be applied to improve business operations. For more information, please contact bclancy@bizphyx.com.

[TL 9000 Benefits For Independent Local Exchange Carriers \(ILECs\)? \(Post 3\):](#)

This week we are discussing the benefits of TL 9000 for ILECs. As an independent local exchange carrier executive you may have heard about TL 9000 or QuEST Forum, but may be unfamiliar with TL 9000 and wonder how it might benefit your company. **TL 9000 has been adopted as a common quality language across multiple suppliers and service providers in the telecommunications industry.** The beauty of TL 9000 is that it provides service providers like yourselves a way to ensure that your suppliers are using a systematic method for delivering their products and services to you. It has been very successful in **improving on time delivery and overall customer satisfaction** since its introduction in 1998.

One of the prime benefits of having one quality management system through the entire supply chain is that suppliers and service providers are that suppliers—can **reduce cost of supply** by eliminating rework resulting from poor installations, support services and products. Furthermore, with TL 9000 there is an **emphasis on risk management planning** in order to help **reduce risk of supply** on your behalf. Companies are required to identify risks to your projects in order to ensure that they consider them in advance, plan to eliminate or reduce them and recover should all else fail. Risks such as labor shortages, single source suppliers and others are predicted in advance and dealt with. These plans are required to be reviewed and updated regularly.

Finally, there are **formal means for receiving and responding to customer problem reports related to hardware, software and service products.** This process requires solutions to be provided by your suppliers within certain time frames according to the seriousness of the problem or require you to solve them according to customer contract arrangements depending on the type of business you are in.

All of this means that you can standardize your system of tracking and reporting performance among your suppliers. It reduces the amount of overhead you need to have to **maintain multiple supplier report cards and can significantly reduce or eliminate supplier quality audits.** I would encourage you to check into TL 9000 to see if it would work for your company as it has for many major service providers. If you have any questions about TL 9000 implementation contact bclancy@bizphyx.com.

[TL 9000 Application and Benefits In VoIP and Broadband \(Post 4\):](#)

In our last few articles we've been emphasizing the benefits of implementing the communications quality standard, TL 9000. I wrote about how the standard began in the wireline segment, being driven by major service providers such as AT&T and Verizon and how it's beneficial to other industry segments such as ILECs and in wireless space.

What about the rapidly emerging technologies such as broadband video and voice over IP? The truth is that the major service providers and their OEM suppliers are aggressively rolling out services in these spaces as well. Let's assume for a moment that broadband and VoIP suppliers are different. Actually there are some VoIP suppliers that may not be operating in the market segments we just mentioned. So in that sense, they are different. They probably have little familiarity with TL 9000. I have actually been surprised at the number of suppliers that are unique to each of these communications markets.

So let's explore some benefits of TL 9000 to VoIP OEM and service suppliers. **Would you like to be assured that your on time delivery percentage improves?** Would it be beneficial if your product was designed and developed according to customer requirements? How would you feel about a product that was thoroughly tested under all conditions? **Does your firm have a disaster recovery plan that helps you continue to serve your customers under dire conditions, such as a loss of data or a facility outage?** What if you could reduce the cost of providing your product or service and still maintain its high quality?

The truth is that TL 9000 brings all of these benefits to the table through solid requirements that when "added" to the basic tenants of ISO 9001, create a standard that can be used by all telecommunications market segments. The TL 9000 standard reflects the expertise of volunteer executives, who since 1998 have applied their competence in quality systems and their knowledge of past industry issues, in order to create a standard that can be used by all communications market segments.

Furthermore, TL 9000 allows you to benchmark yourself against your competitors with solid data about on time delivery, customer complaints and other standard measures using blind data that gives no names, but does provide industry averages—best and worst in class and so forth. As a result we're starting to see broadband and VoIP suppliers/providers look to TL 9000 in their quality programs. Why wouldn't you implement TL 9000, the "communications" quality standard? Doesn't it seem like a no-brainer to improve the bottom line of your operations? For further information on TL 9000 training or implementation contact: info@bizphyx.com.

Benefits Of TL 9000 To Cable Providers: Competitive Advantage (Series Conclusion) (Post 5):

As we wrap up the series on the benefits of TL 9000 in multiple communications segments, I was thinking about how to distinguish a message regarding the benefits of the TL 9000 to service providers in the **cable space**. Quite frankly the message is much the same regardless of market segment: **by using TL 9000 as a standard quality management system for suppliers you can control costs within your supply chain, reduce supply chain risk and improve key performance in areas such as, on time deliveries and reduction of network outages**. All of these advantages make sense outright, just as they do for traditional telecommunications wireline and wireless service providers. However, there is a way that cable providers can look at TL 9000 as being particularly beneficial to their industry-competitive advantage.

TL 9000 can clearly help cable providers by bringing a strategic competitive weapon to the marketplace. Cable providers are vying for the same customers against service providers with a long tradition of quality and network uptime. Until now, this industry segment has not followed a single quality standard for their operations. (Workmanship standards are another category and I'm sure standards exist for how equipment is installed and maintained.) I am not disparaging cable providers, as they may not be aware that such a communications quality system exists.

It is often said; when in Rome do as the Romans do. **Cable providers need to be aware that the major providers have already adopted the TL 9000 quality management standard.** TL 9000 and standardized network operating policies have been a strategic competitive weapon for wireline and some wireless service providers for quite some time. Standardized measurements required for TL 9000 certification allow certified companies to benchmark themselves against their competitors within their service category. This means that at any given time they will know if they are best in class, worst in class, average, etc. for on time delivery, customer complaints, network or service outages and defective services.

Imagine as a cable operator, if you reported this type of blind data and had access to it too? You would pay hundreds of thousands of dollars for this type of data from companies that lack the specific expertise of QuEST Forum, TL 9000's sponsor. QuEST Forum is made up of member service providers and suppliers that all have industry expertise to lend to working committees that develop the standard and the measurements.

Cable companies could also encourage critical suppliers within their own supply chain to adopt TL 9000 so they would have a standard way of ensuring that suppliers meet their requirements. **The TL 9000 quality standard would be a very effective way for cable suppliers to improve customer satisfaction based on fact based data, shorten their time to market and compete effectively with other providers in the communication's marketplace.** For more information about the standard, contact the TL 9000 Experts and/or e-mail us at info@bizphyx.com.

