



TL 9000 EXPERTS



## TL 9000 Frequently Asked Questions

### General Questions

#### What Is TL 9000?

**A:** Created in 1998, TL 9000 is a global quality standard, designed specifically to meet the supply chain requirements of the communications industry. TL 9000 is built on the international quality standard known as ISO 9001 and its eight quality principles. It defines quality system requirements for design, development, production, delivery and service, in the communications industry. TL 9000 also specifies measurements for companies to help them evaluate the effectiveness of their quality program. QuEST Forum governs the TL 9000 standard.

#### What Is QuEST Forum?

**A:** The Quality Excellence for Suppliers of Telecommunications (**QuEST**) **Forum** is a global, nonprofit communications association, comprised of a unique partnership of industry service providers and suppliers. QuEST Forum was formed in 1996, to improve the quality and reliability of telecommunication services, through a single, consistent set of quality management requirements and standards. These requirements form the quality management system (QMS) known as TL 9000. QuEST Forum is a member organization. For QuEST Forum membership information visit: [questforum.org](http://questforum.org).

#### What is the value of implementing TL 9000?

**A:** By implementing TL 9000, you eliminate the need for multiple quality standards and your organization benefits from a consistent set of quality expectations that improve performance across the global telecommunications supply chain. By achieving and leveraging their TL 9000 certification, **our clients testify to these results:**

- Greater customer satisfaction due to consistent quality output
- Increased competitiveness and access to new markets
- Operational efficiencies and productivity that reduce costs
- Profitability that comes from continuous quality improvement
- Measurement capabilities that quantify performance
- Process standardization and complete documentation
- Improved employee teamwork and consistency of execution

## How long will it take for my company to become TL 9000 certified?

**A:** The entire process can take from 6 to 18 months. It varies with the size of the company, existing quality management systems, scope of registration (hardware, software, and service), and the amount of resources (staff) you can dedicate to the effort.

## Where can I obtain a complete copy of the TL 9000 standard?

**A:** Copies of the TL 9000 Quality Management System Requirements Handbook and the TL 9000 Quality Management Systems Measurements Handbook may be purchased through QuEST Forum by contacting them at: [tl9000.org](http://tl9000.org).

## Do we have to be a member of QuEST Forum to register to TL 9000?

**A:** No, membership is not required. Organizations can be TL 9000 registered independent of QuEST Forum membership. However, QuEST Forum membership offers additional benefits, like access to Performance Data Reports, sharing best practices and contributing to the improvement of the standard. In addition, there is no reporting fee (monthly measurements) for member companies. You also gain monthly access to benchmark data. We believe in TL 9000 certification so much, that our CEO, Sue Clancy, is the current Co-Chair of the [Jump Start Mentor Program >](#)

## Category Questions

### Will TL 9000 registration allow for multiple locations and/or multiple categories?

**A:** Yes. TL 9000 supports three distinct certifications. There is TL 9000 H for hardware, TL 9000 S for software and TL 9000 V for services. It allows for a registration to cover hardware, software, services (independently) or a combination of these sectors. For example, a company can register for **TL 9000 H**, **TL 9000 S** or both (**TL 9000 HS**).

### We are a service company providing services. How does TL 9000 apply to us?

**A:** TL 9000 includes requirements that are specifically written for Service companies. These requirements are indicated in the handbook with a **(V)**, where as those for software have an **(S)** and for hardware have an **(H)**. These requirements were developed to allow the TL 9000 standard to meet requirements of various product or service offerings, unlike the generic requirements of ISO 9001 alone.

Additionally, TL 9000 has measurements for service product categories that apply to companies in these areas: Engineering, Installation, Maintenance Service, Repair Service, Customer Support Service and others. Product categories may be combined to cover the full range of services provided by a company. The metrics for service companies are specific to the categories and are different from OEM and Network Operations metrics.

### What if we are an OEM providing hardware and software products?

**A:** There are many product categories under which a company may register. A company can choose to register all products or only designated products. Because there are specific ways in which these rules apply, we recommend discussing your strategy with your TL 9000 consultant.

### Do organizations that distribute or integrate products for other organizations, need to be registered to a hardware or software product category?

**A:** No. Organizations that distribute or integrate other suppliers' products still register as a service registration. If integrating a final product however, they may be required to report hardware return measurements for the finished goods.

## Do companies that do Engineer, Furnish and Install (EF&I), need to include design and development in their registration scope?

**A:** No. EF&I Organizations provide an engineering service defined in product category 7.2.1 as Network Engineering, including specifying locations and placement of equipment and many other activities. These activities are not defined in the standard as design activities. For further information see the QuEST Forum website: [tl9000\\_resources >](#)

## Latest Version R5.0 and Upgrading Questions

### What is the latest version of the TL 9000 standard?

**A:** The TL 9000 standard is contained in two handbooks, **Requirements and Measurements**. Release 5.0 is the latest version of the *Requirements Handbook* and was made effective as of November 2009. Release 4.0 may be used by organizations until November 14, 2010 and Release 5.0 must be implemented by November 15, 2010. **The Measurements Handbook remains at Release 4.0.**

### What is the latest version of the Measurements Handbook for TL 9000?

**A:** The current version of the TL 9000 Measurements Handbook is version 4.0; however a new release is expected later in 2010.

### Do you have any tips on upgrading from TL 9000 version 4.0 to 5.0?

**A:** The process is similar to implementing 5.0 afresh. Start with a gap analysis. Put together an implementation team and map a strategy and project plan that includes key milestones for various departments and your registrar. Meet often to track progress. **BIZPHYX** can help you assess the differences between the two standards and implement a successful project.

## Latest Implementation, Registration and Maintenance Questions

### Does BIZPHYX certify or register companies to TL 9000?

**A:** **BIZPHYX** provides implementation and consulting services (preparation, documentation and training), and therefore cannot provide *certification audits*. These are provided by third party registrars approved by QuEST Forum. **BIZPHYX** can refer you to an authorized registrar, and we do this as part of our implementation service. Please listen to a very important MP3 overview on our [internal audit page](#).

### What preparation is involved before implementing TL 9000?

**A:** Before contacting a registrar to do a certification audit of your quality system, you must **learn the requirements and reportable measurements**. You must document a quality system to meet those requirements including a quality manual, document and record control procedure, internal audit procedure and others depending on your business. You must implement the requirements and train people on them.

Additionally, you must conduct an internal audit of your entire quality management system. You must report a sample of QuEST Forum data to QuEST Forum through their data repository. You must conduct a management review of the quality management system. There are many details behind each of these major milestones and **BIZPHYX** can help through turnkey consulting or webinar based implementation services.

## Are there maintenance costs once we obtain TL 9000?

**A:** Costs of maintaining your certification can vary on the size of your company and the complexity of your quality management system. You will have recurring registrar audit costs. This expense is typically a per-day rate, based on the number of days they audit and/or the size of your size company. You will be required to perform an internal audit of all your TL 9000 clauses once a year. You may also choose to outsource your internal audits to a company like **BIZPHYX**. Finally, if you are not a QuEST Forum Member, there are costs to report data, as part of your TL 9000 certification.

QuEST Forum charges all non-members an annual **Registration Management System (RMS) fee** for the creation and management of their registration record. This fee covers the use of the system and includes all data submissions and re-submissions.

## What are the different types of audits and how often do we need them?

**A:** First, there are certification audits and surveillance audits, which are performed by a third party registrar. Once you have successfully completed your certification audit, you are issued a certificate that is good for three years by the registrar. Each year thereafter for two years, the registrar will conduct one or more surveillance audits of your system, depending on your contract with your registrar.

In addition to your registrar reviewing your system, ISO 9001 requires your system be *internally audited* as well. You should do an internal audit of all of the TL 9000 clauses at least once a year. You can conduct these audits internally with your employees once they are trained or you can outsource this to a consultant. For many companies outsourcing is most effective, as *you must be independent of the process you are auditing*. **BIZPHYX** conducts **internal audits** for clients.

## Why should we use BIZPHYX?

**A:** We are the nation's leading TL 9000 training and consulting firm, providing complete quality management services: preparation, implementation and maintenance. All **BIZPHYX** consultants, trainers and auditors have specific telecommunications quality experience. Find out more about the distinct advantages that enable us to deliver the results you need. **Contact us at 972-429-5560.**

