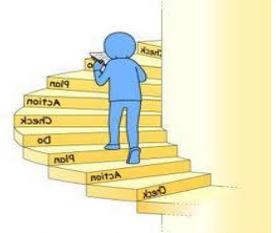


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What is PDCA Cycle?

A fundamental quality improvement tool used to improve almost anything. While it looks deceptively simple, it is extremely powerful: the more you use it, the more you improve.

PDSA stands for Plan - Do - Check - Act

1. Plan

The first step is to plan what you want to achieve, i.e., what outcomes you want. First you decide on the end results wanted, then you work back from them to set objectives and plan the tasks or activities required to get those outcomes, as well as the measurements (KPIs/success criteria) you'll use to decide if the outcome was successfully achieved.

2. Do

Work the plan. Do the tasks and activities that you planned in the previous step.

3. Check

When it's been done, you then check and study the outcome. Look at what happened.

What actually happened? Did you get the results you planned for, expected and wanted? Or a different result? Were the results wanted or unwanted? If things didn't go as you planned, why not?

Are things now better or worse -- or much the same?

If they're better, can they be further improved? If worse, why and what should you do next? If the same, why?

Do you need to do something different, continue for longer, change some aspects? And so on.

Some approaches and techniques that may be used in this phase include observation, monitoring, measuring, studying the data you collect, analyzing, discussing, holding 'management reviews', looking at results of audits.

4. Act

The final part of the cycle is to take action, which is based on the results you got and your analysis.

If the change was a good one, you build it into your system.

If things didn't work out well, or need further work, you might just refine the plan or part of it, or even start over again from the beginning.

Which takes you to on the next stage of another cycle: step 1 (Plan) again, but this time with new knowledge.

Then you repeat step 2 (Do): again, with new information and knowledge. And thus you repeat another cycle of Plan - Do - Check - Act.

Followed by another... and another... and so on. With each cycle, you cannot help but improve your quality system.

It's a 'virtuous circle' because the more you do it, the more you improve.

The cycle is known by various names, including the Continuous Improvement cycle, Shewhart's cycle (he invented it) or Deming's cycle, because although he didn't invent it, he made it widely known.

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WHERE FAILURES OCCUR ??

Many organizations tend to do only part of this cycle, usually the Plan/Do parts.

The majority of businesses are most comfortable in the Do phase. There's a lot of activity - winning the business, getting sales, making product or providing service. All of which is seen as 'the real work'.

Plan is at least known, or paid lip service to. So they may do some planning, to a greater or lesser degree. Or at least know that it's important and try to do it. Or mean to. When they 'get around' to it... when they 'find the time'.

Where most organizations fall short is in the other half of the cycle: Check and Act. For example, they may Plan and then Do, but far too often they don't make the time to Study what happened and then to Act depending on those results.

Some companies (too many!) may produce a Plan but then rarely use it or apply it. They don't make time at intervals to review (check) their plan and compare current status with where they planned to be.

It's only when an organization learns to place its attention on all of the stages of the PDCA cycle in the right order that becomes an organization in which improvement really is a way of life. Where continuous improvement isn't just a phrase, but something that occurs often.

Those that don't are usually stuck forever in reactive mode, fighting fires: fixing the latest crisis and responding to the latest problem that cropped up. Barely managing that one before they dash on to the next one.

Highly successful organizations put equal attention on all 4 aspects of the cycle and practice them all, without emphasizing any one to the exclusion of others. They understand that this apparently simple tool is incredibly powerful.

You can use it to achieve very real improvements, but only if you practice it regularly: use and apply it repeatedly and give equal attention to all four stages. If you do, improvement cannot fail to occur.

In Six Sigma programs, the cycle has been adopted for use, but given a different name (as so often happens). It is known as DMAIC: Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve, and Control.

Disclaimer: The steps mentioned herein only provide a basic and close to actual outline of implementation of ISO standards & their certification. However, these steps may not be true or close to actual for certain rare, uncommon, new or product specific ISO standard's implementation & certification. These steps are based on RIDHAMA's own method of implementation and may vary from standard to standard, due to revision in standard(s) or due to customer's specific requirements. RIDHAMA reserves the right to change these steps for ISO standard implementation & its certification without prior notice, communication or intimation to viewers/ audience, website visitors & its customers.