

# **Making Quality Management Attractive for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises**

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## **Abstract**

### ***Purpose***

Small and Medium Enterprises (SME's) account for a large part of the economy. However, methods and standards in Quality Management are developed with large organizations in mind. The purpose of this paper is to show that alternative approaches, suitable for SME's can be developed.

### ***Design / Methodology / Approach***

Looking at elements from ISO standards on Quality Management and Six Sigma, we show how difficult it is to interpret and implement them for SME's. A test was performed to evaluate the complexity of the language and terms used in ISO 9001. From that recommendations were formulated to improve the standard. The ISO 13053-1 standard was used to evaluate the "standardized" implementation of Six Sigma. Alternative approaches are defined for medium sized companies.

### ***Findings***

The terms used in ISO standards require specialized knowledge. A certifiable standard should be achievable by any organization that is legitimately in business. In its current form this is not the case. Implementing Six Sigma according to the original guidelines makes it unattainable for medium sized companies.

### ***Practical implications***

Making Quality Management methods more adapted to the needs of SME's will have an impact on the application of Quality. It will help SME's to perform better and increase competitiveness.

### ***Originality/value***

This paper's value lies in an appeal to the Quality World to think critically about the language and terminology we use, making our valuable methods less accessible to the outside world.

**Keywords:** SME, terminology, accessibility, complexity, standards