



STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN

ISO/TC 312

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This ISO/TC work is related to service companies of all sizes and all service units from manufacturing industry as well as public services and non-profit service organizations. Service Excellence is used by the top 10% to 20% leading service organizations. Nevertheless, all organizations can use the Service Excellence standard to help develop their business toward Service Excellence and achieve outstanding customer experiences.

Implementing the Service Excellence standard generates several benefits for organizations and the environment they are operating in:

First of all, the usage of this standard can be seen as a competitive differentiation which enables a higher growth of service excellence and customer centricity reputation. The establishment and strengthening of long-term customer relationships are only two key factors which might lead to a greater propensity of repurchase and recommendation and a reduction of churn rates. Moreover, the cost-saving potential in the long-term perspective is another benefit which expresses its relevance by e.g. lower failure costs, easier sale conversions and reduced advertising expenses for acquiring new customers. With the help of this Service Excellence standard organizations get the opportunity to improve customer co-operation and engagement and to set up an excellent employer brand. Within this “employer branding”, recruitment opportunities can be improved and higher levels of staff engagement and retention can be observed. This ISO standard helps to manage networks with subcontractors and to create brand strengths based on a positive brand awareness.

Agile organizations can boost their efficiency and create sustained service excellence. The standard can also help to create competitive advantage. Additionally, society can also benefit from excellent services.

Generally, the main objective is to develop standards to help organizations to improve their Service Excellence and customer centricity. Within this standard it is possible to assess different options and means regarding Service Excellence and to identify the dimensions of this area by implementing necessary and clear documentation. The standards could be acceptable to national governments and promote awareness and possible uptake to all necessary stakeholders.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 *ISO technical committees and business planning*

The extension of formal business planning to ISO Technical Committees (ISO/TCs) is an important measure which forms part of a major review of business. The aim is to align the ISO work programme with expressed business environment needs and trends and to allow ISO/TCs to prioritize among different projects, to identify the benefits expected from the availability of International Standards, and to ensure adequate resources for projects throughout their development.

1.2 *International standardization and the role of ISO*

The foremost aim of international standardization is to facilitate the exchange of goods and services through the elimination of technical barriers to trade.

Three bodies are responsible for the planning, development and adoption of International Standards: [ISO](#) (International Organization for Standardization) is responsible for all sectors excluding Electrotechnical, which is the responsibility of [IEC](#) (International Electrotechnical Committee), and most of the Telecommunications Technologies, which are largely the responsibility of [ITU](#) (International Telecommunication Union).

ISO is a legal association, the members of which are the National Standards Bodies (NSBs) of some 164 countries (organizations representing social and economic interests at the international level), supported by a Central Secretariat based in Geneva, Switzerland.

The principal deliverable of ISO is the [International Standard](#).

An International Standard embodies the essential principles of global openness and transparency, consensus and technical coherence. These are safeguarded through its development in an ISO Technical Committee (ISO/TC), representative of all interested parties, supported by a public comment phase (the ISO Technical Enquiry). ISO and its [Technical Committees](#) are also able to offer the ISO Technical Specification (ISO/TS), the ISO Public Available Specification (ISO/PAS) and the ISO Technical Report (ISO/TR) as solutions to market needs. These ISO products represent lower levels of consensus and have therefore not the same status as an International Standard.

ISO also offers the International Workshop Agreement (IWA) as a deliverable which aims to bridge the gap between the activities of consortia and the formal process of standardization represented by ISO and its national members. An important distinction is that the IWA is developed by ISO workshops and fora, comprising only participants with direct interest, and so it is not accorded the status of an International Standard.

2. BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT OF THE ISO/TC

2.1 Description of the Business Environment

The following political, economic, technical, regulatory, legal and social dynamics describe the business environment of the industry sector, products, materials, disciplines or practices related to the scope of this ISO/TC, and they may significantly influence how the relevant standard development processes are conducted and the content of the resulting standards is presented:

The globalization process of services, service industries and corporations world-wide has increased the need for organizations to improve their competitive position and to establish long-term customer relationships. Moreover, as customer needs and expectations continue to expand and as customer loyalty wanes increasingly, organizations must concentrate their efforts on optimizing their customer touchpoints and finding innovative, excellent service solutions which create outstanding customer experiences resulting in customer delight.

Therefore, providing not only a higher level of quality for core services or value-added services, but establishing a framework which systematically produces outstanding customer experiences has emerged as a critical success factor for leading service-providing companies. Thereby the impact of excellent services on a company's competitiveness can be significant, due to creation of delightful moments for customers which have a direct impact on customer loyalty and especially on repurchase and recommendation behavior. Consequently, service companies have shifted their focus towards finding ways how to design, produce, and deliver excellent services.

As a result of this shift in focus, the objectives of customer experiences and customer delight have emerged as viable and promising opportunities. A necessity for this is the provision of excellent services which exceed the expectations of the customers. Delight as an emotional response to excellent services, is in turn capable of strengthening a customer's commitment to a service provider.

Since customer experience and customer delight are primarily mentioned as "soft factors", a standardized understanding and handling of relevant topics are required. Service organizations can profit from doing so when they dedicate their business strategies to offering customers excellent services. In consequence, customers and society can also benefit from an increased service level which is outstanding.

Whereas the relevance of providing excellent services is already well-known and well-established by leading companies, in a lot of service markets there exists no fundamental knowledge how to define and design these "soft" factors. Therefore, first attempts were made on a national level and regional (EU) level to think about first guidance for service organizations which result for example in CEN/TS 16880 "Service Excellence – Creating outstanding customer experiences through service excellence". Since this topic is of high relevance for all service organizations world-wide and the provision of excellent service is a global challenge which can lead to tremendous benefits for all stakeholders, an ISO project bundles the service competencies of leading service organizations world-wide to improve customer experiences and create additional value for all stakeholders.

2.2 Quantitative Indicators of the Business Environment

The following list of quantitative indicators describes the business environment in order to provide adequate information to support actions of the ISO/TC:

The ISO/TC primarily refers to the tertiary sector as the application area of Service Excellence. Overall, the service industry sector is dominating the world economy and includes all parts where knowledge meets the distribution of tangible and intangible products. Many services are

nowadays based on communication and information technology to improve productivity and performance.

In 2021, 64.43% of the world's GDP was generated in the service sector, what makes 62,055 billion US-Dollars. A more detailed view on the different regions in 2021 show a variety ranging from 48.1% for Africa Sub-Sahara, 48.5% for South Asia, 59.1% for East Asia and the Pacific Region, 65% for Latin America and Caribbean as well as for the European Union, up to 76.7% for North America. Services as the most dynamic segment of world trade also show the fastest growing exports world-wide. In 2022, the volume of service exports was about 7.09 trillion US-Dollars with a forecast of 8 trillion US-Dollars by 2025. This service trading includes a wide range of activities, where any service is provided by people from one country to people or companies from another country. Nevertheless, the service sector is often overlooked in discussions of international trade, which tend to focus on cross-border flows of goods. Yet failing to account for trade in services creates a highly distorted picture. The importance of services in international trade has grown significantly over time as new technologies, and the increasing sophistication of many consumers, have expanded the potential for services to be readily traded across borders. Moreover, as business processes become digitally transformed, and delivery of goods and services become increasingly intertwined, trade in services has been growing faster than the underlying growth of international trade in goods.

Furthermore, jobs in the service sector are the main driver of the future employment growth, so that 1.64 billion employees in 2021 are only one key aspect of the overall impression. Over the past 25 years, about 75% of 1 billion new jobs created in the world have been in services. In 2021, three out of four jobs in the EU were accounted for the service sector.

This service orientation is aligned with consistent measurement of service levels and has to be applied in accordance with the business objectives. The application of service standards in the dynamic practical context provides a contribution to aspects of quality and transparency. This allows organizations to cope with structural transformations in the global service sector and to deliver improvements within costs and income. Moreover, this vital need for standards to ensure excellent service processes is manifested in compliance rules with suppliers, legislations and other service providers within the application in the respective service industry. Generally, services are key factors for growth and success and deliver new market opportunities in a continuously growing environment. The growth of international trade in services has outpaced overall trade growth in recent years. Between 2010 and 2022, the value of global trade in services increased by around 70%, and therefore clearly outstrips the trade in goods.

In 2021, trade in services returned to its pre-Covid-19 level.

3. BENEFITS EXPECTED FROM THE WORK OF THE ISO/TC

Before the establishment of ISO/TC 312 in 2017, there was no technical committee of standardization (TC or PC) working on related topics like customer experiences, service design, and excellent services in ISO. Therefore, the technical committee ISO/TC 312 should be responsible for standardization of mindsets and procedures on how to achieve outstanding customer experiences through the provision of excellent services including terminology, principles, elements, metrics, implementation, amongst others. Subsequently, it will support the [ISO Strategy 2030](#) where developing standards for services is one of the priorities since they make a positive contribution to the globalization of the services sector.

Potential stakeholders are all organizations delivering services, such as commercial organizations, public services and not-for-profit organizations. The mentioned standards will help service organizations world-wide to design, manage and deliver better services evoking positive to outstanding experiences for their customers and resulting in delighted customers. This will also lead to significantly increased,

- loyal customer relationships,
- customer and employee engagement,
- cost-savings,
- company/business reputation,
- employer image,
- financial results, and
- attractiveness of trading services world-wide.

In consequence, the standards lead to more attractive service offers enhancing the value for service-providing organizations and for customers.

The work of the TC/312 results in a broad range of tangible and intangible benefits including but not limited to the following stakeholders for each area of focus:

1. Principles and model to achieve outstanding customer experiences and customer delight:

All kind of service organizations as relevant stakeholders can gain a better understanding of the most important aspects and principles to improve the customer experiences by providing excellent services.

Suppliers and clients can better communicate about a consistent way how to satisfy and delight customers.

Employees will have an improved engagement and empowerment.

Consumer organizations and government will get a better impression of customer needs, perception and experiences.

2. Designing excellent service to achieve outstanding customer experiences:

Service organizations will be enabled to develop and deliver better experiences and services for customers.

Customers benefit from better experiences and excellent service.

3. Measuring Service Excellence performance:

Service organizations will measure, analyze and improve their capabilities to re-orientate the service business into the direction of the customer. Analysts, service associations and government authorities will get deeper insights into the performance (potentials) of the service sector. Metrics will be delivered to “tangibilize” Service Excellence.

4. Practices for achieving Service Excellence:

Service organizations will be informed about concrete practices for achieving service excellence to develop and deliver better experiences and services for customers.

Customers will profit by getting better services and a higher value provision.

5. Principles and model for public service organizations:

Public services organizations will be able to become more citizen centered.

Citizens will benefit by getting better public services.

6. Implementation approach for ISO 23592:

Service organizations will get guidance on how to implement Service Excellence based on ISO 23592.

Customers will profit by getting better services and a higher value provision.

7. Maturity model:

Service organizations will get guidance for using a service excellence maturity model (SEMM), learn about the underlying principles and get guidance for future and sustainable improvements. It can be used for internal and external audits.

8. Guidelines for application of digital approaches to achieve Service Excellence:

Service organizations will get guidelines to apply ISO 23592, including principles, models, and specific application methods to achieve service excellence by using digital approaches.

Customers will profit by getting better services and a higher value provision.

4. REPRESENTATION AND PARTICIPATION IN THE ISO/TC

4.1 Membership

[Countries/ISO member bodies that are P and O members of the ISO committee](#)

4.2 Analysis of the participation

As these standards focus on services and their specifics, all countries with a strong service sector or a high percentage of service exports have a strong interest in improving the service businesses from an average service level to an excellent service level. According to World Bank data, services account for 64 % of GDP and for 75% of employment in the most developed countries. But even in many developing countries, the services share is still close to 50 %. And services trade has been growing consistently. Some two-thirds of the global FDI (foreign direct investment) stock is in the services sector. Therefore, most of the regions and countries world-wide are affected by these standards.

The establishment of such a set of standards will help service industries all over the world to improve the service businesses and to satisfy and delight their customers. Thus, the delivered services will be improved, financial effects for the service-providing companies can be reached and the experiences of customers can be improved.

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE ISO/TC AND STRATEGIES FOR THEIR ACHIEVEMENT

5.1 *Defined objectives of the ISO/TC*

Initial work shall include the following projects:

1. Standard for principles and model of service excellence

Creating principles to stimulate the mind-set of service managers and service employees going into the direction of customer centricity.

Developing a model on service excellence containing different elements leading to outstanding customer experiences and delight.

Set clear definitions for terms like customer centricity, customer delight, customer experiences, service leadership and management, excellent services due to the subjective perception of such “soft” constructs.

2. Standard for designing excellent service to achieve outstanding customer experiences

Guidance on the creation of outstanding customer experiences and excellent services: a standard which defines the scope of outstanding customer experiences and specifies guidelines to promote the creation of outstanding customer experiences and the design of new services.

3. Standard for Measuring Service Excellence Performance

Identifying an appropriate set of objective and subjective (especially emotional indicators) internal and external metrics which can be used to operationalize the influencers and substantial effects (positive impact on stock evolution) of outstanding customer experiences and customer delight and monitoring and reporting of the efficiency of service excellence.

4. Report on practices for achieving Service Excellence

Collection of practices that are related to the four dimensions and nine elements in the service excellence model. It enables all stakeholders to understand how to apply ISO 23592 and ISO/TS 24082 through various case studies of 10 highly acclaimed organizations in five countries.

5. Standard for principles and model of Service Excellence for public service organizations

It specifies the service excellence terminology, principles and model so that public organizations that deliver services could provide outstanding experience to their key stakeholders.

6. Standard for implementation approach for ISO 23592

Guidance on the implementation of service orientation and transformation of the organization: a standard which defines the construct (service culture, service leadership and management) of service orientation and specifies guidelines to support a better understanding of customers and the design and provision of excellent services.

7. Standard for Service Excellence maturity model

Principles and guidance for a service excellence maturity model (SEMM) helping organizations to determine and demonstrate their own maturity level with regard to service excellence as defined in ISO 23592 and gives guidance for future and sustainable improvements.

8. Standard for guidelines for application of digital approaches to achieve Service Excellence

Guidelines to apply ISO 23592, including principles, models, and specific application methods to achieve service excellence by using digital approaches.

To achieve these objectives, ISO/TC 312 has to motivate its stakeholders to actively engage in this TC.

5.2 Identified strategies to achieve the ISO/TC's defined objectives

The work started with the basic standard on principles and model of service excellence to build up a similar understanding of the innovative and complex matter on Service Excellence. The next steps focused on the standard on Designing excellent service to achieve outstanding customer experiences, the standard on the Measuring Service Excellence performance and a report on Practices for achieving service excellence. Because of the specialties, a separate standard on Principles and model for public service organizations should also be created. Afterwards, the standard on Guidelines for application of digital approaches to achieve Service Excellence, the standard on Maturity Model and the standard on Implementation approach for ISO 23592 is to be developed. Therefore, the new TC plans to propose five additional international standards in three to four years.

The following standards have been taken into account:

CEN/TS 16880 Service Excellence – Creating outstanding customer experiences through service excellence

DIN SPEC 77224:2011-07 Achieving Customer Delight Through Service Excellence

BS 8477 Code of practice for customer service

ISO 9001:2015 Quality management systems — Requirements

ISO 10001:2018 Quality management — Customer satisfaction — Guidelines for codes of conduct for organizations

ISO 10002:2018 Quality management — Customer satisfaction — Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations

ISO 10003:2018 Quality management — Customer satisfaction — Guidelines for dispute resolution external to organizations

6. FACTORS AFFECTING COMPLETION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ISO/TC WORK PROGRAMME

The completion and implementation of the ISO/TC programme is affected by different factors: One of the main problems is that expert resources are not sufficiently available which slows down the general standardization process. Especially practitioners from different countries and cultures are not available to contribute essential approaches to the overall objectives. Furthermore, the acceptance within the business community should be enhanced by having more participating P-members. It will be also useful to involve experts from public service organizations in the project of public services in order to integrate this expert knowledge in the work programme. Generally, the technical committee must be aware of legislation regarding privacy and accessibility and of mainly efficient work processes. Furthermore, the ISO/TC 312 has to continuously monitor, reflect and discuss developments in the work and work programme of related TC's, e.g. ISO/TC 176 and JTC 1/SC 40. Misalignment may lead to shifts within the timetable. Timely communication about the committee and the related projects is one central factor which influences the overall approach and its success in the end. To do so, a stakeholder communication plan was developed to establish a structured communication. Besides, a special microsite was implemented and is to be continually updated.

7. STRUCTURE, CURRENT PROJECTS AND PUBLICATIONS OF THE ISO/TC

The work started with the standard on principles and model of service excellence to build up a similar understanding of the innovative and complex matter on Service Excellence. The working group took the CEN/TS 16880 Service Excellence – Creating outstanding customer experiences through service excellence into account among others.

The next steps focused on the standard on Designing excellent service to achieve outstanding customer experiences, the standard on the Measuring Service Excellence performance and a report on Practices for achieving service excellence. Because of the specialties, a separate standard on Principles and model for public service organizations should also be created. Afterwards, the standard on Guidelines for application of digital approaches to achieve Service Excellence, the standard on Maturity Model and the standard on Implementation approach for ISO 23592 is to be developed. Therefore, the new TC plans to propose five additional international standards in three to four years.

As soon as a standard is completed, the freed up resources are invested in starting up the next work item. Therefore, the new TC plans to propose five international standards in three to four years.

Information on ISO online

The link below is to the TC's page on ISO's website:

[ISO TC 312 on ISO Online](#)

Click on the tabs and links on this page to find the following information:

- About (Secretariat, Secretary, Chair, Date of creation, Scope, etc.)
- Contact details
- Structure (Subcommittees and working groups)
- Liaisons
- Meetings
- Tools
- Work programme (published standards and standards under development)

Reference information

[*Glossary of terms and abbreviations used in ISO/TC Business Plans*](#)

[*General information on the principles of ISO's technical work*](#)