

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS IN LAW LIBRARIES

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SUMMARY: I. *Introduction*. II. *Quality Management Systems*. III. *Budgets for the Implementation of Quality Management System in Law Libraries*. IV. *The Quality of Library Services in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic*. V. *Conclusions*. VI. *Bibliography*.

I. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic raised contexts in various unforeseen areas. Libraries were no exception, the confinement, the forty, suspension of activities and the closure of their facilities, made it necessary to rethink the way in which they would continue to provide their services to meet the needs of users.

Libraries focused their attention on designing strategies and new ways of providing services that would satisfy the information needs of their users. The access and consultation of information, mainly using digital resources, was a constant, which forced libraries to adopt an internal organization that balanced the information needs of users and the security of librarians and librarians who provide these services; in the same way, it demanded that they establish themselves as training and user training centers, especially in a virtual way.

In this scenario, the quality of library services and the internal organization of libraries were and will continue to be the situation to be resolved, creating risks, but also areas of opportunity to establish Quality Management Systems that allow dealing with this and many situations, more de-

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rived from the pandemic and from the dynamics of the return to activities under safe service provision schemes.

In this order of ideas, this article has been structured into four sections, the first of which addresses in a general way what a Quality Management System (QMS) is as well as its principles according to the International Standard ISO 9001: 2015 ; In the second section, the budgets of its implementation in legal libraries are addressed, considering the experience of the person who signs this article as Responsible for the Quality Management System of the Library “Dr. Jorge Carpizo” of Institute of Legal Research at UNAM and finally, the third section focuses on the importance of the quality of library services in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

II. QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

From the analysis of the ISO 9001: 2015 Standard of the International Organization for Standardization, a quality management system is a set of principles that allow improving the performance of an organization to meet the needs of its customers.

The principles of the QMS in accordance with the aforementioned standard are:¹

- Customer focus.
- Leadership.
- Commitment to people.
- Focus on processes.
- Upgrade.
- Evidence-based decision-making.
- Relationship management.

The application of these principles to an organization constitutes an important strategy for its performance, which will allow it to improve its internal communication in order to better manufacture products or provide services that meet the needs and requirements of its customers.

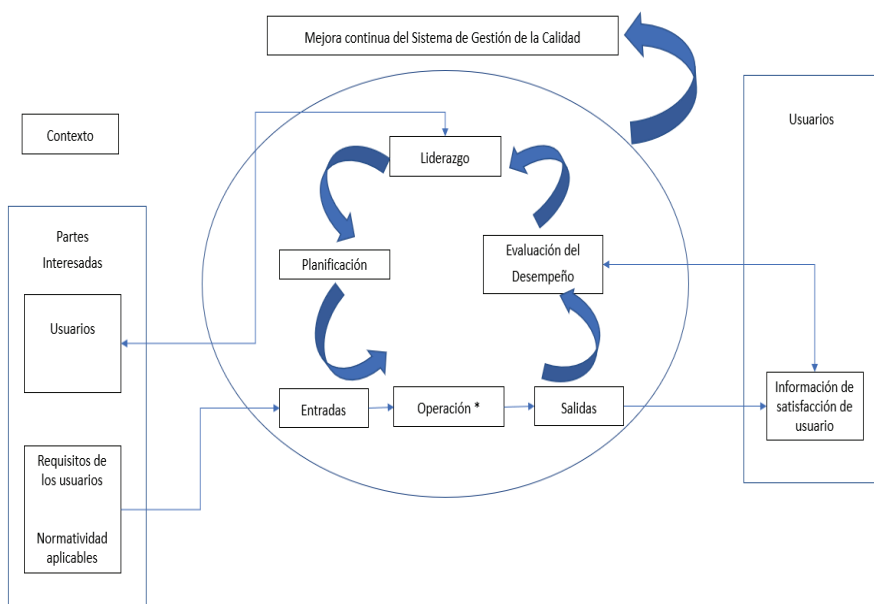
The way in which these principles are articulated within the organization is based on Demin’s Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle, which includes four stages.

The planning that establishes a direction and starting point of the organization; the doing that executes what was planned; the verification that

¹ International Standard ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management Systems.

evaluates what has been done and the action that implies a remastered conception of planning as it is enriched by the verification of what has been done.

IMAGE 1. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT
OF THE QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM



SOURCE: Self made.

The adoption of a QMS, based on this brief description, implies opting for an organizational commitment in the short, medium and long term. Once the System is implemented, there is an inertia that leads day by day to the improvement of services.

III. BUDGETS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS IN LAW LIBRARIES

From an operational approach, the QMS requires considering different aspects prior to its implementation:

1. Adaptation to Work within a QMS

Carrying out a work activity within a QMS does not change the work carried out, but rather the vision that one has about it. One becomes aware of the importance that each step has in achieving the provision of a service.

This change in awareness about our work is one of the main benefits of implementing a QMS, which can translate into motivation to contribute to the objectives and work goals established by the organization.

Making us aware of what our work implies for the value chain that is generated by the service has a favorable impact on both those who carry out the activity and the organization, by fulfilling the satisfaction of its clients.

This is perhaps the benefit that few realize within a QMS, the qualitative change with which the work carried out within an organization begins to be appreciated.

For this reason, within legal libraries, establishing a QMS is a mechanism that could vindicate the different types of workers, academic, administrative, trusted or grassroots with the work they perform by providing them with a different perspective that leads to a joint achievement by the entire organization for the benefit of its users.

2. The Knowledge, Experience and Skills of the Personnel that will be Integrated into the System

Without a doubt, it is required, especially when starting a System, to integrate senior people in the organization, since they have the knowledge and experiences that need to be documented within the System to provide a service that meets the needs of our customers.

When a QMS is started, a series of situations associated with risks, non-conforming outputs, areas of opportunity, which can be more easily identified by experienced personnel in the area, can arise both in its preparation and in its implementation. Above all, their knowledge and experience can contribute to the elaboration of a SWOT that responds almost entirely to the context of the organization, leaving behind partial or inaccurate interpretations about strengths, weaknesses, areas of opportunity or threats.

Experience is knowledge and knowledge within a SGC is the main tool to carry out a successful PDCA cycle for the organization.

Legal libraries, within this category, if they are interested in implementing a SGC, should integrate it with senior people to document their knowledge and develop a Start System with knowledge about the context of the

library, which prepares it to face risks and areas of opportunity successfully and satisfactorily.

On the other hand, those who integrate the system must be resilient, because sometimes the adaptation to work under a System can generate stress.

In addition, in relation to the competencies, especially those who are Responsible for the System, they must have:

- *Ability to express yourself*, both orally and in writing, to have assertive communication with System personnel.
- *Efficient information management* that promotes the organization of ideas and message communication in exhibitions, meetings, dynamics.
- *Creativity* that allows designing strategies to mitigate risks, or address weaknesses and threats or perhaps to manage the areas of opportunity and strengths of the organization.
- *Decision making* that allows choosing between different options.
- *Troubleshooting* to analyze the causes of a problem and design and implement an action plan to resolve it.
- *Ability to learn and participate* in meetings or decision making that allow improving the performance of the organization.
- *Teamwork* that allows listening to the concerns of the System's staff, promoting and exchanging ideas, coordinating initiatives and joining efforts to work on common goals.
- *Management of situations* for time management, handling and tolerance of frustration.

In this order of ideas, every library that wishes to implement a System must identify the type of profile it has in each of its collaborators, in order to be able to integrate a team that faces the de facto challenges of a QMS.²

3. *The Importance of Understanding a Process Approach and Customer Satisfaction*

The focus on processes and customer satisfaction are one of the basic pillars of a QMS in accordance with the ISO 9001: 2015 standard, since

² “Some organizational models are more in tune than others with what has been said up to now and allow us to reconcile an efficient structure of the library, a strong projection of results and user satisfaction, a high level of employee responsibility. It deals, in a word, with organizational and management models inspired by the principles of quality and the management of objectives”. Solimine, Giovanni, “La gestión del cambio, cultura y metodología de management en la biblioteca”, in Solimine, Giovanni *et al.*, *Gestión y planificación de bibliotecas*, Argentina, Alfagrama, 2010, p. 40.

the provision of the service from the beginning carries with it the purpose of satisfying a need of a client or user. Thus, for which the service is made up of various stages, each and every one important to obtain the result or the need that is sought to be satisfied.

To understand in practice the Demin cycle of Plan-Do-Check and Act, is to understand that the work activities that can be carried out are not isolated, but rather are part of other processes that ultimately make the existence of the service possible and customer satisfaction.

Of course, we should not decontextualize customer satisfaction, because sometimes it is valid not to be able to meet their expectations when they are outside the context of the organization.

Thus, legal libraries, if they wish to implement a QMS, must emphasize the focus on processes and customer satisfaction. Always keeping in mind that the will and expectations of its users must be reasonable and sometimes may have limits.

4. *The Continuous Improvement of the Services Provided*

Continuous improvement allows us to position ourselves towards a permanent evaluation of a positive nature, since its sole purpose will always be to contribute to the optimal provision of services for the sake of customer satisfaction and an organizational culture that makes the interior grow the organization.³

A frequent scenario that generates stress in the personnel of a System are the audits and the Revisions by the Directions, vigilance and monitoring exercises necessary for its good operation.

Libraries that implement a System must be aware of the importance of these inspections, not only because of the benefits implicit in the provision of services, but also because, above all, in audits, there is a great area of opportunity to understand and understand the principles of the QMS, the findings are lessons that guide our understanding of the system. Perhaps very few see the audits from this perspective, since the fear generated by feeling evaluated obscures their usefulness, as true learning clinics of the QMS.

³ “In addition, it must be understood that quality management and evaluation are a constant process, something that is the responsibility of all members of the Library”. Arriola Navarrete, Óscar, *Evaluación de bibliotecas. Un modelo desde la óptica de los sistemas de gestión de la calidad*, México, Alfabrma, 2006, p. 20.

5. *The Importance of Evidence in Decision Making*

Within a QMS, any action that is carried out within its scope, or that may have an impact on it, must have evidence. The evidence is fundamental to be able to accredit, demonstrate or refute any action, finding, non-conformity, among others.

Whoever is going to work within a System must venture into the “culture of evidence”, that is to say, of any record that documents the activity and procedures of both management and services. Trades, emails, logs, photos, records, formats, minutes, are ways to generate evidence. Without evidence, there is no way to make reasonable decisions that guide optimal performance in a library.

6. *The Support of Senior Management*

Finally, if you do not have the backing and support of senior management, it is difficult for a System to be developed, much less to be implemented.

Every QMS requires different resources, material, personal and economic, if the System is not provided with them, it would be very difficult to implement it.

Any library that decides to develop a QMS must first ensure that it has the endorsement and support of its directors at the highest level, otherwise the System is doomed to failure, since it implies collaborative work and effort, which must be supported by higher level authorities.

Finally, the assumptions described above seek to establish guiding criteria of what libraries should consider if they decide to develop and implement a QMS to improve the performance of their organization and the provision of services for the sake of customer satisfaction.

IV. THE QUALITY OF LIBRARY SERVICES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

We believe, as we discussed in the introduction to this article, that with the pandemic, legal libraries and information centers in general need to design and generate strategies that allow balancing the quality of library services and their internal organization. In this sense, SGCs can be useful and strategic tools to achieve this balance, for the benefit of their users.

The pandemic has forced libraries to continue operating even outside their facilities, remotely. Many librarians had to learn and learn about electronic resources and become familiar with platforms, to later train users and continue to operate remotely to meet the information needs of their users.

Subsequently, in hybrid schemes, they face the context of reincorporation, where we continue, perhaps out of habit, forced to use electronic resources, but to combine it with the use of printed books and with security measures in accessing and consulting these physical materials.

Faced with this scheme of changes, expectations and requirements have been modified on some occasions, and in this scenario the quality of library services must be ensured, and one way to do it is through the QMS, since they provide tools libraries to deal with present and future situations after the Covid-19 pandemic.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The Quality Management Systems are strategic tools to be able to contribute to the quality of the services provided by legal libraries, since through their principles they allow the generation of internal organizational dynamics that satisfy the needs of their users in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic scenario and in the process of reincorporation to face-to-face activities.

Thus, those libraries that decide to develop and implement a QMS should consider the budgets that I recommend from my experience as the person in charge of the Quality Management System of the “Dr. Jorge Carpizo” of the Institute of Legal Research of UNAM: adaptation to work within a QMS; the knowledge, experience and skills of the personnel that will be integrated into the System; the importance of understanding a process approach and customer satisfaction; the continuous improvement of the services provided; the importance of evidence in decision-making and support from senior management.

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