THE EXPERT’S OPINION

An interview with
Chookiet Jittimaitreesakul
Marketing Manager
Fujitsu (Thailand) Co., Ltd.

Buncha Numuen
Human Resources Manager.
Thai Micro Systems Technology Corporation Co., Ltd.,
Thailand.

Chitchanok Sagnamueng
Quality Director
Bangkok N. S. Electronics Co., Ltd., Thailand.

Yukonthon Sitkietisak
Assistance Manager, Quality Department
Sony Magnetic Products (Thailand) Co., Ltd.

Somchai Tangsamanjit
Quality Manager
The Union Plastics Co., Ltd.

Noparat Patoomrungsee
Public Relation Manager, Administration Department
Seagate Technology, Thailand, Ltd.

Interviews conducted by Jarachsri Tungphaisal and Rick Gibson, American University, Washington DC

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 9000 series is a popular quality standard for the telecommunication equipment companies in Thailand. The Thai government decided to adopt the ISO 9000 standards to be a national standard named Thai Industrial Standards (TIS) 9000. Companies can apply for either national or international registration as necessary.

JGIM: Please describe the quality system presently utilized by your company.

Sagnamueng: Bangkok N. S. Electronics Co., Ltd. is a manufacturer of integrated circuits. We were using Ford Q1 as the quality system standard. How- ever, the company was afraid of losing old customers who often asked whether the company had TIS 9000 registration. After getting the registration in 1994, the company has increased its customer base.


Tangsamanjit: The reasons Union Plastics Co., Ltd. set up TIS 9000 standards are as follows: First, there are not many companies in Thailand able to set up the quality system standards because of high costs. Second, most administrators in the company are confident that TIS 9000 will play an important role in every kind of industrialization. Third, setting up the standards helps all levels of employees to learn more about quality system processes and standards. Last, to use the ISO 9000 standards is a policy of the company’s headquarters.

Numuen: Thai Micro Systems Technology Corporation, Ltd. got TIS 9002 registration in 1994. The reason we decided to pursue the ISO 9000 quality system standards is because the company would like to have a good foundation for quality systems and documents.

Jittimaitreesakul: Fujitsu (Thailand) got TIS 9002 registration in 1994 and is scheduled to be audited for the international registration (ISO 9002) by registrars from the U.S.A.

JGIM: Please explain the factors that are considered in choosing between the national (TIS) and international (ISO) certification.

Patoomrungsee: Seagate Technology (Thailand) has had ISO 9002 registration in producing hard disk drives since 1992, therefore, it is not necessary for the company to have TIS 9000. The company’s
goal is to develop the quality of the products to meet the customer’s satisfaction.

**Sitkietisak:** Sony Magnetic Products (Thailand) got TIS 9002 registration in 1994 and is not interested in having the international registration because it is the company’s policy to support Thai industrial standards that have the same processes as the international standards. It is not necessary to have the international registration because most of the company’s customers are Asian companies and do not require the international registration.

**Tangsamanjit:** Union Plastics is not interested in the international certification. The Thai standards are enough because they are adopted from the international standards and follow exactly every procedure. However, it is difficult to make the national standards reliable for the international companies. Anyway, at present, the international certification is not very useful for Thai telecommunication equipment companies. Only the national certification is enough because most companies focus on the internal market.

**Sagnamueng:** Getting the national registration (TIS 9002) does not always increase competitive advantage if the competitor also has it. Here, the customer will compare the quality, price, and delivery of product, etc. Therefore, Bangkok N. S. Electronics Co., Ltd. also needs to improve its quality systems continuously. We are trying to get the international registration. It may not be useful in that our company does not export products. However, customers can assume that the company is now at a higher level of quality. Also, the international registration will give the company’s customers more confidence because the customer may export its product and refer to the supplier’s registration. Therefore, the registration may get Bangkok N. S. Electronics new customers because customers can take advantage of the international registration to do business with the international companies. Thailand also needs more suppliers in the market to see whether all of them can apply the standards to improve their quality systems. If they do, then we need to see what they earn from the registration.

**Numuen:** Actually, the ISO 9000 registration is not very useful for the internal market. On the other hand, it is very important to have the international certification to show the external market (export) that the company has a good quality systems performance. Thai Micro Systems Technology Corporation Limited needs a minimum of one year to see how well the existing national registration works for the internal market because the company is an internal supplier. So far, the company has not seen the profits yet. However, at least the employees learned how to work with the ISO 9000 type of quality systems.

**JGIM:** What was the cost of national certification?

**Sitkietisak:** For Sony Magnetic Products (Thailand), setting up the quality systems from start to finish cost the company about 500,000 bahts ($20,000). The total expenses for 650 employees who were trained by external and internal professional training over a six months period cost the company about 50,000 bahts ($2000).

**Tangsamanjit:** Union Plastics Co., Ltd total costs of setting up the TIS 9000 quality system standards were about 1,100,000 bahts ($44,000).

**Numuen:** Thai Micro Systems Technology Corporation, Ltd. got TIS 9002 registration in 1994. The company has only 500 employees and spent approximately 100,000 bahts ($4000) to set up the ISO quality systems. The company spent most of the money on training all its employees.
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