

The information and data contained in this document were prepared by a technical committee of the Association. The committee and the Association assume no liability or responsibility in connection with the use of such information or data, including but not limited to any liability under patent, copyright, or trade secret laws. The user is responsible for determining that this document is the most recent edition published.

Suggestions for developing a box plant quality manual

Scope

This Technical Information Paper provides some basic guidelines for the development of a box plant quality manual.

Safety precautions

No safety precautions apply.

Background

The increased emphasis on quality and continuous improvement over the past few years has also highlighted the need for documentation. In addition to Standing Operating Procedures (SOPs), the quality manual is probably the next most “asked for” document required by quality conscious customers. There are numerous formats to choose from, but all cover the same salient topics. The ISO 9000 series publications published by the American Society for Quality (ASQ) identifies six documented procedures which must be addressed for ISO certification. The guidelines provided in this TIP include many of the ISO elements, but are not ISO based nor are they written for the purpose of ISO certification.

Quality manual scope

The quality manual typically references other documented procedures (Fig. 1). It does not have to cover every portion of the plant’s quality process in great detail. It should be written to provide a comprehensive overview of the plant’s quality process.

Key topics / elements

1. *Plant quality philosophy or policy statement.* This can be included in the quality manual or can stand alone.
2. *Organization and responsibilities.* An abbreviated organization chart can show key players in the quality process and their relationship to each other. Although quality is “everyone’s” responsibility, the manual should clearly delineate responsibilities for key management, supervisors, operators, etc. The person assigned as “quality process facilitator” is primarily responsible for quality training, monitoring the quality process, and reporting trends to management. The authority and responsibilities of the quality process steering groups, etc., should also be discussed.

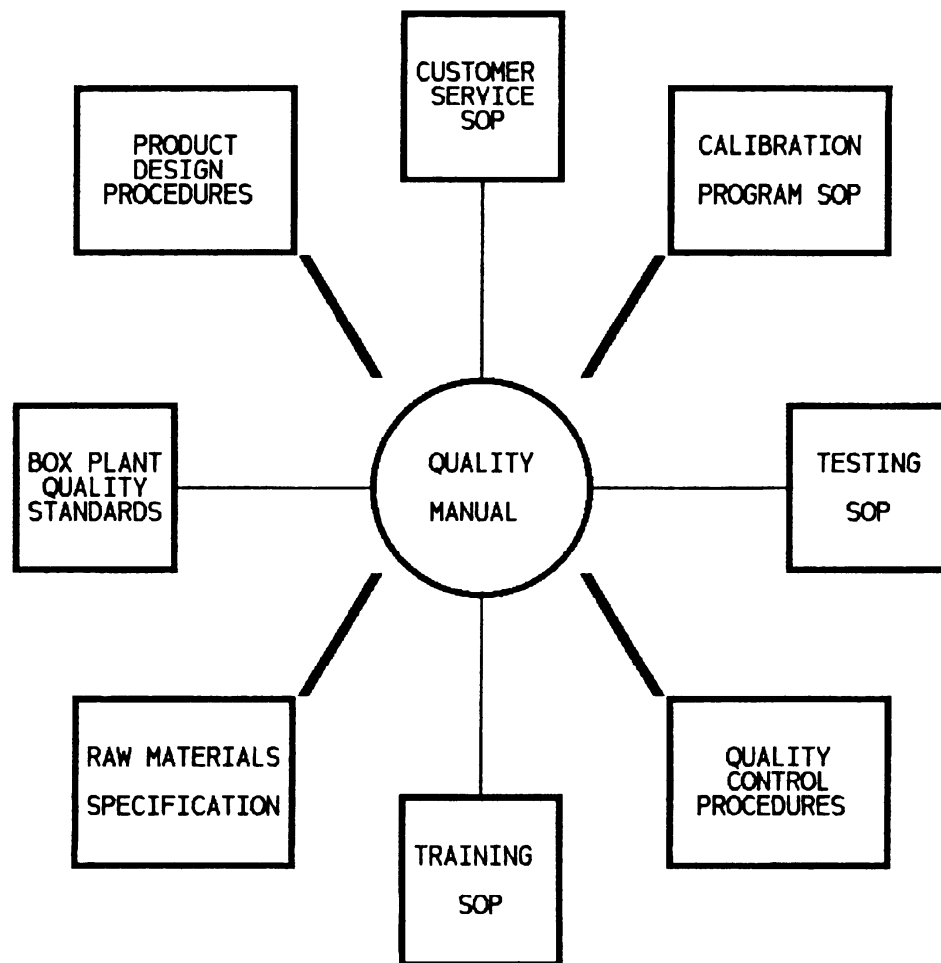


Figure 1. The Quality Manual can reference other procedures.

3. *Quality plan and process.* An overview of the quality plan and specific processes including raw materials used and quality checks conducted should be provided. A discussion of how the quality process is tracked and monitored for trends may be appropriate.
4. *Raw materials.* This section of the manual should identify and address critical process material. *Quality control checks.* This section describes how quality is controlled throughout the process. A brief description of checks made and how they are documented is appropriate. These may be simple quality checks or statistical process control procedures. Detailed descriptions concerning the conduct of quality checks and corrective action procedures might best be covered in a separate procedure or procedures.
5. *Calibration.* Provide an overview of how test and measurement devices are identified and calibrated. Frequency of calibration and a system for monitoring should be outlined.
6. *Non conforming materials.* Outline the procedure for handling non conforming product and ensuring they remain segregated from conforming materials.
7. *Corrective & preventive action.* This section should explain how corrective action steps are determined and documented as well as preventive actions. Analysis of trends may trigger preventive action steps.
8. *Documentation.* An outline of the quality “paper trail” is provided along with a discussion of how documents are controlled and how long they should be retained. The review process for SOPs and specifications could be included.