



PLAN-DO-CHECK-ACT (PDCA) CYCLE

What is the PDCA Cycle?

PDCA is a four-step model that stands for: Plan-Do-Check-Act. It is sometimes referred to as the 'Deming Cycle' or 'Shewhart Cycle'.

A key focus of your management system will be continual improvement and the PDCA Cycle is a popular tool to help you achieve this. It can be applied to your management system as a whole or to each individual clause.

When applied, the PDCA Cycle aims to find a solution through constant repetition. The model never really ends, repeating the cycle to find further improvements each time. This is achieved from learning during the 'do' and 'check' stage. These lessons are then used to inform in the 'act' and subsequent 'plan' stage.

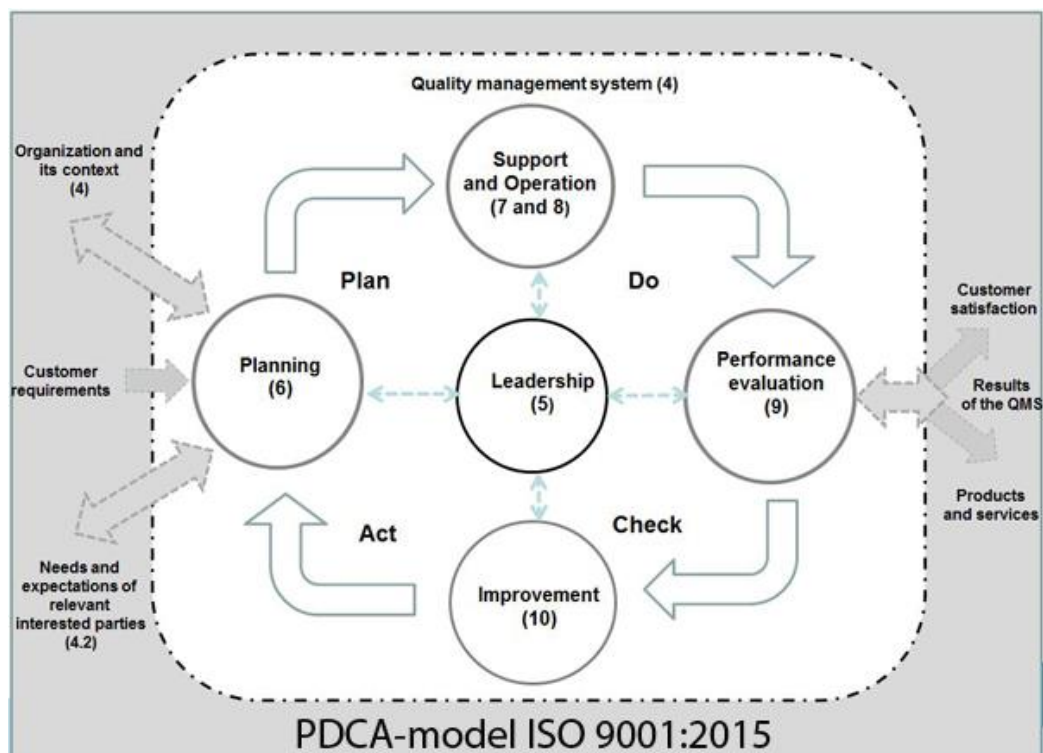
By taking this approach, you can proactively identify and manage any risks and opportunities that may arise. This means that the impact on your delivery of services is minimal and can continue to meet customer requirements.

When to Use the PDCA Cycle

The PDCA cycle should be used when (not exhaustive):

- Analysing performance
- Conducting internal audits
- Project planning

How to Use the PDCA Cycle



Plan

Your first step is to identify where your organisation is currently and where you want to be. This could be based on an opportunity or a problem that has been spotted.

During this phase you also need to consider:

- Resources required
- Customer and stakeholder requirements
- Policies
- Risks
- Opportunities

Set yourself SMART objectives (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Timebound) and make sure these are communicated with your team to ensure everyone is working towards the same goal.

Do

This phase is where you implement what you planned during the 'Plan' stage. Make sure that your team have all the relevant training and resources available to help them perform their tasks.

Check

Next you need to monitor and measure performance, checking that your plans have been implemented and that you are on track to reach your goals.

Make sure you document everything during this stage so that it can be fully reviewed during the 'Act' stage.

Act

During this stage you take corrective action to improve performance, as necessary.

Use the evidence gathered during the 'Check' stage to review the project and assess your performance. What did you learn? Was it successful?

Remember:

The PDCA model is a loop and does not have an end point. You must continue to look for other areas of improvement by taking what you've learnt in the 'Act' phase and starting the cycle again.