

WHICH ISO CONSULTING PROVIDER WILL BE BEST FOR YOUR COMPANY?

Hi there.

So you have finally decided that you can't put off getting ISO certification any longer and that you are going to need some help to get started.

But when you go to look for a consultant, you realise you have *no idea* how to choose the best provider- and you've soon found out that the wrong choice has the potential to be very expensive....!

At ICS we have been around long enough to know that there are so many ISO consultants out there and prices, quality and type of service vary widely. It can be difficult to choose- especially if this is your first time going through this process. You may be wondering:

- How do I know if the consultant is well-qualified for the job?
- Am I going to finish the process and find the consultant was not legitimate or didn't offer what was required for successful certification?
- Are they just going to hand me a heap of documents and then walk away and I will be left to make sense of it or are they going to support me on an ongoing basis?
- Is going with the cheapest provider dangerous? What about the most expensive or the one in the middle?
- Or simply, what does it all mean?? and would someone just give me some *free* advice please!

We sympathise! Which is why we have created this comparative chart/ questionnaire to help you decide what is important to *your* business and situation in choosing an ISO consultant and what questions you will need to ask to find out which providers are able to give that to you.

How to use the questionnaire:

First of all look down the features on the left hand side and highlight the 10 or so most important features for you in an ISO consulting service and then go ahead and contact the providers you have found and ask the related questions (you may need to ask for evidence) to find out who can offer most of them for you. You can then easily compare one provider against another in relation to your chosen criteria and make the best choice.

We have completed the answers for us [ICS] but if you have questions, (I'd be surprised if you didn't!) we are more than happy to have a chat with you. You will find us friendly, helpful and down-to-earth and we have a policy of not trying to sell you on the idea of certification or on our particular service. Certification is not for everyone and different companies have different needs- so ICS is not always the right choice either. We can also help you find more suitable options.

Please feel free to call us on 03 8677 0838 or email us at support@iconsultingsolutions.com.au anytime for some friendly, no obligation advice or information.

In the meantime, try out the questionnaire below. Good luck!



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Which of these are important to you?			Is this provider for you?			
Feature	Choose the 10 that are most important to you and number them (1-10)	Ask potential providers your 10 top questions from this list	ICS	Solo consultant	Other consulting company.	Certification body (Make sure they are on the JASANZ accredited register)
1. \$ vs. \$\$\$ PRICE		What's your best price? We only want the cheapest.	A RANGE OF DIFFERENT OFFERINGS FROM BUDGET TO PREMIUM. Please call/email for more information.	?	?	?
2. AVAILABILITY- IF REPLACEMENT REQUIRED		Do you have a team of equally qualified people to call on in case my chosen consultant becomes unavailable/ busy/ ill etc?	YES	?	?	?
3. AVAILABILITY- LONGEVITY		Are you an established company? (and therefore likely to remain in business for the foreseeable future.)	YES	?	?	?
4. AVAILABILITY- ONGOING		Can you guarantee me your availability/ ongoing support over the several months it will take me to get my system established?	YES	?	?	?
5. AVAILABILITY- QUICK RESPONSE		Can you get us started / find me a consultant at a moment's notice- because we're in a real hurry?	YES	?	?	?
6. COMPLIANCE ONLY VS BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT		<p>Do you create a customised business system which not only complies, but also improves our business?</p> <p>Will the system you create:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Make us more efficient? ✓ Make us more productive? ✓ Cut our costs? ✓ Improve our relationship with our customers? ✓ Improve morale? and ✓ Provide all employees with clarity about what they need to do? <p>AND do you also GUARANTEE it will be 100% compliant or my money back?</p>	YES	?	?	?



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7.	COMPLIANCE ONLY VS BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT		Do you develop systems that are <i>just about compliance</i> , not business systems improvement? We understand that we will need to maintain this system separately to the rest of the business. NB These can be quicker and cheaper and they don't integrate with "how you do business".	NO (We believe in creating systems that improve businesses as well as complying.)	?	?	?
8.	CONSULTANT APPROACH		Tell me about your consultant's approach to the project. What principles do they work under? (Do they meet our minimum criteria for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Integrity? ✓ Attitude- hands- on, constructive and helpful? ✓ Developing systems which are "light" on documentation? ✓ Developing systems which are customised to my business? ✓ Taking the time to understand my business? ✓ Offering me business improvement suggestions based on their wealth of experience in similar industries. ✓ Etc) Can you show me references to prove this?	YES	?	?	?
9.	CONSULTANT- INDUSTRY SPECIFIC EXPERIENCE		Can you offer a consultant with specific experience in my industry or a very similar one?	ALMOST ALWAYS	?	?	?
10.	CONSULTANT- REPUTATION AND REFERENCES		Do you have references and testimonials from satisfied customers?	YES	?	?	?
11.	CONSULTANT-EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS		Can you guarantee/ prove that consultants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Have been vetted as qualified and experienced in their areas of expertise? ✓ Have management experience and/or auditor/ consultant experience? ✓ Are experienced and registered auditors? 	YES	?	?	?
12.	CUSTOMISED VS TEMPLATES		Will you customise everything you do for us to suit our particular business and situation?	YES	?	?	?
13.	CUSTOMISED VS TEMPLATES		Can you get us a basic compliance only/ template system in a couple of weeks? (E.g. in time for our tender?)	NO (we don't believe a good system can be set up in this	?	?	?



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				timeframe, but we can provide you with documents to help get you through the initial phase of the tender.)			
14.	FLEXIBILITY OF CONSULTING MODES		Do you offer flexible modes for consulting to suit my busy schedule, minimise interruption to operations and reduce cost e.g. after hours, virtual (email/ Skype/ telephone/ webinars) consulting?	YES	?	?	?
15.	FLEXIBILITY OF PAYMENT OPTIONS		Can you offer me flexible payment options e.g. credit card, payment plans, financing, direct debit, cheque and bank transfer?	YES	?	?	?
16.	LEVELS OF SUPPORT TO SUIT DIFFERENT BUDGETS		Can you offer me different packages to suit my needs and budget. E.g. low cost "virtual" options, low (just advice)/ medium (partner) and high level (do it all for me) support or a combination?	YES	?	?	?
17.	LOCATION- AUS WIDE		Do you have consultants <i>residing</i> in my state? (I don't want to have to pay for interstate travel)	VIC -Yes NSW - Yes QLD - Yes WA-Please ask NT- Please ask ACT- Please ask	?	?	?
18.	LOCATION- VIC		Do you have consultants in all areas of Victoria?	All Melbourne and surrounds- Yes Most regional areas. Also offer virtual consulting for remote areas.	?	?	?
19.	OFFER CERTIFICATION AS WELL		Do you offer certification as well as setting up a system?	NO (We recommend you only accept certification from JASANZ ACCREDITED certification bodies- ICS do offer a <i>compliance</i> certificate)	?	?	?



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20.	ONGOING CONTACT		<p>Will you keep in regular contact with us via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Email/ Newsletter with useful info and updates? ✓ Special offers for workshops/ additional services? ✓ Industry updates that apply to me? ✓ Alerts as to what has changed in the Standards etc.? 	YES	?	?	?
21.	ONGOING SUPPORT		<p>Will you give me ongoing support if I want it- even after my system is in place e.g. training, internal audits, FREE email support and regular newsletters to keep me informed about developments?</p>	YES	?	?	?
22.	RANGE OF RELATED PRODUCT AND SERVICE OFFERINGS-INTERNALLY		<p>Do you offer a range of related products and services- not just one or two? e.g. :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Legislative updates ✓ Training on the standards and related ✓ Advice on how to choose a certification body and reduce the cost. <p>And more.....</p>	YES	?	?	?
23.	RANGE OF RELATED PRODUCT AND SERVICE OFFERINGS-NETWORK		<p>Do you have access to an extensive network of experts to call on for any specialised help I may need AND Can you/ are you willing to- find and vet related service providers to meet our needs. E.g. I.T., accounting, warehousing, tenders?</p>	YES	?	?	?
24.	SOFTWARE DRIVEN ISO SYSTEM TEMPLATE		<p>Can you offer us a template electronic software package pre-designed to handle all compliance issues?</p>	NO	?	?	?