

1. Standards Matter to Consumers

Standards do not just deal with products. Services such as healthcare, tourism, energy providers, banking and insurance are also covered by standards that deal with issues, such as staff training and qualifications, information provision, customer service, complaints handling and billing. There are also standards to tackle key issues such as social responsibility, the management of sustainable events and the accessibility of public buildings.

Standards matter to everyone. They protect us and give us the information that we need to make informed choices.

Standards help to make products and services:

- Safer – reducing accidents and saving lives. For example, by setting minimum standards for products such as toys, fire safety and electrical appliances.
- Better quality – improving levels of customer service. For example, by giving guidance to companies about how to produce clearer bills or handle complaints effectively.
- Easier to use – by ensuring that products and services are accessible to all consumers, including older and disabled people.



What are standards?

A standard is a document that sets guidelines and good practice for organisations to follow. It is not compulsory for organisations to use (sign up to) a standard, although if a standard supports legislation a manufacturer or supplier may demonstrate their compliance with the requirements of the law by using the standard.

As standards are voluntary, consumers can feel confident that organisations choosing to use them take issues such as safety, accessibility and customer service seriously. Organisations might show evidence of compliance with specific standards by advertising the name and number of the standard or by displaying a certification mark.

www.bsigroup.com/LocalFiles/en-GB/consumer-guides/resources/BSI-consumer-brochure-standards-matter-to-consumers-UK-EN.pdf

2. Nigeria Promotes Non-oil Export Trade

The Government of Nigeria is seeking to make up for the dwindling oil revenue through promotion of non-oil export commodities. Analysts, however, believes this can only be achieved if the country comes up with a well-articulated standardisation policy that would enable the nation's export products to compete favorably in the increasingly quality-conscious global markets.

The Government of Nigeria would not hesitate to deal decisively with any producer or manufacturer that tries to compromise the nation's standardisation laws for selfish personal gains.



Some of the measures put in place to enforce compliance with standards are aimed at improving the quality of goods produced locally and those imported into the country. In working to establish the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) in Africa by 2017, standardisation remains the tool to having a hitch-free trading opportunity for Nigeria in the African continent as the intra- and inter-Africa market remains huge to be tapped.

The Acting Director General of the Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON), Paul Angya, urged stakeholders to focus more on a comprehensive African approach to standardisation, explaining that it was a strategic resource to Africa's economic integration and an asset for improving the competitiveness of certified made-in-Nigeria products for global acceptance.

The SON's boss also sought the cooperation of industrialists in the country in the agency's bid to eradicate substandard products. And he called on the policymakers in Nigeria to enact laws for the adoption of gender mainstreaming into the standardisation programme in the country, stressing that women constitute more than 60 percent of the population in Nigeria involving in economic activities. He maintained that empowering women was synonymous to empowering the society.

<http://nationalmirroronline.net/new/promoting-non-oil-export-trade-through-proactive-standardization-policy-regime/>

3. In Vietnam, not all Fish Sauces are made From Fish

Just as one can never make beefsteak without beef, fish plays an indispensable role in the making of fish sauce, Vietnam's distinctive food flavouring. Despite this, most fish sauce products available in Vietnam are made with no real fish as ingredients. Instead, these 'fish sauces,' made by famous food companies, are a mixture of fish essence, flavoring, coloring, preservatives and sweeteners. Yet they are

all marketed via advertising campaigns that boast of their premium nutritional value and health benefits.

These products, even though they meet all the necessary food safety requirements to be sold in the market, cannot be called fish sauce, as their method of manufacturing is non-standardised. According to the 2012 Vietnamese Standards, the country's national set of food standards, a recognised fish sauce must be liquid extracted from the fermentation of fish using sea salt in wooden barrels for at least 10 months. This is obviously not how the industrial fish sauce is produced.

According to health experts, traditionally-made fish sauce is much healthier than those industrially manufactured, thanks to a higher level of nitrogen. Traditional fish sauce is made from anchovies, whereas commercial ones have various flavours, including salmon and mackerel.

According to a recent survey, Vietnam consumes some 200 million liters of fish sauce every year. However, 75 percent is of industrial-made products, meaning local consumers are using fish sauce that is not really fish sauce in their meals. Major food brands spend big ensuring their products have the most prominent positions on supermarket shelves across Vietnam. Consumers, in the meantime, find it difficult to make choices from a huge variety of available products.

<http://tuoitrenews.vn/business/35720/in-vietnam-not-all-fish-sauces-are-made-from-fish>



4. China Implements Safety Standards for Kidswear

The first mandatory textile standards for children's clothing have been put into effect from June this year in China. The new standards include those for infants aged 36 months or below and for children aged 3-14 years.

Under the new rules, which have a two-year transition period for full compliance, the use of six plasticisers and two heavy metals — lead and cadmium — is banned. Further, apparel for infants and kids under 7 should not have rope or straps around the neck or head. There are also some specific requirements on use of accessories, for example, they should not have sharp points or edges, according to the National Standardisation Technical Committee, China.

The standards classify products into three groups based on safety criteria. All textile and garment products for infants fall under the most stringent criteria, i.e. Class A. Class B standards are to be met by products designed for direct skin contact, while Class C requirements are applicable for those garments that are not intended for direct skin contact.

As per the guidelines, it becomes mandatory to attach the safety category label to the clothing, to help buyers take informed decisions. During the two-year transition period till May 31, 2018, products manufactured till May 31, 2016 can be sold in the market. However, after the two-year period, all products being sold in China must meet the new standards.

www.fibre2fashion.com/news/apparel-news/china-implements-safety-standards-for-kidswear-179883-newsdetails.htm



5. Standards for Personal Information Security and Data Protection

In June 2016, China's National Information Security Standardisation Technical Committee (NISSTC) organised a meeting to launch a working group tasked with drafting a *Personal Information Security (PIS) Standard*. The NISSTC is a government committee jointly supervised by the Standardisation

Administration of China and the Cyberspace Administration of China. In addition to the government agencies, several Chinese research institutions and Internet companies (including Tencent and Alibaba) will also participate in the working group.

According to one report, the PIS Standard would be a non-binding guideline serving as a bottom line for the data privacy and security practices of companies, including Internet companies, operating in China. The PIS Standard would limit the kinds of information companies are permitted to collect, and that certain data protection-related conditions would be imposed

on providers of information services and the design of relevant software.

Although the contemplated PIS Standard would not be legally binding, its content may influence the future trajectory of data privacy and security-related legislation amid calls for a more comprehensive legal regime governing the protection of personal information. Further, as Chinese regulators generally wield significant discretion in the interpretation and application of often vaguely worded laws and regulations, such a standard could serve as a barometer for assessing legal compliance.

www.natlawreview.com/article/china-formulating-standards-personal-information-security-and-data-protection



6. Europe's 'Single Standardisation Policy' Welcomed

The European Standardisation Committees: CEN and CENELEC welcome the European Commission's (EC) latest proposals concerning the future of the European Standardisation System. In particular, CEN and CENELEC are satisfied to see that the Commission has committed itself to having a more consistent and unified policy towards standardisation, which serves to strengthen the Single Market and also supports the implementation of EU policies and legislation.

Responding to the European Commission's Communication 'European Standards for the 21st Century' (COM(2016) 358 final), which was published on 1 June, **Elena Santiago Cid**, Director General of CEN and CENELEC said: "In CEN and CENELEC, we are very pleased to see that the European Commission has promised to have a much more coherent and integrated policy towards standardisation.



We believe that the 'single standardisation policy' should encompass all economic sectors and fields of activity – including digital technologies, which until now have been addressed separately."

CEN and CENELEC look forward to the launch of the 'Joint Initiative on Standardisation' (JIS), which has been developed in the framework of the EC's 'Single Market Strategy'. The JIS would be officially launched in Amsterdam on June 13, 2016, during a major conference on the Single Market organised by the Dutch Presidency of the Council of the EU.

Alongside the European Commission, EFTA and the European Standardisation Organisations (CEN, CENELEC and ETSI), a wide range of stakeholders were expected to participate in the JIS -- including European industry federations, societal stakeholder organisations, SBS (Small Business Standards) and national governments, among others.

www.cencenelec.eu/News/Press_Releases/Pages/PR-2016-03.aspx

7. EU to Update & Accelerate Setting of Service Standards

The EC outlined plans on June 01, 2016 to modernise and speed up the way in which it agrees on technical standards for services, to ensure that Europe is at the centre of setting global norms.



In April 2016, the EC already proposed measures to accelerate the standard-setting process for IT with five priority areas of focus - 5G, cloud computing, the internet of things, data technologies and cyber security.

Its latest plans recommend a focus on services, which account for 70 percent of the EU economy but represent only about two percent of all European standards. Such standards could include terminology on hotels and other tourist accommodation or the requirements of services offered by customer contact centers.

The EC said such common standards clarifying expectations between services providers and customers could reduce costs for companies, particularly smaller enterprises, and ease their access to other markets.

www.reuters.com/article/us-eu-standards-idUSKCN0YN42C

8. Price Comparison to Get Easier with New Standards

In a price-conscious world, being able to compare prices quickly and effectively is a growing consumer demand. A new standard in development on unit pricing will help.

Unit pricing is a simple solution that allows consumers to quickly assess the value of products when compared with similar ones packaged in a different manner. Research has shown that, where it exists, consumers are likely to use it in making their choices, but it is not always widespread and laws and units vary widely around the world. It is for this reason that ISO experts have recently come together to form a committee aimed at developing a standard to make unit pricing work effectively.



ISO project committee ISO/PC 294, *Guidance on unit pricing*, has now started work on an International Standard that will establish guidelines and principles of unit pricing such as visibility, accuracy, consistency and uniformity. The standard is likely to be published sometime in late 2017.

www.iso.org/iso/news.htm?refid=Ref2073

9. Revision Ongoing for ISO 22000 on Food Safety

The consequences of unsafe food can be devastating, both for consumers and businesses worldwide. With many of today's food products repeatedly travelling across national boundaries, ISO 22000 is more essential than ever to the safety of the global food supply chain. Now the standard is being substantially revised to ensure it stays relevant to modern needs.

The standard is now at the Committee Draft (CD) stage and experts worked hard to sift through the more than 1 000 comments collated by DS on the draft standard. Simultaneously, WG 8 had to clarify certain key concepts. These included:

- Applying ISO's new High-Level Structure (HLS) to ISO 22000, which is now mandatory when drafting or revising management system standards (MSS). The new structure sets a framework that makes it easier for businesses to integrate more than one MSS at a given time.
- Providing users of ISO 22000 with a new understanding of the different risk-based approaches.
- Providing further clarification on how the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle works by including two separate PDCA cycles in the standard, that operate one inside the other. The first will apply to the management system while the second, within it, addresses the operations described in Clause 8, which simultaneously cover the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles defined by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.
- Giving users a clear description of the differences between Critical Control Points (CCPs), Operational Prerequisite Programmes (OPRPs) and Prerequisite Programmes (PRPs).

Preventing, reducing or eliminating food safety hazards is essential to maintain a hygienic environment throughout the food chain. The revised standard will incorporate recognised key elements to ensure food safety at every step of the food chain, right up to the point of consumption.



The introduction of a food safety hazard can occur at any stage in the food supply chain, so it is essential to have adequate controls in place at every step of the way. Good communication is paramount to ensuring that food hazards are identified and managed at the proper operational level. Food safety

can, therefore, only be ensured through the combined efforts of all parties along the food chain, from feed producers and primary producers through food manufacturers, transport and storage operators and subcontractors, to retailers.

www.iso.org/iso/home/news_index/news_archive/news.htm?refid=Ref2075

10. Mobile Technology Changing Customer Service Standards

Mobile communication channels can play a crucial role in addressing customer inquiries faster, but a Tyntec/Ovum survey shows a large gap exists between what consumers expect and what's being provided by brands across all industries. Mobile communications technologies are being developed in silos without sufficient level of standardisation, making it difficult for international businesses to create and maintain consistent brand experiences across markets and touchpoints.

Couple that with the speed in which the technologies are evolving and the varying requirements of local tastes and regulations, businesses can quickly find the challenges difficult to tackle.

Given the complexities of the mobile communications ecosystem, it is crucial for companies to work with a service provider who can integrate multiple technologies, SMS and various chat apps seamlessly across all markets.

While email and voice still are commonly used communication channels, 56 percent of respondents would like to send an SMS to their customer service agents using the same number they use to call them, the survey found. Respondents' believe SMS is less time-consuming (44 percent) and more convenient (42 percent) than alternative communications forms.

www.eweek.com/small-business/mobile-technology-changing-customer-service-standards.html



11. Pharma Gets New ISO Tool to Identify Drugs

With hundreds of thousands of prescription drugs on the market, the pharmaceutical sector faces an increasingly complex and risky challenge. Rapid growth in the number of available medications may be contributing to increased uncertainties. That is where the new ISO IDMP (IDentification of Medicinal Products) series comes in.

ISO IDMP is a collection of five ISO standards, which together form the basis for a system of unique, global identification of medicinal products. It is designed to enable cross-border healthcare delivery, particularly the exchange of electronic prescriptions and safe dispensation of prescribed medicinal products. IDMP will impact many key areas within a pharmaceutical company, from registration with an authority, research and development, to manufacturing, distribution and product safety.

ISO IDMP aims to harmonise the way the pharmaceutical industry and all stakeholders refer to medicinal products – including the substances used in the manufacturing process. It applies throughout the medicine's life cycle, from clinical trials through marketing and, eventually, discontinuation. It will not only support drug adverse event monitoring but clinical processes such as electronic prescriptions.

The five standards in the IDMP series include:

- Substances – ISO 11238
- Pharmaceutical dose forms, units of presentation, routes of administration, and packaging – ISO 11239
- Units of measurement – ISO 11240
- Regulated medicinal product information – ISO 11615
- Regulated pharmaceutical product information – ISO 11616

The ISO IDMP standards are being adopted globally by health authority agencies and organisations, such as the World Health Organisation. The initiative has enjoyed cross-border support, with the regulatory authorities of US, Canada and Switzerland all publically committing to adoption at some point in the future and Japan, Australia, Russia and Iran all expressing at least some level of interest. The European Medicines Agency (EMA) has already mandated compliance by July 01, 2016.

www.iso.org/iso/home/news_index/news_archive/news.htm?refid=Ref2092



12. Food Safety Supervision with Meat, Vegetables & Fruits

On June 01, 2016, Vietnam's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development issued the Circular No. 08/2016/TT-BNNPTNT on food safety supervision of agro-aqua-forestry products including: cereals, meat, products made of meat, fisheries and fishery products; vegetables, fruits and their products; eggs and egg products; honey; salt; spices; sugar; tea; and coffee, etc being sold at wholesale markets, agro-aqua-forestry markets and bulk purchasing and distributing facilities and other facilities trading agro-aqua-forestry products.

Within that, products and criteria of food safety supervision shall be determined according to consumers' reflection, warning of food safety authorities or competent authorities of importing countries; according to previous food safety inspection or supervision; requirement of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural development and Departments of Agriculture and Rural development or it is a cause of mass food poisoning.

After the testing result is announced, every supervising authority shall send a written notice of testing results and request the business facility having unsafe products to trace such unsafe product origin and recall all unsafe products, investigate causes of failure of safety and apply remedial measures for mitigating consequences and report them to the supervising authority. In case the business facility delays to submit their report on investigation and mitigation of unsafe product consequences, supervising authority shall submit a written request for handling of violations against the Law on Inspection to specialised inspecting authorities.

This Circular takes effect on July 15, 2016

www.tcvn.gov.vn/sites/head/en/tin-chi-tiet-food-safety-supervision-with-meat-vegetables-fruits-sold-at-market-270d0e60.aspx?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1

