



QA – IN BRIEF

To control or not to control, that is the question

Recently a client's Warehouse Supervisor discussed with me the renovation work being completed on his home.

He & his wife were totally dissatisfied with the builder's poor customer service, quality of work and trade problems which required constant checking to ensure the project remained on track.

He specifically cited an incident where the electrician had completed the installation of wiring and had used plans that were 6 months out of date.

With the exception of the home owner no-one had bothered to check.

So who's responsible for this monumental error?

The Builder, Electrician, home owner or Project Manager?

Each party has a role to play in ensuring that the project runs smoothly, achieving budget and agreed deadlines.

However, the root cause of the problem was a lack of document or systems control and this is the responsibility of the Builder / Project Manager. Had the plans been checked and maintained with the latest detail or information the mistake would have been avoided.

So how far do we go to control company documents?

As far as is necessary when based on the size of risk to the business or project.

If clients discover you're using obsolete plans for the control of their project then the risk to your business is massive.

Clients will not only question why you should be allowed to continue the contract, they'll also informally discuss their dissatisfaction with colleagues, family, friends and industry sector groups. And, they won't hesitate in citing your business name.

Your business, its lack of attention to detail, low level of professionalism & poor regard for customer satisfaction will become common knowledge.



Summary

I found the discussion with the Warehouse Supervisor fascinating because when assisting clients with their management systems many will question the validity of document, systems & version control claiming, amongst other reasons:

- We don't have time.
- It's too costly.
- There's too much paperwork.
- We have more important things to do.

And yet when personal risks such as home renovations are involved, data, document & records control becomes critically important to them.

Review your business processes, the documentation used and the level of risk involved.

Then ensure you have full control over the documentation and processes that could produce a costly error.