

***Strategic Standardization:
The U.S. System from a
Practitioner's Point of View***

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What is a standard?

- **An agreed-upon way of doing something; a set of rules, requirements, or processes agreed upon between interested parties**
- **They come in various “flavors”**
 - **best practices**
 - **guidelines**
 - **specifications**
 - **recommendations**
 - **codes**
 - **laws & regulations**

Why do standards?

- Health and safety requirements
- Business imperatives
- Marketing/procurement imperatives
- Globalization of industries/markets
- Socio-economic reasons

**Each of these is a valid reason and each can be done
in a variety of ways within the U.S. standards
“system.”**

Who creates standards?

- **Standards typically are done by Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) who are drawn together for a common purpose**
- **Typically meet under the legal/fiduciary umbrella of an organization: company, association, forum/consortium, governmental agency, etc.**
- **In meetings, either in-person or via new video technologies, these SMEs reach consensus on what the measurement, definitions, symbols, tests, guides, processes, and/or quality ratings should be for any given product or service**

How does the U.S. standards system work?

- There are basically four types of standards done within the U.S.: company standards, industry standards; fora/consortia standards; and ANSI accredited standards
 - Each has been and can be used today
 - Some organizations may play in more than one type of standards-setting group
 - Some Standards Developing Organizations (SDOs) can generate more than one type of standard if their processes permit
 - Each type has it's own peculiarities, nuances in processes, and pros & cons

How does each work & what are their up/down sides?

- **Company Standards:**
 - Done solely within the confines of one company (and its subsidiaries)
 - All participants are funded by the company
 - Objectives and process is defined by management
- **Up/Down Sides**
 - Brings together individuals with a typically well-defined problem to solve
 - Works as quickly and as long as necessary to develop the standard
 - Standard is proprietary and not typically available outside the company

How does each work & what are their up/down sides (cont)?

- **Industry Standards:**

- Typically include an entire industry silo or sector
- Typically fall under a trade association or professional society
- Have defined memberships
- Follow proscribed rules, often incorporating ANSI's Essential Requirements

- **Up/Down Sides**

- Brings together a significant cross-section of an industry
- Works fairly quickly to achieve a guideline/standard
- May exclude certain affected parties
- Document distribution limited and output can be costly

How does each work & what are their up/down sides (cont)?

- **Fora/Consortia:**

- Typically focused on a given part of an industry sector
- Typically create their own new infrastructure
- May have limited and expensive memberships
- Follow proscribed rules

- **Up/Down Sides**

- Brings together a narrowly focused group of SMEs
- Works “fast” to achieve a guideline/standard
- Excludes large numbers of affected parties
- Document distribution may be very limited and output could be very expensive
- Sometimes take on a life of its own

How does each work & what are their up/down sides (cont)?

- **ANSI Accredited Standards:**
 - All directly and materially affected parties must have the opportunity to participate
 - Accredited Standards Developers (ASDs) typically give legal and fiduciary oversight for the activities conducted
 - ASDs must follow ANSI Essential Requirements in their standards development processes
- **Up/Down Sides**
 - Brings together a large and diverse group of SMEs
 - Can work fairly quickly but ANSI process adds time to market
 - Document distribution is wider but not necessarily free

The system works...but

- Better grasp of standards by upper management in order to get greater financial support
- Replacing old SMEs with new ones (mentoring)
- Downsizing and M&As must be overcome
- Education has to be more than on the job (kudos to you!)
- More aggressive U.S. leadership in international standards bodies
- Creating more insightful leadership within the business and governmental communities

Follow-up information

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