



WYNLEIGH INTERNATIONAL  
CERTIFICATION SERVICES

+27 (0) 31 941 4790 | info@wynleigh.com | www.wynleigh.com

Office 5, Block 1, Nkwazi Business Park,  
3 Dumat Pl, Mt Edgecombe

## ISO Certification: Reality, Myths & What Good Looks Like

Key takeaways from the Wynleigh ICS online information session  
Presented by Tony Cunningham, Managing Director – Wynleigh ICS

### Purpose of this session

- Demystify ISO certification for organisations at various stages of readiness.
- Clarify what ISO does and does *not* require
- Share real-world insight from certified organisations
- Help leaders make informed decisions — not to sell certification

### Why ISO certification matters now

- ISO standards have not radically changed, but the business environment has.
- Organisations face greater supply chain scrutiny, regulatory expectations, and customer demands.
- ISO certification is often used as a proxy for trust.

### Common myths — and the reality

**Myth 1: “ISO is just paperwork.”**

**Reality:** ISO requires **evidence of control**, not unnecessary documentation.

**Myth 2: “ISO is expensive and resource-heavy.”**

**Reality:** Costs vary — **over-engineered systems** create unnecessary burden.

**Myth 3: “ISO tells you how to run your business.”**

**Reality:** ISO defines **requirements**, not methods.

WICS

ISO 9001 ISO 14001 ISO 45001

### The real cost of ISO certification

- External: certification body fees, surveillance audits, recertification.
- Internal: time and ownership, system design, internal audits, management review.
- Over-engineered systems create unnecessary burden.

### What ISO auditors actually look for

- Leadership intent, involvement, and accountability
- Defined processes that are consistently followed
- Alignment between claimed practices and daily reality
- Risk awareness and control.
- ISO Management Standards are conformance-based, not performance-based.

### Common auditor red flags

- Systems designed only for audit purposes.
- Lack of clear ownership.
- Staff who cannot explain or use procedures.
- Documents that exist but are not applied.

### Why organisations fail ISO audits

- Poor preparation or unrealistic timelines.

### Final thought

- ISO is not inherently bureaucratic, expensive, or restrictive — poor design causes these outcomes.

- Weak internal audits.
- Misunderstanding the standard's intent.
- Lack of leadership engagement.

### What successful organisations do differently

- Keep systems simple and proportionate.
- Integrate ISO into normal management activity.
- Maintain visible leadership.
- Treat audits as verification, not inspection.

### Certification vs transfer

- Transfer audits are often underestimated.
- Legacy complexity and drift are common.
- Transfer is an opportunity to simplify.

### ISO as a business tool

- Improves clarity and accountability.
- Supports proactive risk management.
- Enables consistent decision-making.

### Leadership's role

- Leaders must understand why the system exists.
- Set the tone for ownership and accountability.
- Demonstrate awareness of risks and controls.