

## ABSTRACT

This project consists of the development of a Quality Manual (QM) for Amador Lewis, Inc. Consulting Engineers, herein referred to as ALI, a small business organization, founded by myself and my husband in December 20, 2005. ALI is one of 13 structural engineering firms in Stanislaus County. It has a total of 6 employees, including the owners, and provides engineering services mainly to the building construction industry. In general, small business firms have difficulty applying Total Quality (TQ) principles, which leads to misguided perceptions that quality management cannot be effectively accomplished in a service organization. Initiating a TQ concept requires an assessment of the costs and benefits and recognition of the importance of quality. The QM produced herein was drafted under the guidelines of ISO 9004, which differs from the recognized ISO 9001 that many organizations adopt for certification or contractual purposes. ISO 9004 promotes the adoption of a process approach to a quality management system, without certification and, therefore, is ideal for small businesses in pursuit of continual improvement of performance. ALI went through a process of: (1) educating its employees on the fundamental principles of TQ; (2) drafting a QM, with procedures and work instructions; and, (3) recording results of a series of self-assessments. The addition of this QM to the existing quality system enhances the ability of ALI to achieve and maintain a competitive advantage in the region. Chapters I-V discuss the process of planning and creating the QM, which is re-produced in Appendix A.