



Your satisfaction is our priority !

by ISO Secretary-General, Rob Steele

"ISO standards. Integrated confidence" was the theme of the *2008 ISO Annual Report*, a key objective in all of ISO's work. But it is hard to build confidence if you are not meeting the needs of the users of ISO's standards, publications and services.

The theme of this year's Annual Report, "ISO's customer focus", brings the absolute imperatives of relevance, responsiveness and reality to meet ISO's customers' needs in everything ISO does.

Now you might say that this is stating the obvious – you might even say that if we were not already doing this, then how has ISO achieved the success that it has? After all, you will read in this *2009 Annual Report* that ISO is well on track to achieve the 2005-2010 strategic goals set five years ago and, by any of the measures used, is more relevant, recognized and responsive than ever before.

And, to an extent, you would be right. In this report, you will read how customers have profited from their use of ISO standards, the progress made by ISO in 2009 and plans for the future. You will also read about some of the personalities involved in developing and using standards – after all, standardization is "a people activity".

So why the theme of "customer focus"?

Simply, we are good, but we need to be great at focusing on customer needs and then meeting these needs.

We also need to be clear about who we are talking about when we talk about the "customer". Given the huge diversity of those who are involved in developing, using and benefiting from ISO standards, the term "customer" can and should mean many different groups, interests and individuals who may wear different hats depending on what relationship they have with ISO.

For example, the ISO Central Secretariat exists to respond to the needs of a key customer, the ISO membership. But to meet these needs, we work with a broad range of organizations and people, including ISO members, at the international, regional and national levels, with the objective of helping to ensure ISO is recognized and that ISO standards are globally relevant, understood and used.

So, while the relationship might sound a bit complicated, ISO does have customers, and a satisfied customer is essential to the relevance and growth of any organization, including ISO.

If ISO does not respond to and, ultimately, work to anticipate customer needs, then we are no longer relevant and do not deserve to exist. Does that mean we should just wait for the need to be identified by others and brought to ISO? In my view, no. The speed of change

