

# "Guter Mittelstand" company control sheet by INQA

Success is not a matter of chance. How to improve the form and organisation of work?



**The "Guter Mittelstand" company control sheet by INQA**

was created as a common standard and published by

The "Offensive Mittelstand – Gut für Deutschland" initiative,

an independent network

operating under the auspices of "Initiative Neue Qualität

der Arbeit" (INQA). The brochure enables small and medium-sized enterprises

to analyse their management potential

and use it. The brochure covers

all main topics related to operational management,

corporate culture, and

the value creation process.

**Initiative Neue Qualität der Arbeit is**

a joint initiative which brings together the federal government, federal states,

employers' associations and chambers, trade unions,

the Federal Employment Agency, enterprises,

social security institutions and foundations. The aim is

to boost the quality work, which is the key to innovation

and competitiveness in Germany.

The initiative was launched in 2002 and offers

inspiring ideas from practice as well as

comprehensive consultancy, information,

opportunity to exchange experiences,

and a support programme for projects related to

employment policy.

The **Offensive Mittelstand – Gut für Deutschland** initiative

promotes successful employee-oriented business management

by creating

modern standards and practical tools. It also offers

various regional support structures

developed in particular for middle sized enterprises. Currently

the "Offensive Mittelstand – Gut für Deutschland" initiative comprises approx. 250 partners,

including the federal government, federal states,

business associations, trade associations, guilds,

craft chambers, trade unions, professional business organisations,

health insurance companies, research institutes and

service providers.



# Contents

"Guter Mittelstand" company control sheet by INQA	3
How to use this brochure?	5
Quick start: Where to start?	7
1 Strategy	8
2 Liquidity	10
3 Risk assessment	12
4 Leadership	14
5 Market and customer	16
6 Organisation	18
7 Corporate culture	20
8 Staff	22
9 Production process and efficiency	24
10 Purchases	26
11 Innovation	28
SME sector: Driving force for Germany – Ideas for Germany	30
Self-declaration	32
Action plan	
Disclaimer	

In the "Guter Mittelstand" INQA company control sheet an effort was made to use gender-neutral language. We wish to emphasise that in cases where this was not possible, all genders are addressed irrespective of the form used.



**"Guter Mittelstand"  
company control sheet  
by INQA**

# "Guter Mittelstand" company control sheet by INQA

## >> What is the purpose of this brochure?

The INQA "Guter Mittelstand" company control sheet helps you to identify the potential for improvement in your company. This brochure supports you in actively dealing with the requirements of Work 4.0 (Industry 4.0, Service 4.0) and demographic changes. The brochure allows you to tap into the challenges of rapidly changing sales and labour markets to gain competitive advantage. The brochure features a summary of the experiences of successful companies as well as results of research.

The brochure helps you primarily to motivate **employees** and create a sense of belonging. It is a key success factor given the **shortage of qualified employees** and an ageing population.

The brochure promotes what has always made SMEs strong players: **culture of trust** and appreciation as a condition for commitment, creation of ideas and **innovation**.

A successful and healthy organisation is not a matter of chance or short-term speculation. Good SMEs care about the quality of their products and services and the **satisfaction of both customers and employees**. The brochure will help you to achieve this and focus on the most important issues.

## >> Who is this brochure for?

The brochure will help in particular small companies to quickly check crucial aspects of good planning and organisation of work. Suggestions and ideas put forward in the brochure are also dedicated to larger companies. Furthermore, the brochure is suitable as an introductory manual for SME advisors.

## >> How to use this brochure?

The brochure comprises eleven thematic modules. It can be used like a toolbox. You can select individual modules or cover all of them from start to finish or in any order (it takes about 30 to 60 minutes). Once you have finished, you will know how you are doing in particular areas and where there are opportunities to improve your business. Further development within the scope of individual topics (for example "My actions") depends on the number of checkpoints where you see a need for action.

With the **Quick Start chapter "Where to start?"** (p. 7) you will quickly identify which of the eleven topics requires special action.

[www.inqa-unternehmenscheck.de](http://www.inqa-unternehmenscheck.de)

The "Guter Mittelstand" company control sheet by INQA is also available as an online tool featuring many additional interactive possibilities, as well as in the form of an application.



## >> What makes this brochure special?

The "Guter Mittelstand – Erfolg ist kein Zufall" (Successful SMEs. Success is not a matter of chance) brochure presents the standard for good employee-oriented business management that the partners have jointly subscribed to. It addresses all relevant subjects that are important within the "Initiative Neue Qualität der Arbeit" initiative and presents them in a practical manner for SMEs to benefit. This brochure is therefore a very important tool for the "Initiative Neue Qualität der Arbeit" initiative.



The driving force behind the development of this brochure were primarily BC GmbH Forschungs- und Beratungsgesellschaft, Institut für Mittelstandsforschung (IfM) Bonn (Institute for SME Research), Institut für Technik der Betriebsführung (itb) im Deutschen Handwerksinstitut e. V. (Institute for Technique of Business Management at the German Skilled Crafts Institute), RKW Rationalisierungs- und Innovationszentrum der Deutschen Wirtschaft e. V. (Rationalization and Innovation Center for the German Economy) and the Trade Association of Raw Materials and Chemical Industry (BG RCI). The brochure was adopted by all partners during a plenary session of the "Offensive Mittelstand – Gut für Deutschland" initiative as a common standard applicable in practice and a self-assessment tool for small businesses.

This brochure can also be used as an introduction to the part on organisation.

## Notes

The term SME is used to refer to all companies, from micro-businesses to larger family businesses, where the owner or a member of the owner's family manages their business (see Institut für Mittelstandsforschung Bonn, 2006, [www.ifm-bonn.de](http://www.ifm-bonn.de)).

The eleven modules of company control comprise an overall process taking place in each company; all elements are interconnected within the system. Therefore, it is not always possible to separate the elements and clearly assign specific content to particular topics.

The eleven topics are based on the value creation process. All topics on integrated management have been included.

In this brochure an effort was made to use concepts that are understandable to all SMEs. If, for example, 'management' is referred to in the context of a micro-business, this means an employee in charge of a designated area of responsibility other than the owner (for example, journeyman, deputy).

# How to use this brochure?

## > Stage 1

Cover the eleven topics in the brochure and determine the **need for action** for the checkpoints (pages 8 to 29).

The brochure can be covered in its entirety. According to our experience it takes between 60 minutes and 1.5 hours.

You can also select individual topics to start with.

## > Stage 2

Then, determine the specific actions you want to implement in your company. Write them down in the action plan (on the back cover).

Go through all the checkpoints where you marked urgent action needed (red) or action needed (yellow).

The ten most important control points in the action plan should then be introduced (column 1) and the activities appropriate for your company should be identified (column 2). You will find examples of actions in relevant checkpoints.

Then establish the priorities for action (column 3) (e.g. priority 1 = start immediately; priority 2 = start soon, priority 3 = start in a month).

Then designate the persons responsible for implementing the actions (column 4), set the date of commencement (column 5) and the control of the implementation (column 6).

It is also possible to specify multiple measures for one control point.

## > 3. Filling in the self-declaration

The self-assessment is complete after

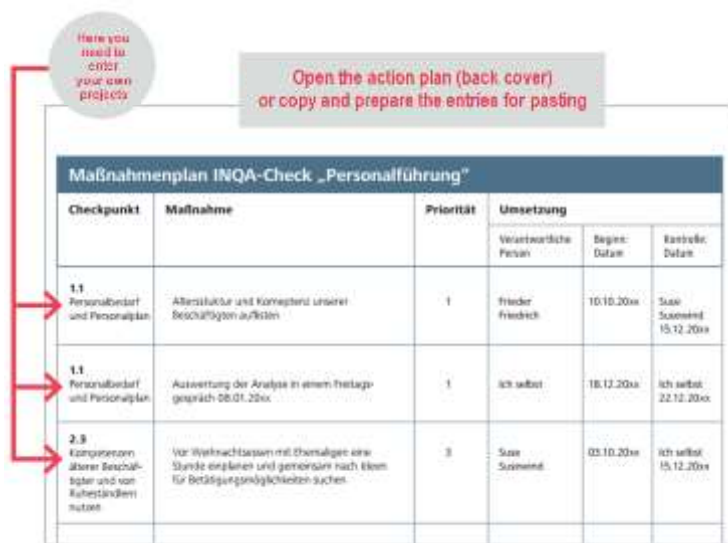
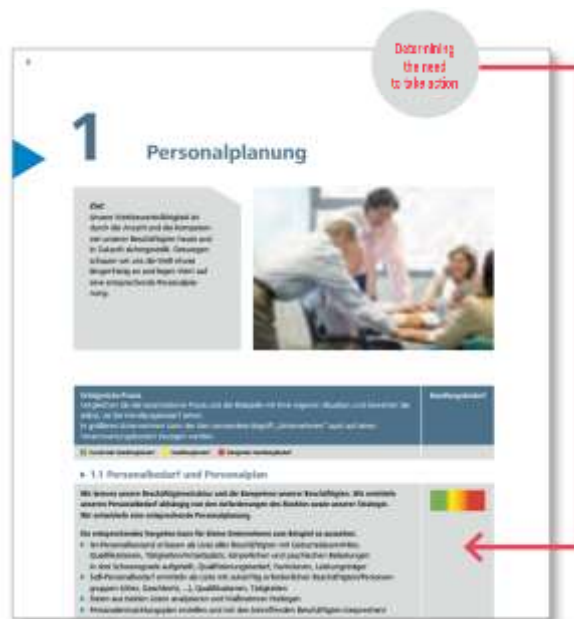
- > covering all the eleven topics and all control points,
- > recording, describing and prioritising all activities in the action plan and
- > designating the person in charge, the timing of implementation and its control.

Then proceed to filling in the self-declaration on page 32.

The declaration is a document confirming the fact that you have carried out a thorough review of how you manage your company's staff based on the INQA "Human Resource Management" brochure.

The declaration can be pinned to a bulletin board in your own company.

However, you must document completion of the INQA "Guter Mittelstand" company control sheet and actions taken to prove the correctness of the declaration (e.g. in banks, insurance companies, labour protection authorities) in case of questions.



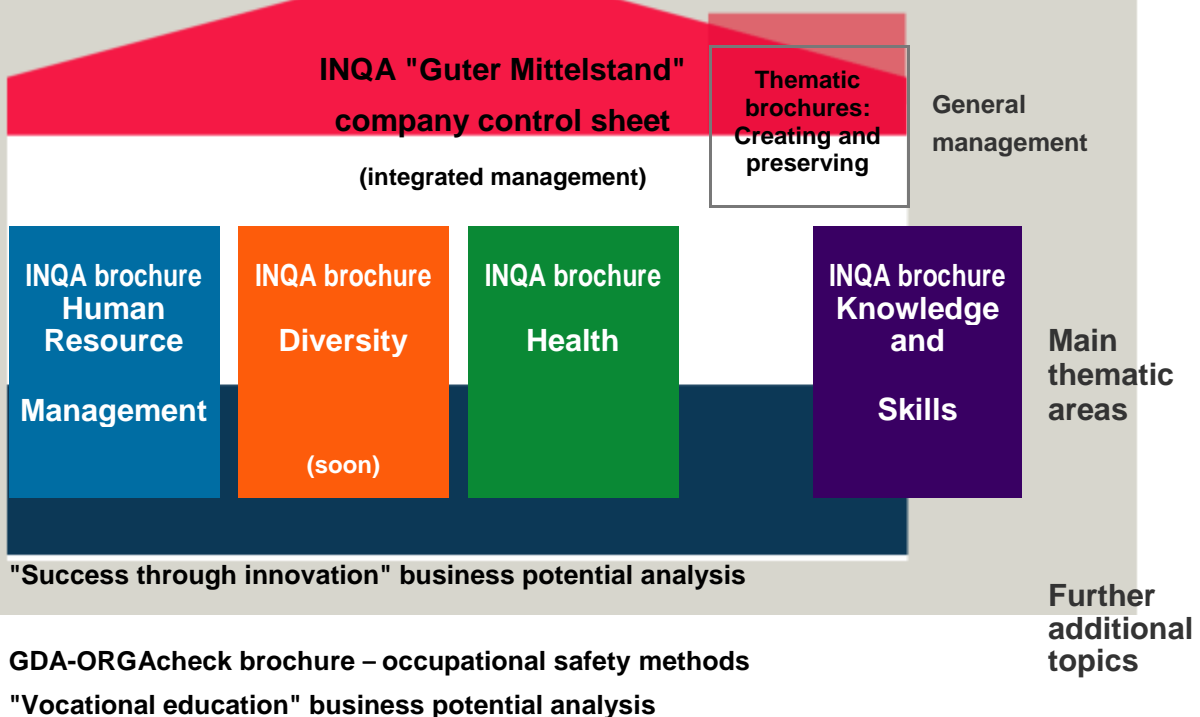
## "Guter Mittelstand" company control sheet by INQA and INQA toolkit

The "Guter Mittelstand" company control sheet by INQA is a part of INQA toolkit comprising practical standards and instruments for self-assessment. In addition to the INQA company control sheet used for analysis of good practices in integrated management, each thematic area is covered in a separate INQA brochure. Moreover, other tools for self-assessment are available on other specific topics.

Special features of the tools:

- > They were developed as a **common practical standard** and a **self-assessment tool** for all partners associated under the Offensive Mittelstand initiative and other partners active in a given thematic area.
- > They follow a **uniform classification and methodology** (based on the process of value creation, continuous improvement, description of good practices/state of the work sciences, each topic described on two pages, in print and online).
- > They constitute a **template for systematic assessment** and an **accessible introduction** to the relevant topic (also an introduction to certified systems, such as the INQA, QM, AMS, ÖKO audit, and quality mark awarded by competent authorities).
- > **Specification of further practical assistance from INQA network partners.**

The INQA "Guter Mittelstand" company control sheet and brochures on specific topics were developed by the "Offensive Mittelstand" initiative under the auspices of the Initiative Neue Qualität der Arbeit (INQA). The use of all tools is free of charge.





# Quick start: Where to start?

<p><b>11 company control topics by INQA</b>                      The Quick Start module will help you determine which of the eleven control areas in the INQA company control sheet require action. You should start working on these topics immediately.                      In addition, the brochure comes with a handbook which describes how to work with the brochure and gives an overview of the eleven topics. This should help you to implement specific actions.</p>	<p><b>Need for action</b></p>	<p><b>Topic to consider</b>  as soon as possible</p>
<p>■ No action currently needed ■ Action needed ■ Urgent action needed</p>		
<p><b>&gt;&gt;1. Strategy</b></p>		
<p>We know where we have the best market opportunities and where we are better than our competitors. We have clear ideas about how to organize and plan our work within the company in order to take advantage of our opportunities.</p>		
<p><b>&gt;&gt;2. Liquidity</b></p>		
<p>We constantly control and monitor incoming and outgoing payments, as well as liquidity, so that sound financial management is possible at all times.</p>		
<p><b>&gt;&gt;3. Risk assessment</b></p>		
<p>We systematically record the level of risk in our company and assess it (for example, risks in the areas of finance, customers, production/services, IT, labour and environment protection, health, staff).</p>		
<p><b>&gt;&gt;4. Management</b></p>		
<p>We assign clear tasks, empower employees and support them in achieving results (motivation) in a targeted manner.</p>		
<p><b>&gt;&gt;5. Market and customer</b></p>		
<p>By providing customer service and creating good rapport with customers, we know what their needs are and which of our strengths are particularly useful for a particular customer. We want society to perceive us as attractive.</p>		
<p><b>&gt;&gt;6. Organisation</b></p>		
<p>We can say that our company is organized in such a way that every employee knows what to do, when to do it and whether the resources are used optimally.</p>		
<p><b>&gt;&gt;7. Corporate culture</b></p>		
<p>Our employees identify themselves with our company, our products and services. We have a good atmosphere at work and our employees enjoy coming to work every day.</p>		
<p><b>&gt;&gt;8. Staff</b></p>		
<p>Each of our employees has a clear perspective of working in our company, which has been agreed with them. We create the right conditions for them to enjoy efficient and safe work.</p>		
<p><b>&gt;&gt;9. Production process and efficiency</b></p>		
<p>In order to develop our products and implement our services, we have defined our processes in a clear way so as not to waste resources (cost-effectiveness, efficiency, quality, safety, environment). We constantly monitor and improve effective process implementation.</p>		
<p><b>&gt;&gt;10. Purchases</b></p>		
<p>We follow criteria for the purchase of equipment, materials and services that enable economic and trouble-free processes (examples of criteria: quality, safety, environmental protection, social standards).</p>		
<p><b>&gt;&gt;11. Innovation</b></p>		
<p>We look for new trends, we use new information and communication technologies, and in particular we use all our employees' knowledge to create new products and services and to improve processes in the company.</p>		

# 1 Strategy

## Goal:

We know where we have the best market opportunities and in what areas we are or want to be better than our competitors (external strategy). We have a clear idea of how to organize and plan our work in the company in order to take advantage of our opportunities (internal strategy).



## Successful practice

Compare the described practice and examples with your own situation and decide whether you see a need for action. In larger entities, the word "company" may also mean the scope of responsibilities.

## Need for action

■ No action currently needed
 ■ Action needed
 ■ Urgent action needed

## >> 1.1 Competitiveness (external strategy)

**We establish and implement clear and realistic goals for our company which translate into maintaining competitiveness in the future.**

### Practical suggestions:

- >> Discovering needs and expectations of our (potential) customers
- >> Deciding which customers are important in the short, medium and long term
- >> Monitoring social trends and changes
- >> Strengths in comparison to our competitors (special products/services, skills, customer service, "cultural assets"), key skills
- >> Economic situation and operational efficiency
- >> Potential, skills and qualifications of our employees
- >> New work processes, technologies, materials, digital processes
- >> Lawfulness/legality of the product

### Establishing targets in writing, for example in:

- >> corporate principles, corporate policy, in the Guter Mittelstand Der Businessplan, Produkt-/Leistungspolitik, Kennzahlen brochure (Successful SMEs: business plan, product/performance policy, key parameters)



## >> 1.2 Internal corporate goals (internal strategy)

**We describe the goals and processes applied in the company and the way we work with each other and we organise work so as to implement the strategy externally (internal strategy to implement external strategy).**

### The goals include, among others:

- >> Customer-oriented approach
- >> Continuous improvement
- >> Quality awareness
- >> Conscious work
- >> Timeliness of work
- >> Work carried out in a safe, healthy and environmentally friendly manner; few errors and faults
- >> Mutual respect and assistance; operation and work in an employee- and team-oriented manner
- >> Taking into account flexible working time requirements
- >> Information and communication strategy, process digitisation

### The above are described for example in:


- >> management principles, agreements, company visions, management systems (QM, AMS, ÖKO audit)



## Strategy

<b>Successful practice</b> Compare the described practice and examples with your own situation and decide whether you see a need for action. In larger entities, the word "company" may also mean the scope of responsibilities.	<b>Need for action</b>
■ No action currently needed ■ Action needed ■ Urgent action needed	


### >> 1.3 Information on company goals

<p><b>We discuss our goals and the manner of achieving them with our management and employees.</b></p> <p><b>Practical suggestions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;&gt; Interviews with employees</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Establishing goals</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Staff meetings</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Company agreements</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Company information/news bulletins</li> </ul>	
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### >> 1.4 Workforce planning

<p><b>We have specific ideas on how we can meet our current and future need for skilled staff to implement our strategy.</b></p> <p><b>Practical suggestions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;&gt; Identifying demand taking into account demographic changes</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Considering age structure in the company (survey if necessary)</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Supporting qualified staff and creating a sense of belonging through attractive initiatives</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Acknowledging the diversity of employees (age, gender, cultural background)</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Purposeful implementation of recruitment procedures</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Provision of training/apprenticeship opportunities</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Offering training and further education</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Flexible forms of work (such as crowdworking / making sure agreements with employees are fair)</li> </ul> <p><b>→ Use the "Vocational education" business potential analysis</b></p>	
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### >> 1.5 Region

<p><b>We are committed to our region and support employees in their voluntary work. We take Corporate Social Responsibility seriously.</b></p> <p><b>Practical suggestions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;&gt; Sponsoring events/clubs</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Cash or in-kind donations for social purposes</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Environmental protection measures</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Participation in local political life</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Involvement in the activities of chambers, guilds and associations</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Involvement in schools, kindergartens, social institutions, parishes, fire brigades, refugee camps, etc.</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Business environment (perceiving companies in the region not only as competitors, but as potential partners for cooperation)</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Activities aimed at professional development (e.g. internships, tutoring for students)</li> </ul>	
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# 2 Liquidity

## Goal:

We control and monitor incoming and outgoing payments, as well as the availability of capital, so that sound financial management is possible at all times. We strive to achieve a sufficient rate of return while ensuring liquidity.



## Successful practice

Compare the described practice and examples with your own situation and decide whether you see a need for action. In larger entities, the word "company" may also mean the scope of responsibilities.

## Need for action

■ No action currently needed ■ Action needed ■ Urgent action needed

## >> 2.1 Financial and profitability planning and control

**We plan our business success and draw up a financial plan taking into account expected sales, costs (liquidity, profitability) and required production capacity. We carry out regular comparisons of targets and current performance based on our business analyses and intermediate/final calculations of our orders and assess risks.**

### Practical suggestions on financial planning and comparisons of targets and current results:

- >> Order planning, order portfolio
- >> Planning staff production capacity and production costs
- >> Budget planning for overheads, products/services, investment planning
- >> Marketing plan and budget
- >> Use of goods/materials/employees and external services
- >> Calculating and setting default values/price limits
- >> Intermediate/final calculation and recording calculations and data on surcharges
- >> Evaluation of ongoing and completed projects

→ Use the Offensive Mittelstand "Guter Mittelstand: der Businessplan" tool (Successful SMEs: a business plan) and/or an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system (for capital, personnel, working equipment, materials, IT).



## >> 2.2 Liquidity planning and control

We developed a process for planning and controlling liquidity. In addition to the direct financial risk, we also consider other internal and external risks. We use monthly financial analyses (betriebswirtschaftlichen- Auswertungen, BWA). Securing liquidity is "a matter for the boss".

### The basis for planning and control is:

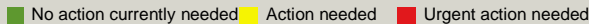



- >> Short-term (e.g. within a month) upcoming payments (including tax charges and advance payments/overdue payments, insurance premiums and fees)
- >> Incoming payments expected in the same period
- >> Bank accounts and cash in hand
- >> (Secured!) availability of short-term credits and working capital
- >> Provisions for special payments (such as bonuses, claims, repayments and interest)

### Examples of internal risks:

- >> Advances on orders
- >> Deductions under (statutory) warranty
- >> Failure to invoice timely, additional costs are not recorded and accounted for
- >> Disturbances due to improper preparation / organisation of work and work equipment and materials



## Liquidity

<b>Successful practice</b> Compare the described practice and examples with your own situation and decide whether you see a need for action. In larger entities, the word "company" may also mean the scope of responsibilities.	<b>Need for action</b>
	
<p>&gt;&gt; Inefficient scheduling of employees, lack of qualifications, absence from work, staff turnover            &gt;&gt; Problems arising from insufficient product/service quality            &gt;&gt; Insufficient cooperation with suppliers            &gt;&gt; Loss of information and profitability due to insufficient use of digital technologies</p> <p><b>Examples of external risks:</b></p> <p>&gt;&gt; Complaints about services and products            &gt;&gt; Market changes (e.g. fluctuations and decreases in the number of orders)            &gt;&gt; Amended terms of sale/new competitors            &gt;&gt; Worse company image among customers, employer image            &gt;&gt; Legislative changes, official requirements            &gt;&gt; Third party attacks (such as sabotage, viruses/hackers), disasters (fire, floods, storms)</p> <p>In any case, annual liquidity planning is recommended.</p>	
<p>&gt;&gt; <b>2.3 Payment arrangements</b></p>	
<p><b>We define payment methods to prevent temporary insolvencies or at least to avoid consequences that can be anticipated in advance and controlled.</b></p> <p><b>For example:</b></p> <p>&gt;&gt; Contractually agreed payment terms with all business partners (customers, suppliers, subcontractors, banks)            &gt;&gt; Agreeing on a binding payment schedule, including advance payments/partial payments            &gt;&gt; Using discounts in a controlled manner</p>	
<p>&gt;&gt; <b>2.4 Securing claims</b></p>	
<p><b>We do not start performing an order without the order being placed in writing. We determine the scope of the order on the basis of which we verify the creditworthiness of the customer and, if necessary, we require appropriate guarantee.</b></p> <p><b>Practical suggestions:</b></p> <p>&gt;&gt; Creating a claim recovery system with clear rules in case of payment default or partial payment of an invoice            &gt;&gt; Information on customers from credit agencies (e.g. Bürgel/Creditreform/Euler-Hermes/SCHUFA)            &gt;&gt; Checking the register of debtors in the district court            &gt;&gt; Contractual agreement on extended retention of ownership            &gt;&gt; Purchase of factoring services (i.e. selling claims), bad debt insurance, credit insurance</p>	
<p>&gt;&gt; <b>2.5 Banking situation</b></p>	
<p><b>At all times we have sufficient credit lines in our banks, both in terms of the amount of available funds and the associated conditions.</b></p> <p><b>Practical suggestions:</b></p> <p>&gt;&gt; Current account transfers and withdrawals from the current account do not exceed 80% of our credit lines in the next three months.            &gt;&gt; The remaining term of each of our agreed credit lines is at least six months.            &gt;&gt; We regularly discuss positive rating and interest rate adjustments with our Corporate Account Managers.            &gt;&gt; We know exactly what guaranties banks have and how they are valued.            &gt;&gt; We regularly ask our banks about the possibility of using public funds as operational resources (sale of receivables).</p>	



# 3 Risk assessment

## Goal:

We are aware of the internal and external risks our company faces. We carry out systematic risk assessment and use our resources in a productive, safe and economical manner to prevent possible harmful events. We act with caution.



## Successful practice

Compare the described practice and examples with your own situation and decide whether you see a need for action. In larger entities, the word "company" may also mean the scope of responsibilities.

## Need for action

■ No action currently needed
 ■ Action needed
 ■ Urgent action needed

### >> 3.1 Market and external developments

**We have procedures in place to identify external risks in a timely manner, assess them and take preventive measures to minimise risk.**

#### Examples of external risks:

- >> Unclear contractual terms and conditions and situations regarding individual orders
- >> Market changes (such as falling prices, decreasing number of orders, changes in competition conditions), new work processes, technologies, materials applied too late
- >> Reliability and efficiency of suppliers and partners
- >> Failure to use new digital technologies (such as RFID, Cyber Physical Systems)
- >> Emergencies, disasters, third-party hazards
- >> Non-compliance with new provisions

#### Examples of procedures:

- >> Assessment of risks associated with a contract before submitting an offer, contract review
- >> Market research and observation, customer/supplier surveys
- >> Responsibility for keeping up with changes in technology, products, case law, etc.



### >> 3.2 Products and services

**We developed procedures to determine the quality of our products and services and quality assurance measures.**

#### Examples of procedures:

- >> Measurement method
- >> Surveys
- >> Quality control, complaint management, quality management system
- >> Digital reporting and warning systems

Checking whether the use of a particular insurance offer is justified.



### >> 3.3 Customers


**We developed procedures to identify shortcomings in the area of contacts with customers and use information provided by customers to improve our products and services.**

#### Examples of procedures include:

- >> Complaints management
- >> Customer surveys
- >> Test orders and purchases



## Risk assessment

<b>Successful practice</b> Compare the described practice and examples with your own situation and decide whether you see a need for action. In larger entities, the word "company" may also mean the scope of responsibilities.	<b>Need for action</b>
	

### >> 3.4 Working conditions

We keep a record of the risks associated with hazards and stress at work. We take action for economical, safe and health-oriented work planning and monitor it regularly (risk assessment – use of internet tools).



**Suggestions from practice: when taking protective measures resulting from risk assessment, you should also take into account the following:**

- >> Preference for technical and organisational measures
- >> Instructions/guidance on how to proceed
- >> Medical assistance in the workplace
- >> Personal protective equipment

**Further guidance on implementation:**

- >> Encouraging employees to participate
- >> Use of preventive incentives (e.g. developed by professional associations, health insurance companies)
- >> Mobile, digital risk assessment
- >> Mobile, digital health and safety check lists and forms

Involve the works council/employee committee if such body exists in the company structure.

- ➔ **Use the GDA-ORGCheck brochure ([www.gda-orgcheck.de](http://www.gda-orgcheck.de)). If you want to deal with occupational safety issues systematically, introduce a safety management system. Use offers of accident insurance companies / professional associations.**

### >> 3.5 Permanent incapacity to perform the duties of an entrepreneur and management

We have procedures in place in the event that an entrepreneur or members of management are unexpectedly unable to perform their duties on a permanent basis.



**Practical suggestions:**

- >> Procedures for organising replacements
- >> Measures to be taken in the event of an employee's inability to perform their duties (including regulations concerning signatures, healthcare proxy, account access, access authorization)
- >> Folder or briefcase for emergency situations (use templates from financial service providers, guilds, associations)
- >> Last will and testament of the entrepreneur

### >> 3.6 Code of conduct (compliance)

In our business relations, we pay attention to compliance with legal and social regulations, such as work and production conditions, as well as the corporate values and principles of our business partners.



**For example:**

- >> Respect for human rights (including in the supply chain and when purchasing products)
- >> Compliance with minimum wage requirements
- >> Combating corruption and embezzlement
- >> Compliance with health, safety and environmental protection regulations
- >> Legal and fair subcontracting
- >> Avoiding child labour and complying with youth employment protection legislation
- >> Protection of personal rights, security and data

Include the works council/employee committee if such body exists in the company structure.

# 4 Leadership

## Goal:

We assign clear tasks, empower our employees and support them in achieving results (motivation) in a targeted manner. We understand good leadership as a process of motivation and learning. Good leadership in our company creates conditions conducive to achieving efficiency, maintaining good health and deriving pleasure from work. We trust our employees and empower them.



## Successful practice

Compare the described practice and examples with your own situation and decide whether you see a need for action. In larger entities, the word "company" may also mean the scope of responsibilities

## Need for action

■ No action currently needed ■ Action needed ■ Urgent action needed

### >> 4.1 Tasks and expectations

**We make sure tasks and responsibilities are unambiguous**

#### Practical suggestions:

- >> Unambiguous instructions, procedures and job descriptions
- >> Determining how management delegates tasks (e.g. team meetings, project kick-off meetings, so-called 'OK points')
- >> Making sure that employees understand their tasks
- >> Criteria for performing a particular activity are defined and known or agreed on
- >> Our employees have the opportunity to make direct suggestions in terms of tasks, for example using a digital mobile reporting and optimisation management system.

→ See also the INQA "Human Resource Management" brochure ([www.inqa-check-personalfuehrung.de](http://www.inqa-check-personalfuehrung.de))



### >> 4.2 Exemplary behaviour and recognition

**We consider ourselves a positive role model and act accordingly in order to be authentic in pursuing our goals. We recognize and praise our employees' achievements.**

#### Practical suggestions:

- >> Respecting each other every day
- >> Setting an example in observing requirements in the long term (for example, wearing a safety helmet if it is expected of employees)
- >> Owning up to mistakes
- >> Creating a stress-free atmosphere in which imperfection is accepted, where we are allowed to err and search for solutions and ideas
- >> Managers point out problematic behaviours to each other
- >> Praise, recognition, regular and constructive feedback
- >> Incentive systems
- >> Diversity of employees is perceived as an asset (e.g. age, gender, migrant background, religion)

#### Procedure to be followed:

- >> Exchange of experience
- >> Expressions used in the corporate vision
- >> Agreements with the management
- >> Agreements with employees



## Leadership

<b>Successful practice</b> Compare the described practice and examples with your own situation and decide whether you see a need for action. In larger entities, the word "company" may also mean the scope of responsibilities.	<b>Need for action</b>
■ No action currently needed ■ Action needed ■ Urgent action needed	

### >> 4.3 Staff inclusion

**We include employees in work planning and organisation and we use their knowledge and experience in implementing our plans.**

**Practical suggestions:**

- >> Meetings concerning work planning and processes
- >> Conducting risk assessments
- >> Purchase of work equipment
- >> Workstation rotation
- >> Procedure to be followed in the event of problems in the work organisation system
- >> Fault reporting and optimisation using a digital, mobile information system (written notes, voice notes, photos)

Include the works council/employee committee if such body exists in the company structure.



### >> 4.4 Discretion

**We create conditions so that employees can act independently, take responsibility and apply their qualifications, skills and experience.**

**Practical suggestions:**

- >> Freedom in decision making thanks to clearly defined objectives and limits
- >> The possibility of expressing opinions on management methods without fear and making suggestions for optimisation, for example a complaint box, team meetings, continuous (short) employee surveys



### >> 4.5 Performance control and evaluation

**We check and evaluate our performance within the company, in teams and individually, as well as the agreements with employees. We described the criteria of the controls and communicated them in advance.**

**Practical suggestions:**

- >> Verification of objectives and the degree of their fulfilment
- >> Verification of the implementation of agreements
- >> Evaluation of performance
- >> Performance review and implementation of follow-up measures
- >> Management assessment (assessment of management methods during management meetings, employee feedback, employee survey)
- >> Determining which data can be used for control purposes (data protection)



### >> 4.6 My health

**I consciously think about my health, implement certain measures and set an example for the team.**

**For example:**

- >> Help with time management and organization skills
- >> Implementation of binding sports/exercise/nutrition plans
- >> Implementation of binding leisure time/holidays/break plans

➔ Use offers of health and accident/occupational accident insurance companies/professional associations.

➔ [www.psyGA.info](http://www.psyGA.info)



# 5 Market and customer

## Goal:

We strive to create the most stable customer base possible. We can tell our customers exactly what our strengths are and what makes us different from our competitors. Thanks to our customer service and customer engagement we know what customers need and which of our strengths are particularly useful for specific customers. We want society to perceive us as attractive.



## Successful practice

Compare the described practice and examples with your own situation and decide whether you see a need for action. In larger entities, the word "company" may also mean the scope of responsibilities.

## Need to take action

■ No action currently needed
 ■ Action needed
 ■ Urgent action needed

## >> 5.1 Customer needs

**We developed a procedure which helps us notice customers' needs and wishes.**

### Practical suggestions:

- >> Customer research
- >> Regular interviews with customers (or surveys)
- >> Verifying complaints
- >> Systematic use of employees' knowledge about customers
- >> Information from guilds/chambers/associations
- >> Information from suppliers
- >> Social media
- >> Engaging customers in production and service provision processes with digital tools
- >> Using a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to document and manage customer relations



## >> 5.2 Customer satisfaction

**We developed procedures to determine customer satisfaction and take suitable measures if necessary**

### Practical suggestions:

- >> Arrangements with employees on how to use information acquired from customers
- >> Measuring customer satisfaction (survey, rating system, complaints ratio)
- >> Targeted interviews with customers
- >> Customer research
- >> Maintaining contact with customers after completion of an order and offering them after-sale services.
- >> Systematic evaluation: Customer research, customer interviews, complaints, additional orders completed, rejected offers/no orders received, use of CRM (customer relationship management) system





## Market and customer

<b>Successful practice</b> Compare the described practice and examples with your own situation and decide whether you see a need for action. In larger entities, the word "company" may also mean the scope of responsibilities.	<b>Need for action</b>
■ No action currently needed ■ Action needed ■ Urgent action needed	

### >> 5.3 Behaviour towards customers

**Our employees know that each contact with a customer has impact on our company's image. They know how to behave to increase customer satisfaction and loyalty. Our employees talk with customers about our strengths and strive to find opportunities to improve our results and create new products or services.**



#### **For example:**

- >> Corporate rules/arrangements should include matters such as the following:
- >> Training/role playing games and other training measures organised by associations, chambers and guilds
- >> Qualifications acquired by trainees (e.g. the Botschafter im Blaumann (Ambassador in Overalls) initiative)
- >> Rules concerning politeness and good manners in contacts with customers
- >> Jointly developing a method of how to use each contact with a customer to acquire new orders
- >> Exchange of experiences within the company
- >> Drawing up NOT to-do lists / list of taboo subjects

### >> 5.4 Marketing

**We follow a strategy when presenting our products and services to target groups (who, when, where, what). We verify which measures prove effective in the case of particular groups of customers. We pay attention to attractive external perception of the company's image**



#### **Practical suggestions concerning marketing strategy:**

- >> Agreeing on the main message / basic offer (purpose of communication)
- >> Defining the target group
- >> Identifying suitable materials and advertising media
- >> Defining the advertising message or benefit resulting from the use of a product from the customer's perspective
- >> Customer file with key information
- >> Unique selling proposition (advantage over competitors)

#### **Practical suggestions on implementation:**

- >> Attractive external presentation (attractive logo, well-designed and clean company cars, uniform clothing with a logo, clean workstations)
- >> Targeted interviews with customers
- >> Enabling employees to use each contact with customers to acquire future orders
- >> Recommendation-based marketing (make customer reviews public, present reference projects)
- >> Print media (brochures, flyers, announcements, press reports)
- >> Website, social media
- >> Fairs, events
- >> Sponsorship and social engagement
- >> Promotional articles
- >> Cooperation with other companies
- >> Consciously creating the company's image and contacting public contracting authorities

# 6 Organisation

## Goal:

Our company is organised so that each employee knows what to do and when to do it and whether resources are used optimally. We create transparent structures that encourage learning towards a healthy company.



## Successful practice

Compare the described practice and examples with your own situation and decide whether you see a need for action. In larger entities, the word "company" may also mean the scope of responsibilities.

## Need for action

■ No action currently needed ■ Action needed ■ Urgent action needed

### >> 6.1 Giving instructions and scope of responsibility

**In our company, everyone knows what is expected of them and what decision-making powers they have. Everyone is responsible for efficiency, quality, safety and health, environmental protection and data security.**

#### Practical suggestions:

- >> Clear authorisations to assign tasks/scopes of responsibility (without overlapping)
- >> Transfer of duties, procedure for determining replacements, job descriptions/tasks
- >> Operating procedures, operating instructions and work instructions
- >> Organisation chart
- >> Data protection and security provisions



### >> 6.2 Organisation and flexibility

**We take a critical look at what needs to be regulated in a binding way and what can be approached flexibly depending on the situation.**

#### Practical suggestions:

- >> Creating regulations only when necessary for quality, performance or safety reasons
- >> Creating regulations that enable employees to act independently according to their qualifications and promoting self-organisation of work
- >> Addressing spontaneous wishes of customers



### >> 6.3 Information and communication

**We make sure that managers and employees have all the information they need to perform their work. We made clear arrangements on who informs who, how and about what.**


#### Practical suggestions:

- >> Information and materials for performing tasks are complete, ready to use and available for everyone (in a mobile and digital form)
- >> Regular employee meetings, exchange of experiences and feedback
- >> Instructions and guidance for new tasks, equipment/materials
- >> Special information on behaviour at work and in official situations
- >> Online access authorisations/identity management/data security/employee data protection
- >> Using digital means of communication (such as a smartphone, tablet, SmartWatch, SmartGlass)
- >> Digital support systems (e.g. for machine operation, instructions, orders)




➔ Use the INQA "Knowledge and Skills" brochure ([www.inqa-check-wissen.de](http://www.inqa-check-wissen.de))


## Organisation

<b>Successful practice</b> Compare the described practice and examples with your own situation and decide whether you see a need for action. In larger entities, the word "company" may also mean the scope of responsibilities.	<b>Need for action</b>
	


### >> 6.4 Work organisation

<p><b>We plan and design our workplaces so that our employees feel comfortable and can work efficiently. We take risk assessment into account (see 3.4)</b></p> <p><b>Practical suggestions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;&gt; Ergonomic design of workplaces, equipment and working spaces</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Software ergonomics (also for mobile devices)</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Room climate, lighting, noise</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Break rooms, bathrooms</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Communication options</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Digital control of ergonomic and safe working conditions</li> </ul> <p>Include the works council and the employee committee, if any.</p> <p>➔ <b>Use the INQA "Health" brochure (<a href="http://www.inqa-check-gesundheit.de">www.inqa-check-gesundheit.de</a>) and the GDA-ORGCheck brochure (<a href="http://www.gda-orgcheck.de">www.gda-orgcheck.de</a>).</b></p>	
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### >> 6.5 Using equipment

<p><b>We use appropriate, safe and functional equipment to enable trouble-free work. We take risk assessment into account (see 3.4)</b></p> <p><b>Practical suggestions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;&gt; Using only reliable work equipment</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Designating auditors and dates for controlling equipment</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Planning maintenance intervals and taking them into account in ongoing operations</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Digital control of wear and defects</li> </ul>	
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### >> 6.6 Emergency preparedness

<p><b>We are prepared for any emergencies. Our employees are regularly trained and know how to proceed in the event of emergencies.</b></p> <p><b>Practical suggestions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;&gt; First aid (material, marking), first-aider</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Fire and explosion protection plan, emergency and rescue plan</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Regulations and information on procedures to be followed in the event of accidents and incidents of environmental concern, training</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Access rights/access control, IT security</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Action plan in case of increased disease incidence, epidemic (pandemic plan)</li> </ul>	
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### >> 6.7 Sustainability, recycling, disposal

<p><b>We established how materials, equipment, products and residues are recycled or disposed of in an environmentally friendly manner. We checked whether other environmental requirements (ambient concentration, air pollution protection, water, soil/nature) must be met. We keep energy and material consumption as low as possible in all operating activities.</b></p> <p><b>Suggestions from disposal practice:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;&gt; Check which materials and equipment can be recycled and how to do this; advice can be obtained, for example, from environmental centres, chambers and guilds</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Provide information/guidance to employees on utilities consumption (e.g. energy, water)</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Provide customers with information on the environmental compliance of products and services</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Appoint a person responsible for reuse and disposal</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Verify quality and reliability of the disposal company</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Keep a register of hazardous waste; see Abfallverzeichnis-Verordnung (Regulation on the list of wastes)</li> </ul> <p>If you want to deal with environmental issues systematically, introduce an environmental management system according to the DIN EN 14001 standard.</p>	
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# 7 Corporate culture

## Goal:

We perceive our corporate culture as the "personality" of our company. Our employees identify with our company, our products and services. Our good corporate culture helps us to boost the efficiency and innovation potential of our company and to be an attractive partner for our customers.



## Successful practice

Compare the described practice and examples with your own situation and decide whether you see a need for action. In larger entities, the word "company" may also mean the scope of responsibilities.

## Need for action

■ No action currently needed ■ Action needed ■ Urgent action needed

### >> 7.1 Work culture and values

**We have a clear idea of how we work and how we interact with each other. This has been discussed and written down. We treat our suppliers with respect.**

#### Examples of arrangements made:

- >> Mutual tolerance
- >> Respect and trust
- >> A stress-free atmosphere in which imperfection is accepted, where we are allowed to err and search for solutions and ideas
- >> Safety and health
- >> Constructive criticism from employees, customers and suppliers
- >> Customer-centric approach
- >> Quality requirements
- >> Competitive behaviour
- >> Corporate responsibility
- >> Order cancellation criteria
- >> Personal data processing (Work 4.0)

Described as part of the corporate vision. Include the works council/employee committee if such body exists in the company structure.



### >> 7.2 Transparency and honesty

**We have clear rules on how decisions are communicated in an understandable way and how we deal with each other in the company.**

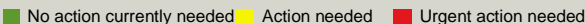
#### Examples of arrangements made:

- >> Interpersonal relationships based on honesty and respect
- >> The same standards apply to everyone
- >> Clear rules for dealing with conflicts
- >> Procedures to be followed in case of behaviour perceived as disrespectful and unfair
- >> Procedures to be followed in case of mobbing

Described as part of the corporate vision.



## Corporate culture

<b>Successful practice</b> Compare the described practice and examples with your own situation and decide whether you see a need for action. In larger entities, the word "company" may also mean the scope of responsibilities.	<b>Need for action</b>
	

### >> 7.3 Information exchange and discussion culture

We regularly communicate our vision of work culture and values to our employees in an understandable way; employees participate in further developing our vision of work culture and values. Everyone has the opportunity to address issues based on the agreed values without fear of sanctions.

#### Practical suggestions:

- >> Employee meetings
- >> Team meetings
- >> Intranet (discussion forums)
- >> Posters/bulletin boards, leaflets, employee newsletter



### >> 7.4 Acting with caution and learning from mistakes (culture of error prevention and resolution)

We make decisions and act with caution to avoid foreseeable danger, damage and failure and to make sure our employees remain healthy and motivated. We approach mistakes in a constructive way and see them as an opportunity for improvement.

#### Practical suggestions:

- >> Motivating managers and employees to identify risks in behaviour and work processes
- >> Motivating managers and employees to identify risks at work and in official situations
- >> Motivating people to tackle errors without having to face the consequences
- >> The possibility of reporting errors ("confessional"), positive approach to admitting to errors, "Every error is an opportunity to improve!"
- >> Analysing causes of errors together
- >> Agreeing on how to avoid mistakes: "We are looking for solutions, not scapegoats".
- >> Communicating the causes of errors in the developed solution to other employees so they can draw conclusions.



### >> 7.5 Image

We create a credible, distinctive image of our company, our products and services (Corporate Identity).

#### Practical suggestions:

- >> Uniform image (Corporate Design), i.e. logo, website, letterhead, working clothes, cars
- >> Publicly announcing successes and product launches and celebrating them in the company
- >> Publishing information about company events in regional press, magazines, Internet and social media



### >> 7.6 Nurturing relationships

We organize events to promote a sense of belonging.

#### Practical suggestions:

- >> Opportunities for informal conversations: kitchenette, communication corner, break room
- >> Company events
- >> Company trips
- >> Leisure activities: sport, culture, entertainment
- >> Health promotion courses, sports in the company
- >> Making employees aware of the importance of their diversity and learning what is special about everyone





# 8 Staff

## Goal:

Our employees contribute to creating added value in our company. We create conditions conducive to efficient and safe work. Each employee has a clear perspective of working in our company. We want to ensure employee retention. We want to be an attractive employer for our employees.

→ Use the INQA "Human Resource Management" brochure ([www.inqa-check-personalfuehrung.de](http://www.inqa-check-personalfuehrung.de)).



## Successful practice

Compare the described practice and examples with your own situation and decide whether you see a need for action. In larger entities, the word "company" may also mean the scope of responsibilities.

## Need for action

■ No action currently needed ■ Action needed ■ Urgent action needed

### >> 8.1 Work conditions and resources

Regardless of individual projects, our managers are responsible for ensuring that the professional, organisational and technical requirements are met, so that employees can work productively and with full motivation. Managers can use the necessary resources (such as skills, time, budget) to do so.

#### For example:

- >> Basic information and instructions for safe and healthy behaviour at work and in official situations
- >> Suitable, ergonomic and functional tools and vehicles
- >> A safe and healthy working environment
- >> Data handling
- >> Activities of internship mentors
- >> Crowdfunding agreements (fair agreements with employees)



### >> 8.2 Diversity

We make sure that our employees do not always perform the same activities, but that they are entrusted with a variety of tasks (also helpful in the case of regulations on replacement of employees).

#### For example:

- >> Working in different areas, job rotation
- >> Qualification to perform various activities



### >> 8.3 Development opportunities

We hold regular discussions with each employee about their results, ideas and development opportunities.

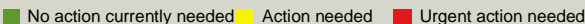
#### Practical suggestions on the content of such conversations:

- >> Establishing goals
- >> Delegation of responsibility and powers
- >> Qualification and further training opportunities
- >> Health promotion (safeguarding employability)
- >> Career development prospects
- >> Discussions with employees after recovering from an illness (company integration management (Betriebliches Eingliederungsmanagement, BEM))

→ Use the INQA "Vocational Education" business potential analysis ([www.check-betriebliche-bildung.de](http://www.check-betriebliche-bildung.de)).



## Staff

<b>Successful practice</b> Compare the described practice and examples with your own situation and decide whether you see a need for action. In larger entities, the word "company" may also mean the scope of responsibilities.	<b>Need for action</b>
	

### >> 8.4 Employee retention

**We introduce specific measures to ensure loyalty on the part of managers and employees.**

**Practical suggestions:**

- >> Offering specific personal perspectives
- >> Interpersonal relationships based on respect
- >> Creating a learning-friendly, good working atmosphere
- >> Promoting participation in training and educational events
- >> Performance-related remuneration
- >> Concepts of family friendly work organisation
- >> Offering trainees attractive job prospects
- >> Employee pension schemes
- >> Year-round employment, i.e. working time accounts, training and further education in less busy seasons
- >> Incentive systems (such as bonuses, insurance schemes)
- >> Company offers (such as health promotion, sport activities, events)



### >> 8.5 Acquiring employees

**We have ideas and take specific measures to find suitable managers and employees. We position ourselves as an attractive employer (particularly in the region).**

**Practical suggestions:**

- >> Positive presentation of the company in the region
- >> Possibility to complete apprenticeship or internship
- >> Social involvement / sponsorship (activity) in the region
- >> Special measures for refugees
- >> Analysis of requirements/qualifications (including demographic changes)
- >> Information on good working conditions on the website
- >> Press articles
- >> Open day/Boys-Girls-Day
- >> Cooperation or events organised together with vocational schools, training centres, universities, chambers or guilds.
- >> Participation in regional fairs
- >> Online recruitment (via Gute-Bauunternehmen.de, social media)
- >> Membership in real-life and virtual networks
- >> Initial support offer (e.g. language courses, reading and writing courses)
- >> Culture of openness to foreign specialists and new employees



### >> 8.6 Work and family

**We put emphasis on the possibility of combining family life with professional life and we take measures to achieve it.**

**Practical suggestions:**

- >> Individual and flexible working time
- >> Flexible workstations (workplaces at home, "parent-child office", also taking into account religious and cultural specificities)
- >> Assistance in finding childcare facilities
- >> Supporting workers in caring for family members at home
- >> Family events in the company / open day for family members
- >> Supporting the fulfilment of technical requirements (e.g. smartphone, laptop)



# 9 Production process and efficiency

## Goal:

When creating our products and implementing our services, we pay attention to the quality and cost-effectiveness. Working conditions for our employees are safe, healthy and environmentally friendly. Our customers receive the best products and performance within their budget.



## Successful practice

Compare the described practice and examples with your own situation and decide whether you see a need for action. In larger entities, the word "company" may also mean the scope of responsibilities

## Need for action

■ No action currently needed
 ■ Action needed
 ■ Urgent action needed

## >> 9.1 Drafting offers and making arrangements with customers

**We create offers in which we describe services, quality, prices and lead times in a comprehensive and understandable way for the customer. We make detailed arrangements with the customer to ensure that their expectations and (financial) capabilities correspond to our production capabilities (if necessary, we make contractual arrangements).**

### Practical suggestions:

- >> Asking specific questions about the customer's wishes and ideas and addressing them in the offer
- >> Carrying out a preliminary diagnosis in order to assess the situation and risk and making individual arrangements with the customer
- >> Detailed explanation of the advantages of the offer and individual customer benefits, documentation of quality (based on certificates, awards) and references (customer reviews, website [www.gute.bauunternehmen.de](http://www.gute.bauunternehmen.de)).
- >> Providing advice if the customer does not have full knowledge of the scope of services. Identification of potential risks arising from the offered services. Pointing out possible need to comply with state regulations and those of trade associations
- >> Performing a calculation based on business economics, taking into account e.g. overheads, costs of materials and personnel, financing (own funds, external capital), profitability (working/production time, unit costs), return on investment (income)
- >> Describing payment schedule and methods



## >> 9.2 Process planning / work preparation





**When planning products and services, we take into account, to the extent possible, all factors affecting the process in order to avoid quality defects, unproductive periods, faults, delays, downtime, alterations and risks to employees and the environment.**

### Practical suggestions for systematic process planning:

- >> Clear definition of product/performance requirements – purpose, benefit, function
- >> Verification of feasibility, process risk and economic viability – procedures, regulations, know-how
- >> Detailed definition of required stages and work processes (work planning)
- >> Creating risk assessment concerning working conditions or using an existing assessment
- >> Establishing the scope of responsibility for the process
- >> Description of key processes – management, finance, human resources, quality assurance, procurement, logistics, production, sales
- >> Defining/describing qualification requirements for those involved in the process
- >> Determination of resources, material supply/flow, vehicles/means of transport



## Production process and efficiency

<b>Successful practice</b> Compare the described practice and examples with your own situation and decide whether you see a need for action. In larger entities, the word "company" may also mean the scope of responsibilities.	<b>Need for action</b>
	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;&gt; Description of required outsourced and preceding services</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Taking into account supporting processes (such as energy supply, transport, maintenance, waste disposal, IT)</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Definition and creation of interfaces between different departments (transfer points, so-called "OK points") (processes do not know the concept of "departmental barriers")</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Defining the flow and content of information (internal and external)</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Drawing up working documents, work instructions and procedures</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Coordinating changes in plans with customers, employees and other process participants</li> </ul>	
<h3>&gt;&gt; 9.3 Suitability of employees</h3>	
<p>The use of employees in specific work processes that are suitable for the tasks.</p> <p><b>For example:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;&gt; Qualifications (evidence of education, evidence of qualifications such as a driving licence, welding qualifications, evidence of completion of training, ...)</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Skills (if possible, the employee should not be over- or under-challenged)</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Physical fitness and health aspects (medical assistance in the workplace)</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Knowledge of processes (information, manuals, instructions) and onboarding</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Setting working hours, shifts, field work, holidays, etc. well in advance.</li> </ul>	
<h3>&gt;&gt; 9.4 Coordination with other companies</h3>	
<p>Working with other companies or placing orders with other companies, we define tasks, quality criteria, designate the person authorised to give instructions, specify the use of equipment, information and guidance, points of contact between different departments, lead times and, if necessary, we coordinate activities.</p> <p><b>Other companies may include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;&gt; Subcontractors</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Partners</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Temporary employment agencies, companies operating under a work contract</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Customers with own employees, services provided by the company for its own needs</li> </ul>	
<h3>&gt;&gt; 9.5 Process control and improvement</h3>	
<p>We verify the conformity of the works performed with the offer. We constantly and systematically check our production/service provision processes in terms of optimization possibilities. We developed procedures to identify and eliminate process errors before continuing to work with errors.</p> <p><b>Practical suggestions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;&gt; Establishing process evaluation criteria (such as frequency of errors, waste, complaints, improvements, performance measurements, absence of employees, periods when orders are not fulfilled)</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Verifying the effectiveness of risk assessment</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Process review in terms of the necessity and completeness of sub-stages</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Reporting, registering and recording faults and deviations</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Rules on how to deal with delays and insufficient quality</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Repair, maintenance and cleaning plans</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Systematic quality control of initial and final deliverables</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Taking into account the experience of employees (meetings, error logs, surveys)</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Taking into account the experience of customers and suppliers (questionnaires)</li> </ul>	

# 10 Purchases

## Goal:

Purchasing high quality equipment, materials and services contributes to economical and trouble-free processes in our company. Our goal is to achieve a high standard of quality, safety and environmental protection. We also pay attention to social standards. Work equipment = tools, devices, machines, installations, vehicles, computers, software, etc.



## Successful practice

Compare the described practice and examples with your own situation and decide whether you see a need for action. In larger entities, the word "company" may also mean the scope of responsibilities.

## Need for action

■ No action currently needed
 ■ Action needed
 ■ Urgent action needed

### >> 10.1 Criteria

**We established clear criteria for purchasing equipment, materials and services. Price is not the only criterion.**

#### Practical suggestions:

- >> The criteria for purchasing may be the following: economy, quality, safety, health, risk minimization, environmental friendliness, social standards
- >> Definition of specifications for the purchasing process (e.g. material properties, product properties)
- >> Equipment and personal protective equipment (PPE) with appropriate marking (GS, BGPRÜFZERT, VDE if possible or similar marking)
- >> Paying attention to the need for incurring further costs (cost-effectiveness)
- >> No cheap, low quality goods that lead to faults and the need for improvisation
- >> Preference for regional suppliers



### >> 10.2 Knowledge of buyers

**We make sure that our employees entrusted with purchasing tasks have all the information and qualifications needed to complete the purchase.**

#### For example:

- >> Trainings
- >> Participation in fairs
- >> Systematic observation of the market
- >> Searching for information published on the Internet



### >> 10.3 Suppliers and subcontractors

**We only employ suppliers, subcontractors and temporary work agencies that meet our quality, safety and health requirements.**

#### Practical suggestions:

- >> Clear requirements for suppliers, subcontractors and temporary work agencies based on our criteria
- >> Requesting and verifying the validity of the required certificates and licenses
- >> Establishing criteria for assessing product quality, supplier reliability, complaints, prices
- >> Keeping a register of suppliers



## Purchases

<b>Successful practice</b> Compare the described practice and examples with your own situation and decide whether you see a need for action. In larger entities, the word "company" may also mean the scope of responsibilities.	<b>Need for action</b>
■ No action currently needed ■ Action needed ■ Urgent action needed	

### >> 10.4 Contracts

**We specify clear quality, safety and health requirements in contracts concluded with our suppliers, subcontractors and temporary work agencies.**

**Practical suggestions:**

- >> Scope, quality and delivery time
- >> Authorisations to give instructions
- >> Providing the required guidance
- >> Provision of good quality equipment and protective equipment



### >> 10.5 Dangerous substances

**When ordering products containing dangerous substances, we check whether we can use alternative products containing less dangerous substances (substitutes). We make sure that the variety and quantity of hazardous substances is as low as possible.**

**Practical suggestions:**

- >> Using only labelled substances
- >> Requesting Safety Data Sheets and creating instructions (use of templates provided by professional associations)
- >> Requesting specific information in specialist shops
- >> Searching databases
- >> Remaining inventory which is no longer needed is disposed of in an environmentally friendly way
- >> Inquiries to professional associations / accident insurance funds



### >> 10.6 Use of experience

**When purchasing equipment, materials and products, we tap into the experience of managers, employees and customers.**

**Practical suggestions:**

- >> Developing procedures to ensure that products, equipment and materials with which employees had bad experience are not re-purchased
- >> When outsourcing to sub-contractors/suppliers and temporary work agencies, we collect the opinions of customers and employees, analyse them and take them into consideration





# 11 Innovation

## Goal:

Thanks to innovations and continuous improvement, we are competitive and ranked among the best.

Innovation = product innovation, process innovation and social innovation

→ Use the INQA "Success through innovation" business potential analysis ([www.inqa-innovation.de](http://www.inqa-innovation.de)).



## Successful practice

Compare the described practice and examples with your own situation and decide whether you see a need for action. In larger entities, the word "company" may also mean the scope of responsibilities

■ No action currently needed ■ Action needed ■ Urgent action needed

## Need for action

### >> 11.1 Monitoring trends

We agreed on how to record developments and current trends in the areas of market, technology, work organisation, work processes, materials, customer and society requirements. This constitutes the basis for developing new products and services (based on our corporate strategy). In the case of new offers we also consider digitisation (e.g. intelligent products / intelligent services).

#### Practical suggestions:

- >> Reading specialist magazines
- >> Searching for information published on the Internet, social media
- >> Participating in fairs, congresses and professional conferences
- >> Inter-industry exchange of experience
- >> Customer forums, customer research
- >> Exchange of information with other companies
- >> Use of external advisors, e.g. advisors of chambers/associations, occupational health and safety specialists, occupational physicians, environmental protection workers

→ Use the INQA "Innovation through success" business potential analysis



### >> 11.2 New information technologies

We use new information technologies to communicate and increase the efficiency of procedures and processes. We established the principles to be followed when using information and communication technologies.

#### Practical suggestions on applications and technology:

- >> Company website, social media (e.g. blogs, Facebook, Twitter)
- >> Electronic records of working time and remuneration for work performed at hourly rates
- >> Cloud Computing
- >> Digital document management, digital and mobile project documentation
- >> Digital support systems (smartphone/tablet/SmartWatch/SmartGlasses)
- >> Digital reporting from the place of work/workstation to management/administration (text, voice and photographic notes)
- >> Smart Grid/Smart Home as new service offers
- >> Electronic signature, encryption
- >> Electronic information on components and equipment (bar codes, QR codes, RFID/AR codes)
- >> Exchange of information and data between all parties involved
- >> Technical data protection and security




## Innovation


<b>Successful practice</b> Compare the described practice and examples with your own situation and decide whether you see a need for action. In larger entities, the word "company" may also mean the scope of responsibilities.	<b>Need for action</b>
■ No action currently needed ■ Action needed ■ Urgent action needed	

<b>Processes:</b> >> Digital and mobile management of information, tasks and meetings >> Regulations on access, organisation, processes, data backup, data protection, GPS applications >> Electronic procurement >> Electronic process control (EPC) – workflow management system >> Digital and mobile material and device management (bar codes, QR codes, RFID/AR codes) <b>→ Use the INQA "Knowledge and Skills" brochure (<a href="http://www.inqa-check-wissen.de">www.inqa-check-wissen.de</a>)</b>	
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### >> 11.3 Stimuli and motivation

<p>We motivate our employees to constantly think about better/new opportunities at work and new products and services. We encourage and motivate them to share their ideas.</p> <p><b>Practical suggestions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;&gt; Regular team meetings to discuss potential innovations</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Books of proposals/ideas competition/financial incentives</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Complaint box/management of ideas</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Further vocational education, training courses</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Participation in fairs</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Specialised press</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Cooperation</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Participation in research projects</li> </ul>	
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### >> 11.4 Focus on practical application and customer centricity

<p>We make sure that our innovations are practical and appropriate for us and our customers. Not every trend should be followed.</p> <p><b>For example:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;&gt; Focusing on benefits resulting from our products, services and processes</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Considering viability/results of the cost-benefit analysis</li> </ul>	
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### >> 11.5 Innovation-oriented cooperation (partnerships and cooperation)

<p>We work with other companies, associations, technical universities or colleges to learn, develop and implement new products/services, processes and concepts.</p> <p><b>For example:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;&gt; Bonuses/financing programmes</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Financing research projects</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Dissertations/student theses</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Teaching assignments</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Cooperation with regional businesses and crafts</li> </ul>	
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# SME sector: The driving force for Germany – Ideas for Germany

## [www.offensive-mittelstand.de](http://www.offensive-mittelstand.de)

The SME sector is the driving force behind ideas in Germany. More than 3 million small and medium-sized companies operating in the field of crafts, trade, industry and services drive growth, innovation and employment. Around 70 percent of jobs and more than 80 percent of all apprenticeships are offered by small and medium-sized enterprises.

### Offensive Mittelstand – Gut für Deutschland

We are working together under the "Offensive Mittelstand – Gut für Deutschland" initiative to increase the odds of SMEs succeeding and to better coordinate our activities. We are social partners, professional bodies, ministries, accident insurance companies, health insurance companies and institutes. The total number of partners amounts to approximately 250. With the "Offensive Mittelstand – Gut für Deutschland" initiative and INQA practical standards, we contribute to the "Fachkräfteoffensive" (Skilled Workers Offensive) initiative launched by the federal government ([www.fachkraefteoffensive.de](http://www.fachkraefteoffensive.de)) and Mittelstandsinitiative (SME Initiative) by the Federal Government ([www.bmwi.de](http://www.bmwi.de)).

### Objectives

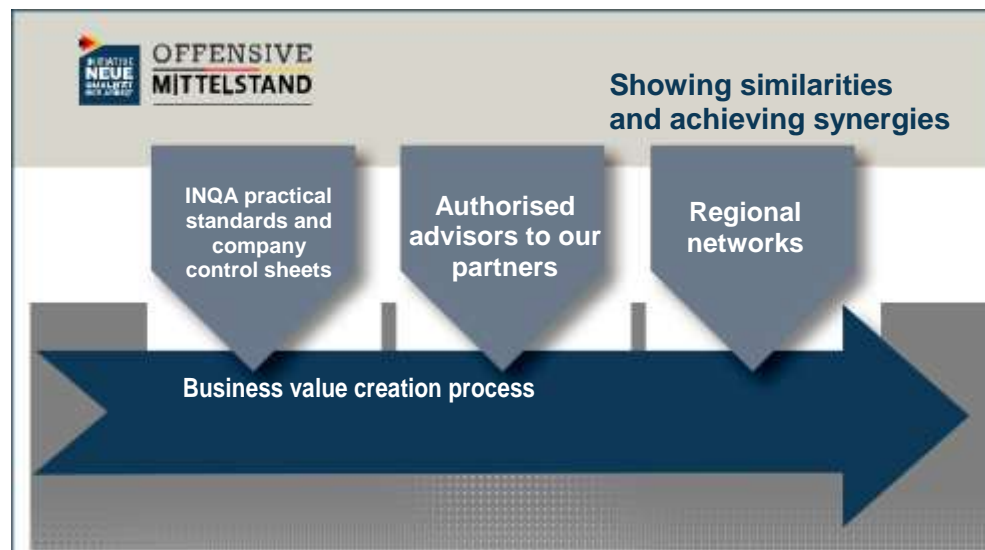
Successful small and medium-sized enterprises are healthy and innovative. We strive to ensure that as many SMEs as possible are successful. We help as many SMEs as possible to take advantage of demographic changes and the digital transformation (Work 4.0) and turn it into an opportunity.

Successful SMEs show us how to do this: The (new) quality of work in these companies is based on systematic and preventive management, continuous employee development and retention, good corporate culture and innovation. As "Offensive Mittelstand" we are guided by the following goals:

- > **New quality of cooperation** – Offensive Mittelstand partners try to coordinate support for SMEs more effectively.
- > **New quality of practical support for SMEs** – Offensive Mittelstand partners develop common standards and INQA practical standards in which they present their conclusions.
- > **New quality of advice** – Offensive Mittelstand partners organise coordinated advice for SMEs, based on common standards/control sheets and work together in regional networks.

### Our Way

Basic assumption: Successful medium-sized companies take care of good general framework conditions in the company – consultants help companies, if necessary, based on common basic assumptions.



The "Offensive Mittelstand" initiative pursues its objectives in the following ways:

- >> **Practical standards and company control sheets by INQA** (see also page 6) – the result of our effort to describe standards in the form of specific self-assessment tools for SMEs presented in a compact and accessible form SMEs can benefit. First of all, we developed a joint analysis tool (comparison of the target situation and the current situation), which allows each SME to quickly and easily identify its potential for improvement. We do not reinvent the wheel. Our standards and brochures the best practical help on the most important topics. We simplify access to these support options and provide necessary information in an organised way.
- >> **Authorised advisors to our partners** – many Offensive Mittelstand partners are entitled to authorise their advisors to apply the INQA practical standards and company control sheets. Offensive Mittelstand advisors specialising in different fields use these tools in their work and increasingly often cooperate with advisors from other fields. This enables providing more effective support for SMEs. We do not compete with recognised and reliable advisory structures, but we support a common understanding of the basic principles on a common platform according to the motto "Better together". Our database of advisors features all the advisors we have authorised to offer consultations based on practical standards and company control sheets by INQA.
- >> **Regional networks** – our basic principles applicable at "Offensive Mittelstand – Gut für Deutschland" are transferred to regional networks. Our practical standards and company control sheets foster the idea of working together in the regions towards a new quality of work in the SME sector. We make sure that as many different advisory areas as possible work together in the regions.

For more information go to:  
[www.offensive-mittelstand.de](http://www.offensive-mittelstand.de)

## Join us!

Help and support SMEs,  
 which are the driving force behind ideas in Germany.  
 Become a partner of "Offensive Mittelstand".

Our partners include (in alphabetical order):

- >> Bundesvereinigung der Deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände, BDA (German Employers' Confederation)
- >> Bundesagentur für Arbeit (Federal Employment Agency)
- >> Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales, BMAS (Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs)
- >> Bundesnetzwerk Bürgerschaftliches Engagement, BBE (National Network for Civil Society)
- >> Bundessteuerberaterkammer (Federal Tax Advisor Chamber)
- >> Deutsche Gesellschaft für Qualität, DGQ (German Association for Quality)
- >> Deutsche Gesetzliche Unfallversicherung, DGUV (German Social Accident Insurance)
- >> Deutscher Steuerberaterverband (German Association of Tax Advisers)
- >> Deutscher Verkehrssicherheitsrat, DVR (German Transport Safety Council)
- >> Fortbildungsakademie der Wirtschaft, FAW (Business Development Academy)
- >> IG BCE Industriegewerkschaft Bergbau, Chemie, Energie (IG BCE – Trade Union for mining, chemicals and energy industries)
- >> Institut für Mittelstandsforschung Bonn (Institute for SME Research)
- >> Chambers, guilds, business associations
- >> Health insurance companies > IKK, BKKK, AOK
- >> RKW Rationalisierungs- und Innovationszentrum der Deutschen Wirtschaft e. V. (Rationalization and Innovation Center for the German Economy)
- >> Universities, colleges, institutes
- >> Business advisors
- >> Zentralverband des Deutschen Handwerks (German Confederation of Skilled Crafts)

... more than 250 partners in total.

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## Self-declaration

### INQA "Guter Mittelstand" company control sheet

Company name

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Address

declares, after an audit based on the INQA "Guter Mittelstand" brochure and related information about the system and structure of the company, that it operates according to the principles specified therein.

**The self-declaration is based on self-assessment carried out on**

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bearing document number

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The self-assessment was carried out by the management based on  
**the INQA "Guter Mittelstand" company control sheet.**

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Place, date

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Signature of the President

The self-declaration is only valid with self-assessment for a maximum of 2 years.





## DISCLAIMER

### INQA "Guter Mittelstand" company control sheet

Success is not a matter of chance. How to improve the form and organisation of work?



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RKW Rationalisierungs- und Innovationszentrum der Deutschen Wirtschaft e. V. (Rationalization and Innovation Center for the German Economy)  
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The "Guter Mittelstand" company control sheet by INQA can be ordered on the website [www.inqa.de/Publikationen](http://www.inqa.de/Publikationen).

