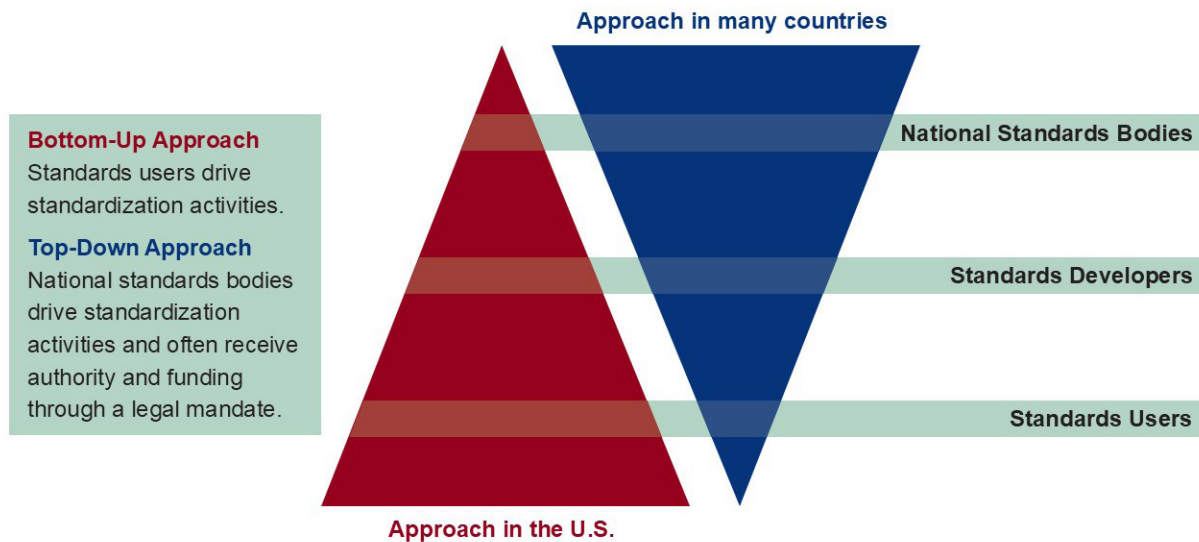


The Power of Standards

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Where would your business be without standards? Can you imagine if every gear manufacturer used different inspection and rating criteria? Or if you had to re-learn new gear nomenclature for each manufacturer you talked to? Standards are the documented set of generally accepted rules, guidelines, and requirements within an industry. They are based on proven and verified practices and provide a common language for an industry. AGMA has standards covering all aspects of gearing, from design, to inspection, to materials, to assembly, and to specialized applications such as wind or aerospace industries.

Outside of AGMA there are standards for almost every good and service you can imagine. Such as Quality Management (ISO 9001), IT Security (ISO SAE 21434), Environmental Management (ISO 14001), and Food and Environmental Safety (NSF/ANSI 61) just to name a few. Standards are behind the scenes in almost all products you use everyday. In fact, The U.S. Department of Commerce reports that 92 percent of U.S. goods exports are affected by standards and technical regulations legacy.trade.gov/td/osip/documents/osip_standards_trade_full_paper.pdf

In the United States, we have a “bottom-up” approach to standardization. In the bottom-up approach users of the standards *you* have the strongest voice to decide what to standardize, and how to write the standards. AGMA staff does not write standards. Instead, we coordinate diverse, volunteer stakeholders to ensure consensus processes are followed fairly and openly, which avoids monopoly or anti-trust issues. Overseeing AGMA is the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). ANSI’s main roles are accrediting standards developing organizations such as AGMA, making sure organizations are not duplicating efforts (such as other organizations also writing gear standards), and facilitating U.S.

participation on the global stage through ISO. The bottom-up approach offers speed and flexibility to those that use the standards to independently find solutions for their market. In the United States, when a standard exists, the government is less likely to write a regulation, and if a regulation is written it is more likely to cite the standard.

In contrast to the United States, many countries use a “top-down” approach to standardization. In a top-down approach the national standards body (often a governmental agency) has the most influence. Standards users are at the bottom of the pyramid, having the standards that affect them dictated mainly by other entities. In a “top-down” approach there is more central planning on what to standardize, how the standards are written, and in this system when regulations are written there may not be as much input from the affected stakeholders.

For more information see the ANSI website here: standardsportal.org/usa_en/standards_system/introduction.aspx

Now that you know that standards are everywhere, you may be asking, “Who is writing the standards that affect my business?” And the answer is, “If it’s not you, it’s your competitors.” Every manufacturer has a way of running their business, designing parts, making parts, inspecting parts, etc. Some businesses even write down their way of doing these things. So, if you have these “in house” best practices, why not try to make them U.S. industry wide best practices, or even the worldwide best practices through standardization?

For gears the place to start is AGMA. Our website has a list of active standards projects here:

agma.org/committees/standards-projects/

We are always happy to hear from industry about future standardization needs. Email us at tech@agma.org for more information.