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What is TQM?

Total Quality Management (TQM) is a combination of quality and management tools aimed at increasing business and reducing losses due to wasteful practices. An important part of **TQM** is its philosophy toward continually improving your business and products.

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Questions you may have are:

- a) How do you satisfy the customer?
- b) Why should you satisfy the supplier?
- c) What is continuous improvement?

Satisfy the customer

The first and major **TQM principle** is to satisfy the customer--the person who pays for the product or service. Customers want to get their money's worth from a product or service they purchase.

Users

If the user of the product is different than the purchaser, then both the user and customer must be satisfied, although the person who pays gets priority.

Company philosophy

A company that seeks to satisfy the customer by providing them value for what they buy and the quality they expect will get more repeat business, referral business, and reduced complaints and service expenses.

Some top companies not only provide quality products, but they also give extra service to make their customers feel important and valued.

Internal customers

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Within a company, a worker provides a product or service to his or her supervisors. If the person has any influence on the wages the worker receives, that person can be thought of as an internal customer. A worker should have the mind-set of satisfying internal customers in order to keep his or her job and to get a raise or promotion.

Chain of customers

Often in a company, there is a chain of customers, -each improving a product and passing it along until it is finally sold to the external customer. Each worker must not only seek to satisfy the immediate internal customer, but he or she must look up the chain to try to satisfy the ultimate customer.

Satisfy the supplier

A second TQM principle is to satisfy the supplier, which is the person or organization from whom you are purchasing goods or services.

External suppliers

A company must look to satisfy their external suppliers by providing them with clear instructions and requirements and then paying them fairly and on time. It is only in the company's best interest that its suppliers provide it with quality goods or services, if the company hopes to provide quality goods or services to its external customers.

Internal suppliers

A supervisor must try to keep his or her workers happy and productive by providing good task instructions, the tools they need to do their job and good working conditions. The supervisor must also reward the workers with praise and good pay.

Get better work

The reason to do this is to get more productivity out of the workers, as well as to keep the good workers. An effective supervisor with a good team of workers will certainly satisfy his or her internal customers.

Empower workers

One area of satisfying the internal supplier is by empowering the workers. This means to allow them to make decisions on things that they can control. This not only takes the burden off the supervisor, but it also motivates these internal suppliers to do better work.

Continuous improvement

The third principle of TQM is continuous improvement. You can never be satisfied with the method used, because there always can be improvements. Certainly, the competition is improving, so it is very necessary to strive to keep ahead of the game.

Working smarter, not harder

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Some companies have tried to improve by making employees work harder. This may be counter-productive, especially if the process itself is flawed. For example, trying to increase worker output on a defective machine may result in more defective parts.

Examining the source of problems and delays and then improving them is what is needed. Often the process has bottlenecks that are the real cause of the problem. These must be removed.

Worker suggestions

Workers are often a source of continuous improvements. They can provide suggestions on how to improve a process and eliminate waste or unnecessary work.

Quality methods

There are also many quality methods, such as just-in-time production, variability reduction, and poka-yoke that can improve processes and reduce waste.

In conclusion

The principles of Total Quality Management are to seek to satisfy the external customer with **quality goods and services**, as well as your company internal customers; to satisfy your external and internal suppliers; and to continuously improve processes by working smarter and using special quality methods.

TQM Requirements

The common elements of a successful shift to TQM are:

- a) Top Management commitment / leadership.
- b) Shared Values - Policy Deployment.
- c) Line Management ownership.
- d) Cascade training in TQM - compulsory.
- e) Widespread use of teams / councils / committees.
- f) Employee involvement / empowerment.
- g) Recognition and celebration.
- h) Voice of the customer.
- i) Challenging quantified goals - benchmarking.
- j) Focus on processes / improvement plans.
- k) Specific incorporation in strategic planning.

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l) Supported in all Management appraisal.

TQM Principles

The 5 Key principles of our TQM initiative are:

Management Commitment

- a) Plan (drive, direct)
- b) Do (deploy, support, participate)
- c) Check (review)
- d) Act (recognize, communicate, revise)

Employee Empowerment

- a) Training.
- b) Suggestion scheme.
- c) Measurement and recognition.
- d) Excellence teams.

Fact Based Decision Making

- a) SPC (statistical process control).
- b) DOE, FMEA.
- c) The 7 statistical tools.
- d) TOPS (FORD 8D - Team Oriented Problem Solving).

Continuous Improvement

- a) Systematic measurement and focus on CONQ.
- b) Excellence teams.
- c) Cross-functional process management.
- d) Attain, maintain, improve standards.

Customer Focus

- a) Supplier partnership.
- b) Service relationship with internal customers.
- c) Never compromise quality.
- d) Customer driven standards.