Management

PARTICIPATION: A MAJOR BUILDING BRICK OF STRONG TQM

Shalini Misra*

ABSTRACT

A successful TQM program may change the structure of an organization through conversion to a more team-oriented, worker-empowered approach; it changes the culture as the commitment to quality is institutionalized and organization members at all level ponder about quality in new ways. It also changes operations through improved processes, clarified instructions, modeling of behavior by top management, and training in new ways to accomplish work. The responsibility for improving quality is given to everyone from workers on the factory floor to senior executives. While quality control departments typically measure quality through inspections at the end of the manufacturing process, Total Quality Management requires that workers incorporate attention to quality at every step in the manufacturing process and that managers seek out root causes of variations. Employee participation goes hand-in-hand for the correct application of the TQM techniques.

Keywords: Employee Empowerment, Natural work teams (NWTs), Problem solving teams (PSTs),Quality Circles, Quality improvement teams or excellence teams (QITs), TQM, TQM model.

INTRODUCTION

Total Quality Management (TQM) is a management approach that originated in the 1950s and has steadily become more popular since the early 1980s. Total quality is a description of the culture, attitude and organization of a company that strives to provide customers with products and services that satisfy their needs. The culture requires quality in all aspects of the company's operations, with processes being done right the first time and defects and waste eradicated from operations.

TQM is an organisational cultural commitment to satisfy customers through the use of an integrated system of tools, techniques, and training. TQM involves the continuous improvement of organisational processes, resulting in high-quality products and services. TQM is the way of managing for the future, and is far wider in its application than just assuring product or service quality – it is a way of managing people and business processes to ensure complete customer satisfaction at every stage, internally and externally. TQM, combined with effective leadership, results in an organisation doing the right things right, first time.

---

*Shalini Misra is a Research Scholar at Mewar University, Chittorgarh, Rajasthan.

Figure. 1
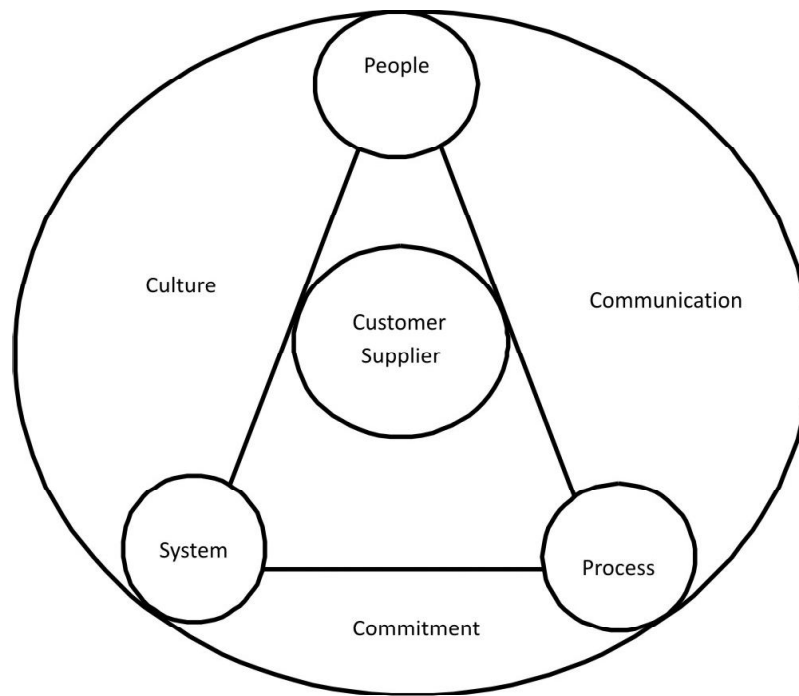
Source : www.dti.gov.uk/quality/tqm

Effective leadership, results in an organisation doing the right things right, first time.

The core of TQM is the customer-supplier interfaces, both externally and internally, and at each interface lie a number of processes. This core must be surrounded by commitment to quality, communication of the quality message, and recognition of the need to change the culture of the organisation to create total quality. These are the foundations of TQM, and they are supported by the key management functions of people, processes and systems in the organisation. The figure above explains this concept well.

In a TQM effort, all members of an organization participate in improving processes, products, services, and the culture in which they work. The methods for implementing this approach come from the teachings of such quality leaders as Philip B. Crosby, W. Edwards Deming, Armand V. Feigenbaum, Kaoru Ishikawa, and Joseph M. Juran

Quality Circles are the work group that meets to discuss ways to improve quality and solve production problems to accomplish TQM. Karou Ishikawa of Japan is recognized for contributing to the emergence of quality circles, where workers meet to discuss suggestions for improvements. His idea of quality circle promotes cooperative approach to quality. Many American companies initiated quality circles with hopes of emulating Japanese manufacturing success; they failed to understand, however, that much of the Japanese success with quality circles occurred because managers learned over a time to take the workers' suggestions seriously and to allow them to be implemented.

THE TQM MODEL

The simplest model of TQM is shown in this TQM Diagram 1. The model begins with understanding customer needs. TQM organizations have processes that continuously collect, analyze, and act on customer information. Activities are often extended to understanding competitor's customers. Developing an intimate

understanding of customer needs allows TQM organizations to predict future customer behavior. TQM organizations integrate customer knowledge with other information and use the planning process to orchestrate action throughout the organization to manage day to day activities and achieve future goals. Plans are reviewed at periodic intervals and adjusted as necessary. The planning process is the glue that holds together all TQM activity.

The final element of the TQM model is total participation. TQM organizations understand that all work is performed through people. This begins with leadership. In TQM organizations, top management takes personal responsibility for implementing, nurturing, and refining all TQM activities. They make sure people are properly trained, capable, and actively participate in achieving organizational success. Management and employees work together to create an empowered environment where people are valued.

Diagram 1
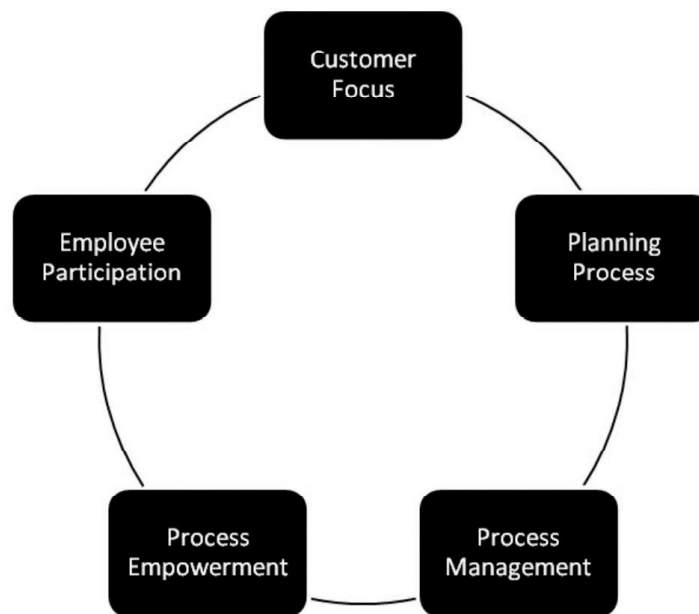
PARTICIPATION AND TQM

- Having the support of attention of senior management remains a necessary condition for making TQM work in an organization, but without empowered employees it won't go very far. Employee Empowerment stands for a substantial change that businesses are implementing. It means letting employees make decisions at all levels of an organization without asking for approval from managers. The idea is quite simple: people, who actually do a job, whether it is running a complex machine or providing a simple service, are in the best position to learn how to do that job the best way. Therefore, when there is a chance to improve the job or the systems of which a job is apart, people should make those improvements without asking for permission. All employees participate in working toward common goals. Total employee commitment can only be obtained after fear has been driven from the workplace, when empowerment has occurred, and management has provided the proper environment. High-performance work systems integrate continuous improvement efforts with normal business operations. Self-managed work teams are one form of empowerment. This is how participation does a great job towards TQM.

- Main elements of TQM are communication, recognition, participation, integrity and ethics of which participation is one of the most important elements of TQM. It is said to be the major building brick of an effective TQM. Employee participation includes training, teamwork and leadership.

- Training – Training is very important for employees to be highly productive. Supervisors are solely responsible for implementing TQM within their departments, and teaching their employees the philosophies of TQM. Training that employees require are interpersonal skills, the ability to function within teams, problem solving, decision making, job management performance analysis and improvement, business economics and technical skills. During the creation and formation of TQM, employees are trained so that they can become effective employees for the company.

- Teamwork – To become successful in business, teamwork is also a key element of TQM. With the use of teams, the business will receive quicker and better solutions to problems. Teams also provide more permanent improvements in processes and operations. In teams, people feel more comfortable bringing up problems that may occur, and can get help from other workers to find a solution and put into place. There are three types of teams that TQM organizations adopt:

A. Quality Improvement Teams or Excellence Teams (QITs) – These are temporary teams with the purpose of dealing with specific problems that often recur. These teams are set up for period of three to twelve months.

B. Problem Solving Teams (PSTs) – These are temporary teams to solve certain problems and also to identify and overcome causes of problems. These generally last from one week to three months.

C. Natural Work Teams (NWTs) – These teams consist of small groups of skilled workers who share tasks and responsibilities. These teams use concepts such as employee involvement teams, self-managing teams and quality circles. These teams generally work for one to two hours a week.

Leadership – It is possibly the most important element in TQM. It appears everywhere in organization. Leadership in TQM requires the manager to provide an inspiring vision, make strategic directions that are understood by all and to instill values that guide subordinates. For TQM to be successful in the business, the supervisor must be committed in leading his employees. A supervisor must understand TQM, believe in it and then demonstrate their belief and commitment through their daily practices of TQM. The supervisor makes sure that strategies, philosophies, values and goals are transmitted down throughout the organization to provide focus, clarity and direction. A key point is that TQM has to be introduced and led by top management. Commitment and personal involvement is required from top management in creating and deploying clear quality values and goals consistent with the objectives of the company and in creating and deploying well defined systems, methods and performance measures for achieving those goals.

BARRIERS OF TQM

To be able to become a total quality organisation, some of the bad practices must be recognised and corrected. These may include:

- Leaders not giving clear direction
- Not understanding, or ignoring competitive positioning
- Each department working only for itself
- Trying to control people through systems
- Confusing quality with grade
- Accepting that a level of defects or errors is inevitable
- Fire fighting, reactive behaviour
- "It's not my problem" shirking attitude

CONCLUSION

Total quality management can be summarized as a management system for a customer-focused organization that involves all employees in continual improvement. It uses strategy, data, and effective communications to integrate the quality discipline into the culture and activities of the organization. We should appreciate the fact that these elements are key in ensuring the success of TQM in an organization and that the supervisor is a huge part in developing these elements in the work place. Without these elements, the business entities cannot be successful TQM implementers. It is very clear from the above discussion that TQM without involving integrity, ethics and trust would be a great remiss, and in fact it would be incomplete. Training is the key by which the organization creates a TQM environment. Leadership and teamwork go hand in hand. Lack of communication between departments, supervisors and employees create a burden on the whole TQM process. One must encourage employees through granting due recognition for their contribution in the overall completion of given task.

REFERENCES

1. Bartlett, C. A., and S. Ghoshal(1990). "Matrix Management: Not a Structure, a Frame of Mind." Harvard Business Review 68, No. 4 (July-August 1990): 138-145.

2. Bartlett, Christopher A., and S. Ghoshal(1987). "Managing Across Borders: New Strategic Requirements." MIT Sloan Management Review 28, no. 4 (summer 1987): 7-17. (Also in The History of Management Thought, edited by Peter J. Buckley, Ashgate Publishing, 2002.)

3. Case, John (1998). The Open-Book Experience: Lessons from Over 100 Companies Who Successfully Transformed Themselves. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

4. Collins, Denis(1996). How and Why Participatory Management Improves a Company's Social Performance: Four Gainsharing Case Studies. Business and Society 35(2):176-210

5. Drehmer, David E., James A. Belohlav, and Ray W. Coye (2000). An Exploration of Employee Participation Using a Scaling Approach. Group and Organization Management

6. Elhance, D.N. and R.D. Agaarwal(1975). Future Organisations.

7. Ghoshal, S., and C. A. Bartlett(1994). "Linking Organizational Context and Managerial Action: The Dimensions of Quality Management." Strategic Management Journal (Summer 1994).

8. Goll, Irene, and Nancy Brown Johnson (1996). The Role of Top Management Demographic Characteristics in Employee Participation Programs. International Journal of Management.

9. Hower, Ralph H., and Charles Orth. (1963). Managers and Scientists. Boston:Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration.

10. Likert, Rensis. (1969). Supervision. In The R&D Game. David Allison (ed.). Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, pp.161-181.

11. Ouchi, W. (1981). Theory Z: How American Business Can Meet the Japanese Challenge. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

12. Stoner, Freeman and Gilbert Jr.(2003). Management, VI edition, Eastern Economy Edition.

WEBSITES

1. http://www.isixsigma.com/methodology/total-quality-management-tqm/eight-elements-tqm/

2. http://www.slideshare.net/shamsherkhan/8-elements-0f-tqm

3. http://www.johnstark.com/fwtqm.html