

Article

Process Control: The Forgotten TQM Component

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The training world is alive with change and new ideas focusing on quality. Is TQM dying on the vine? Unfortunately, a large number of businesses that have implemented TQM programs have not maintained all of the necessary components. They have allowed sales and marketing to illustrate the philosophy with banners and slogans, without providing operational support to implement the systems.



With new emerging technologies such as ISO 9000 taking hold, corporate leaders are once again focusing on standardization and measurement that lead back to the foundation of TQM.

Managers are faced with tight budgets, less staff and stringent deadlines. Leaders have to implement standards, procedures, controls, evaluations and measurements in order to plan effectively.

Quality process reengineering has to render a zero-defect system delivering 100 percent effectiveness in service and the production of goods.

Take a look at what doing it right 99.9 percent of the time could lead to in the United States today:

- One hour of unsafe drinking water per month
 - Two unsafe landings at O'Hare airport every day
 - 16,000 lost pieces of mail per hour
 - 20,000 incorrect drug prescriptions per year
 - 500 incorrect surgical procedures performed each week
 - 50 newborn babies dropped by doctors at birth each day
 - 22,000 checks deducted from the wrong accounts each hour
- (Excerpted from *Root Cause Analysis*, by Paul E. Wilson)

It is clear the only acceptable target is zero-defect quality, 100 percent of the time.

This is a lofty goal, but attainable through the implementation of an easy to understand process control system. A system that management can design is TQM friendly, and easy to install.

The philosophy is based on the merger of two proven concepts: TQM (Total Quality Management) and HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point). HACCP was developed by the Pillsbury Company in the early 1960's for the space program as a process control system for safe food. Merging these two concepts renders a systematic process control for application in manufacturing, service, project management, etc.

Before you can implement the mechanics of the system it is necessary to establish objectives.

Developing the following thoughts and actions enables you to reengineer your quality approach:

- Define Quality and Commitment
- Develop a quality mindset through the eyes of your customers
- Organize quality teams
- Design quality models and flow charts

A properly implemented quality system will enable you to:

- Identify potential process failure risks and control points
- Establish corrective action at control points
- Monitor procedures
- Provide associates with corrective actions

The elements of the quality program are:

- Needs assessment
- Control point identification
- Development of quality standards and measurement tools
- Control point monitoring procedures
- Establishment of modifying actions for unacceptable performance
- Effective and efficient record keeping process
- Procedures to verify program effectiveness

Quality concepts apply to all stages of a process and when you come right down to it, all stages of your everyday life. Everyone uses these tools in some way every day. Quality concepts developed through this type of system are easy to understand resource management techniques.

Quality commitment has to be more than a slogan; it has to be a system for quality. It is not a product standard. It is a quality-based system that focuses on process control. At the same time, it initiates customer-focused thinking and provides data for continuous process improvement.

This philosophy is not a new twist on TQM, or another fad. It is a proven and time-tested methodology that is being revitalized by businesses taking a proactive look at quality issues. The system can be applied to a manufacturing process or service-related task.

It is time to get back to basics. Give your customers what they want: quality products and service. A quality-based process control system makes sense. Believe in it, implement it and know your bottom line will benefit from it!