

Article

TQM: It's Alive

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I stand against the belief of some modern day management consultants who have unemotionally left Total Quality Management to die. The weak-hearted who have jumped on and off the TQM bandwagon bring truth to the common belief that TQM is nothing more than a modern, often complicated, high tech way to transfer money to consultants. The deserters of TQM are opportunists who flee toward trends, adding power to their cause absent of personal commitment.



Corporations influenced by this knee-jerk reaction have exposed themselves to unnecessary change and internal disruption. TQM flag-wavers, as I like to call them, fueled by Madison Avenue marketing gurus, comprise the large percentage of corporations that failed in their TQM efforts.

Quality sells. Unfortunately, products and services that customers actually receive are often provided by those who hold a total disregard for quality. On-hold messages, signs, slogans, advertisements, and other propaganda scattered across the business plains in the late 1980's represented the beginning of the end for TQM as Dr. Deming meant it to be.

Dr. W. Edwards Deming, known to many quality and management practitioners as the father of Total Quality, said, "Americans still care about quality. The country is full of intelligent, courageous people who could change...if they only knew how."

For those of you who stand and fight for the true meaning of TQM, I applaud your valiant effort. Success of a Total Quality program relies on top-to-bottom support and the commitment to optimize and enhance existing technology. Your vision must embrace the customer; and your mission should pave the road you travel along. Total Quality is a continuous journey by which your company, personal development and customer satisfaction will be enhanced to levels of competency you never thought to be possible.

Dr. Deming's message to management is simple: "The prevailing system of management is ruining us. The prevailing system focuses on short term thinking, ranking, merit systems, and management by results and quotas."

In other words, blow apart the paradigm that represents security and structure. The successful business preparing to move aggressively into the 21st century will be one that empowers employees to participate as entrepreneurs and enlists their ideas to improve products, services and quality continuously. TQM also has to change with the times; it is about change. New technologies such as HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) and ISO 9000 have a place in today's global market. If they are properly implemented as part of a Total Quality initiative, these components work together to create a customer-driven focus.

Is this radical new thinking designed by a reengineering specialist? No, it is the fabric of true Total Quality Management.

Total Quality Management does not mean measurement of quality against the end product. Instead, TQM concepts implemented during a process will reduce the need for end product testing. In essence, this will reduce cost. It is less expensive and more efficient to correct a problem at the root cause than it is to fix or replace the finished product. This applies to both services and manufactured goods.

Deming's System of Profound Knowledge encompasses the voice of the customer and the voice of the process.

Keeping in mind we are all customers to one another, a constant stream of strategically planned inputs will render superior service, products and associates. The transformation between input and output is programmed with data and guidelines to produce continuous improvement and consistency.

It is difficult to pay tribute to such a global belief. As business leaders, managers and trainers, we should all apply quality concepts to our personal behavior. As our personal standards migrate into our professional decisions, the harmony will create a quality-driven achiever.

And for those that think TQM is dying on the vine, keep in mind: It is the application of Profound Knowledge that can turn grapes into fine wine.

For more information regarding this topic we can be contacted via phone or e-mail at info@amsconsulting.com