

TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT *TQM*

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Introduction

There are many approaches in the business domain in order to achieve and exceed the quality expectations of the clients.

For this, most companies integrate all quality-related processes and functions together and control it from a central point.

As the name suggests, Total Quality Management takes everything related to quality into consideration, including the company processes, process outcomes *usually products or services* and employees.

The Origin

The origin of the TQM goes back to the time of the First World War. During the World War I, there have been a number of quality assurance initiatives taken place due to the large-scale manufacturing required for war efforts.

The military fronts could not afford poor quality products and suffered heavy losses due to the poor quality. Therefore, different stakeholders of the war initiated efforts to enhance the manufacturing quality.

First of all, quality inspectors were introduced to the assembly lines in order to inspect the quality. Products below certain quality standard were sent back for fixing.

Even after World War I ended, the practice of using quality inspectors continued in manufacturing plants. By this time, quality inspectors had more time in their hands to perform their job.

Therefore, they came up with different ideas of assuring the quality. These efforts led to the origin of Statistical Quality Control *SQC*. Sampling was used in this method for quality control.

As a result, quality assurance and quality control cost reduced, as inspection of every production item was need in this approach.

During the post World War II era, Japanese manufacturers produced poor quality products. As a result of this, Japanese government invited Dr. Deming to train Japanese engineers in quality assurance processes.

By 1950, quality control and quality assurance were core components of Japanese manufacturing processes and employees of all levels within the company adopted these quality processes.

By 1970s, the idea of total quality started surfacing. In this approach, all the employees *from CEO to the lowest level* were supposed to take responsibility of implementing quality processes for their respective work areas.

In addition, it was their responsibility to quality control, their own work.

Basic Principles of TQM

In TQM, the processes and initiatives that produce products or services are thoroughly managed. By this way of managing, process variations are minimized, so the end product or the service will have a predictable quality level.

Following are the key principles used in TQM:

- **Top management** - The upper management is the driving force behind TQM. The upper management bears the responsibility of creating an environment to rollout TQM concepts and practices.
- **Training needs** - When a TQM rollout is due, all the employees of the company need to go through a proper cycle of training. Once the TQM implementation starts, the employees

should go through regular trainings and certification process.

- **Customer orientation** - The quality improvements should ultimately target improving the customer satisfaction. For this, the company can conduct surveys and feedback forums for gathering customer satisfaction and feedback information.
- **Involvement of employees** - Pro-activeness of employees is the main contribution from the staff. The TQM environment should make sure that the employees who are proactive are rewarded appropriately.
- **Techniques and tools** - Use of techniques and tools suitable for the company is one of the main factors of TQM.
- **Corporate culture** - The corporate culture should be such that it facilitates the employees with the tools and techniques where the employees can work towards achieving higher quality.
- **Continues improvements** - TQM implementation is not a one time exercise. As long as the company practices TQM, the TQM process should be improved continuously.

The Cost

Some companies are under the impression that the cost of TQM is higher than the benefits it offers. This might be true for the companies in small scale, trying to do everything that comes under TQM.

According to a number of industrial researches, the total cost of poor quality for a company always exceeds the cost of implementing TQM.

In addition, there is a hidden cost for the companies with poor quality products such as handling customer complaints, re-shipping, and the overall brand name damage.

Conclusion

Total Quality Management is practiced by many business organizations around the world. It is a proven method for implementing a quality conscious culture across all the vertical and horizontal layers of the company.

Although there are many benefits, one should take the cost into the account when implementing TQM.

For small-scale companies, the cost could be higher than the short and mid term benefits.

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