

Lesson 4

Leadership of Quality

Introduction

The effective implementation of phase one requires both individual and team based leadership. Individual leadership begins with the top leader and extends out to other key individuals in the command. **Top leader commitment and active support is essential for beginning and sustaining TQL within an organization.** With top leadership support, the organization can overcome many obstacles and begin to experience success through **improved mission performance.**

Improving mission performance is a large and complex undertaking that can benefit greatly from the participation of “key” leaders within the organization. Those leaders are usually formed into a team called an Executive Steering Committee (ESC). The role of the ESC is to work with the top leader (normally the team’s leader) on managing the organizational change process. The ESC and top leader are the first and perhaps the most important members of the “critical mass.” Lesson three begins the discussion of development of the critical mass with an emphasis on this leadership team. The information can be used by the TQL coordinator to help educate these leaders, and assist them in their TQL implementation activities.

Objectives

Upon completion of this lesson, the student will be able to:

- **Describe the role of the top leader in implementing TQL.**
- **Describe the role of the ESC in leading process management activities.**
- **Describe the actions the leaders take to demonstrate commitment to TQL.**
- **Describe methods to enhance commitment.**

“The more profound, comprehensive and widespread the proposed change, the more absolute is the need for the deep understanding and active leadership by the top managers. The transformation to a quality organization is such a change.”

Scholtes/Hacquebord *A Practical Approach to Quality* 1987.

“A leader paves the way for change.”

M. DePree *Leadership Jazz*

Roles And Responsibilities In Leading Quality

First and foremost the top leader has the primary responsibility to improve mission performance. Initiating and sustaining a **quality** effort is the job of the top leader and that responsibility cannot be delegated. Moving the organization into and through phase one is hard work. When the top leader is “out in front” demonstrating a quality-focused approach to achieving the mission, other members of the organization are sure to follow. The main focus of leadership in a quality organization is to constantly work to improve the organization’s systems, processes, products and services that are essential to mission performance. These responsibilities were identified in research conducted in the DoN and lessons learned from public and private sector organizations. Figure 4.1, addresses specific activities which must be accomplished by the leadership team.

Leadership Actions for Leading Process Management	I M P R O V E	Develop Critical Mass	Educate and train the Top Leader Select and train the ESC Select and train the TQL Coordinator Create felt need
	M I S S I O N	Initiate Process Management Efforts	Create a quality environment Clarify mission & quality philosophy Identify significant processes Charter/ train quality improvement teams Establish practice of command-wide process management Provide resources Develop implementation plan
	P E R F O R M A N C E	Support And Extend Process Management Efforts	Plan for re-investment of resources Identify and remove impediments Monitor and assess progress Act on recommendations Extend education / process management

Figure 4.1 Leadership Actions for Process Management

Improve Mission Performance

The primary responsibility of any organization's leadership is to improve mission performance. **Using quality as the principal focus**, the top leaders work to optimize the effectiveness of their organization. They must work to constantly improve the systems, processes, products, and services vital to mission accomplishment.

Develop The Critical Mass

Because a quality transformation cannot be achieved alone, **developing the critical mass** in your command is the first important area in TQL implementation.

Critical mass for quality improvement is achieved when an irreversible change in movement towards transformation has been achieved. **It is dependent upon those people within an organization who possess sufficient knowledge, power, and leadership to initiate and sustain a cultural change.**

Development of a critical mass involves education and training in the concepts of TQL. This, along with planning and executing quality-focused activities, is the essence of the successful practice of process management. Some of the specific activities required for the development of the critical mass follow:

- **Educate and train the Top Leader**

The first step in organizational change is education. By learning about the benefits of a quality-focused organization, and the necessity for applying TQL principles, methods and tools, the top leaders prepare to implement TQL within their organization. The top leaders should constantly strive to acquire knowledge of how their organization can improve and use that knowledge to guide process management efforts.

Specific training for the top leader and other organizational members is discussed in lesson 3. One point must be made here; ***In the most successful organizations the top leader learns before all others, and that learning continues.*** This is especially necessary because TQL implementation is *top down*.

- **Select and train the Executive Steering Committee.**

The selection of the members for the ESC is something to which the top leader should give a great deal of thought. If they have not yet been selected, the TQL coordinator (if already identified) can advise the top leader on selection criteria. Some recommended criteria is included at the end of this lesson.

Note--The Executive Steering Committee should not be considered another form of a department head meeting. It has the unique responsibility for leading process management in the organization. The members of the ESC will usually carry on TQL efforts in the organization after the current leader transfers. **They will be the team in the organization with the greatest responsibility for "sustaining" the TQL effort.** Much attention to their selection and training is required.

- **Select and train the TQL Coordinator.**

The TQL coordinator is responsible for advising the top leader and the ESC in implementing process management activities within their organization. The primary role is to function as an internal consultant providing education and training, acting as a sounding board, and assisting the leadership team in planning and executing implementation efforts. Selection criteria for the TQL coordinator is in Lesson 5.

- **Create a felt need.**

After the Top Leader, the ESC, and the TQL coordinator have been selected and trained, there should be some effort made to create felt need to pursue improvement efforts. Felt need begins in the leadership group, and like a rock thrown into a pond, spreads out into the organization. Some keys for creating felt need were provided in Lesson 1 (Change and Transformation) but those keys are only effective if the organizational leadership holds open and honest discussions. The leadership team **must** understand the importance of their efforts for the organization--and the nation--and agree to proceed. They should realize that their change efforts will upset the status quo and probably meet with resistance. Strategies should be planned for promoting command-wide felt need. Creating a shared sense of urgency and need will assist the process management efforts that will follow.

Initiate Process Management Efforts

An important premise for the DoN TQL implementation approach is that the quality transformation must be led from the top. There are a number of actions leaders must take to establish process management in their organizations. Initial process management efforts should be planned changes for the **technical** way in which work is accomplished. The plan should mandate the following critical actions;

- **Create a quality environment**

Leadership's behavior has a fundamental and perhaps the single greatest effect on the creation of an environment conducive to quality, since organizational members take their cues from the top leader. The leaders must take actions to lead the transformation while creating an environment which encourages, and recognizes quality improvement efforts. If the organizational environment is hostile to quality improvement, implementation efforts will die on the vine.

The ESC should ensure decisions concerning command climate are data based and that a climate for change exists by ensuring an assessment is conducted early in phase one. Periodic re-assessments will be required to track progress. There are several assessment instruments available to the leader and ESC for this purpose.

- **Clarify mission and quality philosophy**

In order to effectively “pave the way for change,” organizational leaders must focus the energy of the organization and describe the standards of conduct in the new approach. It is the unique responsibility of the leadership group to create a statement of the purpose or mission of the organization. This statement should provide the basis for much of the work in process management. These efforts will upset the status quo in the organizational climate and will place new requirements on how the organizational members interact with each other, and their customers and suppliers. Creation of a mission statement and a quality philosophy provide the required focus.

- **Identify significant processes**

The difficult task for leadership is to identify the processes that significantly contribute to mission accomplishment. This task is made easier if the mission statement has been developed.

- **Establish the practice of Command-Wide Process Management.**

The top leaders must personally study and apply the theories and concepts of TQL, and actively participate in process management efforts. Ideally, after the significant processes of the organization are standardized and stabilized, the ensuing process management efforts will spread in the organization focusing on non-mission significant processes which affect quality in daily work. However, these efforts are *subordinate* to and an *extension* of the primary significant process improvement efforts.

- **Charter and train Quality Improvement teams**

After the ESC, lead by the top leader, has revisited or rewritten its mission statement and identified its significant processes, it must expand its process management activities. The ESC may elect, for reasons of training, to run a pilot project. Pilot projects are initial process improvement efforts selected for a team to learn how to conduct and support process management efforts. When the ESC and their leader feel comfortable, it is then time to expand the critical mass by chartering the initial quality management boards (QMB) that will work on the significant processes of the organization. These teams when formed will also require training and support.

- **Provide resources**

The ESC has the responsibility of providing time, people, and funding to allow process management efforts to occur. **This is a strong positive indicator of commitment.** Early efforts at improving productivity in the DoN were less successful due to a lack of leadership support.

- **Develop an implementation plan**

The plan will provide a structured approach to implementing TQL and support the DoN two-phased implementation strategy. **It should only be developed following sufficient education of your ESC.** An education and training plan to achieve critical mass should be part of this implementation plan.

Support and Extend Process Management Efforts

The third major area of TQL implementation is to **support and extend process management efforts** to encourage continuous improvement and innovation, and produce better plans for present and future actions.

- **Plan for the reinvestment of resources.**

As processes are streamlined, and costs, scrap, waste and rework are reduced, the organization can reinvest those resources towards meeting or exceeding customers requirements. Those resources can be reinvested in areas such as training and innovation.

The ESC of the USS Halyburton reinvested \$40,000 saved by process improvement in an SRA to upgrade it's mess decks

The ESC of a Shore Intermediate Maintenance Facility (SIMA) reassigned personnel, identified as *in-excess* through process management efforts, to an other section of the organization.

- **Identify and remove impediments**

Proactive monitoring and action are required to identify and remove impediments that inhibit process management and change efforts. **A good guide for monitoring is Deming's 14 obligations of management.** The ESC and top leader should examine their performance on accomplishing all 14 points and take action when required.

- **Monitor and assess progress**

The top leader and ESC must embrace the concept of continuous improvement in their process management efforts. Using the implementation plan, climate assessments, and reports from teams and other sources, they should constantly monitor and assess their progress. **They should revise the implementation plan as necessary.**

- **Act on Quality Improvement team recommendations**

The top leader and ESC should act on recommendations of the quality improvement teams. In those cases when the scope of the change goes beyond the teams' control, the top leader and ESC should take action to support the team. It may even involve changing some command policies to remove barriers to implementation.

- **Extend education and process management efforts.**

Educate all command personnel in accordance with the DoN recommended approach discussed in Lesson 3.

Successful organizations have recognized that education is an investment for the future

"Management has two problems, the problems of today and the problems of tomorrow"
Deming, (DoN quality conference '93)

Identify additional customers, and other processes for improvement. Consider additional technologies or approaches such as benchmarking, re-engineering, government re-invention laboratory status etc.

As we have seen, knowledge of TQL principles, methods, and tools is a prerequisite for change. The top leader uses his/hers knowledge of TQL to take actions to change the organization. By leading organizational change, and by behaving in a manner consistent with the quality philosophy, the top leader influences the creation of a quality-focused organization.

Commitment of Leadership

To effectively accomplish change in any organization, a high and lasting level of commitment or compliance on the part of those in leadership positions is a must. There is absolutely nothing more critical to success. With strong commitment, the organization can weather almost any crisis and keep on plugging toward its eventual goal of transformation. Without it, the organization is likely to abandon the TQL philosophy the first time the going gets rough.

As operational requirements, directives from higher authority, and the routine inspection cycle bear down on the organization, leaders will be tempted to revert to the old ways of doing business that appeared successful in the past. Only by seeing committed leaders, focused on the future, will organizational members have the courage to *stay the course* and implement a real, rather than surface-only, TQL philosophy. This is not as easy as it sounds. The ability to identify what true commitment looks like, know the levels of commitment, and be able to determine appropriate actions to build or capitalize on varying levels is a critical skill for the coordinator. The following information is provided for those purposes.

What is commitment?

Webster's defines commitment as "*dedicated to a long-term course of action, as a pledge or promise to carry out some action or policy, or to give support to a policy.*" Leadership of quality requires a long-term dedication to learning and action. Without action, the dedication and learning is meaningless. Without long-term dedication, actions will be short-lived, and change temporary. What is clear is that through a dedicated effort at learning about and practicing quality through appropriate actions, commitment does grow and strengthen.

Commitment develops differently in different individuals. For some, it may develop slowly, after a great deal of thought or action. For others, proof is required. Commitment may be instantaneous, or it may grow over time as an individual becomes convinced that this is the right way to go. Commitment grows as the top leader becomes more involved in quality-focused efforts.

Why is commitment important?

Commitment of the top leader is important because the top leader is the individual with the positional authority to influence and lead the organization. The top leader's commitment provides the foundation for change. It generates enthusiasm and support at all levels in the organization. It provides the atmosphere and attitude necessary for the organization to experience success in its transformation efforts. Commitment is the most critical ingredient in the organization's implementation plan. With the commitment of the top leaders, the organization can begin to change and see long-lasting results.

In 1995 a DoN-wide survey found that statements of support by the leadership and senior leaders attending training were the two most important factors in the successful implementation of TQL. (Source: *TQL Assessment Survey: Summary of Pilot Test Data.*)

A leader's level of commitment has a significant impact on the other members of the organization. Without commitment, managers and the work force will perceive that the top leader is treating TQL as just another Department of the Navy program, paying it nothing more than lip service. Without top leader commitment, there will be no support, or resources for implementation efforts. Other members of the organization will lose faith, become disgruntled, and cease to take implementation efforts seriously.

A lack of commitment results in wasted resources, frustrated subordinates, and a high probability of failure to implement a truly effective quality philosophy. If the top leader and/or ESC is not committed, they will revert back to old methods of managing and conducting business, and eventually, quality efforts will fail.

What does commitment look like?

Commitment in leadership may be *recognized* through their words, attitudes, and actions. It is demonstrated to others by the actions the leaders takes to systematically implement TQL within their organization, and by the way those leaders interact with others.

Specific behaviors demonstrate commitment. For example, when briefed on a topic, the top leader and ESC members demonstrate commitment by requesting data that supports the conclusions and recommendations. Or, when bad news comes, the leaders demonstrate commitment by gathering data and taking action to improve the situation; instead of blaming someone else or "shooting the messenger." In short, by demonstrating a commitment to the quality philosophy, the top leadership encourage others to do the same.

A Continuum of Commitment

Although commitment cannot be measured precisely, it can be assessed. There are varying levels of commitment and compliance and each level normally has its own characteristic behaviors. (See Figure 4.2 below) Based upon a number of factors, the leadership-team members will demonstrate through their behavior where they are on the continuum.

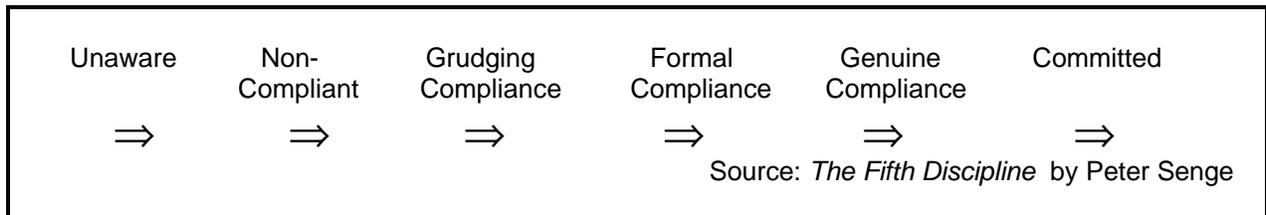


Figure 4.2 Continuum of Commitment

The TQL coordinator, the top leader and the members of the ESC can work together to get a feel for the level of commitment present. It is helpful for those in leadership positions to be able to assess their own level of commitment. They need to understand what actions they are comfortable with, and in which areas they need to do more work, and acquire more education, training, etc. By understanding the level of commitment of the top leader and the ESC, the TQL coordinator can determine what actions to take to strengthen top-level commitment.

Since TQL is complex, a number of different issues can be explored in an effort to assess the level of commitment present. It should be understood that most top leaders will be somewhere toward middle ground on many of these issues. It would be unrealistic to expect the top leader to wholeheartedly endorse each and every area after only a short introductory period. Usually, in the early stages of process management activities, they are more compliant than committed. A healthy amount of skepticism is not only expected, but is desirable in many cases. As further training and experience are gained much of this skepticism should fade. However, a certain amount of commitment is necessary to proceed.

One method of assessing the amount of commitment present is to examine the top leader's behaviors and attitudes to see if they reflect a consistency with a quality focus, or *business as usual*. The following questions provide a guide to the types of issues which reflect commitment. This list is by no means all inclusive. The top leader and TQL coordinator should feel free to develop their own questions to assess commitment, based on the stage of implementation activities within their organization. They may use the roles and responsibilities of leadership as a guide (Figure 4.1).

Provide suggestions for actions that can be taken to strengthen commitment in the following areas. Has the top leader:

Recognized a need for fundamental change?

Recognized a need to shift priorities within the organization?

Started to understand and apply the 14 Points?

Been willing to discuss TQL with other COs?

Delegated TQL responsibilities?

Established an ESC?

Allowed department heads and others to send substitutes to QMB meetings?

Selected pilot projects?

Allowed ESC meetings to be continually preempted?

Been willing to provide the necessary resources for implementing and improving quality?

Scheduled time for TQL efforts?

Been willing to kick off TQL training?

Been willing to send the TQL coordinator and others to additional training?

Continued efforts at self-education?

How the TQL Coordinator Can Enhance Leadership Commitment

The level of commitment on the part of the top leader and the ESC will determine how the TQL coordinator should guide implementation efforts. If the top leader has a low level or lacks commitment, the coordinator can attempt to develop and strengthen it. If the top leader is fully committed, then actions should be taken to build on that commitment.

- **Increase education and training**

A strategy for improving commitment is to increase education with more emphasis on training. This can take many forms, from one-on-one sessions with the top leader, to formal training outside the organization. The coordinator could provide the leaders with TQL related books and articles. Another method is to provide the leaders with opportunities to interact with other leaders who are knowledgeable in and committed to the new philosophy.

- **Success stories**

Another effective strategy for strengthening top leader commitment is to expose the top leader and the ESC members to successes in other organizations. Perhaps the most effective way to accomplish this is to arrange site visits to organizations showing some success in their TQL efforts. Case studies in management journals and popular literature are also effective for developing an understanding of how a quality philosophy can enhance an organization's performance.

- **Suggestions from other TQL coordinators**

In addition, the TQL coordinator should actively seek to share experiences with counterparts at other organizations that have successfully enhanced the commitment of their leadership teams. A combination of the strategies discussed above is probably the most effective means of enhancing the commitment of leadership. **Above all, the TQL coordinator should persevere.**

If There Is Commitment

When leadership enters the implementation process fully committed, the TQL coordinator may proceed in two directions--build on that commitment to advance implementation efforts, and encourage the top leader to remain patient to allow TQL implementation to proceed at its own pace without the natural tendency to rush for quick results.

- **Build on that commitment**

The TQL coordinator can build on leadership's commitment by assisting in implementation efforts. This may be accomplished in a number of ways, depending on the top leader's level of knowledge, and the organization's stage of implementation. The TQL coordinator may help build commitment by providing training sessions, helping with the establishment of an ESC, advising on pilot projects, suggesting tools to use to guide process management efforts etc.

- **Avoid the “Quick Results” syndrome**

The TQL coordinator must help the top leaders be patient and allow the process to work. The top leaders need to see the dangers that pushing for quick results brings. The top leaders should be advised to refrain from micro-managing the implementation process. In short, the TQL coordinator reminds the top leaders that real change takes time.

Selecting ESC Members

The following are some recommended criteria to be used by the organization’s top leader when establishing membership to the ESC. It is not all encompassing and should be modified as required.

- **Controllers of the resources**

The DoN operational definition of the ESC members is *controllers of the resources of the organization*. The reason why controllers are needed is that the leaders within the organization who control the resources are also in a position to influence actions essential to organization-wide (systemic) quality improvement. *Membership should not become a status symbol, a popularity contest, or a form of reward or punishment*. If the leader has good knowledge of significant processes than selecting *owners* of those processes is most appropriate.

The number of people who can be selected to be on the ESC will vary greatly from organization to organization depending upon the size and complexity of the organization. The top leaders should be guided by the *controllers of resources* principle.

- **Workable / Limited size of the group**

When selecting an ESC, the top leader and TQL coordinator should also keep the principles of group dynamics in mind. Since the ESC must speak with one voice and make decisions based upon a consensus of opinion, size is an important factor. Bigger is not always better; a very large group becomes unwieldy and is less likely to reach agreement or accomplish the required tasks in a timely manner. Additionally, because the ESC is learning during these early efforts the team could become greatly bogged down as some members struggle to learn.

Although no hard and fast rules have been developed, a general rule of thumb is that a maximum of ten members will be most effective. On the other hand, a group that is too small could be unaware of many of the problems, opportunities, and requirements of the organization. Therefore the top leader should always be guided by the *controllers of resources* principle.

Lesson 4

Leadership of Quality

Summary

- The primary responsibility of leadership during phase one activities is to improve mission performance.
- The Top Leader and the ESC lead the transformation, establish a quality environment, encourage process improvement and innovation.
- Leadership commitment is demonstrated through action and example.
- The TQL Coordinator works with the top leaders to build commitment.

Readings

- Bennis and Nanus “*Leaders*”, Harper and Row (1985)
- Deming, W. E. “*The New Economics*” MIT Publishing ((1993)
- Dockstader, S. (1990). “*Leadership and the Critical Mass Concept*”. Navy Personnel Research and Development Center, San Diego, CA, pp. 1-5.
- Kidder, P. “*Total Quality Leadership Assessment Survey: A Summary of Pilot Test Data*” TQLO Publication No. 95-02.
- Rinzler, R. “*The New Paradigm in Business*” G.P. Putnam and Sons (1993)
- Smith, D. “*Taking Charge of Change--10 Principles for Managing People and Performance*” Addison-Wesley (1995)
- Wren, D. “*The Evolution of Management Thought*” Wiley and Sons (1987)
- Walton, M. “*The Deming Management Method*” Perigee (1988)