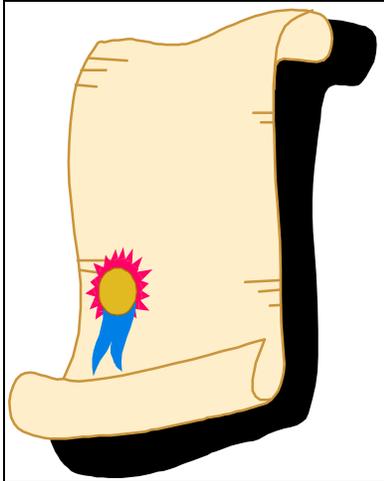


Lesson 9

The Quality Philosophy



Introduction

In the previous lesson you were asked to examine your mission. Actions that you take to improve mission performance will unavoidably begin to affect the organization's culture. For that reason, the ESC is encouraged to create and attach to their mission statement a Quality Philosophy, (sometimes referred to as an Organizational Creed) that reflects or specifies the basic beliefs, values, aspirations and philosophical priorities to which the ESC is committed. It should reflect how the organization wishes to be viewed externally and internally. The ESC should attempt to provide a distinctive and accurate picture of the organization's intent. **Without it, organizational members are left to their own interpretation of the proper actions.** The quality philosophy provides the foundation for transformation and TQL implementation. Like all foundations, the stronger it is, the stronger the results will be. A quality philosophy begins gradually and builds as understanding of quality develops. It defines what TQL will really mean for the organization and what emphasis it will receive within the normal functioning of the organization. This lesson discusses the development of a quality philosophy and its impact on phase one implementation efforts.

Objectives

Upon completing this lesson, the student will be able to:

- Describe why a quality philosophy is developed within an organization.
- Describe how to develop a quality philosophy.
- Describe the relationship of the quality philosophy to TQL implementation.

"I have found that being honest is the best technique. . .right up front, tell people what you're trying to accomplish, and what you're willing to sacrifice to accomplish it".

Lee Iacocca

"The special role that leaders play is to propose the initial answers that the young group has about how to operate internally and externally"

E. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, Second Edition Josey-Bass, 1992

A Quality Philosophy

A quality philosophy is a system of fundamental or motivating principles that form the basis for action or belief. It grows, changes, and develops as the organization progresses through the implementation process. It's reflected in the thoughts, actions, and attitudes taken by the organization as it conducts its daily business, and implementation efforts. It plays a key role in beginning to focus the organization on its core mission related processes, leads to long-term strategic thinking, and sets the first foundations for the transformation of the organization to a quality environment.

- **Reflects the thinking of top leaders**

The quality philosophy reflects the thinking of the top leaders on how they view the organization and its future objectives. As we discussed in Lesson 1, change of the magnitude envisioned for Total Quality Leadership, is a significant cause of anxiety in the culture of the organization. The creation of a statement of philosophy or creed by leadership provides positive psychological safety that can overcome much of that anxiety.

Organizational members get a clearer sense of “what is now expected” and encouragement in statements from leadership. Especially statements that describe how the organization intends to approach TQL implementation, and areas of emphasis in the organization. They lay the groundwork for the development of goals and strategies that will articulate the overriding philosophy of the command.

- **Reflects the values of top leaders**

“Philosophy” has been defined by Webster’s dictionary as “a critical examination of the grounds for fundamental beliefs.” A philosophy in which the central focus is quality requires organizational leaders to re-examine long-held ideas about how the organization is managed and led, how its systems operate, how products and services are produced, and how its people are treated. Some of the beliefs examined will be found to be quite valid, others will need to be changed in light of a new approach centered around quality. This is the time when the leaders can bring the true values of society into the organization. The level of understanding and commitment gained as they define how a value would be identified behaviorally, will help define what they can mean for the organization of the future. As top leaders truly understand and become committed, these values will become the driving force in the organization’s future as attitudes are developed and altered.

- **Becomes stronger over time**

Deciding to adopt a quality philosophy is the underpinning of the entire implementation process. The ESC will use available resources such as lessons learned from pilot projects to continuously reinforce the philosophy. Over time, the top leaders will begin to develop and refine the quality philosophy. Permeating all areas of implementation efforts, the quality philosophy drives the organizational transformation through its

impact of the day-to-day activities of the organization. Eventually, it will be reflected in the organization's long-term plans and be exported to other areas as well. In short, it will act as a vehicle to convert formal implementation efforts into the normal way of conducting business onboard the activity.

Benefits of a Quality Philosophy

- **Guides the creation of an enabling environment**

The quality philosophy will also guide the top leaders in creating an environment that enables, supports, and facilitates the pursuit of quality-focused improvements in the organization. It should always be in the forefront of any planning efforts undertaken by the command's leadership in support of implementation efforts.

- **Fosters cooperation**

Formulation and execution of improvement plans will be most successful in an environment that fosters cooperation among organizational members. Having shared values about what is important promotes these behaviors.

- **Supports the mission**

Improvement efforts will eventually fail without a consistent and well understood purpose. In a quality environment, leaders do not manage by results, rather by well guided mission objectives.

- **Helps create a "Learning Organization"**

In a quality environment leaders make an investment in the education and training of their people, constantly seeking change and improvement. Allowing organizational members to connect externally, learn about their customers and identify their role in meeting customer needs. Good quality philosophies enable forums for learning, innovation, and increased mastery.

- **Supports the establishment of command-wide process management**

The quality philosophy allows process management and improvement to be developed within the organization. It provides the impetus to start looking at significant processes and strategically important systems. It promotes the need to improve those processes, and provides the motivation necessary to allow the improvement process to work at the lowest levels of authority with minimal supervision.

The quality philosophy provides the necessary understanding to assist and nurture improvement team efforts. Adoption of a quality philosophy provides a basis from which all implementation efforts proceed. With a strong philosophy as a backdrop, the chances of successfully transforming the organizational are much better. Without such a philosophy, organizational efforts will struggle to make even a small difference in the effectiveness of the organization.

How to Develop a Quality Philosophy

In order to create the Quality Philosophy the following should have taken place;

- **ESC has gained knowledge of TQL**

The ESC should have knowledge of the Department of the Navy's approach to TQL, and have some familiarity with its tools and methods. In addition, they should be learning about, and applying, Dr. Deming's 14 points.

- **ESC has become committed to quality**

By engaging in training and developing a mission statement, the members of the ESC will be giving a great deal of thought to TQL. They should be discussing what it is, what they are going to do about it, and what implications their focus on quality will have for the organization. Their commitment to quality forms the basis for early TQL activities.

If both of these have occurred, the top leaders need to develop and personalize a statement that reflects their personal values, ideas, and concepts of quality. **Initially, the quality philosophy should be written but not published.** Because behavior does not change immediately with the development of a statement, it may take the ESC some time to get comfortable operating in accordance with their philosophy.

A major Navy Helicopter Squadron's ESC developed a quality philosophy but did not publish it for three months. During that time, they compared the decisions of the ESC against the statements of the quality philosophy. They learned and developed through this process. They then published the quality philosophy with the mission, and felt more capable of supporting both as a result of their learning.

In discussions of the philosophy and methods of TQL, the top leaders will examine their core values and basic assumptions of the organization. Through this process the top leaders strengthen their commitment to improving the quality of the environment and output of their organization, and to taking the actions required for organizational change. The top leaders cannot develop a quality philosophy without some understanding of the concepts and requirements a quality focus places on mission performance.

The Top Leaders Must Consider and Begin to Answer the Following Questions:

If information that provides the answer to any or all of these questions already exists (i.e. customer feedback forms, internal assessments, etc.) they should be discussed by the ESC prior to development of the quality philosophy.

- **What values should govern the way we do business?**

This is the time for the top leaders to create the new philosophy. Tradition has been the anchor that has held many good philosophies from going forward. People need to know what values will be embraced to guide the way things will be done. The challenge for the senior leaders will be to operationally define the values so they can be behaviorally recognized, and rewarded, in order to bring about the desired changes.

- **What does quality mean to this organization's customers?**

For some leaders, developing a quality philosophy may be a new concept. They may be more accustomed to the traditional system of management and feel comfortable installing a "management program" rather than developing an organizational philosophy. Developing a quality philosophy within an organization will begin with the idea that quality is the concept that should be drawing customers to that command, not because regulations say so. This emphasis should begin in the initial stage and continue over time. The top leaders then acquire additional education and training on the concepts and ideas behind a quality philosophy.

- **How does it change the way we do business?**

As the top leaders go about their daily routines, they need to look for ways to incorporate what they have learned into the organization. They should hold discussions with others to broaden their understanding. As top leaders look for practical examples of such concepts as quality by design rather than by inspection, they begin to view the organization differently. They think in terms of systems and processes, and look for root causes when problems occur. They consider the implications of the 14 Points and attempt to practice them to further refine ideas and concepts. Through **continuous learning and practice** the top leaders begin to develop the commitment required to see them through the transformation process.

Note: As the top leader and ESC expand their understanding, they need to avoid narrowing the TQL definition so much that they adopt a "program" mentality. **This tendency is inherent in the process.**

- **How do we want to be known by those that use our products/services?**

What is the reputation of your organization? Both present and potential customers attribute certain qualities to particular organizations. For example;

- ⇒ The fighter squadron that provides thorough, professional adversarial training to your pilots.
- ⇒ The ship that's known for its Naval Gunfire Support (NGFS) excellence, is the one most frequently requested by the Marines.
- ⇒ The Naval Supply Center that excels at delivering the right material, quickly.
- ⇒ The Personnel Support Detachment that provides superb customer service.

The quality philosophy ought to reflect your customers expectations. It should provide clear guidance for decision makers as to how they wish to be perceived by those they serve.

- **How do we want to be known by those within the boundaries of our own organization?**

Every organization needs to know its internal strengths and weaknesses. From this understanding and in consideration of the customer's expectations should grow a statement of *self concept*. Organizations often take on a personality of their own; "*People behave in a system in accordance with the way the system is structured*" is a popular quote that especially applies here. Much behavior in organizations is consistent with the members perception of what is expected even if it is inconsistent with their own values and beliefs. Most people prefer to provide excellent customer service, but organizational policies prevent them from doing so. **The company's self concept reflects its culture.** Organizational members need to know themselves as they are now, and work towards enhancing their excellence or creating anew.

When these questions have been examined, considered, and answered; the next step is to write a quality philosophy. The process is similar to the one used in developing a mission statement. The team should set about writing a statement that incorporates the ideas. If the planning group is large, the TQL coordinator can break them into two smaller teams, and assign each team to work on the groupings generated by a particular question, and generate a statement. When completed the team should combine the statements into one well rounded Quality Philosophy.

Methods for Communicating the Quality Philosophy

As the top leaders further develop and refine the quality philosophy, they will begin to see where fundamental changes are needed. They will need to formalize these ideas and communicate them throughout the organization.

- **Hold discussions**

The senior leaders should hold discussions with command personnel about their focus on quality. **An all-hands meeting would be a good method to brief personnel on where the organization is headed.** They will find themselves addressing many of the same questions they discussed during their development of the quality philosophy. The process of holding discussions is a critical influence tool and, if done well, builds commitment.

- **Write articles**

The senior leaders, with the help of the TQL coordinator, may want to write articles for the organization's newsletter or other publications. These articles should discuss what quality means to the organization, and what actions the leaders intend to take.

- **Walk the talk**

The greatest challenge will to follow their words. As we all know, the military environment is constantly changing, and situations will come up that will challenge the top leaders' commitment to their philosophy. They need to be aware that their people will be watching them. If their commitment is strong, the Quality Philosophy will guide their actions and the command will continue its commitment to achieving quality in its mission accomplishment.

Lesson 9

The Quality Philosophy

Summary

- The top leaders' initial ideas about quality should be formulated into a more comprehensive commitment to it.
- The quality philosophy forms the basis for actions and beliefs.
- The quality philosophy is communicated through actions, to the organization and is incorporated into implementation activities.

Readings

Collins, J.C. and Porras, J.I. "*Building Your Company's Vision*" HBR (Sep-Oct 96)

Pearce, John A. II *The Company Mission as a Strategic Tool* Sloan Management Review, Spring 1982

Pearce and Robinson *Strategic Management* 5th Edition 1994, Irwin Publishing