

TOTAL QUALITY

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SUMMARY: The objective of the present work is to show how quality has ceased of being a differential, to become a question of surviving survival for organizations. The most important aspects of Total Quality conception and coverage of its benefits were arisen. We also highlighted the Seven Pillars of Total Quality Management and its involvement with quality management, no more as a differential, but as part of the production and management process as a whole. Finally, the final considerations of the present study were added.

Keywords. Total quality. Quality management. Differential.

1 FOREWORDS

“Quality is primordially related to the processes by which the products or services are made. Well done processes result in final products and/or services which meet the clients expectations. Quality resides in what we do – as a matter of fact in - everything that we do – and not only in what lies as consequence of it” (ESPUNY apud LOBOS, 1991, p.14).

The origin of quality, according to Caravantes (1997), begins in the 18th and 19th centuries, when quality was understood as the production inspection made by the consumer and the reliability of producer's reputation. This tool was formally incorporated to industrial production as of the 20's, in order to impede that faulty products could reach the hands of the clients.

Due to this concern with quality, we can see that several tools were created along the time to enable a better use and understanding for quality, i.e., the organizations strove to study the quality issues beyond the dimensions reached by the processes, by means of Total Quality, much more comprehensive, which is dedicated to study the satisfaction of clients, both internal and external. In this way, the relations between different departments of an organization and the relations of the organization with the society as a whole are evaluated. (ESPUNY, 2007).

2 QUALITY CONCEPT

“Quality” is a public domain and common use word, so, according to Paladini (2004), we must take into consideration two fundamental aspects, for its technical definition: the definition proposed to quality shall not deny the intuitive notion that we may have about it; and, since the term is already part of the daily life of people, we shall not delimitate its meaning with precision.

Therefore, a large variety of concepts and definitions is available, in specialized literature about quality. Sartorelli (2003), reviewing this literature about Quality, presents some definitions, according to major authors:

Juran: “Quality consists in the product characteristics that meet the needs of the clients, promoting, in this way, satisfaction regarding to the product, i.e., its goodness-of-fit”.

Feigenbaum: “The composition of all the characteristics of the product or service (marketing, engineering, production and maintenance) by which the product or service in sue will meet the consumer expectations”.

Deming: “Quality can only be defined in terms of who evaluates it”.

3 TOTAL QUALITY CONTROL – TQC

Developed in Japan, after the Second World War, to create long time surviving organizations, and thus be able, based in the results, to detect and review bad results, looking for solutions for them.

The objectives of Total Quality Management are the following:

- Increased improvement of products and services;
- Waste elimination;
- Reduction of projects, production and servicing deadlines;
- Final consumer satisfaction;
- Improved integration of the personnel, promoting communication in the different sectors and between different hierarchical levels (vertical and horizontal communications).

4 THE SEVEN PILLARS OF TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT

The Seven Pillars were developed to guide the total quality control, i.e., cost, price, profit, deadline, stock and selling control, in order for the final product to be able to have the desired feedback.

The Seven Pillars are the following:

- Orientation
- Information
- Planning
- Organization
- Communication
- Motivation

- Leadership

According to Meire B. Viana (2010/06), these are the definitions for each one of the Seven Pillars:

Orientation – formal strategic positioning of the company, containing the directives of its business vision, permanent policies and macro-objectives.

Information – A system for data collection and information processing covering all the areas, to feed the decision making and managerial process, along the following pillars.

Planning – deployment of decision and strategic orientation, in terms of operational objectives, containing the description of the paths, means and deadlines for acquirement, as well as pertinent budgets and control instruments & processes.

Organization – mobilization of resources (natural, human, physical and financial) in order for the planning to be able to be performed with the maximum efficacy and efficiency.

Communication – information exchange and interpersonal / interdepartmental coordination, to assure the fluency of processes involving the participation of departments and people.

Motivation – provision of actions intended to stimulate processes of awareness, involvement and commitment, required in all levels.

Leadership – actuation, monitoring and control of all processes in course, and promotion of continuous and progressive qualification of all the people involved.

4.1 Development of the Seven Pillars

The Seven Pillars were developed to better direct the Total Quality Management. These tools were created in order that, all together, they can help to map the defects of products and services, finding the causes and correcting them in the process.

According to Mauricio Affonso dos Santos (April 2012), the achievement of such strategies is one of the major concerns of the companies, today. A lot of advancement was required in the corporate area, until the elaboration of a good strategic plan, defining clear objectives and goals, primarily with the adoption of the BSC (Balanced Scorecard) method by a large number of organizations. However, the majority of the companies finds serious difficulties, to implement the strategy and transform it in a management routine and put it in practice. There are innumerable reasons, such as: lack of time for implementation, prioritization of emergency problems, in detriment of strategic actions, pressure for immediate result, instead of long term goals, absence of human and financial resources to perform the planned actions, and professional unpreparedness to perform more strategic activities.

Analyzing this context, we propose a practical and objective work method, addressed to strategy execution by means of business processes management. This means to understand the required processes to reach the planned objectives and goals, define action plans to improve such processes, and continually follow-up the respective execution, besides reviewing the results in the light of relevant performance indicators.

Allied to these issues, five points are crucial to assure the success of the execution, by means of process management. The first one is prioritization, where work cycles are established along the year, and planned actions are divided, thus keeping a balanced allocation of human and financial resources, for respective execution. Next is collaboration, which aims to involve persons of different characteristics and skills, preferably by promoting group work meetings, to review the problems and define the actions to be performed.

The third point related to discipline, including the definition of work routines and its faithful accomplishment, such as, for example, by means of weekly meetings for action plans follow-up, and monthly meetings for results analysis. Another important issue (the fourth point) is the focus in the execution of defined actions, trying to change the minimum as possible what was already planned, and analyze if the processes are really improving and if strategies are been attained. The fifth aspect is related to the integration of actions, intended to structure a management work model, integrating strategies, projects and processes in a single issue, aimed to operational organizational management excellence.

Additionally to these points, two other topics related to people management are critical factors for implementation of the strategy and complementation of the Seven Pillars of efficient execution. One of them is the participation of the top management, which shall not only sponsor and support the activities, but also actively participate in the phases where it is involved, viewing the execution of the strategy as a big tool of business management. The best cases of success that we found are those where the main executive is closely connected to the execution of the actions.

The seventh and last relevant topic is connected to leadership engagement. The managers of strategic processes and projects are those who really perform the actions. So they must be technically qualified and motivated for the work, also by the creation of acknowledgement and rewarding tools, both for the efforts and results attained.

Aligned with the Management Excellence Model [Modelo de Excelência de Gestão® MEG] of Fundação Nacional da Qualidade (FNQ), we propose the prerequisites to assure that the elaborated strategies and plans can be performed by process management with high commitment of the company's leadership. Although it seems a complex task, the implementation of this work plan may be very simple, provided that all the aspects are aligned, respected and made part of the systemic view of the company.

5. CONCLUSION

TQM (Total Quality Management) is a philosophy, a way of thinking and working, concerned in meeting the needs and expectations of consumers. It tries to move the focus of quality of a purely operational activity, transforming it into a responsibility for the whole organization. Through TQM, Quality becomes a concern for all the people involved, in the company, also dedicating the efforts to quality costs reduction, specially costs with failures, and primarily focusing the continuous improvement process..

“In order for an organization to be truly efficient, each part of it, each department, activity, person and level shall suitably work together, because all persons and activities affect each other and are affected among themselves” (MULLEMANN, A OALKLAND, J LOCKYER, 1992, p.656).

Therefore, we consider that if everybody has conditions to impair the quality, everybody can also improve the quality, just by “not committing mistakes”. Partially, it’s because of this that the TQM philosophies put considerable emphasis in the contribution that the employees of the organization can give to quality. Understand their influence over the quality and accept their responsibility, in order to (at least) avoid mistakes can have an important effect over the quality levels.

However, through TQM, it is expected that the contribution of all the individuals of the organization can go beyond the commitment and the “non committing errors” philosophy. It is expected that individuals can contribute with something positive, in the way of performing their tasks, since everyone is capable of improving the way of executing his/her tasks and, in practical terms, helping other people in the organization to improve theirs. Consequently, to neglect the potential of individuals is to deny a powerful source of improvement, since quality in services is a continuous search.

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