

What Is a Quality Management System?

A quality management system is a management technique used to communicate to employees what is required to produce the desired quality of products and services and to influence employee actions to complete tasks according to the quality specifications.

What Purpose Does a Quality Management System Serve?

- Establishes a vision for the employees.
- Sets standards for employees.
- Builds motivation within the organisation.
- Sets goals for employees.
- Helps fight the resistance to change within organizations.
- Helps to direct the corporate culture.

CUSTOMERS' REQUIREMENTS OR 5 DIMENSIONS OF QUALITY

Customers always have FIVE questions in their mind while they go out to buy any product or service. They may also be called the FIVE dimensions of quality. The traditional view of quality is simply "Conformance to specification". However this is only a part of total quality. Quality involves all of the five dimensions for the customer to be satisfied. The measurement of quality will reflect each of these elements—Specification, Conformance, Reliability, Value and Delivery. Hence the FIVE questions are as follows;

1. What can I expect when I buy your product?

The specification of the product or service. Whether it is specified quantitatively about the product or service.

2. Is it what I expected?

The conformance to the specification whether the product or service actually conforms to the specifications laid down in literature & manual.

3. Does it continue to satisfy as I expected?

The reliability (or conformance through time) i.e. how long the product or service will be able to satisfy the customer.

4. How much do I have to pay?

The value for money aspect. The customer should not feel that he has been cheated and the value for his money has been ignored.

5. When can I have it?

Delivery aspect of the product. Any product or delivery must be made in time or otherwise this may result in lost business.

Quality Management Principles

To lead and operate an organization successfully, it is necessary to direct and control it in a systematic and transparent manner. Success can result from implementing and maintaining a management system that is designed to continually improve performance while addressing the needs of all interested parties. Managing an organization encompasses quality management amongst other management disciplines.

Eight quality management principles have been identified that can be used by top management in order to lead the organization towards improved performance.

a) Customer focus

Organizations depend on their customers and therefore should understand current and future customer needs, should meet customer requirements and strive to exceed customer expectations.

b) Leadership

Leaders establish unity of purpose and direction of the organization. They should create and maintain the internal environment in which people can become fully involved in achieving the organization's objectives.

c) Involvement of people

People at all levels are the essence of an organization and their full involvement enables their abilities to be used for the organization's benefit.

d) Process approach

A desired result is achieved more efficiently when activities and related resources are managed as a process.

e) System approach to management

Identifying, understanding and managing interrelated processes as a system contributes to the organization's effectiveness and efficiency in achieving its objectives.

f) Continual Improvement

Continual improvement of the organization's overall performance should be a permanent objective of the organization.

y) Factual approach to decision making

Effective decisions are based on the analysis of data and information.

h) Mutually beneficial supplier relationships

An organization and its suppliers are interdependent and a mutually beneficial relationship enhances the ability of both to create value.

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These eight quality management principles form the basis for the quality management system standards within the ISO 9000 family.

Role of top management within the quality management system

Through leadership and actions, top management can create an environment where people are fully involved and in which a quality management system can operate effectively. The quality management principles (see 0.2) can be used by top management as the basis of its role, which is as follows:

- a) to establish and maintain the quality policy and quality objectives of the organization;
- b) to promote the quality policy and quality objectives throughout the organization to increase awareness, motivation and involvement;
- c) to ensure focus on customer requirements throughout the organization;
- d) to ensure that appropriate processes are implemented to enable requirements of customers and other interested parties to be fulfilled and quality objectives to be achieved;
- e) to ensure that an effective and efficient quality management system is established, implemented and maintained to achieve these quality objectives;
- f) to ensure the availability of necessary resources;
- g) to review the quality management system periodically;
- h) to decide on actions regarding the quality policy and quality objectives;
- i) to decide on actions for improvement of the quality management system.

Total Quality Management (TQM)

TQM is a management approach in which quality is emphasized in every aspect of the business and organization. Its goals are aimed at long-term development of quality products and services. TQM breaks down every process or activity and emphasizes that each contributes or detracts from the quality and productivity of the organization as a whole.

Management's role in TQM is to develop a quality strategy that is flexible enough to be adapted to every department, aligned with the organizational business objectives, and based on customer and stakeholder needs. Once the strategy is defined, it must be the motivating organizational business objectives. Some degree of employee empowerment is also encompassed in the TQM strategy and usually involves both departmental and cross-functional teams to develop strategies to solve quality problems and make suggestions for improvement to be deployed and communicated for it to be effective at all levels of the organisation.

CORE CONCEPTS OF TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT

The foundation of the concept of “Total Quality Management” are as follows

Quality for Profit

Great deal of profit can be made by quality improvements in products and services, processes and people.

Right first time

At the heart of TQM is the conviction that it is possible to achieve defect free work most of the time. This assertion is phrased in various ways as right first time, working smarter on zero defects.

Total Customer Satisfaction

More profits can only be earned by satisfying customers’ needs and expectations. This can also be achieved by satisfying the FIVE dimensions of quality.

Continuous Improvement

After establishing a quality system, a continuous improvement can only lead an organization towards better products and services.

Management commitment

Commitment of management towards establishing the quality management system, setting its policies and goals and achieving it are the key points for success of TQM.

What benefits can be obtained by implementing TQM other than enhancing Quality?

Ans - The benefits that can be achieved from TQM other than enhancing Quality are –

- a) Increased Productivity
- b) Increased Profits
- c) Better environment in the workplace
- d) High morale of employees