ABSTRACT

Total Quality Management (TQM) has received worldwide attention and is being adopted in many industries, particularly in developed economies. TQM has evolved primarily because of the changes in the global economy and also because of demand in market forces. Although control of quality has been practiced in many industries for several years, the adoption of TQM as a major preoccupation of businesses worldwide is very recent. The traditional control methods being implemented in industries to ensure quality have not yielded the results that were expected of them. Furthermore, rapidly changing technology and customer expectations have already affected organizations worldwide and thus have promoted the need for taking a new look at quality management. In this study we intend to discuss how TQM can be adopted in organizations that are replacing existing quality control systems to promote competition and growth. Paper also deals with some TQM definitions and important principles of total quality management.

Keywords: TQM; Quality Management

INTRODUCTION

Total Quality Management (TQM) is a method by which management and employees can become involved in the continuous improvement of the production of goods and services. It is a combination of quality and management tools aimed at increasing business and reducing losses due to wasteful practices. It is a comprehensive and structured approach to organizational management that seeks to improve the quality of products and services through ongoing refinements in response to continuous feedback. TQM requirements may be defined separately for a particular organization or may be in adherence to established standards. Total Quality is a description of the culture, attitude and organization of a company that strives to provide customers with products and services that satisfy their needs. The culture requires quality in all aspects of the company’s operations, with processes being done right the first time and defects and waste eradicated from operations.

Quality is the need of hour, and the top management is paying proper attention to this interesting and stimulating subject. Good quality products mean customer satisfaction and long-term loyalty. All these things gravitated me to select this topic.

The total in TQM applies to the whole organisation. Therefore, unlike an ISO 9000 initiative which may be limited to the processes producing deliverable products, TQM applies to every activity in the organisation. Also, unlike ISO 9000, TQM covers the soft issues such as ethics, attitude and culture.

OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To understand the concepts of Quality; Quality Control; Quality Assurance: Total Quality Management;

2. To concentrate on continuous improvement employing participative management.
Definitions of Total Quality Management

1. A cost effective system for integrating the continuous quality improvement efforts of people at all levels in an organization to deliver products and services which ensure customer satisfaction.

2. TQM includes maximum focus on customers, their satisfaction, leadership in setting values, fulfilling the organizational mission leading to goals and continuous improvement.

3. The Chartered Quality Institute “TQM is a philosophy for managing an organisation in a way which enables it to meet stakeholder needs and expectations efficiently and effectively, without compromising ethical values.”

4. TQM (TQM) is a comprehensive and structured approach to organizational management that seeks to improve the quality of products and services through ongoing refinements in response to continuous feedback. TQM requirements may be defined separately for a particular organization or may be in adherence to established standards, such as the International Organization for Standardization's ISO 9000 series. TQM can be applied to any type of organization; it originated in the manufacturing sector and has since been adapted for use in almost every type of organization imaginable, including schools, highway maintenance, hotel management, and churches. As a current focus of e-business, TQM is based on quality management from the customer's point of view.

5. A core definition of total quality management (TQM) describes a management approach to long term success through customer satisfaction. In a TQM effort, all members of an organization participate in improving processes, products, services, and the culture in which they work.

Seven Important Principles of Total Quality Management as follows:

- Quality Can and Must Be Managed: Many companies have wallowed in a repetitive cycle of chaos and customer complaints. They believe that their operations are simply too large to effectively manage the level of quality. The first step in the TQM process, then, is to realize there is a problem and that it can be controlled.

- Processes, Not People, are the Problem: If your process is causing problems, it won’t matter how many times you hire new employees or how many training sessions you put them through. Correct the process and then train your people on these new procedures.

- Don’t Treat Symptoms, Look for the Cure: If you just patch over the underlying problems in the process, you will never be able to fully reach your potential. If, for example, your shipping department is falling behind, you may find that it is because of holdups in manufacturing. Go for the source to correct the problem.

- Every Employee is Responsible for Quality: Everyone in the company, from the workers on the line to the upper management, must realize that they have an important part to play in ensuring high levels of quality in their products and services. Everyone has a customer to delight, and they must all step up and take responsibility for them.

- Quality Must Be Measurable: A quality management system is only effective when you can quantify the results. You need to see how the process is implemented and if it is having the desired effect. This will help you set your goals for the future and ensure that every department is working toward the same result.

- Quality Improvements Must Be Continuous: Total Quality Management is not something that can be done once and then forgotten. It’s not a management “phase” that will end after a problem has been
corrected. Real improvements must occur frequently and continually in order to increase customer satisfaction and loyalty.

**Quality is a Long-Term Investment:** Quality management is not a quick fix. You can purchase QMS software that will help you get things started, but you should understand that real results won’t occur immediately. TQM is a long-term investment, and it is designed to help you find long-term success.

Before you start looking for any kind of quality management software, it is important to make sure you are capable of implementing these fundamental principles throughout the company. This kind of management style can be a huge culture change in some companies, and sometimes the shift can come with some growing pains, but if you build on a foundation of quality principles, you will be equipped to make this change and start working toward real long-term success.

Total quality management can be summarized as a management system for a customer focused organization that involves all employees in continual improvement.

**Customer Focus**

The first, and overriding, feature of TQM is the company’s focus on its customers. Quality is defined as meeting or exceeding customer expectations. The goal is to first identify and then meet customer needs. TQM recognizes that a perfectly produced product has little value if it is not what the customer wants. Therefore, we can say that quality is customer driven. However, it is not always easy to determine what the customer wants, because tastes and preferences change. Also, customer expectations often vary from one customer to the next. For example, in the auto industry trends change relatively quickly, from small cars to sports utility vehicles and back to small cars. The same is true in the retail industry, where styles and fashion are short lived. Companies need to continually gather information by means of focus groups, market surveys, and customer interviews in order to stay in tune with what customers want. They must always remember that they would not be in business if it were not for their customers.

**Employee Empowerment**

Part of the TQM philosophy is to empower all employees to seek out quality problems and correct them. With the old concept of quality, employees were afraid to identify problems for fear that they would be reprimanded. Often poor quality was passed on to someone else, in order to make it “someone else’s problem.” The new concept of quality, TQM, provides incentives for employees to identify quality problems. Employees are rewarded for uncovering quality problems, not punished. In TQM, the role of employees is very different from what it was in traditional systems. Workers are empowered to make decisions relative to quality in the production process. They are considered a vital element of the effort to achieve high quality. Their contributions are highly valued, and their suggestions are implemented. In order to perform this function, employees are given continual and extensive training in quality measurement tools.

**Continuous Improvement**

Another concept of the TQM philosophy is the focus on continuous improvement. Traditional systems operated on the assumption that once a company achieved a certain level of quality, it was successful and needed no further improvements. We tend to think of improvement in terms of plateaus that are to be achieved, such as passing a certification test or reducing the number of defects to a certain level. Traditionally, change for American managers involves large magnitudes, such as major organizational restructuring. The Japanese, on the other hand, believe that the best and most lasting changes come from gradual improvements. To use an analogy, they believe that it is better to take frequent small doses of medicine than to take one large dose. Continuous improvement, called kaizen by the Japanese, requires that the company continually strive to be better through learning and problem solving. Because we can never achieve perfection, we must always evaluate our performance and take measures to improve it. Now let’s look at two approaches that can help companies with continuous improvement.
CONCLUSION

TQM in an organization is defined by and supports the constant attainment of customer satisfaction through an integrated system of tools, techniques and training. TQM focuses on continuous improvement of organizational processes resulting in high quality products and services. The ability of an organization to adapt to change in the business environment to capture best practices and achieve and maintain competitive performance is also critical for TQM to be successful. Continuous improvement is a circular process that links the diagnostic, planning, implementation and evaluation phases.

Total quality management is the outcome of all activities that take place within an organization; that all functions and all employees have to participate in the improvement process; that organizations need both quality systems and a quality culture.

REFERENCES