

Quality Management

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On “the total quality approach to quality management” (Chapter 1), the authors give a clear-cut definition of quality and also explain the meaning of total quality approach. Their explanations are based on the writing of Crosby entitled “Crosby’s Fourteen Steps to Quality Improvement.” This is deemed highly desirable simply because it is of great help to readers and business managers throughout the world.

At the end of Chapter 1, the authors provide the readers with a great many key terms and concepts but regrettably they fail to explain their meanings. Besides, there is no glossary at the end of the book. These might be some shortcomings of this introduction book. However, it is praiseworthy that at the end of virtually all the chapters, the authors present factual view questions, critical thinking activities and discussion assignments.

On “quality and global competitiveness” (Chapter 2), the authors describe and explain all aspects of global competitiveness. Of special interest is the fact that many Asian countries (according to the authors) such as Bangladesh, Brunei, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, South Korea and Thailand are following Japan’s

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lead as a way to compete effectively at the global level. As a consequence, today the American companies have to battle daily against companies from not just Japan but also from the above mentioned Asian countries. Surprisingly, as far as the global competitiveness is concerned, the authors do not touch on China at all despite the fact that China is a terrifying competitor. Chinese businessmen have learnt the business knowledge and practices from Western countries as well as from their ancestors who are reputed to have business expertise. For this reason, China is in an advantageous position to compete globally. Failure to say anything about China might be due to the authors' lack of information about China. As is widely known, it is extremely difficult to gain access to information from Communist countries like China.

On "strategic management" (Chapter 3), the authors give the meanings of "strategic management," "SWOT analysis," "developing vision," "action plan," and so on. The authors explain the characteristics of a well-crafted vision statement which include the following: easily understood, brief but comprehensive, challenging yet attainable, lofty yet tangible, stirs excitement, creates unity of purpose, not concerned with numbers, and sets the tone. I am of the opinion that writing the vision statement in this fashion should be followed suit by all managers-both in private and public sectors. Also, the authors explain techniques of developing the mission. But their explanations are based on rules of thumb rather than on research findings. Thus the explanations are justifiable only to a certain extent. With regard to "action plan or specific tactics," the authors give a lucid explanation of the technique of writing the specific tactics of the organization. For instance, they should provide the "how" for achieving broad strategic objectives, are specific in nature, can be quantifiable; can be accomplished within a specified time frame, and so on. These are of great use to all those involved in writing the specific tactics or action plans of their organizations. Most importantly, the authors present a real-world case to the readers.

On "quality management, ethics, and corporate social responsibility" (Chapter 4), the authors put great emphasis on ethics. From my perspective, this is of paramount importance and would help prevent a well-known saying - The nature of business is swindling. - from becoming a reality. But the authors ignore the fact that ethics should

be cultivated during the formative years by the family. Ethics cannot get fixated if they are inculcated or socialized during adulthood. Adults might have a good understanding of ethics but it is extremely difficult for them to put ethics they have learnt into practice. Nevertheless, the facts about the ethics presented by the authors might be of some value to businessmen in that they could enable them to become more attentive to good business practices and to assume social responsibility to a greater extent.

On "quality culture" (Chapter 5), the authors explain the difference between the quality culture and the traditional culture. Their explanations are in a totally convincing way but are not based on any research findings. Interestingly, the authors imply that today culture change is a must. Some leaders whose characteristics are not conducive to cultural change should be changed.

To activate change, the new leader should have, **inter alia**, the following:

- Is fully knowledgeable of the need to change.
- Is able to articulate a vision for the new organization.
- Has set the tone for change and established an organizationwide sense of urgency.
- are willing to remove all obstacles to cultural change, and so forth.

What the authors point out is quite true. The ideas, beliefs, and values of those working in the organization have to be changed if the organization is to survive. However, the authors fail to mention that young leaders, not older leaders, can bring about rapid change. Why is it so? It is largely because most, if not all, of older leaders tend to be conservative and are most likely to maintain their status quo. It is worthwhile to say that the authors clearly explain about resistance to change. The authors mention several reasons that organization members particularly the organizational leaders do not need change. For example, fear, loss of control power, uncertainty and more work. Moreover, the authors pinpoint strategies that promote change. But their proposed strategies are in great part based on common sense rather than on research findings. So I do not think the strategies can cause change to perfection.

On "employee empowerment" (Chapter 8), the authors focus on rationale for empowerment, obstacles to empowerment and managers' roles in empowerment.

In my view, this topic is of great interest with particular reference to democratic countries. Nevertheless, employees should be encouraged to take part in decision making on some issues or problems only. From my standpoint, the quality of the population of a country should be taken into account as well before they are empowered. For instance, in the case of Japan the Eugenics Law of 1948 has greatly helped enhance the quality of her population. Thus employee empowerment in Japan can be practiced with ease. On the contrary, the quality of the population in many less developed countries is rather low compared with Japan. For this reason, the employee empowerment in these countries should be used with great caution.

In regard to barriers to employee empowerment, the authors argue that resistance to empowerment come from many sources. It is noteworthy that the leaders of some organizations do not encourage empowerment and make all possible efforts to impede employee empowerment. There are a wide variety of reasons for their discouragement to employee empowerment such as diminished power, a sense of insecurity, adherence to traditional values and egoism. As a matter of fact, there are some other important reasons that the authors fail to mention such as conflict of interest and various forms of discrimination.

On "leadership and change" (Chapter 9), the authors explain various types of leaders; special stress is laid on the leaders who have an itch to change. Their discussions are based on the writing of Edward Deming. According to Deming, each improvement in work methods and processes initiates a chain reaction that results in the following: improved quality, decreased costs, improved productivity, decreased prices, increased market share and so on. The authors also discuss the principles of leadership for quality. Their discussions are based on the writing of Scholtes. The principles are comprised of the following: customer focus, obsession with quality, recognizing the structure of work, looking for faults in systems, teamwork, and continuing education and training.

I strongly agree with all what the authors describe particularly "continuing education and training." Today private employees have to keep up with the times. Most importantly, they must work hard and work smart. How can they "work smart" without continuing education and training?

On "implementing total quality management" (Chapter 22), the authors give a detailed explanation of various steps of implementing total quality management including 20 steps. Some steps are directed or executed by top executives; others by consultants and the total quality steering committee.

In my opinion, Step 12 which is concerned with PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Adjust) is of vital importance. From my observation, PDCA is commonly used in virtually all the organizations-both in public and private sectors. Finally, I think highly of the authors for their giving a clear- picture of how the steps interrelate and how they should be sequenced in time.

All in all. I would like to say with conviction that the book is of great benefit to students and managers. The book contains a wide variety of substance pertaining to business administration and public administration and all the substance can be put into practical use. Above all, the book is highly suitable for foreign students precisely because in writing the book the authors use in great measure simple sentences and complex sentences and avoid using jargons in business in all possible ways.