
Organizational Change And Development Through TQM

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While Total Quality Management has proven to be an effective process for improving organizational functioning, its value can only be assured through a comprehensive and well thought out implementation process. TQM is, in fact, a large scale systems change, and guiding principles and considerations regarding this scale of change will be presented. Without attention to contextual factors, well intended changes may not be adequately designed.

Planned change processes often work, if conceptualized and implemented properly; but, unfortunately, every organization is different, and the processes are often adopted "off the shelf" ". In summary, the purpose here is to review principles of effective planned change implementation and suggest specific TQM applications. Several assumptions are proposed: 1. TQM is a viable and effective planned change method, when properly installed; 2. Not all organizations are appropriate or ready for TQM; 3. Preconditions (appropriateness, readiness) for successful TQM can sometimes be created; and 4. Leadership commitment to a large scale, long-term, cultural change is necessary.

TQM is, at first glance, seen primarily as a change in an organization's technology, its way of doing work. In the human services, this means the way clients are processed the service delivery methods applied to them and ancillary organizational processes such as paperwork, procurement processes, and other procedures conducted. TQM is also a change in an organization's culture, its norms, values, and belief systems about how organizations function and finally, it is a change in an organization's political system: decision making processes and power bases. For substantive change to occur, changes in these three

dimensions must be aligned: TQM as a technological change will not be successful unless cultural and political dimensions are attended to as well.

Many have noted that TQM results in a radical change in the culture and the way of work in an organization. A fundamental factor is leadership, including philosophy, style, and behavior. These must be congruent as they are presented by a leader. Many so called enlightened leaders of today espouse a participative style, which is not, in fact, practiced to any appreciable degree. Any manager serious about embarking on a culture change such as TQM, should reflect seriously on how she or he feels and behaves regarding these factors.

Other key considerations have to do with alignment among various organizational systems For example, human resource systems, including job design, selection processes, compensation and rewards, performance appraisal, and training and development must align with and support the new TQM culture. Less obvious but no less important will be changes required in other systems. Information systems will need to be redesigned to measure and track new things such as service quality. Financial management processes may also need attention through the realignment of budgeting and resource allocation systems. Organizational structure and design will be different under TQM: layers of management may be reduced and organizational roles will certainly change. To deal with fears of layoffs, all employees should be assured that no one will lose employment

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as a result of TQM changes.

Another systems consideration is that TQM should evolve from the organization's strategic plan and be based on stakeholder expectations. TQM should be purpose oriented: it should be used because an organization's leaders, feel a need to make the organization more effective. It should be driven by results and not be seen as an end in itself. If TQM is introduced without consideration of real organizational needs and conditions, it will be met by skepticism on the part of both managers and workers.

Many employees may see TQM as a fad, remembering past "fads" such as quality circles, management by objectives and zero based budgeting. As was noted above, TQM must be used not just as a fad or new program, but must be related to key organizational problems, needs and outcomes.

In another vein, workers may see management as only concerned about the product, and not staff needs. Furthermore, staff may see quality as not needing attention: they may believe that their services are already excellent or that quality is a peripheral concern in these days of cutbacks and multi problem clients.

For TQM to work, employees must see a need (e.g., for improved quality from their perspective) and how TQM may help. Fortunately, there are win win ways to present this. TQM is focused on quality, presumably a concern of both management and workers, and methods improvements should eliminate wasteful bureaucratic activities, save money, and make more human resources available for core activities, specifically client service.

Sources of Resistance

Implementation of large scale change such as TQM will inevitably face resistance, which should be

addressed directly by change agents.. At another level, management resistance to employee empowerment is likely. They may see decision making authority in zero sum terms: if employees have more involvement in decision making, managers will have less. In fact, one principle in employee involvement is that each level will be more empowered, and managers lose none of their fundamental authority. There will undoubtedly be changes in their roles. However as was noted above, they will spend less time on control and more on facilitation. For many traditional managers, this transition will require teaching/training, self reflection, and time as well as assurances from upper management that they are not in danger of being displaced. Resistance in other parts of the organization will show up if TQM is introduced on a pilot basis or only in particular programs (Hyde, 1992)

Dealing with Resistance

There are several tactics which can be helpful in dealing with resistance to TQM implementation. Generally, they have to do with acknowledging legitimate resistance and changing tactics based on it, using effective leadership to enroll people in the vision of TQM, and using employee participation.

A useful technique to systematically identify areas of resistance is a force field analysis (Brager & Holloway, 1992). This technique was originally developed by Kurt Lewin as an assessment tool for organizational change. It involves creating a force field of driving forces, which aid the change or make it more likely to occur, and restraining forces, which are points of resistance or things getting in the way of change. Each force is then assessed in two ways: its potency or strength, and its amenability to change. More potent forces, especially restraining ones, will need greater attention. Those not amenable to change will have to be counteracted by driving forces. Exhibit I provides an example.

DRIVING FORCES	RESTRAINING FORCES
Environmental pressures leading to reduced funds	Middle management fear of loss of control
Staff who may like to be more involved in agency decision making	Lack of time for line workers to take time for TQM meetings
Successful applications of TQM elsewhere	Skepticism based on the organization's poor performance regarding change

The analysis of the force field involves looking at which driving forces may be strengthened and which restraining forces may be eliminated, mitigated, or counteracted. If it appears that, overall, driving forces are strong enough to move back restraining forces, adoption of TQM would be worth pursuing. The change plan would include tactics designed to move the relevant forces.

Another way to address resistance is to get all employees on the same side, in alignment towards the same goal. Leadership is the mechanism for this, and specific models known as transformational or visionary leadership (Bennis & Nanus, 1985) are most effective.

A powerful way to decrease resistance to change is to increase the participation of employees in making decisions about various aspects of the process. There are actually two rationales for employee participation (Packard, 1989). The more common reason is to increase employee commitment to the resultant outcomes, as they will feel a greater stake or sense of ownership in what is decided. A second rationale is that employees to have a great deal of knowledge and skill relevant is improving work processes, and their input should lead to higher quality decisions.

A change agent should understand that, overall, change will occur when three factors (dissatisfaction with the status quo, desirability of the proposed change, the practicality of the change) added together are greater than the "cost" of changing (time spent in learning, adapting new roles and procedures, etc.) (Beckhard and Harris, 1987). The change agent may try to demonstrate how bad things are, or amplify others' feelings of dissatisfaction; and then present a picture of how TQM could solve current problems. The final step of modifying the equation is to convince people that the change process, while it will take time and effort, will not be prohibitively onerous

A full implementation of TQM does, as was emphasized earlier, represent a significant change in the culture and political economy of an organization, and a comprehensive change strategy is therefore required.

Visionary Leadership

Leadership is a key element in successful

implementation of large scale change. The leader shows the need and sets the vision, defining the basic purpose, goals, and parameters or requirements of TQM. The leader needs to take a long term perspective, and must be able to motivate others to stick with the process during early stages when resistance and obstacles may seem insurmountable. Organizational culture which is compatible with TQM, nurturing and reinforcing continuous quality improvement are desirable for implementing TQM, which essentially involves organizational transformation: beginning to operate in new ways, developing a new culture.

Summary

In summary, first assess pre-conditions and the current state of the organization to make sure the need for change is clear and that TQM is an appropriate strategy. Leadership styles and organizational culture must be congruent with TQM. If they are not, this should be worked on or TQM implementation should be avoided or delayed until favorable conditions exist.

Remember that this will be a difficult, comprehensive, and long term process. Leaders will need to maintain their commitment, keep the process visible, provide necessary support, and hold people accountable for results. Use input from stakeholder (clients, referring agencies, funding sources, etc.) as far as possible; and, of course, maximize employee involvement in design of the system.

Always keep in mind that TQM should be purpose driven. Be clear on the organization's vision for the future and stay focused on it. TQM can be a powerful technique for unleashing employee creativity and potential, reducing bureaucracy and costs, and improving service to clients and the community.

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