

Implementation of tqm principles in sme's



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Assignment Question The 'fad' of TQM seems to have lost popularity since the 1990's. The idea of quality being 'total' is still important today though and the view persists that everyone in the organization has the ability to impair quality in the same way that everyone can improve quality. For an organization of your choice discuss strategies that are in place that involves everyone in the process of quality improvement

Assignment Title The implementation of TQM philosophies within an SME supplying the automotive sector

Introduction

This paper examines TQM within a small to medium sized enterprise (SME), which is a first-tier supplier to Jaguar Land Rover (JLR). D; A Steering Ltd operate from Hockley in Birmingham and manufacture steering assembly units for automotive manufacturers (automakers) including JLR, Nissan UK and Aston Martin. The finished products are manufactured to requirements, as the SME has no involvement in the design specification. The Company has 102 employees in total. 5 employees work in production whilst the quality department comprises a team of four. This organisational design would indicate that much of the quality inspection has been empowered to the production workers. The SME has recently been accredited with ISO9002 and QS9000 quality standards as well as working toward the automotive quality standard of TS16949. TQM Strategies It is recognized that all individuals within a Company have the ability to affect quality (Slack et al. 2009; Ghobadian and Gallear, 1996). Further, this paper endorses that “ quality” may be affected by those individuals or companies involved in the complete supply chain (Brown, 1993) and should not be restricted to individuals from only within the organisation. D; A Steering has a quality steering group

comprising senior managers, supervision and hourly paid workers from the shop floor who meet regularly to discuss, and action various quality related items.

The main responsibilities of the group are to ensure the annual appraisal of the quality system is completed as well as reviewing internal audit results and continuing to work toward improving processes through quality cost and delivery metrics. The steering group also work in conjunction with other local ' quality cubes' to ensure two-way communication is maintained. The quality cubes comprise empowered members of the ' cell' responsible for improving local processes and providing information to the central steering group.

This approach is similar to many manufacturing organisations and prevalent within Japanese quality philosophy in that " improvement is slow" (Dale and Allan, 1993). The accreditations (QS 9000) insist upon continuous improvement (CI) techniques being maintained within the Company. There is evidence that mainly relates to the individual ' cells' in which roles are clearly defined and there is a process engineer and quality engineer appointed in each group.

There is an " improving the product" meeting held weekly where each cell is required to send a representative to discuss new approaches or best practice within the Organisation. The representatives are rotated weekly to ensure all team members are involved in the product improvement exercise. Further, The cell team members are able to demonstrate improvements in process layouts, which has only been possible through teamwork, the desire to

improve and senior management support (investment was required for some initiatives).

The senior management also pointed out that quality is not simply related to the product but also to the ancillary services such as Human Resources, Finance and Logistics. The objective of the TQM approach is based largely around the concept of customer satisfaction (Aspinwall, 2001) and it is recognised, within the company, that many of the services have the ability to affect the satisfaction of the customer directly or indirectly.

The transition journey to accreditation has involved major investment and the Company have installed a number of systems designed to assist in the pursuit of quality excellence. The Organisation believes that quality improvements will only be sustained through the effective deployment of the business plan (customer satisfaction is the primary objective) and through the development of its people. Senior management, through sharing the transition journey contrasted the current and old ways of quality management.

The current focus is centred strongly on people and the organisation continues to work on transforming the culture in support of this plan. The current plan relies more on the contributions of the individual rather than the previous “ management responsibility” mind-set. Now, an appropriate training and skills programme has been designed, which allows for each employee to gain understanding into quality management principles. Further, employees at all levels are encouraged and empowered to stop the line/cell should a defect be suspected.

The emphasis is on getting to the root cause of the problem as opposed to quality defects simply being inspected out. This organisation - a first tier supplier to major automakers - firmly believes that quality management is the responsibility of the whole. Employees are encouraged to raise areas of concern and rewarded for significant improvements through individual and team awards. The competition between cells remains healthy but intense with the emphasis on the output metrics of quality cost and delivery.

It could be argued that quality is not a major concern within the organisation due to the quality department comprising just four members. The organisation would counter the argument by suggesting that quality actually has the biggest team - everyone is a member. Works Cited Aspinwall, E. (2001) 'Case Studies on the implementation of TQM in the UK automotive SME's', *The International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management*, vol. 18, no. 6, pp. 722-743. Brown, A. (1993) 'Quality management in the smaller company', *Asia Pacific Journal of Quality Management*, vol. , no. 3, pp. 66-76. Dale, B. G. (1990) 'Policy Deployment', *The TQM Magazine*, vol. 2, no. 6, pp. 321-324. Dale, B. G. and Allan, D. G. (1993) 'Japan - Myth or Miracle? (Part 2)', *TQM Journal*, vol. 5, no. 3, p. 55. Ghobadian, A. and Gallear, D. (1996) 'Total quality management in SMEs', *OMEGA*, vol. 24, no. 2, pp. 83-106. Slack, N. , Chambers, S. , Johnston, R. and Betts, A. (2009) *Operations and Process Management: Principles and Practice for Strategic Impact*, 2nd edition, Harlow: Pearson Education.