

Action assignment

3.1 critical thinking

[Business](#), [Company](#)



Improving Performance Through Quality Initiatives

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1. One of the most important ideas I learned in Part Four is that quality initiatives have proven to be highly successful using multiple metrics, including higher employee and customer satisfaction, higher productivity, increased market share and better productivity. Given the broad spectrum of impacts on the business, using quality initiatives within a business is a very supported and logical choice. The second idea that I learned was there were actually several methods of improving quality that have shown success, although many of them share similar underlying ideas about how it should be done, including employee empowerment, continuous improvement strategies, and having set standards that are clearly communicated to be achieved. A further interesting aspect of Part Four was the ability of even just the application of checklists to processes to improve quality and performance of tasks done within the scope of business.

The examples of Starbucks and Toyota were interesting as the text recognized that their stellar reputations for quality had slipped recently for both companies. That brings up a further issue as to not merely implementing quality initiatives, and reaping the benefits on average two years later, but how to keep the quality high after the standards have been met. It would appear that some of the motivations present during a quality project where standards are being established, such as continuous incremental progress, could be central to keeping the quality high. For both Starbucks and Toyota, this level of quality could not be sustained indefinitely. Thus, a problem emerges beyond just implementing quality

initiatives, but how to motivate employees to continued high quality work over long periods of time.

2. The overall results described in the later section of Part Four are convincing that even a small group, such a small information technology department, could benefit from an organized quality initiative. One area that small organizations sometimes overlook is having processes in place. That is because it is easy for a small group to maintain word of mouth methods of training. However, smaller groups are also known to have a relatively high proportion of employees that approach the work in less traditional manners, and that can result in very uneven quality. Thus, I would approach the entire department with a task of at least memorializing the processes that are used to do our everyday tasks such as helpdesk work or supply ordering. Just the process of looking at the flow of information and putting it down in written form could result in more uniformity in the way the different tasks are accomplished. Next, a discussion could be had as to what streamlines or efficiencies could be found in the processes by having a uniform approach by the entire group.

It may be difficult to get a consensus, but at the very least awareness will be raised at each reiteration of the attempt to get standardized process checklists in place. The group may be more receptive to the checklist idea if the book by Gawande is highly suggested reading. The slightly more casual approach may appeal to those within the group that do not want to undertake a huge overhaul such as what might be required under a six sigma or lean business method. As always, the goals of any proposed change, that is, the “ why” of this is being done is most important. In

particular, the establishment of set procedures would be undertaken in an attempt to have more consistent work product produced by the department.