

total quality management in the xerox corporation essay sample

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Total Quality Management (TQM) is a term used to define quality programs corporations use to help increase the profit share and the customer relations of the corporation. Total Quality Management can consist of different programs that different companies use to obtain the results of customer satisfaction, better quality products, and a decrease in the defects of the products. Total Quality Management in the Xerox Corporation includes programs such as benchmarking, reduced supplier base, and leadership teams (Evans-Correia, 1991). In the following paragraphs Xeroxs strategies for TQM, the Baldrige Award, and the effects of TQM on the Xerox Corporation will be discussed as well as a background of the Xerox Corporation. The Xerox Corporation started its thrive towards TQM in the 1970s with the invention of PARC, Palo Alto Research Center. This center was created to do research in computer science, electronics, and material science (Brown, 1992). There are same basic principles that PARC has identified as important to research, “ 1. Research on new work practices is as important as research on new products, 2. Innovation is everywhere; the problem is learning from it, 3. Research cant just produce innovation; it must coproduce it, and 4. The research departments ultimate innovation partner is the customer” (Brown, 1992). Research is a key component when it comes to Total Quality Management. The only way to make yourself better is to learn new things and learn when you are doing things wrong so that the errors can be fixed.

By opening up PARC Xerox has given itself a place to help with the innovation process of the corporation and thus allowing the corporation the means to do its job better. Alos, PARC is used as a way of finding out what the customer wants, if the customer can be satisfied then the corporation is one step closer to being a strong thriving company with Total Quality Management. Opening the research facility was one of Xeroxs ways of implementing TQM before TQM was even invented. Now that TQM has become known in the marketplace Xerox has established its own program to obtain it. The Xerox corporation focuses on benchmarking, a reduced supplier base, and leadership teams as a way of producing Total Quality Management. Benchmarking is a “ standard or point of reference in measuring or judging quality, value, etc.” (Webster, 1979). Xerox looks at what the competition is doing and sets a level of quality and value that all of its products are compared against. These levels of quality are also used by other companies because of Xeroxs excellent standards. Once the standard that has been set is met then a new and higher standard is set so that the company is continually striving to do better and have a higher quality product. The second method Xerox is using in its strive for TQM is to reduce its supplier base. A supplier base is the amount of companies that the ordering company, in this case Xerox, gets its materials from.

Xerox has gone from individual suppliers for each of the different manufacturing facilities to a consolidated group of suppliers for all of the manufacturing facilities (Evens-Correia, 1991). This has drastically cut the amount of suppliers needed which increases accountability of the suppliers

to get the materials to Xerox on time and it decreases some overhead costs because of shipping reductions and economies of scale discounts. The smaller supplier base also gives Xerox more control in the corporations decision processes. If the company wants to make a change that affects the way it uses its suppliers there are less problems arising from having to many different suppliers. Furthermore, there are a reduced amount of people needed in overseeing the ordering process from the suppliers which allows for a decrease in positions and less of a chance for error. The third method Xerox uses to help in Total Quality Management is leadership teams. Leadership teams are a new concept that many companies are adapting. These teams consist of a group of people with different areas of specialty. The main functions of the teams are to produce a product for the lowest possible cost with the highest quality.

These teams can have jobs that range from finding ways to cut costs all the way to how to handle difficult employees and anything in between. The teams generally decide on what special project they are going to work on. The teams also decide what the hours are they are going to work and the salaries they are going to get for doing the jobs. Leadership teams also are put together to train other people how to work in teams and how to take an active role in the workplace with your job. Xerox has established a program called Leadership Through Quality (LTQ) and a Quality Training Task Force for its companys leadership teams. " Today, more than 100, 000 Xerox employees worldwide have been trained in this process, which stresses continuous improvement and defines quality precisely as meeting customer

requirements" (Evans-Correia, 1997, 135). Through Xerox's effort with TQM the corporation has won the Baldrige Award as well as a few other awards. The Baldrige Award "has come to signify a standard of excellence in total quality management, and the practices and achievements of each year's award winners have been examined with considerable interest" (Internal Auditor, 1992, 38).

The award was created to identify companies that are going above and beyond the process of making products for cash. These companies are establishing guidelines for excellence. Part of the benefits or downfalls of winning the award, depending on the way you look at it, is that the company who wins the award must share their company's policies with competitors. The winning company gives plant tours and gives lectures on its TQM to other companies and students who are interested in learning about TQM. It is a share the knowledge attitude of the founders of the award. If a company is not willing to give others the knowledge they have found then they will not win the award. The idea of share the knowledge is to help American companies do better in the global market and to help these companies survive in the long run with increasing competition. The more businesses in the market place the more competition there is and the more jobs there are for the American people. The Baldrige Award is only one of the effects of Total Quality Management for the Xerox Corporation. Another example of the effects of TQM on the Xerox Corporation is the employee and customer support given to the company. Xerox hosts a teamwork day in which teams are able to come in and show off the projects that they are working on to

other employees and to visitors. The first year the amount of teams that attended was thirty.

The next year the amount of teams doubled and there were five hundred visitors attending as well. There are no incentives for the teams to take part. The only recognition the people get from the day are thank-you notes (Pell, 1994). This is an excellent example of how TQM is working within the company. The workers want to take part in this activity because of a sense of competition to come up with the best ideas and pride in the work the team has done. These are the kind of employees that help make a corporation become a success and stay a success. The third effect of Total Quality Management is the amount of knowledge the company has learned by implementing the new procedures. The new procedures include research as part of the TQM process. Xerox does surveys to customers, stockholders and employees as part of this research. These surveys are mailed out to the respective people and ask questions about the satisfaction of the products and ask about improvements that can be made to the products. The surveys also take into consideration suggestions made by the employees as to how to improve the products and to improve the production process. " Xerox and other leading TQM companies have similar processes of surveying employees, mass media, government, and investors on an ongoing basis and sharing the information in the company " (Grostedt, 1996).

These surveys let the employees know the quality of the job they are doing and how they can improve their performance on that job. This allows empowerment of the employees and increases the improvement time and it

increases the rate in which improvements are made. These surveys help to strengthen the corporation because of the fact that the company responds to them and the corporations image is improved because good customer relations are developed. The surveys work well in the Xerox corporation because they are taken seriously and are responded to. The company wants to be the best it can be and it is shown partly through these surveys. In conclusion, Total Quality Management plays a major role in the Xerox Corporation. It is the major philosophy of the company and has played an important role in the success of the Corporation. The strategies Xerox uses include issuing surveys and developing events for the employees to take part in to further benefit the corporation. The effects of the TQM process include the winning of the Baldrige Award as well as various other Total Quality Management Awards and the amount of knowledge the company has gained from using this philosophy. Finally, the companies processes that are used in the Total Quality Management program include benchmarking, reduced supplier base, and forming leadership teams. A