



TenStep Supplemental Paper

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Inherent Characteristics of a Quality-Driven Company

Publicity and advertisements go hand in hand, whether you are dealing with a political campaign or a corporate campaign. Projecting an image of efficiency and commercial viability requires publicity. Unfortunately, the idea behind such publicity is often lost in the race to increase business. Companies claim to be quality-driven establishments only to attract customer orders and partnerships. Nevertheless, claiming to be quality-driven can be effective if the company actually is quality-driven.

Claus Moller – An overview

Claus Moller is a Danish economist educated in Copenhagen. Based on his experience and knowledge, he started a company called Time Manager International (TMI) in 1975. TMI functioned as a training base for managers and employees. Over the next 10 years, TMI devised its own management course called the “Time Management Course.” The course helped people to improve their individual performances while working as a team.

Companies could hire TMI to improve employee performance through a program called “Putting People First” (PPF). The PPF programs were an instant hit and helped TMI gain worldwide prominence.

In 1980, TMI, along with JALCOS (a subsidiary of Japan Airlines), educated Japanese Airlines about scheduling operations more effectively to improve employee performance, thereby improving company performance.

Later, in the mid 1980s, TMI’s focus shifted to Russia as it trained people to modernize the Soviet economy. In 1987, while competing with 48 similar companies, TMI got the tender for training 16,000 people for the European Economic Community (EEC). TMI went on to execute many more successful training programs across the world.

Humbled by TMI’s success, Claus Moller wrote a book entitled *Personal Quality* in 1988.

Moller’s visions

Moller belonged to a generation that regarded statistical control tools as the gateway to high quality. However, during the 1970s, a new wave of quality control mechanisms emerged through administrative involvement because customers began demanding higher quality from manufacturers.

Moller’s involvement in training programs allowed him to see the advantages of administrative involvement in quality. He also realized that employees influence the outcome of any project. Given that product quality depends on the employees, he foresaw the need to improve individual knowledge and expertise.

He believed that improving individual performance would enhance productivity, relations and quality. He termed these three aspects “evergreens” and considered them critical and



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intrinsic to all systems. Furthermore, since all three are interdependent, one cannot be achieved without the others.

Quality – The possible, the impossible

Moller believed that quality is a relative term. In short, the target quality depends on the organization. With this in mind, he proposed two levels of quality:

- Ideal performance level (IP)
- Actual performance level (AP)

According to Moller, an IP is what one envisions, i.e. the idea goal. He believed that with expertise and experience, IP levels would change. Therefore, as a person begins to understand a concept, he or she evolves along with it. Thereby, his/her IP levels fluctuate.

AP levels, on the other hand, depend on personal experience, self-esteem and beliefs. AP levels depend on factors such as awards, recognition from peers, and the reasoning behind why a certain task must be performed. In short, AP is the practical level of achievability.

Given Moller's idea that employee development was responsible for enhanced quality, he proposed a few guidelines that would help individuals improve their AP level.

Improve individual AP

1. Do not mix personal goals with the organization's goals.
2. Ask what other employees think about you.
3. Attempt value addition in every step. Aim at providing value to the customer.
4. Be watchful and avoid all unnecessary approaches.
5. Closely coordinate activities to improve efficiency and speed.
6. Ensure effective utilization of resources.
7. Finish what you started.
8. Work towards a common goal
9. Aim at manufacturing high-quality merchandise.
10. Create a work schedule checklist to ensure a smooth workflow.

Moller stressed the need for employees to improve personal knowledge in order to transform the organization into a quality-driven establishment. Accordingly, he also proposed 17 signs of a quality-driven organization.

1. Focus on quality development
2. Management participation in the quality process
3. Satisfied customers/users
4. Committed employees



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5. Long-term quality development
6. Clearly-defined quality goals
7. Quality performance is rewarded
8. Quality control is perceived positively
9. External and internal customers are valued
10. Investments in personnel training and development
11. Prevention/reduction of mistakes
12. Appropriate decision level
13. Direct route to end users
14. Emphasis on both technical and human quality
15. Company actions directed towards customer needs
16. Ongoing value analysis
17. Company recognition of its role in society

Summary

Moller's expertise and experience led him to believe that individual performance influences an organization's performance. Thus, he proposed guidelines for both enhancing individual and organizational performances. These are only guidelines to provide some insight into what must be done. They do not guarantee enhanced performance. It must be remembered that it is only through employee support and cross-functional support that organizations can enhance performance.