

Strategic Human Resource Management

TQM and Organizational Change And Development

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Abstract

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. Without attention to contextual factors, well intended changes may not be adequately designed. In recent years the literature on change management and leadership has grown steadily , and applications based on research findings will be more likely to succeed.Unfortunately , the program itself is usually seen as worthless: Planned change processes often work, if conceptualized and implemented properly

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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. But 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. For many managers, a personal program of leadership development may be a prerequisite to effective functioning as an internal change agent advocating TQM.

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 as a result of TQM changes: jobs may change, perhaps radically, but no one will be laid off

Another systems consideration is that TQM should evolve from the organization's strategic plan and be based on stakeholder expectations. This type of planning and stance regarding environmental relations is receiving more attention but still is not common in the human services. TQM is often proposed based on environmental conditions such as the need to cut costs or demands for increased responsiveness to stakeholders. A manager may also adopt TQM as a way of being seen at the proverbial cutting edge, because it is currently popular. This is not a good motivation to use TQM and will be likely to lead to a cosmetic or superficial application, resulting in failure and disappointment. 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.

People's Expectations and Perceptions

Many employees may see TQM as a fad, remembering past "fads" such as quality circles, management by objectives, and zerobased budgeting. In another vein, workers may see management as only concerned about the product, 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.

Workers may have needs and concerns which are different from those of administration. 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. A key element of TQM is working with customers, and the notion of soliciting feedback/expectations from customers/clients and collaborating with them, perhaps with customers defining quality, is a radical one in many agencies, particularly those serving involuntary clients (e.g., protective services). At another level, management resistance to employee empowerment is likely. They may see decision making authority in zeronum 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: each unit or program sees itself as separate and unique, with nothing to learn from others and no need to collaborate with them

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. 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. Start by identifying the change goal, in this case, implementation of TQM. Represent this by drawing a line down the middle of a piece of paper.- Slightly to its left, draw a parallel line which represents the current state of the organization. The change process involves moving from the current state to the ideal future state, an organization effectively using TQM. To the left of the second line (the current state), list all forces (individuals, key groups, or conditions) which may assist in the implementation of TQM. These may include environmental pressures leading to reduced funds, staff who may like to be more involved in agency decision making, and the successful applications of TQM elsewhere. On the other side, list restraining forces which will make the change implementation more difficult. Arrows from both sides touching the "current state" line represent the constellation of forces. 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.

Exhibit I: A Force Field Analysis	
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
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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. It is also important to note and validate any points of resistance which are, in fact, legitimate, such as the limited amount of staff time available for TQM meetings. Sell TQM based on the organization's real needs, note legitimate risks and negatives, and allow improvements in your own procedures. This should enhance your credibility and show your openness to critically looking at the process.

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 are most effective. Transformational or visionary leadership, the approach suggested here, is an example of the intervention approach. This would involve a leader articulating a compelling vision of an ideal organization and how TQM would help the vision be actualized..

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. 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 have a great deal of knowledge and skill relevant to the issue at hand (in this case, increasing quality, identifying problems, and 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.) Any key group or individual will need a level of dissatisfaction with the status quo, must see a desired improved state, and must believe that the change will have minimal disruption. In other words, the change (TQM) must be seen as responding to real problems and worth the effort or cost in getting there. Conditions favoring change may be created by modifying these variables. 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. The organization as a whole and each person will be judging the prospect of TQM from this perspective. To embrace TQM, individuals must be shown how it will be worth it for them.

A final possible area of resistance, the "not invented here" syndrome may be seen after TQM is successfully adopted in one part of the organization and attempts are made to diffuse it, or spread other areas. Such resistance mentioned above should be helpful. Second, each new area (program division, department) should have a new assessment and contracting process: different circumstances should be expected in each part of the organization

Current Reality and Preconditions

A preliminary step in TQM implementation is to assess the organization's current reality: relevant preconditions have to do with the organization's history, its current needs, precipitating events leading to TQM, and the existing employee quality of working life. If the current reality does not include important preconditions, TQM implementation should be delayed until the organization is in a state in which TQM is likely to succeed. The force field analysis discussed above is one useful tool in reviewing the current situation.

If an organization has a track record of effective responsiveness to the environment, and if it has been able to successfully change the way it operates when needed, TQM will be easier to implement. If an organization has been historically reactive and has no skill at improving its operating systems, there will be both employee skepticism and a lack of skilled change agents. If this condition prevails, a comprehensive program of management and leadership development may be instituted. A management audit is a good assessment tool to identify current levels of organizational functioning and areas in need of change. An organization should be basically healthy before beginning TQM. If it has significant problems such as a very unstable funding base, weak administrative systems, lack of managerial skill, or poor employee morale, TQM would not be appropriate.

However, a certain level of stress is probably desirable to initiate TQM: people need to feel a need for a change. A leader may then become a prime mover, who takes charge in championing the new idea and showing others how it will help them get where they want to go.

Visionary Leadership

. The leader needs to take a longterm perspective, and must be able to motivate others to stick with the process during early stages when resistance and obstacles may seem insurmountable. The preferred leadership style would be a participative one, so that staff may be involved in the design of the specific system elements. .In designing a comprehensive change process, the leader must acknowledge the existing organizational culture (norms and values, managers' leadership philosophies and styles at all levels) to ensure a good fit. TQM also needs to be congruent with or aligned with other organizational processes, including reward systems, financial & information systems, and training systems.

Some Do's and Don'ts

While an organization needn't start TQM at the top, successes in particular units or programs should set the stage for diffusion in other directions. Change from below may be appropriate for those at lower levels who want to initiate TQM. It may work best to start TQM with a temporary task force and then hire trainers, expose staff, and hope that managers will be motivated to learn more. People responsible for leading shouldn't devote full time to TQM; they should maintain their regular work as well. Cohen and Brand believe that TQM is best taught by people doing it day to day in their work. Implement it gradually to ensure meaningful culture change, and use frequent feedback to ensure that change isn't just superficial. There is no need for a "grand plan" (a quality council, etc.); just start where the organization is. Perhaps the most important "do" worth repeating is to involve employees in the decision making process, at whatever stages and levels possible. As a specific aspect of this, advance negotiations and discussions with any unions present should occur. Tell people what the quality standards are so that inspection and review isn't necessary. Emphasize client feedback and both quantitative and qualitative performance tracking.

Several suggestions may be offered to managers. "Management by walking around" is a useful way to stay in touch with direct service workers and their needs. Practice what you preach: use TQM on your own processes. Meet frequently with middle managers regarding their personal efforts to use TQM. Focus on the nature of the work and try to establish in employees' minds excitement about a new way of working. Also, horizontal and vertical communication training may be useful to get groups communicating with each other. Team building is a core element of the process, to ensure employee involvement and effective problem solving. Build analysis into the culture: "stop and think about how we work," according to Cohen and Brand. Insist on objective measures of results. Look for visible improvement, but not optimization; and try to generate some quick results in terms of time or money saved..

Summary

In summary, first assess preconditions 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.

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 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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