

## **Need Of The Hour**

Building the appropriate organizational climate paves the way for qualitative enhancement of services. Most organizations embark on the quality journey due to pressure from competition. Normally this is pursued as a turnkey project with a stretch target and guidance from an external consultant. While enthusiasm peaks on the day of certification it tapers down later and the number of non-conformities increases linearly with time. Then the burn out and downward trends begin. As a corollary, adequate groundwork has to be done for quality improvement programs to bear fruit. Evidently then, the framework which will provide the right organizational climate for the quality tree to grow and yield robust fruits is critical. At the foundation level resides the corporate vision, mission and objective (VMO). In most organizations this is done top down, which reduces the ownership of VMO as you move down the hierarchy. Also, in most companies, around 60% of the employees do not even know the organizational mission. In certain cases the organization itself does not have a mission statement and so an opportunity to drive the organization along the right direction is missed. The improvement of quality should begin at the top management level where vision, commitment and an open approach are formulated.

A well defined mission statement should ideally: Focus on the future of the organization Strategies and programs should flow from this future vision. Be owned by all in the organizations to the lowest levels Should focus on customer & quality All of these can be followed through by top-down and bottom-up orders. The next step is to build the right organizational climate. Especially in industries like software, where the manpower turnover is very high the only solution is continuous education focussed at continuous improvement. It is not that 100% improvement in one process, but it is that 1% improvement in hundreds of processes that grants an organization the competitive advantage.

The whole process of building the right organizational climate rests on four pillars:

- Philosophy: Masaki Imais kaizen Direction:
- W Edward Demings 14 points Steps:
- 5 step methodology of Philip Crosby Integrity:
- Seven habits of Stephen Covey

These philosophies and practices can be imbibed into the organization by continuous education supported by well drawn out, structured training programs and recognition systems for the achievers. These training programs also should undergo continuous improvement and get institutionalized as part of the induction programs for new entrants to the organization. The next challenge lies in organizing the training through external or internal agencies. If external, then identification of adequate competence and enthusiasm to translate the required knowledge with conviction into concrete, viable outcomes forms the most crucial phase. If the training is carried out through internal channels, then it is advisable to get the trainers trained and proven before they embark on the training program.

The programs should be aimed at creating opportunities to learn new skills, practice them and share the experiences which will undoubtedly result in improvement. Recognition programs to support the achievers must be part of the training programs. The ultimate objective of these training programs should be to generate conviction in each employee on the significance of continuous quality improvement. For the organization to experience this cultural change, each and every employee should first experience the benefits at a personal level.

### **Kaizen philosophy**

Kaizen is a Japanese term for continuous improvement which really means continuous incremental improvement. kai refers to change and zen refers to good, thereby meaning changing for the good. It pertains to continuous improvement involving everyone from top management, managers to workers. It also refers to improvement in personal life too. The kaizen strategy is the single most important concept in Japanese management the key to Japanese competitive success. It rests on the basic premise that our way of life deserves to be constantly improved. (Masaki Imai) Implementing kaizen:

Improve constantly and forever the system of production and service. Improvement is not a one time effort. Management is obligated to continually look for ways to reduce waste and improve quality. (W Edward Deming) This is certainly not easy and will come about only when people become dissatisfied with their current working conditions, which is the ideal time to introduce the 5S exercise which comprise of:

**Seiri** - Separate out all that is unnecessary and eliminate it

**Seiton** - Those things found to be necessary are put in order so that they are ready for use when required.

**Seiso** - Clean workplace, equipment and prevent defects

**Seiketsu** - Standardize. Make cleaning and checking routine

**Shitsuke** - Discipline and training, personal cleanliness and applying kaizen to the previous four steps

The starting point for improvement is to recognize the need. This comes from the recognition of a problem. If no problem is recognized, there is no recognition for the need for improvement. Complacency is the arch-enemy of kaizen. Therefore kaizen emphasises problem-awareness and provides clues for identifying problems. (Masaki Imai)

**CRITICAL QUESTIONS:** Using the 5Ws and one H encourages employees to look at a process and raise critical questions. Who is doing it? Who should be doing it? What is being done? What should be done? Where is it being done? Where should it be done? When is it being done? When should it be done? Why is it being done ? Why do it that way? How is it being done? How should it be done?

**MONITORING KAIZEN IMPLEMENTATION:** The kaizen axiom is about continuous improvement of people, processes, procedures and any other factor affecting quality. An effective way to identify problems and representing opportunities

for improvement is to formulate a checklist that draws attention to those factors needing improvement.

These could be: Personnel Work techniques, Time ,Facilities Equipment, Systems Software ,Tools, Materials, Plant Layout ,Production Levels, Inventory, Paradigms or mindset. To utilize this checklist in the workplace, the immediate supervisors approval and co-operation is critical. A positive response from the boss encouraging his subordinates new ideas and techniques will then develop trust between them thus stimulating other improvements in its wake and making the work front a progressive one. However it is easier preached than practised. Very basic questions like The procedures are fine with me, why should we change it? can emerge from the superiors end. From your perspective, it would be risky for you to change it using your own discretion. This could well be a case of the wet blanket list, in Masaki Imais words, wherein your boss declined to give you a chance for anonymous reasons.

Wet blanket list:

- I am too busy to study it
- It is a good idea but the timing is premature
- It is not on the agenda
- Theory is different from practice
- Isnt there something else for you to do?
- I think it does not match with corporate policy
- It isnt our business; let someone else think about it
- Are you dissatisfied with your work?
- It is not improvement, it is common sense
- I know the result,
- Even if we dont do it I will not be held accountable for it
- Cant you think of a better idea?

Those are the twelve wet blankets you frequently hear in work situations which will tell on the productivity of the employees as they typically put out the fire of progress. In order to avoid such a stalemate, the following ten basic kaizen tips can be adhered to: Discard conventional and fixed ideas Think of how to do it, not why it cannot be done Do not make excuses. Start by questioning current practices Do not seek perfection. Do it right away even if for only 50% of the target If you make a mistake, correct it right away Do not spend money for kaizen. Use your wisdom Wisdom is brought out when faced with hardship Ask why five times and seek root causes Seek the wisdom of ten people rather than the knowledge of one. Kaizen ideas are infinite.

### **Crosbys five step methodology**

The onus of Philip Crosbys methodology is on 1% improvement of hundreds of processes than on 100% improvement of one process. Crosby proposed the four absolutes of quality which are the principles we use to operate, manage and improve our job processes. They provide the answers to four very important questions about quality. How do we define quality? How can we make quality happen? What standard do we use for our performance? How can we measure quality? The answer to these questions lies in the four absolutes of quality.

DEFINITION OF QUALITY:

It is conformance to requirements. Any product, service or process that conforms to its requirements is a quality product, service or process.

#### SYSTEM FOR QUALITY IS PREVENTION:

Prevention involves communicating, planning, proofing and working in a way that eliminates opportunities for non-conformance.

#### PERFORMANCE STANDARD IS ZERO DEFECTS:

Zero defects is a commitment to meet all the requirements for our work the first time, every time. Our standard is that non-conformance is not acceptable. It is also an attitude, a personal commitment by each of us to understand the requirements of our jobs and do the needful.

#### MEASUREMENT IS THE PRICE OF NON-CONFORMANCE:

The best way to measure quality is to calculate what it costs to do things wrong. This measurement is called price of non-conformance. The five step methodology is a highly effective one to eliminate any root cause which culminates in non-conformance.

Once a problem or potential problem is identified, these steps can be followed effectively to eradicate the causes for the problem one by one permanently, thus facilitating the organizations progress in the quality journey.

#### DEFINE THE SITUATION:

The first step for solving problems is to define the situation. This step includes describing the problem clearly and planning the solution  
**APPLY FIX:** A fix is a temporary step to keep things going. Identify the root causes. A root cause is the source from which non-conformance originates. The techniques that can be used to identify the root causes can be: Requirements review  
Threads of similarity  
Opportunities for error  
Cause and effect diagram  
Pareto analysis

#### FORMULATE AND IMPLEMENT CORRECTIVE ACTION:

This step has four parts: Generate possible corrective actions  
Select the corrective action  
Plan and communicate the corrective action  
Implement the corrective action

#### EVALUATE AND FOLLOW UP:

We evaluate the corrective action to see if the problem has been solved. We follow up to make sure the corrective action remains in place and to identify any side effects for the change.

### **Demings fourteen points**

If kaizen forms the underlying philosophy and Crosbys five step methodology forms the starting point, then W Edward Demings 14 points gives the direction for the quality improvement process. The top and middle management should always be guided by the spirit underlying the 14 points. This will prevent us from going backwards in our endeavor. The summary of Demings 14 steps are as follows:

Create a constancy of purpose towards improvement of product and service, while being competitive, staying in business and providing jobs.

Create and publish to all employees a statement of purpose of the aims and purposes of the company. The management must demonstrate constantly their commitment to this statement.

Adopt the new philosophy, namely kaizen- for top management and every body.

Cease dependence on inspection to achieve quality, by building quality initially into the product.

Understand the purposes of inspection, for improvement of processes and cost reduction.

End the practice of awarding business on price tag alone. Look for long lasting, mutually beneficial partnerships based on loyalty, trust and professionalism.

Improve continuously and constantly the system of production and service, to improve quality and productivity and decrease costs regularly.

Institutionalize training for the job to develop skills within the new recruitment, to assist management and understand all the processes of the organization.

Teach and institute leadership.

Drive out fear to increase everyones effectiveness.

Create trust and openness and a climate for innovation.

Break down barriers among departments.

Optimize the aims and purposes of the company, the efforts of teams and individuals.

Eliminate slogans.

Eliminate numerical goals, quotas and management by objectives. Instead encourage learning, institutionalize methods, initiate methods for learning capabilities of processes and their improvement.

Remove barriers that rob members of their right to take pride in workmanship.

Eliminate the annual rating or merit system.

Institute programs for education and self-improvement of every one.

Institute an action plan and put everyone in the company to work to accomplish the transformation.

These can act as guidelines which will focus all the activities towards achieving constancy of purpose. Simultaneously they provide an apt road map for top management to demonstrate their commitment. Trust and openness within the

organization is central for these steps to gain momentum. The absence of such a work environment will obfuscate questions like why?, how?, who?, where? and what?, which constitute the back bone of innovation leading to improvement.

### **Coveys seven habits**

The moment an individual attempts to become his own advocate, seeking to justify himself or reciprocate in kind the treatment received, he gets trapped within the realm of negative energy exchange. This brings both he and his rival on the same footing compelling them to resort to manipulation, violence, withdrawal, indifference, litigation or political battles. The dialogic and reciprocal nature of our daily exchanges affirms a fundamental belief in the capacity to grow and improve. As a result, the magnanimity that we weild builds greatness into the very fabric of our personality and character. People with primary greatness have a sense of stewardship about everything in life, including their time, talents, money, possessions, relationships and family. They recognize the need to use all their resources for positive purposes, and are willing to accept responsibility for their actions. The seven habits lay the foundation for this: Being proactive refers to the endowment of self-knowledge or self awareness with an ability to choose your response. The probable consequences of every employee believing that Quality begins with me. And I need to take my own decisions based on carefully selected values and principles, are very promising. Proactivity cultivates this freedom to subordinate your feelings to your values. So on the continuum, you proceed from being a victim to an achiever who wields self determining creative power based on self awareness choosing a response to any condition or conditioning. Beginning with the end in mind is the endowment of imagination and conscience. If you are the programmer, write the program. Decide what you are going to do with the time, talent and tools you have to work with. This promises a sense of hope and purpose encouraging initiatives within our area of influence to improve things around and within. The realization that memory ties you down to the past and imagination leads you to the future is vital. Your potential is unlimited, but to potentiate is to actualize your capabilities in spite of the trying conditions. Placing first things first relates to the endowment of willpower.

If we look at the activities we perform, they can be categorized into four quadrants:

QUADRANT 1 : Urgent & Important

QUADRANT 2 : Important & not urgent

QUADRANT 3 : Urgent & not important

QUADRANT 4 : Not urgent & not important

We tend to spend most of our time in 1, 3 & 4 while the essence of success in the long run is the reduction of 4 , 3 & 1 and in the enlargement of 2.

Think Win-Win pertains to an abundance mentality. As people become increasingly principle-centric, they love to share recognition and power because for them it is an ever expanding pie. The basic paradigm of limited resources is shattered. The abundance mentality produces more profit, power and recognition for everybody. Seeking first to understand than be understood pertains to the quality of courage balanced with consideration.

The root cause of all personnel problems is want of effective communication. People do not listen to understand but are busy preparing their answer while listening. They need approval and lack courage. The attitude is Wait a minute, I am the manager in control. I did not come to listen, I came to talk. When I want your opinion Ill give it to you. The ability to listen first requires restraint, respect and reverence. And the ability to make yourself understood requires courage and consideration. On the continuum, you proceed from fight and flight instincts to mature two way communication where courage is balanced with consideration. Synergy refers to the quality of creativity. The receptivity towards joint efforts in generating solutions that are far better than those proposed individually and originally is really about synergistic communication. This also marks the ability to transcend designation, hierarchy and position. Sharpening the saw is the unique endowment of renewed improvement or self-renewal to overcome entropy. At the one end of the spectrum is entropy and at the other end is continuous innovation, improvement and refinement.

The last word Once the organization focuses on these things, the other achievements like quality certifications will follow as a by-product of the continuous quality improvement drive. Undoubtedly, it will generate a positive impact on the whole business due to enhanced product quality, reduced waste, and contented customers and employees.

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