AN APPROACH TO IMPLEMENT TQM EFFECTIVELY IN AN ORGANIZATION

Kerav Pandya*
Amit Pathak**

Abstract: *TQM is a very useful tool in developing any organization. But its successful implementation is not a simple task. Implementation of TQM has to face resistance from different levels in organizations. The purpose of this paper is to outline key aspects of implementation of large organizational change which may enable an organization to thoughtfully and successfully implement TQM. Sources of resistance to change and ways of dealing with them are also discussed. Next, a model of implementation is presented, including a discussion of key principles. Visionary leadership is offered as an overriding perspective for someone instituting TQM. Implementation principles will be followed by a review of steps in managing the transition to the new system and ways of helping institutionalize the process as part of the organization's culture.*

KEY WORDS: *TQM, Organizational development, Change.*

An approach to implement TQM effectively in an Organization

1. Introduction

In today's complex, fast-paced and shifting environments, focus on quality is the most important factor for any profit making organization. There are different ways by which quality is managed in the organization. Traditionally, quality improvement was considered to be the process, which can be achieved through improvements only in the products or services of the organization. But these methods by themselves can not help achieve excellence. An enhancement in the techniques and systems becomes necessary to meet the global competition. A continuous improvement can lead to the changing of the culture of the organization, which in turn can lead to Total Quality Management (TQM). According to British standard, TQM is defined as a Management Philosophy embracing all activities through which the needs and expectations of the customers and the community, and the objectives of the organizations, are satisfied in the most efficient and cost effective way by maximizing the potential of all employees in a continuing drive for improvement6. This definition gives emphasis on the maximization of the potential of all employees. TQM is also defined as both a philosophy and a set of guiding principles that represent the foundation of a continuously improving organization2. It is the application of quantitative methods and human resources to improve all the processes within an organization and exceed customer needs now and in the future. TQM integrates fundamental management techniques, existing improvement efforts, and technical tools under a disciplined approach7.

2. TQM and Organizational Transformation

Implementation of TQM will change technological, cultural and political system of the organization. In the human services, changes are affected, in the way clients are processed, the service delivery methods applied to clients, and in ancillary organizational processes such as paperwork, procurement processes, and other procedures. TQM is also a change in an organization's culture including norms, values, and belief systems with respect to organizational functioning. And finally, it is a change in an organization's political system into 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.

*Mr.Kerav Pandya, Lecturer, Anand Institute of Management, M.B.A Programme, Anand, Gujarat. E-mail: pandyakerav@yahoo.com
** Mr. Amit Pathak, Lecturer, Anand Institute of Management, M.B.A Programme, Anand, Gujarat. E mail: pathakak1982@yahoo.com

It is important to note 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, practised to any appreciable degree. Any manager serious about embarking on a culture change such as TQM should reflect seriously on how he/she feels and behaves regarding these factors.

For effective implementation of TQM, it is necessary to align various organizational systems. As an example, information technology systems will need to redesign to measure and track new things such as service quality, information transfer time, coordination among all functional departments etc. Changes are also required in other systems in organization. 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. 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. In particular, middle management and first line supervisors will be operating in new ways. Instead of acting as monitors, agents and ordergivers, they will serve as boundary managers and coordinators who assist line workers in getting their jobs done. 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.

TQM must 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.

3. Resistance to TQM implementation

TQM changes the organizational system, so resistance may come from all the levels of employees. Employees at lower and middle levels may consider management as only concerned about the product, not staff needs. Management initiatives focused on concerns such as budget or cost will not resonate with beleaguered line workers. 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. Partly because of heavy service demands, and partly because of professional training of human service workers, which places heavy value on direct service activities with clients, there may be a lack of interest on the part of many line workers in efficiency or even effectiveness and finally on outcomes. This challenge should be addressed by top management.

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. At another level, management resistance to employee empowerment is possible. They may see decision making authority in zero sum terms, i.e. if employees have more involvement in decision making, managers will have less. So, managers will spend less time on control and more on facilitation. For traditional managers, this transition will require teaching/training, introspection(self reflection), and time.

Resistance in other parts of the organization will show up if TQM is introduced on a pilot basis or only in particular programs. Kanter5 (1983) has referred to this perspective as segmentalism, each unit or program sees itself as separate and unique, with nothing to learn from others and no need to collaborate with them. This shows up in the "not invented here" syndrome, those not involved in the initial development of an idea feel no sense of ownership for it10.

4. Strategies to Mitigate Resistance

There are several strategies, which help in dealing with resistance to TQM implementation. Generally, strategies have to do with acknowledging legitimate resistance and changing implementation plans based on it, using effective leadership to involve employees in the vision of TQM, and by using employee participation. To mitigate resistance, the first step is to know the causes of resistance. A useful technique to identify areas of resistance is 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 promotes change or at least triggers it; and restraining forces, which are points of resistance or things getting in the way of change. Start by identifying the revised 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. Examples may be middle management fear of loss of control, lack of time for line workers to take for TQM meetings, and skepticism based on the organization's poor track record regarding change. Arrows from both sides touching the "current state" line represent the constellation of forces10. Each force is then assessed in two ways, its strength, and its amenability to change. Stronger forces will need greater attention.

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. Klein encouraged change agents to validate the role of the "defender" of the status quo and respond to legitimate concerns raised. This will allow appropriate adaptations of the TQM process to account for unique organizational circumstances. Sell TQM based on the organization's real needs, note legitimate risks and negatives, and allow improvements in present organizational procedures. This should enhance organization's credibility and show its openness to critically looking at the process.

Another way to address resistance is to get all employees on the same side, in matching goals of organization and employees. Leadership is the mechanism for this, and specific models known as transformational or visionary leadership is most effective. Research on change implementation has identified four methods. The first, "intervention," involves a key executive justifying the need for change, monitoring the process, defining acceptable performance, and demonstrating how improvements can be made. This was found to be more successful than "participation," in which representatives of different interest groups determine the features of the change. Participation was found to be more successful than "persuasion" (experts attempting to sell changes they have devised) or "edict," the least successful. 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 is 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 manager should consider any decision area as a possibility for employee participation, with the understanding that participation is not always appropriate. Employees or their representatives may be involved in decision areas ranging from the scope and overall approach of the TQM process to teams engaging in quality analysis and suggestions for improvements. Employees may also be involved in ancillary areas such as redesign of the organization's structure, information system, or reward system. Involvement of formal employee groups such as unions is a special consideration which may also greatly aid TQM implementation.

5. Implementation of TQM

Implementation of TQM involves three important factors viz. Understanding Status Quo and Preconditions, Role of a leader, and managing the Transition Process discussed as under:

5.1 Understanding Status Quo

First 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 employees' 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. 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. Kanter addresses this phenomenon by describing building blocks which are present in effective organizational change. These forces include departures from tradition, a crisis or galvanizing event, strategic decisions, individual "prime movers," and action vehicles. Departures from tradition are activities, usually at lower levels of the organization, which occur when entrepreneurs move outside the normal ways of operating to solve a problem. A leader may 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. Finally, action vehicles are needed: mechanisms or structures to enable the change to occur and become institutionalized. TQM processes and models of employee participation are such mechanisms.

Essential or desirable preconditions may be identified in two areas: broad and narrow. Broad factors include those which are concerned with issues such as leadership, resources, and the surrounding infrastructure. Narrow issues have to do with internal issues such as employee training and empowerment and organizational processes such as quality assurance.

Several key factors related to successful TQM. First, as many researchers have noted, top management support is necessary. This is typically represented partly through strategic planning regarding TQM. Second, a customer focus is an important precondition, since TQM often involves improving quality from a customer's point of view. Employees or their representatives must be involved early, particularly in addressing employee training and recognition and employee empowerment and teamwork issues. Attention to these issues is important in changing the organization's culture in the direction of teamwork and a customer and quality focus. The measurement and analysis of products, processes and quality assurance are final elements which need attention. Budgeting and Resource Allocation Systems will need to be realigned to fit with the TQM culture. TQM cannot be used as a mechanism to simply cut costs or rationalize cutbacks. The same is true for human resource management systems; work may be redesigned to implement self-directed work teams, performance appraisal and compensation systems may be changed to reward team based performance, and massive training for managers, supervisors, and workers will be necessary. Finally, thoughtful attention needs to be paid to the ways in which customer feedback is used.

5.2 Role of a Leader

With these principles and preconditions in mind, the following implementation steps will be discussed: using leadership to articulate a vision of the future for the organization and how TQM fits into it, designing a comprehensive change process, implementing TQM and related new systems, and ensuring institutionalization.

As was emphasized earlier, leadership is a key element in successful implementation of large-scale change: the leader shows the need and sets the vision, defining the basic purpose, goals, and parameters or requirements of TQM. The leader needs to take a long term 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. This may seem in contradiction to the earlier stated preference for an "intervention" approach as opposed to traditional participative

decision making. In the former, the leader is, in fact directive regarding the big picture and overall goals, i.e., establishing PDM. Once that strategic direction has been determined, a participative style may be used on implementation details. Prior to this decision, of course, the manger should study TQM, talk to others who have used it, and perhaps attend a preliminary training session. This is important in order for the manager to accurately assess the fit between TQM and her/his style. This will be necessary in establishing an organizational culture which is compatible with TQM, nurturing and reinforcing continuous quality improvement.

In designing a comprehensive change process, the leader must acknowledge the existing organizational culture to ensure a good fit. TQM also needs to be congruent with or aligned with other organizational processes, including reward systems, financial and information systems, and training systems.

5.3 Managing the Transition Process

The basic steps in managing a transition to a new system such as TQM are identifying tasks to be done, creating necessary management structures, developing strategies for building commitment, designing mechanisms to communicate the change, and assigning resources.

Task identification would include a study of present conditions (assessing current reality, as described above); assessing readiness, such as through a force field analysis; creating a model of the desired state, in this case, implementation of TQM; announcing the change goals to the organization; and assigning responsibilities and resources. This final step would include securing outside consultation and training and assigning someone within the organization to oversee the effort. This should be a responsibility of top management. In fact, the next step, designing transition management structures, is also a responsibility of top management. In fact, management must be heavily involved as leaders rather than relying on a separate staff person or function to shepherd the effort. An organization wide steering committee to oversee the effort may be appropriate.

To communicate the change, mechanisms beyond existing processes will need to be developed. Special all staff meetings attended by executives, sometimes designed as input or dialogue sessions, may be used to kick off the process, and TQM newsletters may be an effective ongoing communication tool to keep employees aware of activities and accomplishments.

Management of resources for the change effort is important with TQM, because outside consultants will almost always be required. Choose consultants based on their prior relevant experience and their commitment to adapting the process to fit unique organizational needs. While consultants will be invaluable with initial training of staff and TQM system design, employees (management and others) should be actively involved in TQM implementation, perhaps after receiving training in change management which they can then pass on to other employees. A collaborative relationship with consultants and clear role definitions and specification of activities must be established.

6. Conclusion

Total Quality Management (TQM) can be viewed as an organization wide philosophy requiring all employees at every level of an organization to focus their efforts to help improve each business activity of the organization. For successful implementation of TQM, first assess status quo 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. It is important to note that this will be a difficult, comprehensive, and long term process. Leaders must 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.

References:

1. Agrawal, S.K. (1993), "ISO 9000 implementation in Indian industry", Proceedings of the Eighth ISME Conference in Mechanical Engineering, New Delhi, India, pp.638-644.

2. Dale H. Besterfield, C B Michna, G H Besterfield and M B Sacre "Total Quality Management" Third edition, Prentice-Hall publication.

3. Jagadeesh, R. (1999) "Total quality management in India - perspective and analysis" The TQM Magazine, Vol. 11, No. 5, pp. 321-323

4. James Evans & James Dean, "Total Quality – Management, Organization and Strategy", second edition, South-Western, a division of Thomson Learning.

5. Kanter, R. (1983). The Change Masters. New York: Simon & Schuster.

6. Khanna V.K., Vrat Prem, Sahay B. S. and Shankar Ravi (2008),"TQM- Planning, design & Implementation" , first edition, New Age International Publication.

7. Mostafa Moballeghi and Shivaraj B.," TQM Implementation and Organisational Development among Indian Industries", A paper from http://www.odsummitindia.org/content/html/Best%20Practises/Mostafa%20Moballeghi.pdf.

8. http://www.improve.org

9. http://www.godrejinds.com/working_with_us/tqm.htm

10. http://www.evancarmichael.com/Human-Resources/840/TQM-Implementation-Process.html