

Total Quality Management - Meaning and Important Concepts

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To understand the meaning of “Total quality management”, let us first know what does Quality mean?

Quality refers to a parameter which decides the superiority or inferiority of a product or service. Quality can be defined as an attribute which differentiates a product or service from its competitors. Quality plays an essential role in every business. Business marketers need to emphasize on quality of their brands over quantity to survive the cut throat competition.

Why would a customer come to you if your competitor is also offering the same product? The difference has to be there in quality. Your brand needs to be superior for it to stand apart from the rest.

Total Quality Management

Total Quality management is defined as a continuous effort by the management as well as employees of a particular organization to ensure long term customer loyalty and customer satisfaction. Remember, one happy and satisfied customer brings ten new customers along with him whereas one disappointed individual will spread bad word of mouth and spoil several of your existing as well as potential customers.

You need to give something extra to your customers to expect loyalty in return. Quality can be measured in terms of durability, reliability, usage and so on. Total quality management is a structured effort by employees to continuously improve the quality of their products and services through proper feedbacks and research. Ensuring superior quality of a product or service is not the responsibility of a single member. Every individual who receives his /her paycheck from the organization has to contribute equally to design foolproof processes and systems which would eventually ensure superior quality of products and services. Total Quality management is indeed a joint effort of management, staff members, workforce, suppliers in order to meet and exceed customer satisfaction level. You can't just blame one person for not adhering to quality measures. The responsibility lies on the shoulder of everyone who is even remotely associated with the organization.

W. Edwards Deming, Joseph M. Juran, and Armand V. Feigenbaum jointly developed the concept of total quality management. Total Quality management originated in the manufacturing sector, but can be applied to almost all organizations.

Total quality management ensures that every single employee is working towards the improvement of work culture, processes, services, systems and so on to ensure long term success.

Total Quality management can be divided into four categories:

- Plan
- Do
- Check
- Act

Also referred to as PDCA cycle.

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Planning Phase

Planning is the most crucial phase of total quality management. In this phase employees have to come up with their problems and queries which need to be addressed. They need to come up with the various challenges they face in their day to day operations and also analyze the problem's root cause. Employees are required to do necessary research and collect relevant data which would help them find solutions to all the problems.

Doing Phase

In the doing phase, employees develop a solution for the problems defined in planning phase. Strategies are devised and implemented to overcome the challenges faced by employees. The effectiveness of solutions and strategies is also measured in this stage.

Checking Phase

Checking phase is the stage where people actually do a comparison analysis of before and after data to confirm the effectiveness of the processes and measure the results.

Acting Phase

In this phase employees document their results and prepare themselves to address other problems.

“Quality management” ensures superior quality products and services. Quality of a product can be measured in terms of performance, reliability and durability. Quality is a crucial parameter which differentiates an organization from its competitors. Quality management tools ensure changes in the systems and processes which eventually result in superior quality products and services. Quality management methods such as Total Quality management or Six Sigma have a common goal - to deliver a high quality product. Quality management is essential to create superior quality products which not only meet but also exceed customer satisfaction. Customers need to be satisfied with your brand. Business marketers are successful only when they emphasize on quality rather than quantity. Quality products ensure that you survive the cut throat competition with a smile.

Quality management is essential for customer satisfaction which eventually leads to customer loyalty. How do you think businesses run? Do businesses thrive only on new customers? It is important for every business to have some loyal customers. You need to have some customers who would come back to your organization no matter what.

Would you buy a Nokia mobile again if the previous handset was defective? The answer is NO.

Customers would return to your organization only if they are satisfied with your products and services. Make sure the end-user is happy with your product. Remember, a customer would be happy and satisfied only when your product meets his expectations and fulfills his needs. Understand what the customer expects from you? Find out what actually his need is? Collect relevant data which would give you more insight into customer's needs and demands. Customer feedbacks should be collected on a regular basis and carefully monitored. Quality management ensures high quality products and services by eliminating defects and incorporating continuous changes and improvements in the system. High quality products in turn lead to loyal and satisfied customers who bring ten new customers along with them. Do not forget that you might save some money by ignoring quality

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management processes but ultimately lose out on your major customers, thus incurring huge losses. Quality management ensures that you deliver products as per promises made to the customers through various modes of promotions. **Quality management tools help an organization to design and create a product which the customer actually wants and desires.**

Quality Management ensures increased revenues and higher productivity for the organization.

Remember, if an organization is earning, employees are also earning. Employees are frustrated only when their salaries or other payments are not released on time. Yes, money is a strong motivating factor. Would you feel like working if your organization does not give you salary on time? Ask yourself. Salaries are released on time only when there is free cash flow. Implementing Quality management tools ensure high customer loyalty, thus better business, increased cash flow, satisfied employees, healthy workplace and so on. Quality management processes make the organization a better place to work.

Remove unnecessary processes which merely waste employee's time and do not contribute much to the organization's productivity. Quality management enables employees to deliver more work in less time.

Quality management helps organizations to reduce waste and inventory. It enables employees to work closely with suppliers and incorporate "Just in Time" Philosophy.

Quality management ensures close coordination between employees of an organization. It inculcates a strong feeling of team work in the employees.

Total Quality Management is a combined effort of both top level management as well as employees of an organization to formulate effective strategies and policies to deliver high quality products which not only meet but also exceed customer satisfaction. Total Quality management enables employees to focus on quality than quantity and strive hard to excel in whatever they do. According to total quality management, customer feedbacks and expectations are most essential when it comes to formulating and implementing new strategies to deliver superior products than competitors and eventually yield higher revenues and profits for the organization.

Credits for the process of total quality management go to many philosophers and their teachings. Drucker, Juran, Deming, Ishikawa, Crosby, Feigenbaum and many other individuals who have in due course of time studied organizational management have contributed effectively to the process of total quality management.

There are many models of total quality management and it is really not necessary that every organization should select and implement the same model.