

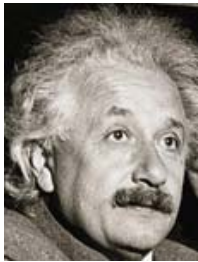
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**Executive
Information
Forum**
Collection

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Our Belief

“We can’t solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when created them.”

“Albert Einstein”



Our Mission

“To inspire curiosity in you to endeavor the unknowns, lead you to observe, absorb, and implement, and eventually guide you, but *NEVER DRAG* you, to success.”



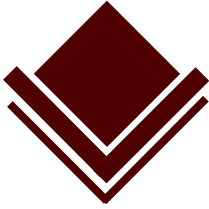
Our Business Reputation

“We start when the others stop”



Our Business Approach

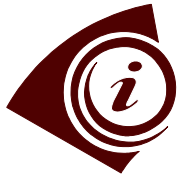
“Although be inspired by it, *NEVER* follow the crowd.”



accrete

*accrete: 1-To grow or become attached by accretion -
The process of growth by gradual buildup; 2- to cause
to adhere or become attached.*

*accretion: Coherence of separate particles;
Concretion*



Executive Information Forum, a dynamic monthly periodical, was published electronically by **accrete**, *The Business Excellence Realization*, from August 2003 to December 2004. This initiative was introduced to furnish its distinguished Senior Managers / Executives audience with unique and practical leadership solutions for complex issues.

This valuable collection contains the series of concise articles about fundamental issues in various fields of management.



Author's Profile

Following several years of holding Manufacturing Process Control Analyst position in the Printing Industry and transforming its inherent process to a digitized one, Rahmat Ushaksaraei earned his Bachelor degree in Mechanical Engineering from the McMaster University. Subsequently, his career encompassed design of non-standard wheels and casters for various industries, Research and Development, Product Management, Project Management, Process Management, Quality Management, Consultancy, and Technical Training. Furthermore, his Business Development functions included Best Practice, Business Excellence, Marketing Management, Strategic Planning, and Business Process Design.

His design projects included the special caster for Walt Disney, the only height adjustable caster in the world for Lift Truck application, component for Medical application casters, and the mini quiet run caster for Toyota Tundra Pickup Truck seating. Moreover, his project management endeavor encompassed various plastic injection molding projects in automotive industry, the largest Siemens-Westinghouse gas turbine engine in the world with 256 Mega Watt output, transfer of technologies for various industries at international level, streamlining internal processes for corporations by managing multi disciplinary international teams.

Combining his expertise in various fields, he has developed the **Diamond Total Management**, an integrated Concept-Project-Process-Quality Business Excellence Model with its pragmatic underlying **Human Intelligence Management** structure and revolutionary macro level subsets of DRP, QFD, PMI, IER, SMART, SCCCC, Stability, FMEA, Variation, and PA, which including its unprecedented and dynamic **Business Excellence & Leadership Mentoring Programs** are being introduced by **accrete**, *The Business Excellence Realization*, a member of Mississauga (Ontario/Canada) Board of Trade (MBOT).

As a Professional Engineer (P.Eng.) and Project Management Professional (PMP), Rahmat Ushaksaraei is member of both Professional Engineers of Ontario (PEO) and Project Management Institute (PMI).



Corporate Landscape



August 2003

This is achieved by connecting the common edges (from available 8 sides) and form the mini Corporate Landscapes.

❖ Thereafter, ask the entire group to collectively find common edges between the mini Corporate Landscapes, and connect them to construct the overall Corporate Landscape.

❖ Repeat the process with other employees to obtain a more precise picture of the overall perception. This will be the solid foundation for implementing required programs to raise the collective awareness.

Due to dynamics of the prescribed method, it is applicable in evaluating smaller scopes such as “Departmental Objectives”.



Case

As the Senior Manager / Executive;

1. how would you evaluate the employees' perceptions of the Corporate Goals?
2. how would you raise the employees' collective awareness of the Corporate Goals?



Solution

Recommendation is to:

“Construct the Corporate Landscape“

This is how:

- ❖ Form a session with up to 12 employees from 3 different departments, or functional groups.
- ❖ Provide them each with a cardboard shaped as an octagon (8 sides). In addition have the drawing materials, paint, tape, glue, colored construction papers, etc. available at their disposal.
- ❖ Ask them, without conferring with each other and in an hour, by utilizing the provided construction aids, pictorially illustrate their perception of the “Corporate Goals” and their specific roles toward achieving them.
- ❖ Upon completion, ask them, with their colleagues from the same department and/or functional group, strive to construct the common departmental and/or functional group perception of the Corporate Goals.

By: Rahmat Ushaksaraei, P.Eng., PMP





Effective Communication



September 2003

❖ Upon readiness of the Leaders, blind fold the Followers, and bring them to the table where the scrambled pieces of the puzzle are. Then, ask the Followers to listen to the nature of the exercise explained by one of the Leaders, follow the Leaders' guidelines precisely, and complete the task within specified timeframe. The rule is that during the exercise all Followers are required to participate in completion of the puzzle.

❖ Upon either expiration of the specified period or completion of the puzzle, remove the blind folds, ask the Followers to review among themselves sequence of the events, enumerate the communication issues, evaluate the strength of the Leaders in communicating effectively, and rank their collective performance (1=Weak, 10=Strong). Simultaneously, ask the Leaders to separately perform the same evaluation as a self assessment.

❖ Finally, ask the 2 groups to present the results of their evaluations to each other, and let the group discussion take its natural course.

❖ To gain a profound view about the effectiveness of communication in your organization, repeat the process with more employees.

➤ 2- To improve the overall effectiveness of the communication, take advantage of our unsurpassed Leadership Training program of "Effective Communication Management" & and its inherent dynamic "SCCCC Methodology".

Case

As the Senior Manager / Executive;

1. how would you measure the effectiveness of communication at various levels of your organization?
2. how would you improve the overall communication in your organization?

Solution

➤ 1- To measure the effectiveness of communication, we would recommend to simulate the exercise: "Follow the Leader". This is how:

❖ Form a session with 10 employees, and divide them into 2 groups, 3 Leaders and 7 Followers. Separate the groups from each other whereby the Followers would not overhear the initial discussions between the Leaders. Note that prior to the actual exercise at no time its nature is revealed to the Followers.

❖ Provide the Leaders with a manageable puzzle (e.g. 20-Pieces). Explain the fact that during the exercise, without touching the pieces of the puzzle, the Leaders' main mandate will be to guide the Blind-Folded Followers to complete the puzzle in a prescribed timeframe. So, instruct the Leaders to agree upon a timeframe, and develop a communication strategy whereby they are clear on how, when, and by whom the information are relayed to the Followers.

❖ The rule is that during the exercise all Leaders are required to participate in giving the instructions

By: Rahmat Ushaksaraei, P.Eng., PMP





Preventing Failure



October 2003



Case

1. What are:
 - the Indicators of failure in achieving the corporate objectives?
 - their corresponding Causes?
 - the Sources of those identified Causes?
2. Why would the corporations equipped even with the most sophisticated management system experience continuous failure?
3. How would one prevent a failure?



Solution

- 1- Generally, Indicators of failure in achieving an objective, their corresponding Causes, and Sources are:
 - ❖ **Indicators:** Missed Target, Non-Repeatable Process, and Nonconforming Product or Service.
 - ❖ **Causes:** Divided Attention, Chaotic Approach, and Unreliable Evaluation.
 - ❖ **Sources:** Lack of utilizing a methodological Project Management, lack of adhering to a dynamic Process Management, and lack of implementing a comprehensive Quality Management.
- 2- Although may have adapted the most sophisticated management system, the fundamental reason of the systematic failure in a corporation lies in its "One Dimensional" approach. In various industries it has been repeatedly experienced that corporations merely due to the fact that the competition has implemented a system, would adapt either a similar one, or in

some cases a more complex one.

Although a dynamic system is designed to perform like a master key, if it is not suitably tailored for a specific application, its adverse effects may be beyond control. For example, what would be the rate of the success of a corporation that follows the competition's footsteps and adapts the complex "Six Sigma" system without adhering to the fundamentals of a simple and logical quality system first? On the other hand, implementing even the most sophisticated system without considering its integration with other existing ones limits its effect. Furthermore, the impact is more severe, if this one dimensional approach is coupled with mistaking a "Tool" for an "Objective". Specifically, a management system (Tool) is intended to facilitate the process, and not become an idol. Therefore, it is required to be treated as such, continuously revisited, improved, and readapted. Otherwise, as an "Objective", it will only provide a short term solution. Beyond that specific point, in itself it turns into a road block.

- 3- To prevent a systematic failure, we recommend to adapt the "**Diamond Total Management**", a flexible and dynamically integrated Project-Process-Quality Management system. This evolved methodology has taken advantage of the key practical elements of the various management bodies of knowledge, has introduced new concepts, and is to equip its user with a Multidimensional Total Management tool. To learn more about the Diamond Total Management Methodology, refer to the "downloads" page of www.accrete.ca.
- ❖ To equip your management body with the Diamond Total Management, take advantage of its corresponding Leadership Training Program which is exclusively offered by our experts.

By: Rahmat Ushaksaraei, P.Eng., PMP





Domino Effect



November 2003



Case

1. What are the Domino Effect, and its inherent criteria?
2. How would one recognize it?
3. What is the main source of it?
4. How would one prevent and/or control it?



Solution

➤ 1- Domino Effect is a *"cumulative effect produced when one event initiates a succession of similar events"* (The Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, © 1983). Coupled with its definition, Domino Effect is the most common cause of systematic failure of an organization. Mainly, depending on its nature, it ranges from the hidden slow moving ripples with sporadic emergence of its adverse results, or the fast paced one with both shocking and immediate multidimensional hits one after the other.

➤ 2- In brief, both presence of a Domino Effect and its impacts are more detectable by an independent and professional outside observer with no prejudice toward the organizational interdependencies. Furthermore, within an organization, although its presence may be less tangible to the naked eyes, for sure both its impacts and trends are. These effects are usually experienced as continuous failure of projects/programs, high level of nonconformity in product/service, and non-repeatability of processes which all collectively contribute to unsatisfied internal and external customers.

➤ 3- Independent of an external influence, the main source for both initiation, and spread of a Domino Effect is rooted in the management system of an organization. Mainly lack of a fully competent, professional, and integrated management body that is equipped with the dynamic and comprehensive tools would not allow an organization to expand its vision beyond the short term goals and day to day activities. As a result, the units within an organization are operated independently, each creating a ripple. Consequently, the organization is paralyzed in proactively seeking adverse effects, and controlling and/or preventing them. Naturally, the hurricane of organizational uncertainties leads to a disastrous situation which only can be cleared away by the "Super Managers". Logically, where would these visionaries start from? -"Restructuring of the Organization, Integrating of the Systems, and Streamlining of the Processes"; specially at the senior management level.

➤ 4- The rate of success of an organization in either preventing or controlling the Domino Effect and its adverse results is proportionally related to the degree of its senior management's commitment in resolving the deficiency at its source, the competence of management resources in key roles, and the dynamism of the tools that they are equipped with and religiously practice. Furthermore, depending on the flexibility of an organization the rate of success either linearly or exponentially is to increase, providing this mindset is coupled with furnishing the management body with integrated leadership training. In parallel, liaising with a professional outside observer that temporarily is to play the role of the "Super Manager" with integrated approach will have a significant impact on streamlining of the processes that are required to effectively shift the gear toward either preventing or controlling the Domino Effect.

By: Rahmat Ushaksaraei, P.Eng., PMP





Operation Checkmate



December 2003



Case

1. How would an organization reach the “Operation Checkmate” status?
2. How “Product and/or Resource Inventory” is related to this issue?
3. How would an organization prevent experiencing this phenomenon?



Solution

➤ 1- Disregard of nature of product and/or service provided by an organization, the main focus of a healthy business practice is to both maintain and increase the level of its customer satisfaction. Furthermore, recognized by the most prestigious international body of Quality Management, ISO, which has restructured its entire 2000 version of the Quality Management System (QMS) to reflect this issue, securing both internal and external customers' satisfactions has become the first of its eight principles. This is only a logical shift of attention to the most fundamental parameter that guarantees success of an organization. It is further evident that level of customer satisfaction is proportionally related to the quality, efficiency, and promptness of overall service that is received by a customer. Therefore, considering that an organization experiences continuous freeze in adequately responding to its customers' (Internal/External) requirements, it defies the fundamental purpose of continuing its existence. Consequently, the organization reaches “Operation Checkmate” status, a sensitive point in its operation life cycle that it is paralyzed. Beyond this point, unless the organization ceases the opportunity as wake up call and spearheads a drastic shift of its

attitude toward altering its destiny, in majority of the cases experiencing a systematic failure in its entirety is imminent.

➤ 2- Fundamentally, an in-depth understanding of its product and/or resource inventory is a key factor for an organization in preventing experiencing an Operation Checkmate. In a simple analogy, to reach a destination, one is required to be aware of both availability and suitability of the means of traveling. Specifically, a precise recognition of the pool of products and/or resources allows an organization to align its internal potential more adequately with its customers' expectations, remove the redundancies, conduct a precise “Need Analysis”, and proactively acquire the external assistance to compensate for its internal inabilities. Furthermore, experiences have repeatedly shown that the rate of success of a small traditional organization with a tight grip on its internal capacities is much higher than its large but unaware competition, even if it is equipped with state of the art and leading edge technology.

➤ 3- Coupled with recognizing existing pool of products and/or resources, effectively managing these inventories, developing the corresponding Key Performance Indicators (KPI), and continuously monitoring and improving upon them are the major factors in preventing an organization to experience this phenomena. To comply, the first step is to implement a dynamic and effective Inventory Management system which proactively is to review products and/or resources inventories, distinguish “Stock” from “Stuff”, and recommend alternative methods. In specific, we recommend to familiarize your organization with the “Effective Inventory Management (EIM)” system, a revolutionary technique developed by the pioneers in field of the Inventory Management that is being offered as part of our Leadership Training Program.

By: Rahmat Ushaksaraei, P.Eng., PMP





Precise Estimation



January 2004



Case

1. What is the criticality of “Precise Estimation” in success of an organization?
2. How is the Precise Estimating capability of an organization measured?
3. How would an organization improve upon this skill and/or master it?



Solution

► 1- To remain competitive, organizations are continuously tasked by their senior managers to undertake new challenges. These are mainly focused to materialize a wide range of objectives that vary in nature and complexity. Normally, in each case, preliminary macro level feasibility and cost analysis are conducted either by an internal or external source. Within this process, what remains intact is the detailed analysis of required efforts. In majority of the organizations, this task becomes responsibility of the implementers who may be distanced from the senior managers by couple of hierarchical levels. Inherently, “Precise Estimation” of the necessities is truly an art, and is a delicate process. Furthermore, although both the TCQ (Time-Cost-Quality) constraint and external influences may have effects in shaping the outcome, mainly characteristics of the final result is determined by extent of collective knowledge and expertise of the “human resources” tasked to manage it. Accordingly, combined approach of the implementers may lead to either under or over estimation of obligatory actions. Subsequently, deviation from precisely estimating the required efforts, known as baseline, will be reflected in the obtained result. Then, the difference will be between

the overall characteristics of what was achieved and what is acceptable as the “Voice of Customer” (VOC). Naturally, underestimating during the Planning Phase translates, in the Execution Phase, into emergence of unaccounted for parameters, conflicts in priorities, and exhaustion of resources. On the other hand, overestimating results in over allocation of resources, and overlap of responsibilities. In this specific case, although overestimating may be viewed synonymous with either “Fast Tracking” or “Contingency Planning”, in reality it neither guarantees a faster result nor eliminates risk. Generally, in both cases of under and over estimation, providing quality is not overlooked, time, and cost are impacted, and particularly cost of achieving a desired goal rises.

► 2- In achieving an objective, cost overrun is an indication of a deviation from precisely estimating the required efforts. Therefore, this hypothesis may be utilized to develop a gauge for measuring the familiarity of an organization with the concept of “Precise Estimation”. Specifically, the expertise of an organization in this field is evaluated by its adherence to reach a set goal within the original macro level approved budget. Furthermore, over a period of time, witnessing a trend of an either systematic cost overruns or adherence to prescribed budgets for implemented programs, is an indication of the overall competency of an organization in this field.

► 3- To improve upon the skill of “Precise Estimation” and/or master it, it is recommended to familiarize your key stakeholders with IER (Input-Expectation-Risk) methodology, and its corresponding Risk Management, and Effective Communication Management concepts. This combined approach is to ensure the quality of inter-organizational communication in relaying the expectations, and monitoring the effectiveness of its inherent feed back system in signaling the road blocks, if any.

By: Rahmat Ushaksaraei, P.Eng., PMP





Process

Characteristics



February 2004

Case

1. At macro level, what are the main characteristics of a process?
2. How would these characteristics impact an organization?
3. How are these characteristics related to each other?
4. How would an organization be able to revolutionize its Process Management system?

Solution

► 1-The dominant macro level characteristics of a process are its **Capability** and **Stability**. Their general corresponding definitions are;

- Capability: Having attributes required for performance; having traits conducive to or feature permitting.

- Stability: Having attributes to restore itself to its original condition when disturbed from equilibrium.

Disregard of a specific application, and from a technical point of view for any process;

Capability: Compliance with the set criteria.

Stability: Consistency and repeatability.

To differentiate between these characteristics let's consider a tangible case whereby a bolt manufacturer is to produce 6.25 long bolts with tolerance of ± 0.25 . This translates into an allowable range of 6.00 (shortest) to 6.50 (longest) in length. In this case, the capability of its corresponding manufacturing process reflects its adherence to both dimension and tolerance intent. Therefore, the length of ALL manufactured bolts must fall in the 6.0 to 6.5 range. Simultaneously, it is NOT restricted that even two manufactured bolts are identical in length. On the

other hand, stability of the same process deals with its ability to manufacture dimensionally consistent (e.g. 6.30) bolts all the time. So, in summary;
Capability: Attribute Compliance (Memory hook: AC).
Stability: Consistency Adherence (Memory hook: CA).

► 2- To evaluate the impacts of the process characteristics on an organization let's continue with the same manufactured bolt case whereby a customer purchases 2 bolts. Randomly, the length of the first bolt is 6 (shortest possible) and the second one 6.5 (longest possible). The customer's intention is to fit these into the holes drilled to the depth of 6.25, equal to the advertised length of the bolt on its packaging. Naturally, the shorter bolt would still fit while the longer one would be oversized by 0.25. Consequently, although both bolts were produced by a capable process and were dimensionally according to the design intent, the customer will be dissatisfied with both the product and the organization that manufactured it.

► 3- From the Process Management point of view, stability of a process precedes its capability. So, it is only logical to measure the capability of a process, if and only if its stability is verified and sustained. Otherwise, although a purely capable process may show temporarily the sign of stability, in a long run sustaining its consistency is difficult. Furthermore, upon securing its stability, its ongoing health may be monitored with determining its continual capability.

► 4- Generally, a process is influenced by at least one of the 5Ms. These are Man, Machine, Material, Method, and Milieu. Moreover, to revolutionize the practice of Process Management in an organization, it is vital to introduce a culture whereby recognizing both the influence of 5Ms and stabilizing the existing processes become top priorities. Thereafter, their capabilities are required to be continually monitored. In achieving this objective it is essential for an organization to familiarize its key stakeholders' with fundamentals of the Effective Process Management system.

By: Rahmat Ushaksaraei, P.Eng., PMP





Fenced

In and Out



March 2004



Case

1. How would quality “Fence In and Out” an organization?
2. What are the elements in making the quality journey a success?
3. How would an organization reach quality excellence?



Solution

► 1- In a competitive market the rate of success of an organization in introducing its new product or service is proportionally related to level of convincing its end customers of its “Quality”. To achieve this goal, an organization may adapt a specific quality approach as a set of guideline. This may range from popular ISO, followed by an intermediate industry specific AS, QS, GMP, TL, etc., to more advanced systems such as the Six Sigma. Regardless of the selection, both suitability of the quality approach and adherence to its guidelines are critical. With the exception of few successful cases, it has been repeatedly experienced that organizations fall in one of the two following categories:

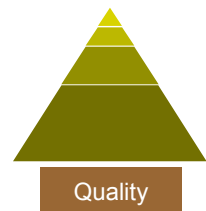
Category 1: Organization adapts the most sophisticated quality approach. Its internal Quality Management System (QMS) is not mature enough to benefit from its full potential. Accordingly, instead of assisting the organization in elevating its inherent quality, the new system functions as a regulatory-administrative mechanism only. Subsequently, built-in quality culture of the standard is replaced with after fact quality inspection, and simultaneously random eruptions of nonconformities/failures are experienced. As a result, the organization is trapped in its own choice of quality attitude, feels “Fenced In”, struggles to release consistent and marketable product/service with expected quality, and consequently is “Fenced Out” of the competition.

Category 2: Due to either lack of an integrated management vision and/or financial restrictions, an organization settles for a more traditional quality approach. Furthermore, it lacks a profound internal QMS to streamline the related processes. Therefore, quality of product/service becomes a guessing game, and Quality Assurance is replaced with Quality Insurance (Dealing with liabilities and recalls). By walking on this path, the organization is “Fenced In” its everyday struggle with recurring nonconformities, feels incapable of releasing consistent marketable product/service, and therefore simultaneously is “Fenced Out” of the competition.

► 2- Simply, the key to a successful endeavor in the field of quality is to select a suitable standard, and adhere to its guidelines. In the real world, due to nature of products/services, although an organization’s option in selecting a standard is limited to few available ones, its competency to make it a success is not. Furthermore, the strength of its internal QMS in recognizing the potential of a quality standard, developing a stable system, and continually reviewing and improving upon it are the key factors in its overall success.

► 3- To equip a product/service with a competitive edge in an aggressive market, an organization is required to achieve the quality excellence. To comply, it is essential for the organization to initiate a review of both its adapted quality standard and internal QMS. Accordingly, either a cultural shift or change is to be commenced. To increase the rate of success, familiarity with fundamentals of the Quality Tree, as depicted below, and its interdependencies are essential. This approach allows the organization to move harmoniously on the specified path to attain the hard reach top fruits:

- Six Sigma
- AS, QS, GMP, TL, etc.
- ISO
- Logic



By: Rahmat Ushaksaraei, P.Eng., PMP





Voice Of Customer



April 2004



Case

1. What is the "Voice Of Customer (VOC)" ?
2. What are the fundamentals of the VOC?; How is it related to "Customer Satisfaction"?
3. What are the methodological and professional approaches for adapting this concept?



Solution

► 1- In today's aggressive market, one of the most critical elements of success of an organization is its devotion to customer satisfaction. Inherently, the basic aspect of this phenomenon is the full compliance with customer's request. To guarantee success, an organization is mandated to perceive the specifics of its customers' requirements, view them from the customers' perspectives, and deliver them as prescribed. This approach defines the boundaries of a concept known as the "Voice Of Customer (VOC)". The VOC is a well known phrase in the Automotive Industry and is simply defined as "Customer Wants". Moreover, the VOC has traditionally been the main drive for all subsequent actions in both current manufacturing of various models of vehicles, and their future design development and improvement. Currently, there are various organizations in the other sectors that are striving to both adapt this phenomenon, and devise the appropriate processes. In this regard, what plays an important role is their familiarity with its logic, and both known tools and new approaches.

► 2- To simplify the process, one is required to view the VOC as a communication issue. Within this boundary, it is essential to devise and implement a coherent process whereby the VOC is heard, by challenging its content it is translated into tangible details, the overall competency of the organization in fulfilling the requirements is verified, and finally the

interpretation of VOC is confirmed with the customer. During this process, it is crucial that attending the VOC is not perplexed with improper interpretation of "Striving for Customer Satisfaction". Dominantly, this phenomenon is perceived as "customer is always right" and therefore may not be challenged. On the contrary, proactively challenging the VOC is a healthy activity, and has two significant purposes;

a- To fully clarify the customer's intention in pursuing a requirement: It has been repeatedly experienced that the VOC is often based on either a market trend or competing with a potential rival. Therefore, requirement is passed on to the potential provider as a vague wish list without a supportive analysis. So, determining the specifics provides the customer with a reality check. Often enough, the VOC is streamlined thereafter to reflect reality.

b- To prevent emergence of undesired changes: In the real world, during the life cycle of a project and due to future realization, the VOC may change. Therefore, challenging it at the beginning functions as a mechanism to provide a tighter control over future interruptive changes by the customer.

► 3- Generally, those organizations are successful in adapting the VOC approach externally that have already mastered the techniques internally and toward their internal customers; i.e. the inter-organizational communications are established, and are functioning at their highest level of efficiency. Moreover, to achieve this goal, an organization is required to adhere to the 7 steps of an Effective Communication Management, source-encoding-message-medium-decoding-receiver-feedback. In addition, to adapt a methodological approach, it is crucial that the key stakeholders of an organization are familiarized with Dynamic Requirement Planning (DRQ) a 9-step process in successfully mapping out the essentials of the VOC, Quality Function Deployment (DFQ) a rational 4-phase customer driven technique that may be utilized to translate the VOC into subsequent steps, and the revolutionary SCCCC methodology, a 5-step integrated approach.

By: Rahmat Ushaksaraei, P.Eng., PMP





An apple a day...



May 2004



Case

1. Are “Kaizen and Kaikaku” myths or realities?
2. Are adapting “Kaizen and Kaikaku” to guarantee the success of an organization?
3. What are the logical steps?



Solution

➤ 1- Hearing the expression, “An apple a day...” is a constant reminder that in a long run a gradual but continual build up of vitamins is to enhance the body’s immune system. Otherwise, after one is infected with flue virus, consuming even the entire pick of an apple tree may not be as effective. The same analogy is applicable to overall health of an organization. One common approach in various industries is the adaptation of the Kaizen (Continuous Incremental Improvement). In contrast, some organizations have chosen a “Lean” thinking approach whereby Kaikaku (roughly translatable as “Radical Improvement”) is the core focus. Regardless of the selected methodology, similar to the case of human body, effectiveness of implementing either concept by an organization is directly proportional to its current health level. Unfortunately, the dominant illusion is that either Kaizen or Kaikaku is the remedy to alter the destiny of an organization that would not benefit from a profound management system. Naturally, if adapted by these organizations, the common outcome is either undesired result or continuous failure in each and every trial. Consequently, the famous conclusion is reached that “Kaizen and Kaikaku are effective, if implemented in the same culture where these methodologies were originated from”. On the contrary, it has been experienced that various industries in the same culture were not successful in implementing continual improvement methodologies either. Perhaps the only logic in this line of thinking is that originator of any methodology has the best understanding of it. In addition, a common mistake is the total disregard for

the inherent dynamism of these tools; i.e. unless continually evolved within, a rigid approach to even such sophisticated methodologies provides only a temporary relief.

In summary, both Kaizen and Kaikaku are as pragmatic as they intended to be. Moreover, the key in successfully adapting such measures is in initially attending and maintaining the overall health of organization.

➤ 2- Considering the nature of the Kaizen and/or Kaikaku, these measures would pave the road to success of an organization, if and only if, they are treated as system enhancement tools. Accordingly, it is fundamentally important to appreciate the fact that devising a “Stable and Integrated” management system is the prerequisite. Only thereafter, these methods show their true value by either incrementally or radically, but continually, improving the original system. Otherwise, although Kaizen and/or Kaikaku temporarily serve the intended agenda, neither one is designed to patch the management inefficiency of an organization.

➤ 3- In conjunction with a strong management culture, an organization is required to implement an initiative whereby the very nature of the existing management system is viewed under microscope. Providing the stability of the system is proven beyond any doubt, either Kaizen or Kaikaku may be implemented. Otherwise, if in doubt:

- ❖ Step 1: By relying on internal resources and/or acquiring outside expertise an integrated management system is required to be devised.
- ❖ Step 2: By defining the key variables, the level of stability of the system is required to be measured.
- ❖ Step 3: By controlling the variables, if any, the system is required to be stabilized.
- ❖ Step 4: The stability of the system is required to be verified. Otherwise the previous steps are required to be repeated.
- ❖ Step 5: Depending on the nature of system, either Kaizen or Kaikaku may be implemented.

By: Rahmat Ushaksaraei, P.Eng., PMP





Performance Indicator



June 2004



Case

1. What are the Metrics that drive your business?
2. How were the Key Performance Indicators selected?
3. What are the next coherent steps?



Solution

► 1- In this day and age, every organization has a set of Metrics. Commonly, in each case baseline is a representative of corporate ideals. Ordinary, the common goal is to continually measure performance and/or achievement of the organization against prescribed measuring bars. Moreover, the result of such comparison is utilized to determine whether or not to continue on adapted path by the organization. Otherwise, the direction is altered to attend new agenda. Therefore, fundamentally, what prescribes future approach is today performance measure-up to a metric. Naturally, a well developed metric would serve as a pragmatic guideline to steer entire system in an appropriate direction. On the other hand, one could imagine what the impact would be, providing a metric is not a true representative of goals. In addition, in both functional and matrix type organizations, it is often customary that various departments have their independent metrics. Furthermore, the interactions among various performance indicators may not be inherently controlled. In this case, providing these metrics, as an intricate moving components of a device are not globally related, they may deter harmonious functionality of the organization as a whole. Consequently, they inadequately alter its future direction. One other important factor is the dominant approach to metrics. Logically, one is required to appreciate the fact that metrics are intended to monitor the overall health of a system. Otherwise, engaging in last minute number crunching to sway the true performance is not a value added exercise.

In brief to ensure true future growth, an organization is required to take a hard look at its metrics that currently are being utilized as performance indicators, and determine their values in driving the business.

► 2- In order to evaluate the true value of current metrics, one is required to initiate an organization wide review. Accordingly, by selecting a dedicated body of resources, a centralized database containing all existing metrics, specific stakeholders, and their main objectives is to be developed. Thereafter, by interviewing the key stakeholders, the main objectives and measurable elements per each metric are to be identified. In specific, one is required to determine:

a. What was the overall process in translating the organization objectives? Who developed the process? Is it mapped?

b. Who developed the metrics? Was it either a collective organization wide effort or an independent department based one?

c. Why a specific set of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) were selected?

d. How long was the trial period set for? How were they reality checked against initial objectives? What was the feedback mechanism? How often they were revisited?

e. How and by whom their global integrity were monitored? Was there a organization metric management system?

And many more...

► 3- As the result of complying with fundamentals of this in depth analysis, Metrics Landscape of an organization may be developed. Thereafter, depending on the outcome:

a. Undesired; The results may be utilized to both overcome systematic inefficiencies and develop a unified metrics system.

b. Desired; A proactive approach may be initiated to develop a monitoring system whereby global integrity and continual efficiencies of metrics are assured.

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Cultural

Fit



July 2004



Case

1. In terms of Human Resources Management, what would define a Cultural Fit?
2. Is cultural diversity the key to success of an organization?



Solution

➤ 1- A while ago, in response to an employment opportunity, a colleague underwent various interviews with key figures of an organization. Upon being determined the only fit candidate for the position, while awaiting the arrival of promised letter of offer, he received an unexpected phone call from HR manager informing him that he is not being considered any longer. Furthermore, he was advised that decision was based on the fact that “he is a too serious person for a relaxed environment that the company enjoys”, and therefore a “Cultural Misfit”. In response, he ensured that the organization was indeed hiring a Senior Project Manager for Engineering department (2 Serious Functions) tasked to enhance the internal system and secure future growth (Serious Mandates). Although since then he took his “Seriousness” as a complement and moved on, one would wonder that in terms of Human Resources Management what would define a “Cultural Fit”?, and how could the same expression have different interpretations? This is due to the fact that, amazingly in the same era, some organizations have truly evolved, surpassed traditional boundaries of widely accepted human resources management practices, and hire individuals categorized as “Slow Paced”. Within this approach, the core philosophy is to involve these employees with fast paced teams that tend to ignore rather insignificant details. If not attended adequately, these small issues may have catastrophic impacts in the future. Naturally, these insignificant yet delicate issues are picked up by “Slow Paced” employees that tend to question every aspects of a subject prior to taking any further action on it.

On the other hand, some organizations misinterpreted “Culturally Fit” as “Functionally Fit” whereby with minimum regards for the employee’s dominant behavior, and purely based on his/her expertise place the individual in blank spot of the organizational jigsaw puzzle.

In summary, what remains inevitable is that “Culturally Fit” entails combined elements of “Organization’s culture”, and individual’s “Behavior” and “Expertise”.

➤ 2- Although “Cultural Diversity” has been occasionally mistaken as a vehicle to merely address racial/cultural concerns, advanced and successful organizations have benefited from it by intentionally diversifying their key resources. Within this approach, they have taken advantage of result oriented methodologies that are based on the fundamentals of human behavior. These researches concentrate on elements emerged from functionality of human brain. One of the most significant endeavors in human behavior has been conducted by Ned Hermann. With 35 years of experience at General Electric, 12 years in Management Education, in 1976 Hermann began his research into creativity and the human brain which led him to combine his own concepts with the left/right and triune brain theories to create the whole brain model. Upon Hermann’s election to the prestigious Training Magazine Hall of Fame, his work was cited as “one of the most significant contributions to training and development”. Ned Hermann, a double major in Physics and Music, developed Hermann Brain Dominance Instrument (HBDI) in 1978. This tool both measures and expresses unique individual thinking preferences.

Overall, diversity, is regarded as the pathway to success of an organization, providing it is not purely intended either as a tool to address “minority content” concern or to function as matchmaker of expertise. On the contrary, although adhering to basics of respecting both human races and individual’s expertise are important, elevating overall perception of an organization regarding human behavioral aspects is the key element in developing a diversified workforce.

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The Right Combination



August 2004



Case

1. Is "Risk Management" a value added element of overall management body of knowledge?
2. Which aspect of Risk Response Planning is more effective? What is "The Right Combination"?



Solution

► 1- A while ago, when I was participating in a prestigious International Management Training in Germany, in response to an issue, I stated: "Unless I am expecting them, I am not fond of surprises". Although the program facilitator initially found my comment hilarious, he inquired about the logic behind it. To satisfy his curiosity, I stated that in essence my attitude toward this issue is not different from the one of a distinguished scientist that believed in: "Luck is for the people who prepare themselves for it". I further explained that providing one has proactively planned before executing a project, and along the way has tightly controlled it, there must not be any surprises other than the ones resulted from act of nature. On the other hand, providing there has been limitation in any of the planning, executing, and controlling phases, one would be expecting future shortfalls (surprises), and therefore is to be prepared for them. To compare this line of thinking with dominant industry perception of "Risk Management", one would appreciate the fact that undeniably the rate of emergence of a risk (surprise) is inversely proportional to quality of risk preventive measures that are in place. Accordingly, to evaluate the overall rate of effectiveness of risk management in an organization, the level of its adherence to this doctrine is to be measured. To comply, DNA of organization is required to be decoded to evaluate the dominant attitude toward risk. Logically, the purpose is to identify intricate part that risk management plays in shaping overall management vision.

During this endeavor, the main focus is to determine:

- a- Is "Risk Management" valued as an proactive management tool to foresee risks (surprises)?
- b- Is "Risk Management" valued as a reactive measure to deflect and/or resolve resulted risk oriented issues?

As a guideline, generally risk management is considered an effective and value added element, providing it is "proactively" identifies the shortfalls, and introduces corrective measures. Otherwise, reactively, it purely functions as a temporary hideout from management inefficiencies. Naturally, insisting on a continual reactive approach will undoubtedly result in an overall system halt.

► 2- Considering following definitions, effectiveness of both Mitigation and Contingency are case specific:

- ❖ **Mitigation:** Reducing, upfront, the probability and/or impact of a risk.
- ❖ **Contingency:** Alternative strategies, after fact, utilized to ensure success, if specified risk occurs.

Although, depending on circumstance, one or the other approach may deem appropriate, the important aspect is which one culturally and repeatedly is being promoted. During Risk Response Planning, Mitigation is viewed as a more proactive approach whereby identified risks are dealt with. On the other hand, Contingency is a reactive approach to an emerged risk that for one reason or the other was omitted. Additionally, providing a systematic reliance on contingency planning is observed, it needs to be regarded as a wakeup call that Proactive Risk Management is not the main focus of organization. Generally, the "Right Combination" is to encompass a culture that devise a strategic plan to promote proactive risk management. This is to ensure that upfront precise planning allows risk elements to be identified, and mitigated accordingly. Within, paying attention to developing risk triggers, evaluators, and internal risk feedback system is imperative. Simultaneously, resources may be reserved to deal with beyond the control risk elements.

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Missing Link



September 2004



Case

1. What is the "Missing Link" in success of an organization?
2. What are the fundamentals of this "Missing Link"?
3. What is the next coherent step?



Solution

► 1- It is often heard that organizations crumble overnight and create irreversible ripple effects either in a specific sector or throughout the entire market. In reviewing such cases, it is immature to assume that merely a volatile market is responsible for the collapse. Specially, it seems that such sophisticated organizations did not have either the basic measures in place to alarm them of forthcoming crises or adapt strategies to address their inherent systematic shortfalls. In fact, an overall study shows that in these organizations an **"Integrated and Dynamic Management Practice"** is the **"Missing Link"**. Instead, there exists an inefficient system patched along the way several times, and so often that no sign of original management culture and vision are in the horizon. The real world analogy of this issue is where, in lieu of an efficient platform, one continuously receives patch files from an operating system software provider. These are temporary solutions for the inefficiency of original system. In some instances, collective size of these temporary patch files is almost as large the size of the operating system itself. Furthermore, an entirely separate files management system is required to integrate the patch files with the original platform. Overall, how stable a patched system would you think will be? Above all, the common justification is that "This is the real world". Trust me, IT IS NOT. The only thing real about it is that such organizations suffer from management inefficiencies, adapt inferior alternatives, and continue to run inefficiently until their entire systems collapse.

► 2- To introduce the fundamentals, one is required to dwell on the strategic phrase that **"lack of an Integrated and Dynamic Management Practice is the root cause of a systematic failure of an organization"**. The corresponding logic is as follows:

- ❖ **Management:** Sole responsible body for providing vision, and mentorship to materialize the vision.
- ❖ **Integrated:** A multi-dimensional practice rather than the classic one dimensional one.
- ❖ **Dynamic:** In comparison to a rigid concept, the capacity in evolving within.

Regardless of the type of an organization (functional, matrix, projectized), the dominant perception about management is that "It is a localized function". Therefore, both visionary and leadership aspects of the practice is clouded with attending everyday issues. Furthermore, providing an organization is conscious enough to view management synonymous with leadership, it may still lack Integrated side of the practice. Therefore, once again managers specializing in one specific area provide leadership locally omitting that they are part of larger orchestra. Finally, Integrated Management Practice without respecting its inherent Dynamism is a tripod that is lacking its third leg. Naturally, considering the element of Dynamism is a constant reminder of the fact that a Management Practice is only a tool, and is continually required to be evaluated, polished, and evolved within. Otherwise, in itself, it becomes a roadblock. In summary, merely an Integrated and Dynamic Management Practice is a true knight in shining armor.

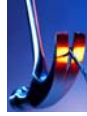
► 3- To reverse the sinking process, an organization is required to focus on both its Aptitude and Attitude. Generally, an average size organization has enough resources, and therefore the "aptitude" to change. To fully take advantage of this potential, its "attitude" is required to be changed, and brought in line with the overall vision. This is achieved, if and only if, a culture change is introduced at various levels and the fundamentals of the **Diamond Total Management** are adhered to.

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Managing Change



October 2004



Case

1. What are the important factors of a “Change”?
2. What are the essential elements of an “Effective Change Management”?
3. How are the repetitive changes to be controlled?



Solution

➤ 1- In today’s world, it seems almost impossible to reach a goal without experiencing at least one “Change” in the overall plan. Providing a change has not been resulted from an omission in attending the fundamentals of a coherent and effective initial planning, measures are required to be implemented to manage it. Such approach has instituted a body of knowledge known as “Change Management”. Despite numerous attempts by various experts to introduce universal and systematic methodologies to manage a change, organizations often rely on their internal approaches. Traditionally, these approaches were nurtured by comparing the event with what was known as collective awareness of an organization. In recent years, more sophisticated organizations have adapted structured approaches whereby they initially refer to their accumulated experiences bundled in a “Lessons Learned” concept. In either case of a traditional or an advanced organization, what remains a common omission is that attending a change, rather than dissecting it first, becomes the dominant agenda. To introduce an effective measure, by shifting the focus to Cause Management, collective approaches are required to be directed to initially define the Nature, Source and Cause of the change. Although it may seem irrelevant at first, this crucial step is the foundation of an Effective Change Management:

❖ **Nature:** The main objective is to determine whether or not change is a one time event or a repetitive one; e.g. in case of a product, a one time change may be implemented to improve its inherent design, and for a

repetitive type, the same product may undergo multiple changes each one intended to capture continuous design improvements.

❖ **Source:** It is to determine who has initiated the change. Is it an Internally driven agenda or an External one? If internal, is it the result of vertically downward mandate or an upward initiative? If external, is it initiated by the market or other sources?

❖ **Cause:** It is to differentiate between a change resulted from internal evolution of an organization and the one caused by a systematic management inefficiency.

In summary; To adapt an Effective Change Management, **shift your focus form just managing a change, to substantiating it first.**

➤ 2- A vital step in managing a change is to establish a core group consisted of the key stakeholders representing all impacted areas. This body is to depict a miniaturized version of both the organization, and its internal systems. Thereafter, the main agenda is:

❖ To develop a bidirectional communication system whereby concerns, if any, are communicated from the core group to the influenced areas and vice versa.

❖ To define the scope of the change to its maximum tangible level that are agreed upon by all concerned parties.

❖ To conduct an impact analysis. This is to identify both internally and externally impacted areas, level of impact, and acceptance/rejection tolerance level.

❖ To initially map the entire change integration process at macro level. Thereafter, the process mapping is to continue to capture all details including specific tasks assigned to individuals.

➤ 3- One of the most practical measures in controlling repetitive changes is the introduction of a “Change Freeze” culture. This introduces a time frame whereby all necessary changes are to be known and/or implemented. Historically, it is shown that although it may face resistance at first, insisting on it eventually promotes both proactive management approach and tighter control on the changes overall.

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Art of Deception



November 2004



Case

1. Would one need to regard “systematic deception” as a body of knowledge?
2. What are the coherent steps to manage this issue?



Solution

►1. In today’s market where for any given product or service multiple options exit, one would have great difficulty in selecting the right one. Simultaneously, in most of the cases, often too late one would realize that he/she has inherited a nonconforming product or service. In such cases, emotional losses aside, although one may suffer financial burden, generally would consider the issue circumstantial, hardly discuss it with the others, and out of frustration would just move on. Although this may be the dominant approach, considering the number of similar cases that even the smallest unit of society such as one’s family collectively may experience are enough to draw the attention of the most respected scientists to conduct studies on the concept of “Systematic Deception”. The more one investigates surrounding issues to nonconforming products and services, and evaluate their impacts on the consumers, the more one would realize that there may be a school of thought that conducts study on the subject of “consumers’ vulnerabilities”, and devise systematic methods to take advantage of them. In fact, the news of new methods travel so fast among the masterminds of art of deception that it seems a powerful and well organized network both manages and promotes its fundamentals. So, why is it so important to pay close attention to such an odd topic? The immediate response lies in “the role of professional communities with established ethics in protecting public’s interest”. In the same line of thinking, although the cases around us may appear as unrelated events, perhaps it is time to regard the systematic deception as a well thought of and fast evolving body of knowledge.

To examine its level of seriousness, by defining commonalities, one may need to dissect this phenomenon further. To simplify this analysis, for example, one would need to just reminisce an ordinary trip to a local hardware store to purchase a low value product, or an experience with purchasing large ticket items such as a car or a house. When one expresses dissatisfaction with a product purchased and/or a service received, common sequence of events are:

- a- Reactively, one is either singled out as the only person, who has complained about the issue or categorized as “Too Picky”.
- b- Upon insisting on it, in odd cases, although promises are made to deal with the issue, coordinated delayed responses are executed to initiate “Customer Frustrating” phase.

- c- Upon further insistence, multiple intentionally delayed plans are executed to address all surrounding issues without focusing on main point of concern.

- d- Depending on one’s level of tolerance, coordinated efforts are initiated to gradually frustrate one’s attempt to draw the attention to the source of the problem.

- e- If not followed with a lawsuit, in majority of the cases, considering the valuable lost time, one would renounce engaging in further actions.

► 2. Considering the complexity of problem, to both manage the issue effectively and protect the public:

- a- First coherent step for professionals is to recognize “systematic deception” at its full potential, and focus their expertise to examine similar cases in their fields until trends are established.

- b- Second step is to systematically expose true identities of such product and/or service providers to the public.

In summary, to overcome a systematic problem, an organized approach is required to be adapted. In the meantime, trade and professional forums and traditional “word of mouth” method are still the most recommended vehicles in exposing very nature of the beast.

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Soaring Above All



December 2004



Case

1. What is the impact of "Culture" of an organization on its success?
2. What are the key factors in continual success of an organization?



Solution

► 1- Similar to a society, the underlying element which determines the direction of an organization is its inherent culture. During an endeavor to alter its destiny, often an organization strives to identify sources of its systematic inefficiencies, and to isolate their associated root causes. Overall, the norm is that the designated group tasked with this corporate initiative is energized at first, and may adapt multiple innovative approaches to address various pre-identified agenda. Upon facing roadblocks, slowly the group's energy is exhausted and its original sharp vision is blurred. Eventually, it may seem that either a measurable result is not achieved or a premature outcome is settled for. Furthermore, normally, conducting a coherent and pragmatic lessons learned analysis is omitted. Therefore, critical reasons behind failure are never discovered. Often enough, upon initiation of another corporate initiative, the cycle repeats itself. In studying similar cases, one would realize that even limited results are achieved when rigid boundaries of dominant culture of organization are not undermined. In other words, subconsciously modifications are introduced to a degree that would not suggest a "Culture Change".

► 2- On the contrary, observing an organization which soars above all shows that the secret ingredients for its recipe of success are in its persistence on:

- Understanding the dominant culture, and specially its limitation(s).
- Respecting the dynamism of the culture, and sincerely striving in maintaining its continuity.
- Introducing diversity into the culture.

Now, let's explore these elements further:

a- Understanding the culture, and its limitations:

Similar to any coherent approach, perceiving the content and limitation of a culture is to open the windows of opportunities for adapting a well calculated strategy. Specially, familiarity with its limitation allows to foresee the shortfalls, adjust accordingly, and adapt practical tactics.

b- Respecting the dynamism of a culture, and maintaining its continuity:

In an era when it is logically proven that a rigid approach to an idea has its limited life span, the culture of an organization is no exception. Accordingly, if it is not dynamically evolved within, not only its effectiveness as the backbone in supporting the structure of an organization is diminished, but also if its rigidity is insisted on, in turn it will eventually become a road block.

c- Introducing diversity into a culture:

Upfront, it is extremely important for an organization to distance itself from common mistake whereby diversity is literary taken as either adapting a "Minority Content" approach or introducing "Racial Tolerance". Furthermore, diversifying the culture of an organization is synonymous with introducing a methodological approach whereby it ensures that the adapted method encompasses all necessary building blocks, and a coherent communication system. The latter in particular allows inherent modules to continually evaluate the effectiveness of implemented methods.

In adapting above mentioned approaches, one would need to appreciate that their integrated implementation is the key factor to its success. Otherwise, a one dimensional adaptation of these key elements would only lead to a limited result. Simultaneously, implementing them blindly would not guarantee a positive outcome . Accordingly, for the best result, the culture is required to be reviewed to determine its boundaries. Thereafter, various shades of above mentioned factors are necessary to be implemented to introduce balance, dynamism and diversity into an unbalanced and rigid culture.

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