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Quality Management System



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Quality Management

Introduction

Quality cannot happen by itself, it is always the result of intelligent efforts, therefore, it has to be managed. After the customer needs are identified, products are designed and capable processes established to produce and deliver the designed products; the next step is to manage the network of processes to ensure that the desired products and services are produced and delivered in conformance to the design. This is possible by establishing a scientific Quality Management System in the organization.

Quality Management involves all the activities of the overall management function that determine the quality policy and objectives of the organization and implement them by means of quality planning, quality control, quality improvement and quality assurance within the quality management system.

The starting point for quality management is the formulation of a quality policy and a set of quality objectives of the organization. Quality policy and objectives are implemented within a quality management system through quality planning, quality control, quality assurance and quality improvement activities.

The following explains the relationship of quality management, quality policy and objectives, quality planning, quality control, quality assurance, quality improvement and quality management system.

A quality management system is the foundation of quality management. Quality planning, quality control, quality improvement and quality assurance are the four pillars through which quality policy and objectives are implemented by the organization. As per the above diagram, in order to implement quality management, the first thing to be done is to create a

sound foundation of a scientific quality management system. Various organizations that jumped to Total Quality Management, without establishing an effective quality management system, failed in attaining their quality objectives.

Quality Policy

A prerequisite to implement quality management is the clear delineation of the quality policy and quality objectives of the company. Until the company people know where the company is going with respect to quality levels of its products, no foundation is provided to build a quality programme.

Quality policy is overall intentions and directions of an organization related to quality as formally expressed by the top management.

The management of an organization should define and document a quality policy. The policy should be consistent with other corporate policies within the organization.

A quality policy statement duly signed by top management puts in place the major road signs leading to Total Quality Management. The route itself would be mapped out specifically by each function, in terms appropriate to its products, customers, markets and business solutions. It will lead to ensure that “ quality becomes everyone's job and every quality related activity is performed right the first time every time”.

The responsibility for and commitment to a quality policy belongs to the highest level of management. The management should take all necessary measures to ensure that quality policy is understood and implemented at all levels of organization.

Quality Objectives

Quality objectives are specific targets for which appropriate strategies must be developed. Along with quality policy, objectives convey the corporate intent to what the process should achieve. Key quality objectives of the organization are related to:

Product quality: Organization should achieve, maintain and continuously improve the quality of its products in relationship to the requirements of quality.

The objectives should be defined and documented pertaining to key elements of quality such as fitness for use, performance, safety and reliability.

Operation's quality: Organization should improve the quality of its operations to meet the customers' and other stakeholders' stated and implied needs.

To attain and maintain desired economic performance, costs associated with all quality elements should be calculated, evaluated and controlled with the objective of minimizing the quality losses. Quality objectives should address continuous improvement of processes.

External customers' confidence: An organization should provide confidence to customers and other stakeholders that requirements for quality are being or will be achieved in all delivered products.

Quality objective should address customer satisfaction consistent with applicable standards and proper business ethics.