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JAMES HOUSTON

## QUALITY CORRECTIONS

*Managing a corrections organization is difficult enough, but managing a prison is even more difficult, particularly if that organization has been ignored and under funded for many years. However, beginning at the bottom may have its advantages: it allows the administration to through out the procedures of many years, it allows the administration to work on developing a new organization culture that emphasizes excellence, and it allows staff to create new programs and procedures. On the other hand, the administration must work with a culture that has many years of history behind it and is difficult to change. There is hope, Total Quality Management has been implemented in corrections organization in many agencies in the United States and the results have been spectacular in many instances. This paper explores Total Quality Management and how it is used in some organizations and points the way for administrators in Eastern and Central European nations who are attempting to rehabilitate organizations that are in great need of repair.*

### INTRODUCTION

Corrections is a field of endeavor that is made more challenging by our reliance on guess work or good intentions. The effective corrections manager will endeavor to put mechanisms in place that assure quality of service, programs, and security. In the last two decades there has been a distinct effort to improve the quality of services rendered to the government, fellow employees, and the inmates/prisoners and in many prison systems in the United States, this effort has been spurred on by the adoption of total quality management (TQM). TQM has radically altered the way in which many correctional organizations do business, because it is not only an approach to doing the business of security and programs, also represents a paradigm shift. That is, instead of quality being checked after the product or service has been completed, quality is built into the organizational culture. As a consequence, everyone's job is quality, not just the responsibility of one individual.

Understanding TQM in the context of corrections means that everyone involved must understand that all work in the organization is part of a process. What goes on in one part of the organization or institution affects what goes on in other parts of the system. One way to prevent problems or calamities such as disturbances, murders, and deterioration in the quality of life in general is to build quality into every step of the work process. In corrections, the application of TQM has dramatically altered the quality of the environment for the better and decreased waste and mismanagement. It is responsible for the transformation of many organizations from mediocrity to excellence. This paper explores the theory of TQM and attempts to inform the reader on how to use TQM in the correctional organization and the tools that are available. This is important in many Eastern and Central European countries that are now emerging from the poverty and policies of the years under dictatorial rule.

### TQM DEFINED

TQM is defined in many different ways and some wonder if TQM has a separate identifiable core, but it is composed of four interlocking assumptions about quality, people, organizations and process. There are several features of TQM that are recurring:

1. Quality is a predictable degree of uniformity and dependability, at low cost and suited to the market
2. Quality is fitness or use
3. Quality is conformance to requirements
4. Quality is in its essence a way of managing the organization
5. Quality is correcting and preventing loss, not living with loss
6. Quality is the totality of features and characteristics of a product, service, or process, which bear on its ability to satisfy a given need; from the customer's viewpoint (British Standard Definition).

The above definitions were coined with industry and the private sector in mind. However, Morgan and Murgatroyd (1994) point out that in the public sector TQM:

1. Involves everything an organization, a society, or a community does, which in the eyes of others determines its reputation on a comparative basis with the best alternatives.
2. Is a total system of quality improvement with decision-making based on facts – data collection — not opinion or impression.
3. Embraces not only the quality of the specific product or service which the end-user or the customer purchases or receives, but everything an organization does internally to achieve continuing performance improvement.
4. Assumes that quality is the outcome of all activities that takes place within an organization, that all functions and all employees have to participate in the improvement process, and that organizations need both quality systems and a quality base.
5. Is a way of managing an organization so that every job and process is carried out right, first time every time. It affects everyone.

## THE MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS TO TQM

W. Edwards Deming (Flood, 1983) was trained as a statistician. During WWII, application of his statistical process control charts was helpful in reducing waste, scrap, and rework in industries contributing to the war effort. After the war, his notions on quality were forgotten in the United States. However, Deming spent time in Japan helping their industry recover from the destruction they suffered. His message of focusing on the variability in manufacturing was well received and he demonstrated that variability can be identified by using appropriate techniques and overcome by well thought out solutions.

In the United States, it was another story. At the end of the war, the rest of the industrialized world was in ashes and the United States and Great Britain could sell just about everything in spite of quality. The boardrooms and plant floors ignored Deming's suggestions and by the 1970s, Japan has surpassed the United States in quality of product. This quality was especially noticeable in the automobile industry where Japan captured a large share of the American market. By 1980, Deming's ideas had begun to catch on and he undertook a rigorous schedule of seminars and training sessions in this country that began to turn the quality tide.

Deming is most known for his *14 Points* and his *Deming Wheel*. The *14 Points* expresses his methods and philosophy for managers, which he saw as necessary to the transformation of businesses and manufacturing. Over time, his approach evolved from one of strictly product, to one where the worker and consumer were important parts of the quality process. The Deming Wheel is a systematic approach to problem solving. The "plan, do, check, action cycle" has become widespread in the literature of

problem solving and its format assures quality built into every step of the manufacturing process.

Deming's initial efforts in the United States ran up against worker and management resistance that were ingrained in the culture of the organization. He identified poor motivation, leadership, and training as examples of problems of the American Workforce. In trying to work out what he saw as the fundamental issues, he identified "five deadly diseases" that need to be dealt with:

1. A general lack of constancy and purpose.
2. Too much emphasis on short-term profit.
3. A lack of suitable evaluation of performance, merit rating, or annual review.
4. Management too mobile.
5. Management decision-making too readily relies on quantitative data without paying due consideration to less tangible or hidden factors.

Joseph M. Juran's primary contribution to TQM was to emphasize the contribution of top and middle management to quality (Flood, (1993). According to Juran, instituting quality into an organization must begin at the top. In corrections, Juran's ideas are captured in the trilogy of quality, and quality control and programs. This trilogy can be brought to life by following the following five steps:

1. Determine quality goals.
2. Develop plans to meet those goals.
3. Identify the resources to meet those goals.
4. Translate the goals into quality.
5. Summarize 1-4 into a quality plan.

Juran also recognized that the "customer" is not only external but also internal. That is, in corrections the people who consume quality are not only the inmates and the taxpayer, but also fellow staff and employees of the department of corrections.

Phillip B. Crosby (Flood 1993) developed five absolutes of quality management that are worth mentioning:

1. Quality is defined as conformance to requirements, not as "goodness" or "elegance."
2. There is no such thing as a quality problem.
3. It is always cheaper to do it right the first time.
4. The only performance measurement is the cost of quality.
5. The only performance standard is zero defects.

Obviously, Crosby believes that quality is cheaper than slovenliness and zero defects mean that errors should not be tolerated. If management want quality, then it must establish requirements that should be adhered to and measurements taken to continually determine conformance to those requirements. Thus, in his opinion, problems are a result of poor management – they do not create themselves or "exist as separate entities from the management process" (Flood, 1994). Managers must take the lead and workers will follow the example being set. However, managers must consult with workers before getting started in order to assess attitudes and to get at problems.

The three above men are the most oft cited figures in TQM, but others have made contributions as well: Shigeo Shingo proposed that defects be handled as they occur by identifying the source and the correcting immediately. Kaoru Ishikawa espoused an organization-wide approach to quality by stressing both vertical and horizontal cooperation. Certainly they all have given us a tool to improve correctional services.

## TQM BASICS FOR CORRECTIONS

Cohen and Brand (1993) point out that the basics of TQM can be reduced to three key elements, which I have modified for corrections:

1. Working with suppliers, elected officials, taxpayers, staff, and inmates to ensure that the work processes are designed for success.
2. Continuous employee analysis of work processes to improve their functioning and reduce process variation.
3. Close communication with customers to identify and understand what they want and how they define quality.

## CORRECTIONS AS AN INTERACTIVE WORK PROCESS

The corrections organization does not exist in a vacuum. It is affected by and must respond to events in the community. The corrections manager recognizes that he or she is dependent on others for budget, supplies, and so on in order to function effectively. In addition, the customer is not only those individuals and groups outside the correctional organization, they are also staff within the correctional organization. A primary feature of TQM is the idea of an interactive work process. TQM requires a constant analysis of the needs of important others and once one knows what those needs are, the manager becomes the supplier's customer. In other words the newest correctional officer is defined as a customer since he or she is consuming safety and other material goods such as radios, post orders, and policy and procedures. Likewise, the taxpayer who is concerned with community safety is viewed as a consumer.

## CONTINUOUS ANALYSIS OF WORK PROCESS BY STAFF

Communication is critical for the effective improvement of work processes. How often does a staff member come up with a suggestion for the improvement of a process that is never accepted because it "isn't our way?" A good starting point for the improvement of work processes is through an analysis of the organization's current level of performance. Benchmarking is a useful tool for the analysis of work processes and is a way to identify and fill gaps in performance by putting into place the best practice, thereby establishing superior performance. Prisons are unique in the field of work; compared to the private sector, workers in prisons do nothing worthwhile; there is no production of product and staff just stand around or shuffle paper work. But prisons are voracious consumers of time. If time, for example, is spent on paperwork, then that is time not spent directly on inmate supervision or counseling. TQM is a method of improving work processes that can have the effect of eliminating, or shortening time spent on paperwork and increasing time spent on direct supervision of inmates.

Staff participation in analysis of job processes is important. Staff analysis results in suggestions that might improve the way work proceeds in the organization of work processes. For example, in developing a policy and procedures manual, all staff need to participate since they are directly involved in inmate supervision or working directly with inmates are more familiar with details of the job. Staff may not always come up with the most ingenious policy or procedure, but their input is important. The executive staff has to point the way for moving the organization in the right direction to excellence.

## ALLOWING THE STAFF TO BE HONEST

Allowing staff to be honest requires both employees and management to be able to separate people from the problem. Honesty must be part of the organization's culture, actively instituted and reinforced by management to reward truth-telling about work

processes. In addition, staff should be rewarded in some way for being honest and creative. Deming (Walton, 1986) noted the propensity for employees to be reticent in discussing ways to improve performance when he said we must "drive out fear."

A serious problem with honesty in the workplace is the fear of reprisals. Staff in prisons and community programs work in a fishbowl and suggestions for improvement may be leaked out to the media or others outside of the agency and used against the executives or elected officials. For example, the Chief Probation Officer in a medium sized court could be at risk if he or she asked a subordinate to prepare a paper with suggestions from staff to improve functioning of probation services. If the paper was leaked to the press, an uproar could ensue, which could result in a good deal of grief, or even termination of employment, for the Chief Probation Officer. Thus, self-interest sometimes prevents honesty from becoming too ingrained in organizational culture.

## IMPLEMENTING TQM

Implementation of TQM is a matter of policy implementation. One should remember that staff may be somewhat jaded by another "new" panacea for organizational problems and will be hesitant to accept it without hesitation. As a consequence, implementing TQM takes time, effort, and requires the full support of the executive in the organization.

*Leadership.* Develop a vision in consultation with members of the organization. Staff value a leader who is able to look over the horizon and who attempts to plan for the future. The vision should reflect where the organization wants to go and what it will look like over time. Begin to develop a management by objectives approach to the future. Only by establishing goals and objectives for each year are staff able to judge how they are doing in relationship to last year. Objectives provide a yardstick by which to judge progress.

A leader is able to communicate the vision and is able to sell the mission of the organization to members of the community and staff; the customers. The leader should: target sectors that require improvements in quality, stress a commitment to quality, stress relationships to customers, and monitor performance and continuous improvement.

*Planning.* Begin with a well thought-out plan that attempts to co-opt any possible opposition needs to be developed. Begin with a training session for executives and supervisors that:

1. Summarizes TQM and the aims of TQM.
2. Examines the purposes of TQM in a corrections organization.
3. Provides an overview of TQM principles.
4. Informs those present of the commitment necessary for TQM to be implemented.
5. Develops a written statement from the group that illustrates their vision of what quality should be.

An often overlooked source of assistance in implementing TQM is the formation of a "Quality Council." Hand-picking a group of individuals from within the organization who meet periodically to review progress of implementation efforts and, once TQM is in place, to review the program and definition of quality is a good idea. The leader of the Quality Council should also be hand-picked with the remainder of members coming from the various department in the organization. In addition, it is a good idea to include a member of the union, if one exists. The purpose of the Quality council is to develop a

plan for implementing the TQM program and to assist the CEO in managing the program. The Council should also be empowered to make changes in organizational procedure that fosters the continuation of TQM.

## **USA STATES THAT USE A FORM OF TQM**

There are thirteen states that use TQM in some form or other. Total Quality Programs are variously called Strategic Planning, Public Accountability, Results Iowa, Quality Services Through Partnership (Ohio). States using TQM include: Arizona, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, Texas, Utah, and Virginia.

Two good examples of Total Quality in Corrections are Florida and Iowa. Florida begins with a well thought out mission statement:

The Department of Corrections protects the public by operating a safe, secure, humane and efficient corrections system.

The Department has established goals for 2000-2005 as it does for each five-year period. The goals for the current period are:

1. Protect the public, staff and inmates.
2. Develop staff committed to professionalism and fiscal responsibility.
3. Ensure victims and stakeholders are treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect in making an executing administrative and operational decisions.
4. Prepare offenders for re-entry and release into society.

The goals are then translated into ten strategic initiatives with a number of objectives within each initiatives

## **STRATEGIC INITIATIVES**

1. To safely, securely, and economically incarcerate inmates and supervise offenders committed to he Department.
  - a. Seven objectives.
2. To operate the Department in a cost efficient and effective manner.
  - a. Seventeen objectives
3. To have validated classification systems that assess offenders for security or supervision requirements and program needs.
  - a. Three objectives
4. To prepare inmates for appropriate institutional adjustment, transition, and re-entry to the community.
  - a. Sixteen objectives
5. To foster a safe and drug free correctional environment.
  - a. Four objectives.
6. To consider the impact upon victims and stakeholders in all decisions.
  - a. Six objectives
7. Recognizing that our employees are our most valuable asset, maintain a well-trained and effective workforce.
  - a. Six objectives
8. To manage inmates with special needs in eh most cost efficient and effective manner possible.
  - a. Two objectives.
9. To have an effective and comprehensive quality assurance program.
  - a. Five objectives.

10. To promote public awareness by encouraging and facilitating contributions to the overall well being of communities.
  - a. Three objectives.

Iowa also begins with a mission statement and a vision statement. They develop guiding principles of the department based upon the leadership core values of opportunity, responsibility, and communities. They identify two core functions:

1. Offender supervision, custody and treatment core function.

Desired outcomes are:

  - \* Offender risk management and risk reduction to reduce crime and increase public and staff safety.
  - \* Increase pay debt to victim and society.
  - \* Offender accountability and programming.
  - \* Constitutional system.
2. Resource management core function.

Desired outcomes are:

  - \* Ensure adequate resources to maintain infrastructure and delivery of services
  - \* A system that is fiscally responsible.
  - \* Ensure adequate staffing resources.
  - \* A system that is responsive to stakeholders and the public.
  - \* A system that uses information technology effectively to ensure complete, accurate, and accessible information.
  - \* A system that constantly seeks to improve its delivery of services to the people of Iowa.

Ohio is another fine example of TQM in corrections (Wilkinson, 1992). In 1992 then Governor George V. Voinovich challenged state agencies to instill in government principles of excellence and service. The Department of Rehabilitation and Correction immediately began work on the project because of four issues: 1). an explosion in the number of inmates and parolees, 2). an erosion in communication among staff as the department expanded, 3). a lowering of expectations and incentives among staff, and 4). nothing to lose and a great deal to gain.

The Department then developed quality steering committees in institutions in order to provide overall guidance. Next the steering committees were challenged to apply TQM concepts to programs and operations in their institution or area. The concept of "benchmarking" or the seeking out of best practices was adopted in order to improve programs and operations.

## **IMPLEMENTING TQM IN THE CORRECTIONAL ORGANIZATION**

Leadership is the key to implementing TQM in an organization. It requires a leader who is able to look over the horizon and ask himself or herself "why not?" Leaders must have a firm moral foundation, be able to relate to staff, be inspirational, and be an effective communicator. There are several rules of implementation:

1. Develop and publish clear documented organizational beliefs and objectives. Objectives should be developed in consultation with staff. Ideally, Department heads will meet with their staff and develop objectives for their department. The Warden or Governor will then meet with the department heads and all objectives will be put on the table for prioritization. It is best to hold the meeting with the department heads at an out-of-the-way retreat for 2-3 days of discussion and negotiation.
2. Develop clear and effective strategies and plans for achieving the objectives. The strategies should be developed at the same time as the objectives. Keeping in

mind that objectives and strategies should be specific, attainable, measurable, and attainable. To establish goals that are too lofty will discourage staff and stifle progress. To develop strategies that are too complicated will also discourage staff and stifle progress.

3. Identify critical process. That is, those activities that must be done especially well for the objectives to be accomplished. In the correctional organization that is security, programs, recruitment, training, and community interface.
4. Review the Management structure. Is the organization too top heavy? Can the organization be flattened out? Are there too many staff reporting to the Warden or Governor?
5. Empower the staff. Staff must be encouraged to participate and take the initiative. The Quality Steering Committee is an important vehicle to empowerment.
6. Develop performance standards. In consultation with staff and management develop performance standards for each position in the organization. Each employee must be aware of the performance standards and agree to them at the beginning of each evaluation period.
7. Training in TQM.
7. Implement an organization wide quality improvement program. Lead by example and the top management should be the standard for excellence.
8. Do things right the first time.
9. Measure performance. This is not difficult. The Warden or Governor should appoint an individual who is responsible for overseeing the implementation of TQM and coordinate the activities of the quality committees. Measurement of variable can include such diverse variables as numbers of disciplinary reports, numbers of prisoners completing education programs or vocational training programs, completion of objectives, and so on. It is important that measurement be used as feedback for quality purposes.

## CONCLUSION

Clearly, corrections is challenged to improve performance in the face of declining budgets, the low priority of corrections, low expectations on the part of the public, and in many countries poor personnel practices. Total quality management is a means to continuously improve quality of services within the corrections organization. It is not a technique as much as it is a paradigm shift – a shift from making one or two persons responsible for quality to a total immersion in quality by everyone in the organization, that is, a change in the culture of the organization. Men such as W. Edwards Deming, Joseph M. Juran, Phillip B. Crosby, Shigeo Shingo, and Kaoru Ishikawa are all giants who managed to transform manufacturing. The same accomplishments have been accomplished in the public sector and Corrections is not exception.

True quality demands a commitment that begins at the top of the organization and continues down the chain of command to the lowest ranking employee. If the Warden, or Governor, insists on quality, then the priority of quality will seep down to the lowest levels of the organization. Corrections management needs to take the leadership to improve services to the public, the staff, and the prisoner in order to make necessary changes in organizational culture instead of approaching quality as an after thought.

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