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Kasim Randeree

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Leading Change in Organisations: A Focus on Quality Management

Kasim Randeree, The British University in Dubai, Dubai, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Abstract: In contemporary knowledge driven economies, local organisations must aim to be competitive, in part, through ensuring the delivery of high quality in their goods and services. Changes in the social environment where customers are more mature and better informed have forced these organisations to consider alternatives to traditional methods of running their business. Consequently, Total Quality Management (TQM) has attracted the attention of many organisations as a potential system to improving their competitiveness and efficiency. Implementation of a TQM system necessitates transformation away from conventional ways of delivering business objectives by changing the way in which people deal with internal or external work processes. TQM looks at change within the organisation as an inevitable process which should be managed flawlessly. Unfortunately, TQM initiatives often fail when implementation begins, with the proportion of successes in TQM implementation only within the range of 20 to 35 per cent, according to Brown (1992 cited in Redman & Grieves 1999). The reasons for failure were associated with the problem of sustainability of leadership and purpose, absence of strategic communications and teamwork for quality improvement and the lack of total commitment to the TQM philosophy and practice. These were attributed to poor understanding of the TQM philosophy by senior management and a lack of employee opportunities to relate training activities with company vision. This paper thus evaluates the dynamics of organisation change with a view to understanding causes of success and failure. The research aims to review earlier studies and, through the results of those studies, analyse the role TQM plays in organisational change management.

Keywords: Organisation, Change, Management, Total Quality Management (TQM)

Introduction

ACCORDING TO ALMARAZ (1994) the foundations of quality management were laid by Deming (1986), Juran (1988), Crosby (1984) and others who advocated the use of statistics to control variation in the manufacturing process. This approach was later expanded to address improvement issues in other areas of the organisation.

Hodgetts et al. (1994 cited in Trofino 2000) defined total quality as an organisational strategy that drives a continuous ongoing program of process improvements. Core values include a customer focus with methods, processes and procedures developed to meet internal and external clients. Top leadership supports the strategy both in word and in actions. There is full organisational involvement, with everyone receiving a quality education.

Reflecting on the model of TQM proposed by Oakland (1993 cited in Thiagarajan and Zairi 1997), the key components that impact on TQM implementation are a synergetic blend of “hard” and “soft” quality factors. Systems and tools and techniques such as those that impact on internal efficiency are examples of hard quality factors. Soft quality factors are intangible and difficult-to-measure issues and are primarily related to leadership and employee involvement.

In order to understand the relationship between TQM programs and Organisational change, it is ne-

cessary to shed some light on organisational change concepts such as models, drivers and implementation frameworks.

Organisational Change

Organisational change is defined as a difference in form, quality, or state over time in an organisational entity. The entity may be an individual’s job, a work group, an organisational subunit, the overall organisation, or its relationships with other organisations.

According to Burnes (2005), from the 1950s until the early 1980s, the field of organisational change was dominated by the Planned approach, which originated with Kurt Lewin and was fleshed out and extended by the Organisation Development movement (Cummings and Worley 2001). Planned change is aimed at improving the operation and effectiveness of the human side of the organisation through participative, group- and team-based programs of change. Burnes proceeds, by the early 1980s, with the oil shocks of the 1970s, the rise of corporate Japan and the severe economic downturn in the West, it was clear that many organisations needed to transform themselves rapidly, and often brutally, if they were to survive (Burnes 2004b; Dunphy and Stace 1993; Kanter 1989; Peters and Waterman 1982).

In place of Lewin’s model, Culture-Excellence school called for organisations to adopt flexible cultures which promote innovation and entrepreneurship and that encourage bottom-up, continuous and co-



operative change. Its advocates maintained that top-down coercion, and rapid transformation, might also be necessary to create the conditions in which this type of approach could flourish (Kanter 1983; Peters and Waterman 1982).

Brunes also noted that underpinning the rise of the Emergent approach were new perspectives on the nature of change in organisations. Up to the late 1970s, the incremental model of change dominated. Advocates of this view see change as being a process whereby individual parts of an organisation deal incrementally and separately with one problem and one goal at a time. By managers responding to pressures in their local internal and external environments in this way, over time, their organisations become

transformed (Cyert and March 1963; Hedberg et al. 1976; Lindblom 1959; Quinn 1980, 1982).

Brunes continues, in the 1980s, researchers began to draw attention to two new perspectives on change: the punctuated equilibrium model and the continuous transformation model. Proponents of the continuous transformation model of change reject both the incrementalist and punctuated equilibrium models. They argue that, in order to survive, organisations must develop the ability to change themselves continuously in a fundamental manner.

Also Myer *et al.* (1990 cited in Johnson 2004) categorised models of change at the firm level and industry as follows:

Table 1: Models of Change within Organisations and Industries

	First-Order Change	Second-Order Change
Firm level	<i>Adaptation</i> Focus: incremental change within organisation Mechanism: Incrementalism, Resource dependence	<i>Metamorphosis</i> Focus: Frame-breaking change within organisation Mechanism: Life-cycle stage Configuration transitions
Industry level	<i>Evolution</i> Focus: Incremental change within established industries Mechanism: Natural selection Institutional isomorphism	<i>Revolution</i> Focus: Emergence, transformation, and decline of industries Mechanism: Punctuated equilibrium Quantum speciation

Cao et al. (2000) also classified the key dimensions of organisational change into four categories, namely, changes in process; changes in functions (structural change); changes in values (cultural change); and changes in power within the organisation. In order to approach such a change context, it is therefore implied that any method or methodology used must be able to address these multiple facets.

Triggers for Change

According to Oakland and Tanner (2007), it is important to understand what the key drivers for change

inside or outside the organisation are, in order that the Need for Change may be understood and articulated to focus the stakeholders’ desire for change. This is where leaders give meaning to the change, without which, as many organisations later discover, initial enthusiasm and energy quickly dissolves. Thus, they categorised major drivers of the change fell into two: External drivers and internal drivers for change (see table 2).

Table 2: Major Drivers for Change

External drivers	Internal drivers
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Customer requirements 2. Demand from other stakeholders, such as the Government Regulatory demand 3. Market competition 4. Shareholders/city 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improving operational efficiency 2. Need to improve the quality of products and services 3. Process improvement

Resistance to Change

It is well known that people are, for the most part, resistant to change of any sort. Atkinson (1990, p. 48 cited in Vermeulen (1997)) identified six reasons

why people resist change - fear of the unknown; perceived loss of control; change means doing things differently; personal uncertainty; it may mean more

work; and unwilling to take ownership and be committed.

Also, in his paper, Nadler (1981 cited in Abraham *et al.* 1997) deals with the issue of resistance to change and the need to motivate people through four stages (1) Identifying and surfacing dissatisfaction with the current state; (2) Building in participation in the change; (3) Building in rewards for the behaviour that is desired both during the transition state and in the future state; and (4) Providing people with the time and opportunity to disengage from the present state.

Managing the Change Process

Recardo (1995 cited in Johnson 2004) defined change management as the process an organisation uses to design, implement, and evaluate appropriate initiatives to deal with demands placed on them by the external environment. Failure to recognise the organisational changes required to adapt to a new business approach will hinder the long-term benefits that can be derived.

Goodstein and Burke (1991) believed that models of change and methods of change are quite similar in concept and often overlap. Kurt Lewin's three-phase model of change—unfreeze, move (or change), refreeze—also suggests method. Organisation development is based on an action-research model that is, at the same time, a method.

They carry on explaining that Richard Beckhard and Reuben T. Harris provided a relatively simple and straightforward framework. They have suggested that large-scale, complex organisational change can be conceptualised as movement from a present state to a future state. But the most important phase is the in-between one that they label transition state. Organisational change, then, is a matter of assessing the current organisational situation (present state), determining the desired future (future state), and both planning ways to reach that desired future and implementing the plans (transition state).

Kotter (1996) also compiled eight steps which are valuable and informative in identifying the actions necessary to achieve organisational change.

1. Establishing a sense of urgency, To drive people out of the comfort zone — to make them believe that the current situation is more dangerous than launching into the unknown.
2. Forming a powerful guiding coalition, it must be nurtured and supported by a dedicated group of influential leaders throughout the organisation. Efforts that don't have a powerful enough guiding coalition can make apparent progress for a while. But, sooner or later, the opposition gathers itself to gather and stops the change.
3. Developing a vision and strategy, the vision says something that helps clarify the direction in which and organisation needs to move. Leaders should be able to communicate the vision in five minutes and elicit understanding and interest.
4. Communicating the change vision, Communication is more than a corporate announcement. Leaders must communicate the vision through their actions. All the typical communication media play a part. But leaders must make opportunities to communicate the vision in hour-by-hour activities.
5. Empowering Others to Act on the Vision, Leaders must clear the way for employees to develop new ideas and approaches without being stymied by the old ways.
6. Planning for creating short-term wins, People will not follow a vision forever. Employees must see results within 12 to 24 months or they will give up. Short-term wins validate the effort and maintain the level of urgency. Rewarding people responsible for the benefits is essential.
7. Consolidating Improvement and producing still more change, Premature victory celebrations can quash momentum and allow the forces of tradition to regain their hold. Until changes sink deeply into a company's culture, new approaches are fragile and subject to regression. Short-term wins must be stepping-stones to greater opportunities and bigger wins, all consistent with the vision driving the overall effort.
8. Institutionalising new approaches, Leaders must now make the conscious attempts to show people how the new approaches, behaviours and attitudes have helped improve performance. Leader must make sure that the next generation of top management really does personify the approach.

TQM and Organisational Change

There have been numerous studies focusing on the organisational variables associated with implementation of a quality programs. When Organisations go through TQM implementation, Romanelli and Tushman (1994 cited in Johnson 2004) believed that they move in a steady state and then experience revolutionary periods substantively disrupting established activity patterns and install the basis for new equilibrium periods. After initial quality standard implementation and registration, the company returns to the steady state. Yet, once a quality management system is eventually established, there is a need to constantly improve. Quality management systems require continuous, constant improvement to meet

ever-changing customer demand and increasing competitor quality levels (Lee and Lazarus, 1993 cited in Johnson 2004).

Almaraz (1994) also explained that TQM often leads to major change within an organisation. Such change may be studied at a variety of levels; at the organisational level, the implementation of quality may represent a strategic move to become more competitive. At the unit level, work units, or teams, are sometimes created to fulfill quality goals. Many teams become empowered through the quality paradigm. Individuals are also impacted by the change resulting from the implementation of quality programs.

Referring to Nadler and Tushman (1989), Almaraz explained that while change may be incremental in nature, many organisations are faced with major, core change, which represents a radical departure from “the old way of doing things”.

He added, the components in Leavitt’s Contingency Model (1965) depicts the interconnection of people, task, technology, and structure. A major change may begin in any of the four components. Its magnitude will be such that all components will make some adjustment to the change, and may in fact incur major changes as a result. Such change will affect the culture of the organisation, that is, the values, beliefs and expectations of organisation members. The result of such a major change will transform the organisation. Thus, Almaraz concluded that TQM change should be classified as radical and transformational.

Abraham et al. (1997) Supported Almaraz, if a “quality” mindset can be grafted onto existing values, the transition may be more incremental. However, if the new values threaten the status quo, this may necessitate transformational change resulting in considerable upheaval in order to create suitable conditions to develop a critical mass of support for the new mindset.

Huq (2005) identified basic internal processes necessary for a TQM paradigm shift. He stated changing organisation structure in order to remove hierarchical barriers; better implementation and control through decision-making; improved communication through multiple media and information systems; and empowering employees and/or creating cross-functional teams to take charge of their work operations in a manner that encourages continuous learning as well as empowering the individual.

Finally, a conceptual model developed by Johnson (2004) defined the importance of transformational organisational change as being rooted in leadership, strategy, structure, technology, culture and rewards and recognition. This paper examines three variables in greater depth, namely, leadership, structure and culture.

Leadership and TQM

Majority of literature had established that one of the key characteristics to affect TQM implementation is the management style. Leadership plays an important role in setting directions and inspiring change throughout the organisation during change implementation. According to Huq (2005), one of the major challenges associated with TQM implementation is navigation, i.e. guiding the change journey as detailed in the implementation procedure.

Zairi (1994) emphasised that leadership in the context of TQM is not about power, authority and control, it is more about empowerment, recognition, coaching and developing others.

Transformational leaders can effectively walk through the change in their organisations by demonstrating the appropriate behaviors at the appropriate stage in the transformation process. He would be a good facilitator of this process by promoting the creation of a culture that encourages team-decision making and behavioral control (Manz and Sims, 1990 cited in Eisenbach *et al.* 1999). Individualised consideration would also play a role in neutralising the inevitable resistance that is bound to accompany the transformational process. The leader must work at getting large numbers of people in the organisation involved in the transformation process.

Management – the president, vice-presidents, managers and supervisors – of the effective TQM organisation are critical to success. Anjard (1998) described the effective TQM manager as an individual with a clear TQM vision, is able to model the vision, clearly defines departmental TQM criteria, encourages involvement and empowers employees, leads, coaches and mentors and is a change agent.

Additionally, Sherman (1995 cited in Johnson 2004) believed that one third of the middle managers should be change agents for a company going through major organisational transformation.

Structure and TQM

Organisation structure is the formal presentation of systems of positions and relationships in the organisation and specifies the formal communication channels. Therefore, this structure should facilitate the objective of TQM in terms of empowerment, more effective decision making removing unnecessary fragmentation of jobs, increasing orientation towards the customer.

The Traditional structures have several layers between the CEO and the workers, and communication is often lost in the process of dissemination from the top to the bottom. This structure promotes an inward focus, with employees focused more on satisfying internal management requests than overall organisational goals and targets.

Jabnoun (2000) stated that there is almost a consensus that a quality organisation should have a low complexity. Low complexity usually means fewer layers and a flatter organisation. This brings the decision closer to the customer. Low complexity can also simply mean a smaller organisation in terms of both height and width. This organisation will also make it easy to infuse a vibrant culture and to reduce variations.

Spencer (1994, p. 447 cited in Moor and Brown 2006) noted that, under TQM, tasks are accomplished by teams, which are centered around organisational processes. Overall, the organisation is restructured as a set of horizontal processes, which extends outside of the organisation to embrace suppliers and customers.

Organisation Size and TQM

Ghobadian and Gallear suggested that some TQM characteristics are size dependent. There is greater correspondence between the inherent characteristics of TQM and those of small to medium organisations (SMEs). SMEs have a distinctive advantage in this respect because the degree of vertical and horizontal visibility is greater in SMEs. For this reason the level of commitment and support generated by a quality improvement team can directly and indirectly influence the change in the corporate culture, a key factor in the successful implementation of TQM.

Thus, on the surface SMEs appear to be better placed to introduce TQM. Yet, the biggest obstacle to the introduction of TQM in SMEs is the “management realisation” and the ability of owner managers to modify their behavior and management style

Moreover, while the limited size of the management team in SMEs means that individuals are often responsible for a number of different functions with little backup. They are often busy with managing the day-to-day activities of the business and have very little time left for activities perceived as adjunct. In general, a short- rather than a long-range management perspective dominates.

Ghobadian and Gallear (1997) believed that the flat structure of SMEs can leave employees frustrated because often they are unable to realise their short and mid-term career goals. This is why SMEs may find it difficult to employ high caliber staff and even harder to retain them.

Cultural Change and TQM

(Sathe, 1985; Schein, 1985 cited in Prajogo and McDermott (2005)) defined organisational culture as the general pattern of mindsets, beliefs and values that members of the organisation share in common, and which shape the behaviours, practices and other

artefacts of the organisation which are easily observable

Also, Sinclair and Collins (1994) explained the difficulty that entails any TQM-driven cultural change in the organisation must be pointed out, as it may also represent a distortion in the behavior of the organisation members. And the bigger the penetration of the real culture in the organisation, the more difficult the change will be. Many organisations – in an attempt to dramatically change the companies’ culture, which necessarily led both managers and employees to dissatisfaction, lack of motivation and frustration – have encountered experiences near disaster.

According to Anjard (1998), cultural values should be part of any TQM implementation. These values are focused on empowerment, being team based, having collaborative management, being one-hundred percent committed to quality, developing a continuous learning environment, having employees trained in the use of quality tools, demonstrating strong human resources policies and showing respect for the individual.

Furthermore, Sinclair and Collins (1994) suggested a number of issues to be considered in the quest for cultural forms which provide the environment for a quality service. These were The rationale for changing; a clear picture of the kind of culture required; how this picture fits in with the achievement of business strategy; a clearer picture of the plurality of cultural forms which make up an organisation; that quality cannot be viewed in isolation: it has knock-on effects for the whole organisation; people have to see the personal benefit of offering a quality service; the process of management must be examined if organisations are to achieve worker empowerment; reward issues require addressing: both monetary and non-monetary and; not seeing quality techniques as ends in themselves.

The key lesson is that management can only offer environments which are conducive to employees wanting to alter their values, beliefs and behaviours towards providing a quality service.

TQM Drivers

The majority of organisation TQM originated with either the CEO of the organisation or the quality department. The two most significant factors were the pursuit of competitive advantage and the need for improved quality.

Lagrosen (2001 cited in Svensson 2005) found that TQM has become well established as a system for improving both the performance of corporations and the satisfaction of customers. Becker (1993 cited in Svensson 2005) also considers TQM as something

to reach for in order to enhance corporate competitiveness and profitability in the business environment.

A Final point, Yousef and Aspinwall (2000) cited Rayner and Porter (1991) and Mo and Chan (1997) who indicated that customer pressure, anticipation of certification request, additional requirements from potential customers, and the ambition to capture a larger market share were seen as the driving forces towards certification. The fear of losing contracts prompted most small businesses to "get quality" into their system rather than actually understanding the purpose of ISO 9000 as one of the tools of TQM.

TQM Resistance

There is often strong resistance to new ways of thinking and new forms of organising. Resistance to change is especially relevant if the vision of a leader differs from the values and beliefs of the existing organisational culture. If that is the case, then cultural issues must be addressed (Schein, 1991; Trice and Beyer, 1991 cited in Almaraz 1994). This is the part of the process that is easy to overlook in major change efforts in organisations. If the organisational culture fails to assimilate the vision and its implications, desired change will never become accepted and will ultimately fail.

Barriers to TQM

According to Gatchalian (1997), some causes of failure in TQM implementation were identified in the acronym REJECT:

- R – Resistance of top management to educate themselves regarding TQM.
- E – Erratic quality program implementation.
- J – Jolting but un-sustained enthusiasm for TQM.
- E – Empowerment at all levels in the company not adequate.
- C – Communication management strategies not fully in place.
- T – Teams for quality improvement not functioning effectively.

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Recommendations

When pursuing organisational change, there are several factors that need to be considered; is the change planned or unplanned, incremental or quantum leaps, transformational or transitional, and the degree of change? These factors are all important to successful implementation of change.

It is necessary for companies to assess the existing state of their organisation and the different aspects of their organisation that will be impacted by changes associated with implementing and integrating a quality management system into their mainstream business practices. Failure to recognise the organisational changes required to adapt to a new business approach will hinder the long-term benefits that can be derived.

TQM to qualify as transformational change, the majority of individuals within an organisation must change their behaviour (Blumenthal and Haspeslagh, 1994 cited in Johnson 2004). They further explain while the goal of all transformations is to improve performance, many efforts to improve performance are not transformational; creating behavioural change is a difficult and long-term process that requires management's concerted and persistent effort.

Conclusion

Managing the transition involves the use of multiple leverage points. This means that many actions in different variables need to be managed simultaneously. For example achievement of a vision may require strategic and structural change in conjunction with team building and individual training. Focus on a single dimension of the model is not likely to be effective, since major alterations in one component tend to upset the balance with other components.

To wrap up, many organisations simply jump on the bandwagon without fully understanding what TQM means for them or its possible consequence. Organisations should avoid wishful thinking that TQM will fix short term problems and quickly improve business performance; TQM is not a destination. It is a journey requiring long term solid commitment to the improvement of product, service and processes. It is a means to an end rather than end in itself.

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About the Author

Dr. Kasim Randeree

Dr. Kasim Randeree is a Lecturer in the Faculty of Business at The British University in Dubai and Visiting Lecturer to The University of Manchester in the United Kingdom. He has conducted numerous research and development projects across the Arabian Gulf and North Africa. He has editorial responsibilities with four international journal publications and has published over 40 peer reviewed articles. He is a Member of the Association of Project Managers as well as the Institute for Leadership and Management. His research interests are broadly within organisational development and theory, with emphasis on structure, leadership, diversity and multiculturalism and Islamic heritage. His particular interests in multiculturalism and diversity in human resource management, the advancement of management education in the Middle East and Islamic and contemporary perspectives on leadership and management, have brought him numerous accolades and supporting publications both internationally and across the region. Dr. Randeree is the Director of the Organisational Studies Research

(OSR) group which has the five Special Interest Groups (SIG) - Project Management, Managing People in Organisations, Leadership, Organisations in Theory and Practice and Learning.

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