



GLOBAL JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS RESEARCH
Volume 12 Issue 7 Version 1.0 April 2012
Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal
Publisher: Global Journals Inc. (USA)
Online ISSN: 2249-4588 & Print ISSN: 0975-5853

Leadership for a Successful Quality Journey

By Dr. Omer El Tigani

Introduction - The need for leaders arises for the critical roles that they play in leading people groups, without leadership a group of human beings quickly degenerates into arguments and conflicts, because humans see things in different ways and lean toward different solutions. Leadership is a skill needed to influence others' thoughts, attitudes and behaviors. Leadership is an important skill not only for people in higher positions, but also for so other people in different organizational levels. Leaders set directions to others and help them to clearly visualize the goals that they are targeting. Moreover, leaders encourage, motivate and inspire others to achieve the desired results.

GJMBR-A Classification : FOR Code: 150305 JEL Code: O15, L32



Strictly as per the compliance and regulations of:



Leadership for a Successful Quality Journey

Dr. Omer El Tigani

I. INTRODUCTION

The need for leaders arises for the critical roles that they play in leading people groups, without leadership a group of human beings quickly degenerates into arguments and conflicts, because humans see things in different ways and lean toward different solutions. Leadership is a skill needed to influence others' thoughts, attitudes and behaviors. Leadership is an important skill not only for people in higher positions, but also for so other people in different organizational levels. Leaders set directions to others and help them to clearly visualize the goals that they are targeting. Moreover, leaders encourage, motivate and inspire others to achieve the desired results.

A person can be a manager and a person can be a leader; but the successful person who is both leader and manager. The organization shall concentrate on the leadership process to be included in the managerial role because it will add other values to its managers and even the rest of staff. Values include motivating other people, fostering innovation, creativity and finding better ways to achieve goals.

II. LEADERS IN QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Leaders in Quality Management System refer to all senior management team within the organization and all levels of managers and/or anyone has a responsibility for managing staff and/or making organizational decision. As stated by the (International Organization for Standardization "ISO", 2009), "Leaders establish unity of purpose and direction of the organization. They should create and maintain the internal environment in which people can become fully involved in achieving the organization's objectives".

Leaders in Quality Management Journey provide the organization with a clear Vision. In the light of Vision, Quality Policy and Quality Objectives for the organization shall be set. The proper communication and having people understand the organization's Vision, Quality Policy and Objectives is a big challenge for the top management or organization leaders, as they have to be careful in using the communication media that suits the certain organizational culture in general and individuals' cultures in particular; aiming to reduce resistance and involve everybody to support the Quality Journey. Moreover, organization's leaders must ensure the availability of resources needed for achieving the

quality objectives and pursuing the organization's vision.

Top management commitment is the principal pillar of the success of every desired organizational change. The most three essential key success factors for any quality management system are: 1) The top management commitment, 2) The top management commitment, and finally 3) The top management commitment !!! Leaders or organization top management is one of the important areas that the ISO 9001:2008 Standard focus on. A complete and big clause is allocated to describe what is required from the organization's top management to embark and succeed in its quality journey. For instance, Clause 5.6 requires the organization's top management to systematically review the adequacy, effectiveness and performance of the quality management system.

III. CAUSES OF POOR QMS LEADERSHIP

There is a famous say "If you cannot measure it, you cannot manage it". This means only managers with technical backgrounds related to the scope of the jobs or business will be successful managers. Is this statement correct? To what level do managers need to hold the technical know-how to succeed as leaders? What about engineers who led financial organizations to succeed? These questions are provided to say that the foresaid statement is not absolutely correct. For instance, do all core business's technical personnel are capable to lead their organizations? Unfortunately, this happens in so many organizations where we find leaders or managers appointed according to their years of experiences in the technical field!! For example, top management members of some engineering organizations are selected ONLY because of their long experience in the engineering works; ignoring the importance of the other managerial or leadership skills (e.g. interpersonal skills) which are essential for successful leaders.

Nowadays leadership and management methodologies and principles become an enormous science with uncountable number of theories and tools that managers and leaders need, not only to apply, but also to implement in a proper and effective way in their day-to-day tasks. Therefore, balance between technical and leadership skills is crucial, as using leaders who do not possess leadership skills will definitely lead to wrong decisions with significant consequences resulted from the narrow visioning, poor planning, bad management to company resources and so many others. Though they are busy with loaded time schedule every day, but

it's crucial for leaders to always update themselves with regards to the latest management tools and theories that educate them on how to deal with their employees, how to maintain a healthy work environment in the workplace, how to continually improve the final product/service, how to attract more customers, and the like.

IV. EFFECTS OF POOR QMS LEADERSHIP IN PRACTICE

The successful Quality Journey must involve everyone in the organization. People's commitment to the new Quality Management System should start by the top management, then, to be cascaded down to lower levels of the organization structure. As mentioned earlier, good leadership is the backbone of any successful QMS of every organization, but by the same way, poor leadership has very damaging impacts upon the performance of the organization. For instance, effects of some wrong decisions - when converted into money - cost the organization lots of Dollars. In the following part, the Author will discuss some of the examples and cases in which poor leadership negatively impacts the QMS performance and the success of the quality journey within the organization:

- As we all know, production is the main business function affecting the company's products, in which the organization gathers all efforts, spends time and money striving to always improve to levels higher than competitors in the marketplace. But unfortunately, poor leadership hinders the organization to achieve the optimum production that it deserves or plans to hit. The organization may survive with the poor leadership, but definitely, it cannot make the optimum use of the available resources to reach the optimum production, as lots of time and efforts are lost in re-working, double working and/or misuse of organization human or other resources.
- Communication is one of the most important key success factors for every Quality Management System. It's important that the top management of the organization to clearly explain to their employees where the organization is going, what are the customer requirements, what are the around business opportunities, and so on. If the organization's vision, mission and strategic goals are properly communicated, employees will consider themselves as part of the organization and they will strongly believe that organization's success is theirs. For instance, leaders must take the responsibility of preparing, reviewing and monitoring the policy and ensures that it's understood at all levels of the organization. On the other hand, poor communication among organization's employees, management and external customers is an

indication for a poor leadership, which affects all aspects of a company's business. Therefore, if management is not on top, they will experience decreased profits, wasted time and employees that do not take the business out to their lives.

- Narrow vision of some leaders, when they limit their ultimate goals to only obtaining quality accreditation, certification or just targeting immediate results. The right understanding is that the Quality Management System (QMS) is not a project with defined ends; it's an ongoing process. Yes, there may be lots of rest stops and many opportunities for settling down for a while; but there is no end. Therefore, the essential concept that everybody in the organization must know by heart is that Quality Management System is a Change that takes its time to happen. Such limited visions from top management (i.e. leaders) will deteriorate the crucial top management commitment to the minimum and make it limited only for short-term achievements. For instance, Top management may give excessive attention to certification auditors in order to obtain the ISO 9001:2008 Certificate; providing low concentration to the quality of the works itself. After certification, the commitment of the top management significantly decreases, thus, ineffective and dull documentation and paper works will be placed over the other workers' heads. Moreover, when the ISO 9000 certificate is the destination and the only final target of the organization, the significant decrease of top management commitment is an expected result. According to that, the ISO 9000 Quality Management System will dramatically lose its value and the organization's workers will feel that the implementation of the ISO 9000 QMS has no added value to their works and to their organization, thus, they will view the requirements of ISO 9000 Standard as dull and very heavy load of works over their heads that they should do anyway!!!
- Poor leadership always treats the Quality Management System as a second priority. This is reflected into so many cases. For example, the Management Representative (MR) is not positioned as part of the top management team in so many organizations. This creates a gap between the business and quality, which must both be speaking the same language, as mentioned earlier. Furthermore, the Quality Department will not possess the necessary influence or power to govern the organization from a quality point of view.
- Some leaders do not provide workers with the suitable environment in the workplace that enables them perform well. This comes as a result of how leaders/managers treat their teams. In some organizations salary packages are not equal for two or three employees who are doing the same job and

having the same educational and experience qualifications. Furthermore, job security is absent in so many organizations, because of which loyalty and morality significantly decrease among employees, as every employee works for his own objective and goals to survive; personal objectives are most probably not in line with the organization's ones. Such work environments demotivate employees from working hard and working faithfully for the organization's benefits, as they feel that they are not part of the organization and they will leave it at any time depending on their superior management's tempers or personal desires.

V. BE THE RIGHT QMS LEADER

In the following part and from the practical experience in the Quality Management and Business Excellence's field, the Author will list down some tips for the leaders of the organizations to follow while driving their quality journey:

- *Be Convinced by the Correct Understanding :* Leaders are the most important party who must be knowledgeable and fully aware of that the establishment, implementation, maintenance and continually improving an effective Quality Management System is a large change management process that takes the organization into an endless journey of continual improvement and requires long-term and constant commitment from everybody. Leaders must understand by heart and be fully convinced with the importance, benefits and advantages that the new Quality Management System guarantees to the organization. But, when the ISO 9000 certificate is the destination and the only final goal of the organization, the significant decrease of leaders' commitment is an expected result.
- *Be Committed :* As discussed earlier, commitment of the top management is crucial for the success of every Quality Management System. Therefore, good leaders should reveal a commitment to the establishment, implementation, maintenance and continual improvement of the strong Quality Management System. Leaders must continuously review the adequacy of the quality management system and ensure the availability of resources needed for achieving the organization's goals. Thus, the ISO 9001:2008 Certificate will be obtained as a result of the effectively working Quality Management System.
- *Make it Step by Step :* As any other change, people of the organization should be taken to the desired Quality Management System gradually, particularly, if the employees' backgrounds and the dominating cultures of the organization are not familiar with the requirements of the new QMS. For instance, some organizational cultures depend totally on the

experience of their staff to complete the required deliverables; giving minimal attention to having a documented procedure to follow or making the necessary documentation while doing the job. To make the change slowly but surely in such cultures, leaders have to ask the employees to establish their procedures by writing what they usually used to do to perform each task/activity. Hence, by-time procedures will be refined and improved to the desired levels of quality to achieve business excellence. Thus, the organization become able to gain the real benefits out of the QMS in terms of reducing process cycle-time, cost saving, increasing revenues. Similarly, leaders must be careful and realistic while setting the organizational goals for the achievement of the desired QMS. Yes, leaders have to set challenging goals for the organization, but they have to be realistic!! Unrealistic goals that organization cannot achieve can lead to failure. Wise leaders who have the ability to match between the vision and the organization's capabilities.

- *Communication Is The Key :* Communicate, communicate, and communicate to the team. Communication is crucial to the success of every organization, importance of communication increase in case of introducing new systems, such as QMS. Leaders must always preserve effective communication channels among top management, employees, and customers. Communication is not a one activity, action or even event. For effective communication, leaders must deal with it as a long-term process that requires constant repetition. From experience, setting a speech, issuing a memo and/or sending a series of emails are not enough to underpin a new idea or a concept to reach all employees; but it needs constant repetition in every interaction with the employees. Furthermore, interview with media or presentation to external parties can be also used as a communication to organization's employees. A question for organizations that are not familiar with 'quality', how much time do you think leaders may need to spread out among employees that quality is everyone's concern??!!
- *Rely on The Team :* Employees are the backbone for every successful organization. Do you think that the unmotivated employees are part of this statement?? The answer is of course 'NO'. Good leaders who have the ability to keep their employees motivated all the time by always providing them with new challenges, as most of people need to be excited by new things to grant their bests for the work. One of the good ideas to keep people motivated to the Quality Management System is to make people rewarded or punished according to their commitment and contribution to the QMS

success. Also, leaders need to empower their people and give them the autonomy, as employees want to find satisfaction and meaning of their works. Leaders must collaborate with their teams, with smart and close monitoring.

- *Keep the Right Balance* : The challenge for the nowadays' leaders is how to get closer to their employees while maintaining the hierarchy of the organizational structure. Some management scholars describe this in terms of distance and closeness of the leaders to their employees. Leaders need to be close to their team to possess some understanding on how subordinates perform the job and what exact resources, efforts and time they require. Besides, such positive closeness from leaders indicates special care and appreciation for what people doing for the company and they are essence for every company success. But at the same time, leaders should keep some distance from the process details to see the bigger picture of the whole organization and the organization's position among other competitors in the marketplace. Therefore, achieving the right balance is the key skill for the modern leaders' success.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Existence of good leadership becomes essential for nowadays organizations to have a successful Quality Management System that grants the organization and employees tremendous benefits for both internal and external customers. But similarly, absence of modern leadership significantly impacts the overall performance of the organization and its reputation in the marketplace as well.

REFERENCES RÉFÉRENCES REFERENCIAS

1. International Organization for Standardization "ISO" (2009). Quality Management Principals.

