


**Quality Culture:
Changing Hearts, Minds, and Attitudes**

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Agenda

1. Understanding What a Quality Culture Is
2. Quality Culture Versus Traditional Cultures
3. Activating Cultural Change
4. Changing Leaders to Activate Change
5. Laying the Foundation for a Quality Culture
6. Learning What a Quality Culture Looks Like
7. Countering Resistance to Cultural Change
8. Establishing a Quality Culture
9. Maintaining a Quality Culture
10. References



Understanding What a Quality Culture Is



To understand what a quality culture is, one must first understand the concept of **organizational culture**. Every organization has one. An organization's culture is the everyday manifestation of its underlying values and traditions. It shows up in how employees behave at work, what their expectations are of the organization and each other, and what is considered normal in terms of how employees approach their jobs.

Have you ever shopped at a store or eaten in a restaurant in which the service was poor and the employees surly or disinterested? Such organizations have a cultural problem. Valuing the customer is not part of their culture. No matter what slogans or what advertising gimmicks they use, the behavior of their employees clearly says, "We don't care about customers."

Understanding What a Quality Culture Is



An organization's culture has the following elements:

- Business environment
- Organizational values
- Cultural role models
- Organizational rites, rituals, and customs
- Cultural transmitters

Understanding What a Quality Culture Is



What an organization truly values will show up in the behavior of its employees, and no amount of lip service or advertising to the contrary will change this. If an organization's culture is its value system as manifested in organizational behavior, **what is a quality culture?**

A quality culture is an organizational value system that results in an environment that is conducive to the *establishment and continual improvement of quality*. It consists of values, traditions, procedures, and expectations that promote quality.

Understanding What a Quality Culture Is



- ✓ Behavior matches slogans.
- ✓ Customer input is actively sought and used to continually improve quality.
- ✓ Employees are both involved and empowered.
- ✓ Work is done in teams.
- ✓ Executive-level managers are both committed and involved; responsibility for quality is *NOT* delegated.
- ✓ Sufficient resources are made available where and when they are needed to ensure the continuous improvement of quality.
- ✓ Education and training are provided to ensure that employees at all levels have the knowledge and skills needed to continuously improve quality.
- ✓ Reward and promotion systems are based on contributions to the continual improvement of quality.
- ✓ Fellow employees are viewed as internal customers.
- ✓ Suppliers are treated as partners.

Figure 6-1
Characteristics Shared by Organizations with a Quality Culture

Quality Culture Versus Traditional Cultures



Organizations that develop and maintain a quality culture will differ significantly from those with a traditional culture. The differences will be most noticeable in the following areas:

- Operating philosophy
- Objectives
- Management approach
- Attitude toward customers
- Problem-solving approach
- Supplier relationships
- Performance-improvement approach

Activating Cultural Change



To attempt the implementation of total quality without creating a quality culture is to invite failure. Organizations in which the prevailing culture is based on traditional management practices are not likely to succeed in the implementation of total quality.

Successful total quality requires cultural change. Several primary reasons cultural change must either precede or at least parallel the implementation of total quality are:

- Change cannot occur in a hostile environment.
- Moving to total quality takes time.
- It can be difficult to overcome the past.

Changing Leaders to Activate Change



How does one know or how can one tell when it will be necessary to change leaders to change the organization? What follows are several questions that can be used by senior executives for self-assessment or by the organization in making its own assessment of the need for new leadership:

1. Are the current leaders fully knowledgeable of the need to change and the ramifications of not changing?
2. Are the current leaders able to articulate a vision for the new organization?
3. Have the current leaders set the tone for change and established an organization-wide sense of urgency?
4. Are the current leaders willing to remove all obstacles to cultural change?
5. Do the current leaders have a history of following through on change initiatives?
6. Are the current leaders willing to empower employees at all levels of the organization to make cultural change?

Laying the Foundation for a Quality Culture



Establishing a quality culture is a lot like constructing a building. The process begins with laying a solid foundation. Like a building, without a solid foundation an organization's corporate culture will quickly crumble. What follows is a 10-step model that quality professional can use to establish a solid foundation for a quality culture in any organization:

1. Understand
2. Assess
3. Plan
4. Expect
5. Model
6. Orient
7. Mentor
8. Train
9. Monitor
10. Reinforce and maintain

Learning What a Quality Culture Looks Like



If a picture of a company with a strong quality culture could be taped to an organization's wall for all employees to see, it would have the following characteristics:

- Widely shared philosophy of management
- Emphasis on the importance of human resources to the organization
- Ceremonies to celebrate organizational events
- Recognition and rewards for successful employees
- Effective internal network for communicating the culture
- Informal rules of behavior
- Strong value system
- High standards for performance
- Definite organizational character

Countering Resistance to Cultural Change



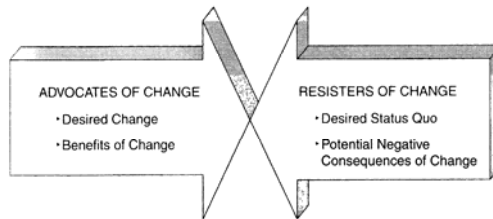
Change is resisted in any organization. Resistance to change is normal organizational behavior. In this regard, an organization is similar to a biological organism. From the perspective of organizational culture, the alien is change, and the organism is the organization to be changed. Continual improvement means continual change. To ensure continual improvement, one must be able to facilitate continual change.

Countering Resistance to Cultural Change



Why is Change Difficult?

Most people understand and accept that organizational change will be resisted. However, to be an effective agent of change, one must understand why it is resisted. Joseph Juran describes organizational change as a “clash between cultures.” Any organization has two separate cultures relating to change: the advocates and the resisters.



Countering Resistance to Cultural Change



Table 6-1
Same Change, Different Perceptions

Proposed Change	Perception of Advocates	Perception of Resisters
Automate production processes	Improved productivity	Threat to job security
Initiate employee involvement and empowerment	More mental resources focused on continual improvement	Loss of authority
Establish a supplier partnership	Mutually beneficial business alliances	Disruption of established purchasing networks
Establish an employee education and training program	More knowledgeable, more highly skilled workforce	Too expensive
Join a manufacturing network	Enhanced competitiveness, shared costs, and shared resources	Competitors taking advantage of what they learn about us

Countering Resistance to Cultural Change

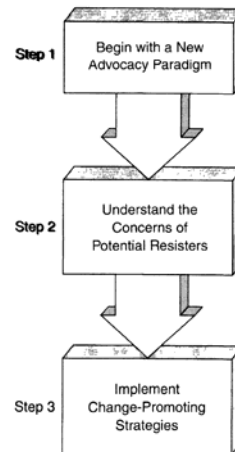


Figure 6-3
Steps in Facilitating Change

Countering Resistance to Cultural Change



Begin with a New Advocacy Paradigm

The first step in facilitating change is to adopt a facilitating paradigm. Juran summarizes the traditional paradigm of change advocates as follows:

- Advocates of change tend to focus solely on expected results and benefits.
- Advocates are often unaware of how a proposed change will be perceived by potential resisters.
- Advocates are often impatient with the concerns of resisters.

If change is to happen, advocates must begin with a different paradigm. When a change is advocated, ask such questions as the following:

- Who will be affected by this change, and how?
- How will the change be perceived by those it affects?
- How can the concerns of those affected be alleviated?

Countering Resistance to Cultural Change



Understand the Concerns of Potential Resisters

The second step in facilitating change is to understand the concerns of potential resisters—to put yourself in their place. Philip E. Atkinson suggests that people resist change for the following reasons:

- Fear
- Loss of control
- Uncertainty
- More work

Countering Resistance to Cultural Change



Implement Change-Promoting Strategies

The third step in facilitating change is implementing change-promoting strategies. These are strategies that require an advocacy paradigm and take into account the concerns people typically have when confronted with change. Juran recommends the following strategies for handling and overcoming resistance to change:

- Involve potential resisters.
- Avoid surprises.
- Move slowly at first.
- Start small and be flexible.
- Create a positive environment.
- Incorporate the change.
- Provide a quid pro quo.
- Respond quickly and positively.
- Work with established leaders.
- Treat people with dignity and respect.
- Be constructive.

Establishing a Quality Culture



Establishing a quality culture involves specific planning and activities for every business or department. This section identifies the steps involved, but first it outlines the emotional processes employees go through as the steps are being taken. Managers need to recognize and accommodate the emotional transition required not only of employees but also of themselves while the steps toward making the conversion to quality take place.



Establishing a Quality Culture



Phases of Emotional Transition

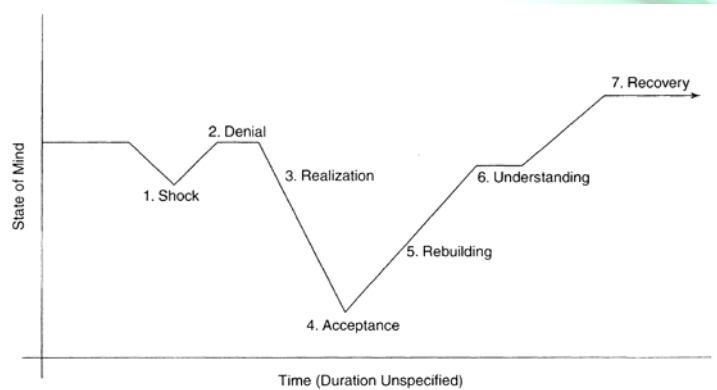


Figure 6-4
Emotional Transition



Establishing a Quality Culture



- ✓ Identify the attitudes, behaviors, processes, and procedures that are to be changed.
- ✓ Put the planned changes in writing.
- ✓ Develop a comprehensive plan for making the changes.
- ✓ Make sure all change advocates are familiar with the emotional transition people go through when confronted with change.
- ✓ Identify the key people in the organization who can either make the conversion work or make sure it doesn't work. Get the identified key people on the team (turn them into advocates).
- ✓ Take a hearts-and-minds approach when introducing the new culture.
- ✓ Apply courtship strategies to bring people along slowly but steadily.
- ✓ SUPPORT, SUPPORT, SUPPORT.

Figure 6-5
Quality Culture Conversion Checklist

Establishing a Quality Culture



Position (Type) _____
 Date _____

Instructions
 The purpose of this survey is to assess the existing culture of our organization. The findings will be compared with what is known about a quality culture for the purpose of identifying the cultural changes needed in our organization to continually improve quality, productivity, and competitiveness. Respond to each of the criteria by circling the number you think best describes our organization as it is today. Zero (0) means that we do not meet this criterion at all. Five (5) means that we completely satisfy the criterion. Do not respond to items that don't apply or about which you are unsure.

1. All employees know the mission of the organization	0	1	2	3	4	5
2. All employees know their role in helping the organization accomplish its mission	0	1	2	3	4	5
3. Executive management is committed to the continual improvement of quality, productivity, and competitiveness	0	1	2	3	4	5
4. Management treats the workforce as a valuable asset	0	1	2	3	4	5
5. Open, continual communication exists at all levels of the organization	0	1	2	3	4	5
6. Mutually supportive internal partnerships exist between management and employees	0	1	2	3	4	5
7. Mutually supportive internal partnerships exist among employees	0	1	2	3	4	5
8. Quality is defined by customers, internal and external	0	1	2	3	4	5
9. Customers participate in the product development cycle	0	1	2	3	4	5
10. Employees are involved in the decision-making process	0	1	2	3	4	5
11. Employees are empowered to contribute their ideas for promoting continual improvement	0	1	2	3	4	5
12. Performance of processes is measured scientifically	0	1	2	3	4	5
13. Scientific data are used in the decision-making process	0	1	2	3	4	5
14. Employees receive the education and training they need to continually improve their performance	0	1	2	3	4	5
15. All employees at all levels are expected to maintain high ethical standards	0	1	2	3	4	5

Figure 6-6
Organizational Culture Employee Assessment Worksheet

Maintaining a Quality Culture



Establishing a quality culture is a challenging undertaking for any organization. It is even more challenging to maintain a quality culture over time. The easiest thing in the world is to become complacent and let the organization's culture begin to slip back into its old mold. According to Frank Gryna, in order to maintain a quality culture, organizations must foster the following critical behaviors:

1. Maintain an awareness of quality as a key cultural issue. This is accomplished through the regular dissemination to all personnel of quality goals and the corresponding results relating to these goals. Managers should "keep score" and let all stakeholders know what the score is.
2. Make sure that there is plenty of evidence of management's leadership. Cheerleading is good, but it's not enough. Managers should provide leadership in strategic planning for quality, serve on quality councils, and be actively involved in the implementation of quality initiatives. Employees need to see managers "walking the walk" as well as "talking the talk."

Maintaining a Quality Culture



3. Empower employees and encourage self-development and self-initiative. Managers should make sure that jobs are designed for as much self-control as possible, continually seek and use employee input, and encourage self-directed teamwork.
4. Keep employees involved. Do not just seek their involvement through empowerment: structure the organization and its processes in ways that ensure it. This means making employees fully empowered members of the quality council; maintaining a system that makes it easy, convenient, and nonthreatening for them to recommend improvements; and involving employees in areas such as product or process design review.
5. Recognize and reward the behaviors that tend to nurture and maintain the quality culture. Recognition involves various forms of public acknowledgment. Rewards are tangible benefits such as salary increases, bonuses, incentives, and promotions.

References

Quality Management for Organizational Excellence: Introduction to Total Quality, 6th Edition, David Goetsch and Stanley Davis, copyright 2010, Pearson, ISBN: 978-0-13-501967-2.

