

March 2002 Newsletter

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The Gurus

There are a number of influential figures in the field of Quality Assurance. Although they all share a common ambition - 'the attainment of quality', they each have their own very individual style or approach to achieving the ambition. Possibly the best known are:

Philip B. Crosby - Zero Defects
W. Edwards Deming - 14 Points
A. V. Feigenbaum - Total Quality Control
K. Ishikawa - Quality Circles
Joseph M. Juran - Breakthrough and Control
Genichi Taguchi - Taguchi Technique (Analysis of Variance) and Loss Function

For the next few months we will introduce one Guru at a time for you to decide which ones views are most appropriate to your organization.

Philip B. Crosby - Zero Defects

Philip B. Crosby was born in West Virginia, USA in 1926. He was a business philosopher and an author. One of his first books, "Quality Is Free", has been credited with beginning the quality revolution in the United States and Europe. He started work as a quality professional in 1952 after serving in World War II and Korea, with a medical school in between. He began his career on an assembly line where he decided his goal would be to teach management that preventing problems was more profitable than being good at fixing them. He created the Zero Defects concept.

The concept is that "Quality is Free". In other words, doing things wrong and making mistakes cost money. This is because when things are done incorrectly they have to be repeated - costing money. When things are made wrongly, they have to be repaired or scrapped and remade - it costs money. To do tasks in the most efficient and effective manner (the quality way) saves money. In fact by improving the performance of the process i.e. no waste, you get quality for free.

His approach describes 4 absolutes of Quality:

Definition of quality being Conformance to Requirements

The system of quality needs to be prevention or preventative

The cost of quality needs to be measured in terms of failure.

There is only one performance standard namely Zero Defects, anything else misses the point

The approach Crosby associates with implementing Zero Defects is:

- *Management Commitment*: defining clearly the management position regarding quality.
- *Quality Improvement Team*: establishing team's role in operating quality improvement program.
- *Quality Measurement*: establishing quality measurement areas that allow evaluation and correction.
- *Cost of Quality*: quantifying the cost of quality.
- *Quality Awareness*: making all employees aware of the teams' activities.
- *Corrective Action*: establishing a structured, organised & permanent approach to resolving problems.
- *Zero Defects Planning*: completing the preparation for launching the Zero Defects program.

- *Supervisor Training*: determining training Supervisors require to accomplish quality improvements.
- *Zero Defect Day*: letting employees realise that a transformation has happened.
- *Goal Setting*: turning the pledges into action by setting goals.
- *Error>Cause>Removal*: providing a method for employees to communicate any problems.
- *Recognition*: recognising employees who have participated in the program and have achieved goals.
- *Quality Council*: promoting discussion and communication between specialist quality people.
- *Do it over again*: maintaining the momentum of the improvement programme.

Although there are very mixed views regarding Philip B. Crosby's approach, some regard his approach as over the top and others have claimed major savings. However, some of his material is excellent and well worthy of consideration.

Air Traffic problems

The new southern air traffic control centre at Swanwick, Hampshire was originally scheduled to open in 1996. It began handling flights in January 2002, six years later. On its first day of opening, some minor difficulties were experienced with telephone lines but bad weather conditions of the day caused greater problems. Some delays were also caused by controllers familiarising themselves with the new equipment. Richard Everitt, chief executive of National Air Traffic Services (Nats), described Swanwick as "the most technically advanced air traffic control centre in the world". He said it would create the capacity to handle the expected 50 per cent increase in the number of flights a year by 2011, and should lead to current average delays of 90 seconds per flight falling by a third. Thereby improving efficiency and safety.

The £1 billion modernisation of Nats has been put on hold due to slump in air travel since September 11. While the new southern control centre at Swanwick, opened in January, the construction of the northern centre at Prestwick, Scotland, has been halted. General Secretary of the British Air Line Pilots Association, Christopher Darke, has said that Prestwick is needed as a backup to Swanwick; otherwise the UK may have to rely on French and Belgian air traffic controllers.

Nursing homes 'keeping subsidies'

Campaigners for over-65's have recently claimed that care homes across the country were withholding Government cash, intended to provide free care for the elderly. Ministers have been asked to take action against these private nursing homes. In many cases the homes have put their prices up, leaving residents facing higher charges than when the Government launched its £100 million support scheme last year.

The private nursing homes claim they have had to increase their prices due to rising costs, caused by minimum wages and new standards set by the Government.

Shake-up for farmers

Members of the Policy Commission on the Future of Farming and Food have produced a report in January 2002 that could revolutionise farming in England. The report seems to concentrate on quality rather than quantity.

The commission's proposals are expected to include:

- paying subsidies not so much for producing crops but increasingly for conserving the countryside
- increasing organic farming substantially, (more than 70% of organic food eaten in UK is imported)
- requiring farmers to have licences to guarantee they will work the land in an environmentally friendly way before they can qualify for subsidies
- encouraging them to establish co-operatives and to use farmers' markets
- urging supermarkets to sell more food produced in their own localities.

Consumers are increasingly concerned about the quality of the food produced and its indirect costs. The Environment Agency says intensive farming costs the UK £1.5bn annually in damage to air, soil and water.

Contact lens alert

It has been reported that contact lens users can be in danger of getting eye ulcers due to cleaning fluids not being strong enough to kill an infectious organism, which causes eye ulcers. Scientists from the Department of Medical Parasitology in Vienna University, Austria, found that conventional cleaning solutions had little effect on this particular bug called Acanthamoeba that has become resistant to the cleaning fluids. It can take two forms, an active "trophozoite" and a less active "cyst". It was found that after eight hours soaking in cleaning fluids all the active forms were killed, but some less active ones were able to survive. The authors of the research, writing in the British Journal of Ophthalmology, suggest that users should choose their lens solution carefully, and keep their lens cases clean by frequently microwaving, boiling or changing them. At the moment there are no standards, which include Acanthamoeba for contact lens solutions.

Rail safety maintenance workers 'in danger'

It has been reported that railway maintenance workers are being exposed to unacceptable levels of risks while carrying out vital modernisation work. Railway Safety chief executive Rod Muttram said four workers had already been killed in recent months and there could be further deaths and injuries unless action is taken. He said government and commercial pressure to expand the railway system and get it running smoothly means too much work is being done too quickly. The warning will put pressure on the government to revise its timetable for improvements or consider reducing train services to cut the risk to workers. Railway workers have had to carry out work near live rails because of pressure to keep trains running around the clock and near fast moving trains when 125mph trains can only be spotted 12 seconds before they reach workers.

The message will not be a popular one at a time when the government has called for a 50% increase in passengers over the next 10 years and an 80% increase in freight.

Green Alert

Your company or business can help the environment by following some of the suggestions made below.

- Documents distributed electronically.
- Envelopes reused for internal office mail
- Printers programmed for double sided printing
- Use recycled stationery
- Use the Spell Check and Print Preview commands before printing
- Use software that allows sending and receiving faxes from your computer.
- Choose your suppliers who use environmentally friendly materials and methods
- Recycle copier, fax and printer cartridges

The added bonus is that by following some of these simple suggestions they can result in cutting costs, improved quality of work, increased profits and a better public image.

To stop receiving unwanted junk mail, you can contact the Mailing Preference Service, Department 97, Freepost 22, London W1E 7EZ. You will become registered on a "delete" file which mailshot companies can access and update their mailing lists and therefore take you off their mailing list.