Total Quality Management in Libraries

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ABSTRACT

Today technologies have changed our social and economic life. In the workplace methodologies change; people work at home or on the web with flexible timetables, and more and more virtual communities are emerging in different fields' emphasis on the continuous quality improvement in the work. Successful application and Implementation of TQM principles in LIC require deciding on the customers/patrons to whom LIC aims to serve, assessing their needs, and deciding on the services. The article is an attempt to make the readers to understand the importance of TQM, an effective system that could enhance the performance of academic libraries.

KEYWORDS: TQM, Organization, Quality, Management, Principles, Libraries.

INTRODUCTION

Total Quality Management is a management approach that originated in the 1950s and has steadily become more popular since the early 1980s.TQM applies quantitative techniques and human resources to improve all processes within an organization and its goal is to deliver products and services exceeding customer expectations. TQM offers an approach for an organization to design processes, policies and jobs so that they are the best, most effective methods for serving user's needs, eliminating inefficiencies and assuring quality service. Total quality management is a structured approach to overall organizational management.

Libraries no longer enjoy monopoly of information provision in today's digital environment. Therefore, libraries are expected to develop systems, philosophies, and strategies for managing and providing quality services. This implies a management approach that focuses on service quality.

Historical Timeline of Total Quality Management

The roots of the principles and practice of TQM go back to the early 20th century and Frederick Taylor's Principles of Scientific Management, which advocated a consistent method for performing tasks and inspecting finished work. In the 1920s, the industry began applying the concept of statistical process controls. Fast forward to Japan in the 1950s, when manufacturers in the country began to apply quality theory to production. By the 1960s the practice of seeking continuous quality improvement had become synonymous with Japanese business techniques. In the late 80s and early 90s, US companies began importing Japanese ideas into their businesses, and the concept of Total Quality Management spread from there all around the world.
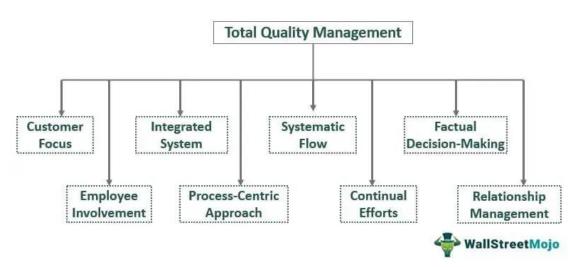
What is Total Quality Management (TQM)?

TQM is defined as both a philosophy and a set of guiding principles that represent the foundations of a continuously improving organization. It is the application of qualitative methods and human resources to improve all the processes within an organization and exceed customer needs now and in the future. TQM integrates fundamental management techniques, existing improvements, and technical tools under a disciplined approach (Talukdar and Ghosh, 2004).

A core definition of total quality management (TQM) describes a management approach to long-term success through customer satisfaction. In a TQM effort, all members of an organization participate in improving processes, products, services, and the culture in which they work.

The word "total" implies that all employees in the organization, from development to production to fulfilment, are obligated to improve operations. "Management" suggests that this methodology should be a focused effort.

Principles of TQM

1. Customer focus

One of the first principles of Total Quality Management is to put the customer at the centre. The quality of your product is determined by your customers. Customer satisfaction is seen as the organization's highest priority and the organization believes it will only be successful if customers are satisfied.

2. Total employee commitment

All employees must be committed to increasing productivity, processes, and sales. It is important for them to understand the vision and goals that have been communicated. It is essential that they are sufficiently trained and given the resources they need to accomplish tasks efficiently. TQM also recognizes that product quality is the result of process quality. As a result, there is a focus on continuous improvement of the organisation's processes.

3. Process approach

In quality management, adhering to processes is crucial. To ensure consistency and speed up production, processes ensure that the right steps are taken at the right time.

4. Integrated system

In an integrated system, everyone should understand policies, standards, objectives, and processes. As a result of integrated systems, the organization is able to continuously improve to achieve a competitive edge.

One way to utilize data is to integrate systems. TQM strategies believe systems should talk to each other, convey useful information across departments, and make smart decisions.

5. Strategic and systematic approach

This principle is described by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) as follows:

An organization's effectiveness and efficiency are enhanced by identifying, understanding and managing interrelated processes as a system.

6. Fact-based decision-making

Data analysis and data gathering help make better decisions based on available information. It is important to make informed decisions so that you can better understand your customers

7. Communications

To achieve goals, your organization needs to know what plans, strategies, and methods will be used. Having a good communication plan will reduce the risk of failure. Effective communication plays a large part in TQM to motivate employees, education members along a process, and avoid process errors.

8. Continual Efforts

Quality improvement should be a continuous process. For the TQM approach to prove effective, people at every level need to be alert in being regular with quality checking. There is a need to recognize and encourage innovative solutions to problems, partly by encouraging employees to upskill themselves and take on enhanced responsibilities.

How Can Libraries benefit from TQM

Since, the libraries are information providers, import knowledge by means of meticulous reference, sometimes they are termed as information centres or knowledge centre. Quality based organizations should strive to achieve perfection by continuously improving the business and production process. TQM is a method by which management and employees can become involved in the continuous improvement of the production of goods and services.

Some of the benefits of TQM are

1. Forces library managers to develop leadership skills interested of replaying on power within position to obtain results.
2. Increase staff participation in decision-making, thus increasing the feeling of "ownership of decisions and directions once charted.
3. Improves the level of training given to staff, thus increasing skills.
4. Helps break down barriers between library departments and improves communication within the organization.
5. Provides a method of improving services to users in a period to similar resources
6. Provides a more convenient material return

7. smoothing the acquisition and collection development procedures,

8. Simplify checkout of materials

9. Helps in implementing and promoting effective interlibrary loan facilities,

10. Uses flexibility in staff assignments

11. designing target services to specific group

12. Implementing and using new technologies for easy information retrieval,

13. Gives new staff a thorough orientation

14. Creates interdepartmental library advisory groups

15. Improves the physical layout of the library

16. Tracks complaints

17. Develops an active outreach program

18. Offers electronic document delivery

19. Developing a database which includes records for all types of materials held in library

20. Efficient utilization of men, machines and materials, resulting in higher productivity

21. Elimination of tension free work environment leading to good human relations; and Improvement of confidence among users.

CONCLUSION

Total quality management is the strategic framework that encourages everyone in an organization to focus on quality improvement. Eliminate errors, streamline processes, and maximize efficiency. TQM emphasizes that quality assurance is a shared responsibility that affects all aspects of an organization.

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