

# **Course 04: Implementation (application) of TQM: Obstacles**

**Module by Prof. SOULEH Samah**

Lectures for second-year Master's students in  
Economics and Business Management.

Department of Economic Sciences

– University of Biskra.

# Obstacles or barriers to implementing of TQM

- TQM is not just another fashionable management theory. It is not a quick fix to solve the problems overnight. There are many barriers to implementing Total Quality Management. They show themselves in all business sectors-manufacturing, services, government and even education. Therefore, it is important for all organizations to understand and avoid these barriers both before and during TQM implementation. It takes a long time to build the appropriate emphasis and techniques into the culture. Overemphasis on short-term results and profits has to be avoided. These barriers can be divided into two categories:

## **1. Organizational barriers**

## **2. Behavioral barriers**

# 1-Organizational Barriers

These are the most visible barriers of TQM implementation and are spread all over organization.

## **1. Lack of Commitment by Top Management:**

The primary responsibility of TQM rests with the top management. Therefore, there must be substantial commitment by top management for TQM. This commitment must be manifest by the management time and organizational resources they keep for implementation of TQM. In some organizations, the quality initiative is delegated to an outside expert. When top management commitment is missing, it passes on to other levels easily. All such organizations experience employee participation and interest in TQM programs.

## **2. Lack of continuous Training and Education:**

Lack of training is the next most important obstacle. This gives rise to confusion about the various aspects of the program. This is like building walls and ceiling without laying the foundation. Naturally, such a structure would collapse. Training and education is an ongoing process for everyone in the organization. When senior management conducts the training on the principles of TQM, its effectiveness increases.

### **3. Improper Planning:**

- Planning accounts for more than 50% of the job. Planning works well when all the concerned people are involved. TQM is no exception. TQM is about empowerment of people and participative management. All constituents of the organization should be the goal. Financial or sales goals take a back seat.

### **4. Inadequate use of empowerment and teamwork:**

- TQM is all about teamwork, participative management and empowerment of employees. However, working in teams is an approach that has to be learned. The Team members need to have proper training. Supervision must learn how to be effective coaches. Further employees need to be empowered to take decisions that affect the efficiency of their process. The lacks of these result in frustration.

## **5. Inability to change organizational culture:**

- The organization must undergo cultural change before teamwork can succeed. Individuals resist change. The resistance has to be overcome. It is very difficult to change an organization's culture and it takes time. It may take around five years for individuals to unlearn the old ways and learn the new ways. Once they are accustomed to doing a particular process it becomes the preferred way. People change only when they want to and only to meet their own needs. Nobody would change for the organization unless adequate reason is given and accepted by him or her. Management must understand and utilize these basic concepts of change. Further people must be moved from a state of fear to trust for accepting a change. Lack of effective communication and emphasis on short-term results are the main reasons for this. Sufficient time has to be spent by organizations for planning for the cultural aspects of implementing a TQM program.

## **6. Incompatible Organizational Structure and Isolated Individuals and Departments:**

- More often, the organizational structure may not be conducive to team building. It can create differences between various departments and between individuals. These differences may create implementation problems. Use of multifunctional terms can help to rectify this. The whole organization has to be made customer oriented to make it more responsive to customer needs. The organization will have to be structured for the same.

## **7. Ineffective Measurement Techniques and Lack of Access to Data and Results:**

- Effective Measurement acts as a booster to the improvements made. It would also inspire and encourage the participants to achieve more on the hand and to rectify and improve on the other hand. It is equally important that the progress is known within a reasonable period of time. Otherwise people lose interest and become frustrated. Access to relevant and quick retrieval is necessary for this. Effective decisions cannot be made in their absence.

## **8. Paying inadequate attention to internal and external Customers:**

- The needs and expectations of customers will be changing over time. There are internal suppliers and internal customers. If we want to take care of the ultimate external customer, it is essential that the internal customer's en route have to be properly attended to. Organization needs to understand this through effective feedback mechanisms.

## **9. Failure to Continually Improve:**

- One of the cardinal principles of TQM is continuous improvement. This continuous improvement is a journey and not a destination. A lack of continuous improvements of the process, product, and/or service is bound to make the implementation a failure.

## **10. Apparent lack of business experience and knowledge:**

- This aspect of continuous improvement in all the activities of an organization implies continuous learning and improving knowledge and experience. Every mistake is a valuable lesson in experience. People have to upgrade not only their knowledge about the product and process but also about customer's perception changes.

## **11. Taking narrow dogmatic approach:**

- Some organizations are determined to follow the Deming approach or Juran approach or Crosby approach, etc. It must be remembered that each of the quality gurus and other experts have made valuable contribution. For TQM to be successful, it is imperative that organization has to assimilate from all these philosophies and create a blue print for their success.

## 2-Behavioral Barriers

Some people do not want the implementation of TQM in the organization. This arises due to:

1. Individual values, attitudes, perception, personality, etc.
2. Lack of training and learning opportunities
3. Management styles viz. autocratic, democratic or laissez-faire
4. Level of success
5. Organizational structure itself doesn't permit the implementation of TQM

# Other Barriers to TQM implementing (case studies)

- Many studies identify the barriers of TQM introducing in organizations. We summarize the findings of the most important studies:
  - **[R.J. Masters , 1996 ] conclude that the barriers of TQM in US organizations are :**
    - - Lack of top management commitment.
    - - Weak comprehension of quality management.
    - - Inability to change organizational culture.
    - - Lack of accuracy in quality planning.
    - - Absence of continuous training and education.
    - - Insufficient resources.

- **• Based on a sample of size 143 organizations in Qatar , [K.N.Al-Khalifa & E.M.Aspiwall, 2000] found that the barriers of TQM are :**
- - Culture change.
- - Rigid hierarchical and authoritative structure.
- - Lack of top management support.
- - Employee resistance to change.
- - Lack of knowledge and skills of top management.
- - Limited resources to implement change.
- - Wrong people in wrong positions.
- - Promotions based on nationality rather than on qualification.
- - Difficulties associated with empowerment at lower employee levels.

- **• Based on a sample of size 102 organizations in India , [P.Mandal et al**
- found that the barriers of TQM are :
- - Too expensive to introduce.
- - Benefit less than cost involved.
- - Resistance by managers/supervisors.
- - Resistance by employees.
- - Lack of understanding by managers.
- **• Based on a sample of size 109 organizations in USA, [G.Salegan & F.Fazel, 2000] found that the barriers of TQM are:**
- - Insufficient time.
- - Poor communication.
- - Lack of real employee empowerment.

- **• Based on a sample of size 83 organizations in Egypt, [I.S. Salaheldin, 2003] found that the barriers of TQM are :**
  - - Insufficient infrastructure.
  - - Lack of training.
  - - Workers are reluctant to get involved in decision.
  - - Inadequate knowledge.
  - - Organizational resistance to change.
  - - Lack of competent management.
  - - Resource limitations.
  - - Lack of government commitment.
- **• Based on a sample of size 872 organizations in USA, [R.Sebastianelli & N.Tamimi, 2003] found that the barriers of TQM are :**
  - - Inadequate human resources development and management.
  - - Lack of planning for quality.
  - - Lack of leadership for quality.
  - - Inadequate resources for TQM.
  - - Lack of customer focus.

- **The barriers to TQM implementation in descending order by their mean are:**
- - Lack of top management support: respondents cited it as a major problem, this could be attributed to the fact that many managers of the **Algerian organizations** consider that iso 9001 certification is the end the quality journey.
- - Lack of knowledge and skills to implement TQM: TQM implementation need new skills and knowledge and the respondents cited it as a problem because the quality initiatives are in their early stages in Algeria.
- - Culture change: respondents consider culture as a problem because the Algerian organizations worked in past in a closed economy protected by government, and TQM need radical change in organizational culture.
- - Limited financial resources: respondents consider financial resources as a minor problem, this could be attributed to the fact that government applies programs to assist the manufacturing organizations to improve their competitiveness.