

Total Quality Management - Meaning and Important Concepts

Quality refers to a parameter which decides the superiority or inferiority of a product or service. Quality can be defined as an attribute which differentiates a product or service from its competitors. Quality plays an essential role in every business. Business marketers need to emphasize on quality of their brands over quantity to survive the cut throat competition.

Why would a customer come to you if your competitor is also offering the same product? The difference has to be there in quality. Your brand needs to be superior for it to stand apart from the rest.

Total Quality Management

Total Quality management is defined as a continuous effort by the management as well as employees of a particular organization to ensure long term customer loyalty and customer satisfaction. Remember, one happy and satisfied customer brings ten new customers along with him whereas one disappointed individual will spread bad word of mouth and spoil several of your existing as well as potential customers.

You need to give something extra to your customers to expect loyalty in return. Quality can be measured in terms of durability, reliability, usage and so on. Total quality management is a structured effort by employees to continuously improve the quality of their products and services through proper feedbacks and research. Ensuring superior quality of a product or service is not the responsibility of a single member. Every individual who receives his /her paycheck from the organization has to contribute equally to design foolproof processes and systems which would eventually ensure superior quality of products and services. Total Quality management is indeed a joint effort of management, staff members, workforce, suppliers in order to meet and exceed customer satisfaction level. You can't just blame one person for not adhering to quality measures. The responsibility lies on the shoulder of everyone who is even remotely associated with the organization.

W. Edwards Deming, Joseph M. Juran, and Armand V. Feigenbaum jointly developed the concept of total quality management. Total Quality management originated in the manufacturing sector, but can be applied to almost all organizations.

Total quality management ensures that every single employee is working towards the improvement of work culture, processes, services, systems and so on to ensure long term success.

Total Quality management can be divided into four categories:

- Plan
- Do
- Check
- Act

Also referred to as PDCA cycle.

Planning Phase

Planning is the most crucial phase of total quality management. In this phase employees have to come up with their problems and queries which need to be addressed. They need to come up with the various challenges they face in their day to day operations and also analyze the problem's root cause. Employees are required to do necessary research and collect relevant data which would help them find solutions to all the problems.

Doing Phase

In the doing phase, employees develop a solution for the problems defined in planning phase. Strategies are devised and implemented to overcome the challenges faced by employees. The effectiveness of solutions and strategies is also measured in this stage.

Checking Phase

Checking phase is the stage where people actually do a comparison analysis of before and after data to confirm the effectiveness of the processes and measure the results.

Acting Phase

In this phase employees document their results and prepare themselves to address other problems.