

QUALITY MATTERS





Why is quality important?

Quality is defined by the customer and different customers may have different requirements from a product or service. As a professional discipline, quality involves working to make an organization, a product or a service increasingly fit for the customer's purpose.

Quality is important to our everyday life – from ensuring the food we eat won't make us ill and doctors in our hospitals are well trained, to making sure the latest mobile phone is well designed and produced so we have a piece of equipment that won't let us down. When quality works, we take it for granted. It is only when it fails, that we truly realise its value.

For organizations, a quality approach is vital to maintain their business and grow it in the future. Many well-known global organizations have only realised the importance of quality when it was too late and their reputation had been severely damaged.

Organizations using quality techniques can expect to be:

- Profitable – with a healthy bottom line
- Safe – compliant with legislation
- Green – operating with reduced energy costs, an enhanced reputation and better placed to respond to legislation
- Improved – continually able to find ways to do things better
- Fit for purpose – delivers on promises, the first time, every time
- Innovative – identifies gaps in the market
- Productive – creates positive results and delivers up to capacity
- Efficient – eliminates wasteful practices
- Sustainable – will be around for many years to come.

This booklet looks at the many ways quality professionals work on products and with organizations to make them better – more efficient, innovative, productive and sustainable. It celebrates the potential of the quality approach, quality professionals and their many achievements.



The role of the quality professional

Quality professionals give confidence to your organization. They are in a unique position to identify and minimise any risks to a business as they can develop an overview of an entire organization and how it works. Quality professionals can work to improve every aspect of an organization, from how things are done to its potential impact on the environment.

Quality professionals can work at any level within an organization but they are perhaps most effective when they are involved in putting together strategy and plans. At this level, they can make sure that the organization is meeting its business objectives and its legal obligations, ultimately providing confidence at board level.

Quality professionals make an organization aware of opportunities to improve, such as being more innovative in product design, saving money by reviewing suppliers or changing the way things are done to reduce costs and save time. They make use of the quality tools and techniques they have seen in action, from control charts to the balanced scorecard, to make their products and organizations better.

Quality professionals make sure your company's reputation will be protected and even enhanced and that projects are delivered on time and on budget without losing quality. They develop management systems and carry out independent audits of

work to check the quality of what is being produced so they can make improvements if necessary.

Quality professionals are also mentors, helping colleagues with enthusiasm and patience to get to grips with business improvement tools and approaches. These might include the review and redesign of processes, customer relationship management and problem solving, all of which are key to the success and profitability of an organization.

Quality professionals work to make sure:

- Everyone in the organization works towards the same goals
- The organization's goals make sense to its stakeholders
- The organization has the resources and capability to reach its goals
- The organization can identify and minimise risks
- Opportunities for improvement are found and implemented.



More efficient

Quality professionals use what they know about an organization's performance and risks to drive forward improvements and remove waste to make the organization more efficient and more profitable.

Quality professionals also set up systems to make sure a business is running as well as it can be. There are standards such as ISO 9001 to assess whether such systems are of a good quality and quality professionals also use other models such as the balanced scorecard and the business excellence model to drive improvement across a company. Specific business improvement projects can make use of a range of recognised quality

tools and techniques such as six sigma, lean and the capability maturity model.

It is important that quality professionals can develop the skills needed to mentor others and empower them to make their own improvements, instilling a quality culture throughout an organization.

Without a system to identify, prioritise and make improvements and which everyone has bought into, an organization will not be able to improve. Organizations that do not change to meet the needs of their customers or to make their performance more effective cannot continue to be viable.

Emma Sloan, MCQI CQP, is a quality engineer at Sellafield

During 13 years in the nuclear industry, Emma has carried out a number of business development and improvement initiatives.

She successfully designed and implemented a quality management system which gained certification to ISO 9001. This significantly improved her company's potential to pre-qualify for tenders and subsequently win contacts. She also secured £10m worth

of tenders through a pre-qualification process over a one-month period by offering assurance and control of company operations to potential customers. Over a six-month period Emma also mentored an undergraduate business student from China with a goal to develop her communication skills.

Emma says: 'Quality can be perceived as an "add on" rather than a core activity, therefore it is my aim to continue with activities which promote the integration

of quality principles and concepts into everyday business processes just as nuclear and behavioural safety principles have been assimilated.'



New ideas



Successful organizations are constantly evolving. They change their products, services and processes – this makes managing change a vital skill. Quality professionals are adept at managing change as they continually review products, processes and plans to see where improvements can be made.

Quality professionals can take a bird's eye view of your organization and think broadly about its connections. They can then recognise the potential gaps and areas for improvement that can seed innovation. They find whole-organization solutions that deliver innovation and improvement across the business. For instance, rather than looking

at a research and development function in isolation, they can consider how it works with sales and marketing, production and customer service.

Gareth Jones, ACQI, is a quality auditor at McLaren Automotive

One of the key innovations at McLaren Automotive over the last five years was the introduction of quality gateways to the production line.

Gareth explains: 'In 2006, our final-vehicle audit scores were high and we had a lot of rework.

'To tackle this we gathered the audit data from 150 vehicles for analysis. The next step was developing and implementing

a series of check sheets for the production line to counter the issues identified – our quality gateways. I trained members of the production staff to perform gateway audits on each vehicle.'

The new gateways allowed the quality team to gain further information on the faults to feed back to the manufacturing engineering team for resolution.

Previously, Gareth and his colleagues found about 45 issues per car upon initial vehicle

auditing. After the gateways were established, they repeatedly had vehicles with zero issues and the average for the year was just three points per car.



Better use of our resources



A quality professional is one of the few in an organization who looks across all interdependent processes and has the authority to check that teams are working together to meet business objectives as well as understanding what customers and stakeholders need.

Quality professionals can provide this service through audit, both internally and by facilitating external audits. The traditional image of someone with a clipboard is out of date – the quality professional is not an internal policeman. Quality professionals work in partnership with individuals and teams to facilitate improvement.

There would be value for many organizations in the quality function reporting to the board to give confidence that an organization is able to deliver against its plans, much in the same way that financial audits give assurance that an organization's financial resources are in order.

If internal audits are not used, it is difficult for an organization to be confident that business objectives can be met. It is also impossible to understand if the policies and processes are followed in practice. This could leave an organization open to risks in its legal compliance, its consistency and the reliability of its operations.

Dan Keeling, FCQI CQP, is the former head of quality at Union Railways North

In 1996 London and Continental Railways was awarded the concession to build the Channel Tunnel rail link later known as High Speed 1. HSI was the UK's first high speed railway and runs for 100km between London and the Channel Tunnel.

Working together on the project, Union Railways as project client and Rail Link Engineering as project manager, the companies

developed a new approach to project auditing involving all the key stakeholders. These audits provided both organizations with the opportunity to uncover issues, concerns and challenges in the execution of the project. The results were clear: the project ran for nine years and employed a workforce of more than 1,000 at its peak. In November 2007 the £5.8bn project opened both on time and within budget.

Dan says: 'It can be argued that this new auditing approach

was a contributing factor to the success of the project and to its achievement of a European Foundation for Quality Management award.'



More sustainable



Successful businesses plan for long-term, sustainable development and take into account the social and environmental impacts of their activities – this approach can only enhance the reputation of your organization.

Consumers often prefer to buy from a socially responsible company, while business customers might choose sustainable suppliers as part of their own commitment to sustainable development.

Quality professionals can support this approach by making sure that the impact of every part of an organization on the environment and society is considered.

They can look for potential energy savings within your organization as well as getting involved in your supply chain to look at the suppliers you use and the contracts that are in place. They can perform checks to make sure you are working with suppliers who comply with your policy on sustainability, for instance considering the environment and treating their employees fairly.

By reducing the risk in your business and showing that it is well managed using a quality approach, quality professionals will also make it easier for your organization to attract investors, to work with regulators and to stay in business well into the future.

Joseph Fay, MCQI CQP, is CMS supply chain manager – Europe at GE Water Process and Technologies

Achieving one of the highest scores yet seen in the Carbon Trust Standard assessment process at 90%, the team at the GE Water Plant in Widnes has continually worked hard to reduce the plant's carbon dioxide emissions – reducing its carbon footprint by a third since 2007.

Having established an ISO 9001 and ISO 14001

certified management system, Joseph, formerly plant manager, and the team integrated the Carbon Trust Standard's requirements into their system.

Not only has their work slowed down the process of climate change, benefiting everyone, but the company has also saved money by reducing emissions – with a 20% saving on utility costs in 2009 compared to 2007.

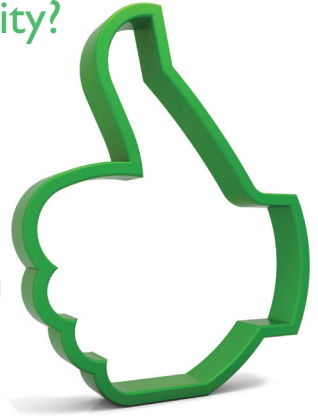
Joseph says: 'We were able to demonstrate that

"ecoimagination" is a way of life at GE and that tools such as lean help us to drive the behaviour change required to reduce our carbon footprint.'



What can you do to promote quality?

1. Pass this booklet on to a friend
2. Get involved with the CQI as a volunteer on a board, branch or special interest group
3. Email info@thecqi.org to volunteer as a spokesperson for CQI
4. Host a World Quality Day event at your organization
5. Visit www.thecqi.org for other ways to get involved



About the Chartered Quality Institute

The Chartered Quality Institute is the UK chartered body for quality professionals. Established in 1919 and formerly the Institute of Quality Assurance, we gained a Royal Charter in 2006, and became the CQI in January 2007. The CQI exists to benefit the public by advancing education in, knowledge of and the practice of quality in industry, commerce, the public sector and the voluntary sector. In short, the CQI exists to help make business better.

We promote the quality management approach, based on planning, measurement and improvement, which delivers the following benefits for organizations:

- Improved customer satisfaction
- Reduced costs and improved profitability
- Improvement and innovation
- Identification and management of risk
- Corporate care and responsibility.

Chartered Quality Institute

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