Total Quality Management (TQM) is a systematic approach to quality improvement that marries product and service specifications to customer performance. TQM then aims to produce these specifications with zero defects. This creates a virtuous cycle of continuous improvement that boosts production, customer satisfaction and profits.

In order to succeed, TQM programs require managers to:

**Assess customer requirements**

- Understand present and future customer needs;
- Design products and services that cost-effectively meet or exceed those needs.

**Deliver quality**

- Identify the key problem areas in the process and work on them until they approach zero-defect levels;
- Train employees to use the new processes;
- Develop effective measures of product and service quality;
- Create incentives linked to quality goals;
- Promote a zero-defect philosophy across all activities;
- Encourage management to lead by example;
- Develop feedback mechanisms to ensure continuous improvement.

**Related Topics**

- Continuous Improvement
- Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award
- Quality Assurance
- Six Sigma

**Methodology**

Learn how our Performance Improvement Practice can help your company achieve its full potential.
TQM improves profitability by focusing on quality improvement and addressing associated challenges within an organization. TQM can be used to:

- Increase productivity;
- Lower scrap and rework costs;
- Improve product reliability;
- Decrease time-to-market cycles;
- Decrease customer service problems;
- Increase competitive advantage.

Related Bain capabilities

- Service operations
- Lean Six Sigma

Selected References


Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. www.nist.gov/baldrige


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