

Implementing TQM in Small and Medium Sized Companies

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Technical Communications (Publishing) Ltd, Letchworth, 1992. 67 pp. £27.95
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This book is unusual in many respects. It is only 67 pages long, double spaced, A4 sized and spiral bound. This presentation style was presumably chosen to keep costs to a minimum.

The book aims to give a practical approach to implementing TQM in companies of up to 100 staff. With some reservations, I believe it just about achieves its aim. However, there are many more suitable books on the market. Longer and more expensive they may be, but then they cover more ground, in more detail and give more advice. The TQM Practitioner Series, of which this is one, is aimed at 'busy managers'. A manager wanting to obtain a brief overview of TQM may find this book of some use, but if he is only prepared to read such a short book, he obviously lacks the commitment to implement TQM!

The contents of the book are as follows:

Chapter 1 gives a 12 page overview of TQM and the special needs of small companies.

The 24 pages of Chapter 2 discuss establishing the need for a company to adopt a TQM approach. It includes brief lists of quality cost items (prevention, appraisal and failure) and ideas for questionnaires to ascertain the perceptions of both customer and employee towards the company. This information is the foundation for obtaining and sustaining top management commitment.

Chapter 3, on implementation, includes a syllabus for TQM training, internal/external customers, teamwork and only two pages on planning the quality improvements. Only one 'tool' is explained—flow charting. The flow out of decision boxes is not from the corners, as is usual, but offset from the corners (or maybe this is a misprint?). One of the first statements in the chapter is that the TQ Co-ordinator should not be the Quality Manager—but no reason is given.

Chapter 4 discusses measurement, communication and recognition. It suggests use of positive measures—e.g. percentage right rather than percentage wrong. Whilst it is important to recognize the positive aspects of the company, it helps to focus on and quantify areas of opportunity if the usual approach of measuring percentage defectives etc, is followed. Indeed, on the following page, it is recommended that percent defective be measured. No mention is made of common and special causes of variation—surely a serious omission in any general text on Quality. Communication and recognition receive less than a dozen lines and a diagram each.

The last chapter consists of a chart outlining a TQM implementation plan and a list of dos and don'ts for the stages of implementing a TQM programme.

I found the terminology confusing. For example, QIP stands for Quality Improvement Plan, not Project as in many other texts. A Business Process is used to refer to any process of any size.

In summary, there is little new in this book, and anyone serious about implementing TQM would need to read other material—it just does not cover TQM in enough detail (for example there are just ten lines of text on steering groups plus a proposed meeting agenda) and the book has a few minor niggles, such as not referencing topics that are mentioned but not discussed until later in the book. On the positive side, it is quick and easy to read, and being printed single sided it is also possible to make copious notes opposite the text.

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Location Modelling in Practice: Applications, Theory, and History

BRUCE L. GOLDEN and H. A. EISELT (Editors)

American Sciences Press, Columbus, USA, 1992. 94 pp. \$98.75
ISBN 0 196 6324

This is an edited text of five interesting papers concerned with location modelling. It is also a special issue of the *American Journal of Mathematics and Management Science* (Vol 12, issue