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# SELLING QUALITY TO ALL DEPARTMENTS

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# SELLING QUALITY TO ALL DEPARTMENTS

Successful quality management does not occur in a vacuum; all departments have a stake in continually improving quality management systems. Today's global manufacturing industry demands that companies redefine the role that quality departments take within the corporate chain of command. Buy-in from employees on the shop floor is as critical as buy-in from senior management. Quality management initiatives can influence internal business processes greatly, so companies should foster a culture of quality awareness that extends to every quality-related department.

## THE IMPACT OF QUALITY MANAGEMENT:

In an ideal scenario, every employee will buy-in 100% to quality management initiatives. The exorbitant cost of non-compliance alone should provide plenty of motivation. The truth of the matter, however, is that quality initiatives too often stagnate within the meeting rooms of quality department managers. Other departments directly affected by quality persist uninformed of proposed changes to production and business processes.

Such a siloed approach to quality management creates opportunities for either poor communication or simple human error to cause disarray on the shop floor. All departments must understand the overall impact of quality. In fact, to earn regulatory compliance, auditors will conduct

interviews to assess the competence of every department touched by quality initiatives.

Integrated quality management solutions can have a net positive impact on engineering, design, purchasing and marketing, as well as quality. Maintenance departments are better able to perform their tasks with the advantage of real-time information, and shipping departments can utilize functionality within an automated quality management system to ensure product integrity. Even administrative services such as finance, human resources and legal departments have a stake in successful quality management.

## SELLING QUALITY MANAGEMENT INTERNALLY:

Resistance to change is an inevitable part of business. Employees and managers alike will almost certainly question the validity of proposed changes to processes for the sake of improving quality. Before earning compliance from certification bodies, manufacturers must sell changes internally in order to successfully implement quality initiatives.

To minimize skepticism from quality-related departments, companies should provide a mechanism for feedback from personnel. Implementing quality initiatives in phases affords departments the time necessary to test proposed changes in the real world. Departmental leaders must also

take an active role in mitigating employee resistance to change, which is a common facet of implementing new IT systems. Gaining buy-in from senior management requires a slightly different approach.

## EARNING BUY-IN FROM SENIOR MANAGEMENT:

Understandably, senior management will question the validity of the value-added potential of an automated quality management system. Business decision-makers value specific solutions to well-defined problems, so one method of selling quality to senior management is to highlight the high cost of poor quality, which may actually be higher than a company's net profit.



By targeting the root failures of quality management, quality departments can control quality's impact on the entire enterprise. In many cases, chronic waste is one of the primary drivers of the cost of poor quality. Return-on-investment figures that highlight the cost gains from eliminating waste are indispensable when seeking approval for automated quality management systems.

In short, quality-related departments must proactively coordinate quality management initiatives. To lower the bottom-line cost of quality, employees and senior management alike must buy-in to quality management completely.

“ Quality is not what happens when what you do matches your intentions.

It is what happens when what you do directly matches the expectations of your customers.”

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