

Total Quality Management and Organizational Change in Public Organizations

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Introduction

T.Q.M comes from acknowledging the organization and its environment, and, we are trying to reach the highest levels through progressive improvement. When it comes for public administration, many authors wonder if it is possible to apply improvement methods objectively.

The introduction of T.Q.M in public administration mustn't be describes as a radical reform. They should start with elementary things.

As any other public or private organizations, the public administration is open to any improvements. In fact, the recent experience has shown that TQM can be applied to the public administration and it allows to accomplish some improvements.

The organization consists of people who share similar ideas, values and attitudes regarding, the purpose of the organization and its policies. In order to develop quality it is advisable to move from a particular culture to the culture of quality.

1. The Organizational Culture

Organizational culture can be defined as an assembly made up of opinions, values, attitudes and behaviour models which are useful to characterize the members of the organization. This system, which is to be found within the organization, guides people's attitudes.

The development of total quality will result in creating a strong culture in order to support and to achieve important purposes, such as: to spread the philosophy of quality, to motivate people and to link the groups. The cultural values belonging to the quality management could be:

- the organization should be focused on the customer, identifying his needs and satisfying them;
- it is people who achieve quality. The human resources represent the main component within the organization it is very important to satisfy it;
- the quality implies any activity of the organization;
- progressive improvement represents the basis of the total quality;
- mutual collaboration based on teamwork is the best way to make progress;
- it is necessary to be willing to get information about other organizations' experiences and innovations in order to search permanently for practical improvements.

On the other hand, the organizational structure is considered a factory providing culture in the way it provides and sustains certain cultural values. That is why, any cultural exchange should start

from an analysis of the present culture and it should have an organizational pattern in accordance with the purpose.

As far as this preliminary analysis is concerned, it has already been mentioned the role that the division of work had in making up the present structures which produced conceived from a technical and administrative perspective.

Because of these regulations, there is loss regarding the efficiency and the economical costs. The division of work implies the inflexibility of individual behaviours to the prejudice of the final results. The organization becomes stiff and consequently, its adaptability and capacity to adapt to any technical and social change decreases.

The previous statements can be applied to any kind of organization. Yet, as far as public administration is concerned, any possible change is difficult to operate due to its history.

Taking into account all mentioned above, obviously, it is necessary to make organizations flexible, to allow the integration of individuals skills and to facilitate the answer to its customers' demands.

People's behaviours, as well as their attitudes and values will be changes in this new pattern in order to have a direction to new changes and results.

2. The Resistance to change

The exchange is inevitable in organizations. As we agree that, these are linked with the area they operate, and we admit that it is in a continuous process of transformation, there is only the alternative of the permanent adaptation. Public institutions make no exception. As it has been mentioned, the TQM implies change in the missions, policy, purposes and culture; there are also changes of the members of the management and of its own organizational structure.

Once the necessary of change has been established, there are other issues to solve, such as "how this change will be achieved".

The process starts with a mutual argument between the leaders. Both the political leaders who belong to the public organism and the organization leaders are to be included. Both groups are compulsory.

The leaders are, in fact, the people who want to make the change and who establish the norms so that the change be successful. It is still they who develop transformation is very important but it is difficult to achieve it, so that the agreement regarding the quality should extend to the whole organization.

The change of attitudes and behaviours is vital. The attitude represents an individual's tendency to answer a person.

It has been confirmed that resistance confronted with change has the tendency to increase. Generally, it is considered an equivalent of uncertainty. Resistance is more frequent to the higher levels of management and it can come from the feeling of loss of a particular known environment, of insecurity.

The answer for the question "what can be done to reduce the resistance to change?" is to anticipate the way people will react (especially the board of management who will initiate the transformations at very stage).

During the negation stage, the best way is to provide information that reinforce both the necessity of change and its benefits.

In order to do that, it should be established mechanisms which provide data about the changes that take place either within the organization or within other similar ones.

It may be useful to invite the members of other organizations, who make progress, to introduce a particular change; or to visit those organizations which were very successful in this way.

3. The Introduction of TQM in Public Administration

The introduction of TQM system must be the consequence of a decision made by the management. For instance, in public administration, it is the politicians who make such a decision. The decision is usually the consequence of all the suggestions that come from a particular group within the organization.

The arguments that sustain the introduction of TQM are based on:

- a) *the reduction of expenses.*
- b) *the outcome increase.* The customers who are satisfied will tend to use more the service or the product they are offered. As for the public administration, there may be expected less delays regarding the taxes.
- c) *the productivity increase.* Quality implies the productivity increase. On the other hand, the collaboration within the organization has the tendency to reduce the costs of coordination.

The introduction of total quality reduces the costs, it does not increase them. So, the efficiency increases, it does not drop.
- d) *image improvement.* The better the service is, the better the image will be. There will be a tendency of increasing the number of dealing or the tendency of using the one which the administration offers without using the services or other alternative processes.
- e) *the increase of competitiveness.* A better image and some cost reductions determine the increase of competitiveness. The company takes advantage of this effect. There could be included here postal services, health services, education, social insurance, police; moreover, a public services, (as those mentioned above) can be replaced totally or partially by private companies which are contacted by people who consider the public service very inefficient.
- f) *the improvement of the place where people (clerks) work.* The cult of total quality makes the carrying out of a better service in public administration a very important objective. Continuous improvement can only be achieved through the staff's collaboration and training.
- g) *a proactive position.* A better planning allows the concentration of efforts in solving out the important problems and it reduces the time to "turn off".

The introduction of TQM is different from taking out a new pattern from the scheme, pattern that increases the efficiency through a radical change and it improves the image of the organization.

As always, the first steps are to accomplish a diagnosis in which it is good to differentiate between:

- quality control or the checking of the services;
- quality insurance or the checking of the way the regulations are obeyed and the analysis of the processes that take place within.

It is important for the departments within the organization to diagnose.

To conclude what has been mentioned before, it should be said that in order to introduce TQM must be followed certain steps, such as:

- 1) the acceptance of the management;
- 2) the foundation of a committee and of a department that administrates the quality;
- 3) the creation of strategies and policies;
- 4) the selection of the most performant model;

- 5) editing the necessary documents to diagnose.

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