

Can selecting the right values help TQM implementation? A case study about organisational homogeneity at the Walt Disney Company

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Total quality management (TQM) is often referred to as a value-based management philosophy, built on a set of core values. These TQM values should ideally be conformed to by all employees in order to achieve a thriving organisation. A strong organisational culture with shared core values can therefore be identified as of importance for a successful TQM implementation. This paper discusses how organisations can act to achieve shared values among co-workers. In theory, two strategies appear: to select people who appear to possess the desired values in the first place and to socialise employees once hired. When working with TQM, several examples of socialisation can be found in described techniques and tools, however the selection strategy seems to be both unapplied and underestimated. In order to find empirical examples, a case study was conducted at an organisation which is renowned for the way in which it works with values. A conclusion of this paper is that, as a complement to the use of socialisation, a selection strategy is proposed to achieve shared values in order to facilitate TQM implementation.

Keywords: values; total quality management; socialisation; selection; organisational culture; recruitment; Disney

Introduction

Total quality management (TQM) is generally considered to be based on a number of core values (Hellsten & Klefsjö, 2000). These core values should ideally be conformed to by all employees within an organisation working successfully with TQM. Many companies that have succeeded in adapting the core values have received quality awards, e.g. the American Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award and the European award EFQM Excellence Model. These quality awards are based on values that are widely considered to be the building blocks of effective TQM implementation (Hendricks & Singhal, 1999). There is much written about the importance of working with the core values of TQM when using tools of improvement, but very little focus on how to work with selecting the desired values at the beginning (see, e.g. Hendricks & Singhal, 1999; Hellsten & Klefsjö, 2000; Dahlgaard & Dahlgaard-Park, 2006).

According to Ahmad and Schroeder (2002), there is little attention paid to the impact of selection of employees on the effectiveness of quality management. They also state that no matter how advanced the statistical methods that are in use, you will not sustain the improvement without the soft skills (such as values) in employees. The employees can often relatively quickly, via training, attain the technical skills needed but developing

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soft skills takes a long time and might even be impossible depending on the employees' personality traits (Ahmad & Schroeder, 2002).

A common set of values within an organisation is often referred to as the company or corporate culture. A strong corporate culture implies that there is uniformity among the employees regarding, for example, values (Pinder, 1998). Changing the corporate culture is increasingly recognised as one of the primary conditions for the successful implementation of TQM (Hildebrandt, 1991). However, there are no simple methods or tools by means of which we can work with culture and quality culture in practice (Hildebrandt, 1991).

In theory, two strategies were found: selection and socialisation that combined together provide a tactic for working with shared values to attain a strong corporate culture. According to Chatman (1989), the best way is an integration of the two strategies. That implies both considering values during selection when the organisation chooses its members, thus recruiting an individual with the 'right' values, and later on by maintaining or reinforcing values by socialisation which can be done by training and orientation among other methods. As regards working with achieving TQM values, we mostly encountered the use of socialisation and feel that there is a need for broader thinking by putting greater emphasis on the selection process when recruiting new members into the organisation, but also by selecting among those already working within the organisation.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the relevance of achieving shared values within an organisation to achieve a successful implementation of TQM and how organisations can work to achieve homogeneity of values. Not homogeneity in the sense of every co-worker being an identical interchangeable clone, but homogeneity in terms of believing in and sharing the same base of core values which in turn leads to desirable behaviours.

Values and organisational culture

Rokeach (1973) defines value as 'an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to its opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence'. Values can also be seen as a type of social cognition that facilitates a person's adaptation to his or her environment, and values have implications for his or her behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Wiener, 1988). A value is consequently something that guides us in our choices, governs our actions and helps us adapt to our environment. Values are something held by us as individuals, thus organisations do not possess values (Pinder, 1998). Organisational norms and values are a group product; even though all members of the group would not have the same values, a majority of active members would agree on them and members of the group would be aware of the group's support for a given value (Katz & Kahn, 1978; Wiener, 1988).

In Pinder (1998), it is stated that organisational culture consists of the shared beliefs, norms, values, knowledge, and tacit understanding held by members of an organisation or organisation subunit (e.g. Sackmann, 1992; Schein, 2004). In fact, values (or shared values) are the very essence of cultures and of organisational cultures in particular (O'Reilly, Chatman, & Caldwell, 1991). O'Reilly et al. (1991) also states that 'If there is no substantial agreement that a limited set of values is important in a social unit, a strong culture cannot be said to exist'. Establishing a new or modified organisational culture is a long-term process (Sinkula, Baker, & Noordewier, 1997). Even though modifications of organisational structures can be done rather quickly, creating a shared understanding of the organisation's vision and values may take longer (Sinkula et al., 1997).

According to Yukl (2006), resistance to change is a common phenomenon for both individuals and organisations and change that appears to be inconsistent with strong values and ideals will be resisted.

Schein (2004) argues that the organisational culture needs to be analysed and understood at three different levels (Figure 1). The first being artefacts: that which can be observed on the surface, e.g. language, products, clothing, stories told about the company, and organisation charts. These can be easily discerned but are hard to decipher. Underlying the artefacts are espoused beliefs and values, e.g. strategies, goals, and philosophies. They often leave large areas of behaviour unexplained and to get a deeper understanding you have to understand the underlying assumptions which are the third level of organisational culture. These underlying assumptions are unconscious and taken for granted, and as such they tend to be very hard to change.

Organisational values and leadership

The culture of an organisation consists of the shared norms, values, and beliefs of members. By establishing a strong culture, leaders can indirectly influence the attitudes and behaviour of members (Schein, 2004). So the leaders have great influence on which culture will be predominant in the organisation. How the leader acts and behaves influences the attitudes and behaviours of the rest of the employees.

Schein (2004) has listed six primary ways how to influence culture. These are the embedding mechanisms and are major tools that are available to leaders to teach the organisation how to behave. They are visible artefacts of the emerging culture and they directly create what would typically be called the 'climate' of the organisation.

- What leaders pay attention to, measure, and control on a regular basis.
- How leaders react to critical incidents and organisational crises.
- How leaders allocate resources
- Deliberate role modelling, teaching, and coaching
- How leaders allocate rewards and status
- How leaders recruit, select, promote, and excommunicate.

TQM and value consistency

TQM is a broad expression and most often referred to as a value-based management philosophy. In Europe, the definition of TQM by Kristensen, Dahlgaard, and Kanji (1995, p. 39) 'quality is a culture of the organisation and the culture is focused on customer satisfaction and continuous improvements' is commonly used. Effectively implementing

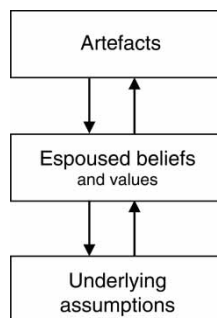


Figure 1. Levels of culture, from Schein (2004, p. 26).

TQM means that the core values are well accepted, practiced, and deployed within a firm (Hendricks & Singhal, 1999). It is claimed that the achievement of world-class quality and TQM via roadmaps, e.g. Lean and Six Sigma, will never work without a company culture characterised by the core principles (referred to in this paper as core values) of TQM (Dahlgaard & Dahlgaard-Park, 2006). Having stated that organisational values are formed by individual values it then becomes important to focus on the employees: ‘people, both as individuals and working in teams, are central to TQM and without their skills and endeavours continuous improvement will simply not occur’ (Dale, 2003).

Many researchers are in agreement that the philosophy and the principles of TQM are sound (Sebastianelli & Tamimi, 2003) and that TQM pays off when it is effectively implemented (Hendricks & Singhal, 1999). The need to achieve a strong corporate culture is one of the key questions within TQM and failure to create a conducive culture is pointed out as one main factor that contributes to failures when implementing TQM (Shin, Kalinowski, & El-Enein, 1998; Dayton, 2001).

Changing the culture is a key element in TQM, and this change needs to permeate all levels of the company (Dale, 2003). Dale (2003) furthermore claims not only that TQM provides the opportunity to influence behaviours and attitudes but also that there is a shortage of information and guidance on how to make this cultural change. Also it has been shown that the development of quality culture is likely to be a difficult process that takes time (Snape, Wilkinson, Marchington, & Redman, 1995).

There is no argument about the fact that a successful organisation built upon TQM values needs to work with organisational change. Traditionally, there has been a lot of focus on the significance of the upper management believing in TQM values and the leader’s responsibility for implementing the values into the organisation, mostly by training behaviours and encouraging education. Education, ideally, in terms of teaching all members of the organisation quality improvement practices as well as a set of values. This of course is of importance, but in addition we want to state that there is more to it than just achieving shared values by practicing behaviour, day after day.

TQM has over time developed from being a philosophy to something more like a culture. The philosophy is the foundation for the concept, the culture the desired state, which will be reached when the philosophy is realised, and the strategy is the way to realise the philosophy (Lundqvist, 1995). Building a corporate culture and working with achieving shared values among co-workers is anything but an effortless solution, but rather a constantly ongoing and demanding struggle. This is one of the many reasons why organisations have difficulties in implementing TQM, therefore leading to scepticism. There are a variety of criticisms against working with TQM as a successful management system (Hellsten & Klefsjö, 2000). Many organisations have faced difficulties in implementing core values into their work procedures. A model on how to progress with TQM is described by Hellsten and Klefsjö (2000) in Figure 2.

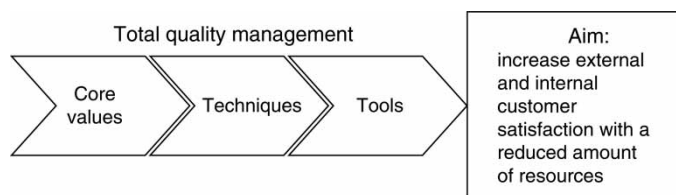


Figure 2. Role of core values, techniques, and tools, original from Hellsten and Klefsjö (2000).

The model suggests starting with defining the company core values. The next step is identifying techniques that are suitable to the organisation, and that support the values. The final step is using suitable tools that support the techniques. All this with the aim of increasing external and internal customer satisfaction with a reduced amount of resources.

In theory: two strategies

When it comes to implementing core values, this work should begin with the identification of the organisation's own core values: what should characterise our organisation (Hellsten & Klefsjö, 2000)? Once decided, the need arises to make these values common within the organisation, to create the desired corporate culture.

Chatman (1989) states that there are two ways of achieving homogeneity of values in an organisation: selection and/or socialisation. Selection is the set of procedures through which an organisation chooses its members. It is the initial match between individual and organisational values (Chatman, 1991). Who do you recruit? Organisational socialisation is the process through which an individual comes to understand the values, abilities, expected behaviours, and social knowledge that are essential for assuming an organisational role and for participating as an organisational member (Louis, 1980; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). The strongest result in organisational homogeneity, according to Chatman (1989), is achieved by a combination of the two, first hiring people with the desired values and then maintaining and reinforcing them by socialisation. The socialisation can be done in many ways with training and teamwork, etc., but the important part is that the employee understands and agrees with the values, norms, and behaviours of the organisation.

According to traditional views, selection processes assess job-related characteristics, such as past experience, intelligence, knowledge, skills, and abilities (Chatman, 1991) and very little attention is paid to values and behaviours. It helps that people are attracted to organisations with similar values and tend to stay longer with such a company. When our values and priorities match the values and priorities of a particular organisation, we are happier and more likely to maintain an association with an organisation (Meir & Hasson, 1982). Matching the individual value with the organisation helps to avoid hiring an employee with contradictory values. Selection processes may also serve the subtle function of selecting individuals whose values are compatible with organisational values and screening out those whose values are incompatible (Meir & Hasson, 1982).

So then, how can values be detected in individuals? Pinder (1998) argues that there is a relationship between the values we hold and the way we behave in different situations (Figure 3).

Bowen and Lawler (1992) emphasise the importance of the selection process when examining how Human Resources can contribute to quality orientation in an organisation. They state that the selection process should include focus on personal characteristics if it is to support TQM throughout the organisation. But nevertheless, very few organisations that are implementing quality management pay the necessary attention to this fact (Snell, Lepak, Dean, & Youndt, 2000). Wilkinson (1992) goes as far as stating that 'the extent to which personnel do manage to achieve strategic input into TQM policy and processes can decide the success or failure of TQM'.

Blackburn and Rosen (1993) found after examining Baldrige Award-winning companies that HR can support a total quality culture in several ways. One way that is pointed out is employee recruitment, selection, promotion, and career programmes that reflect new

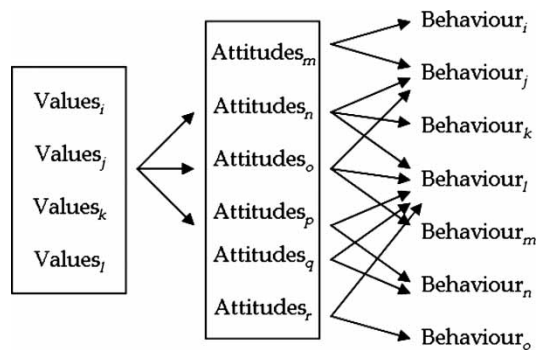


Figure 3. Relationship among values, attitudes, and behaviours (modified from Pinder, 1998).

realities of managing and working with TQM. And even in organisations that are recognised for their TQM achievements, there is still a need for continuously improving this area. Ahmad and Schroeder (2002) show in a study that behaviour traits of employees are equally important, if not more important, than technical skills when it comes to attaining superior plant competitiveness. The study brings to focus the selection of employees based on behavioral traits for the effectiveness of TQM practice.

Case study: introducing the Walt Disney organisation

There are several examples in the literature of how to stimulate and reinforce desired organisational values when working with TQM. Both the use of techniques and tools are examples of training norms and behaviours in an organisation, such as working in teams to solve problems together with improvement tools. A case study was conducted to find examples of the selection strategy, a strategy with the purpose of achieving common values in the organisation. The case study was performed in 2006 at the Walt Disney Company in Orlando, Florida, a well-known company operating within in the field of creating commercial experiences.

The Walt Disney Company was founded in 1923. For more than eight decades, the name Walt Disney has been preeminent in the field of family entertainment. From humble beginnings as a cartoon studio in the 1920s to today's global corporation, The Walt Disney Company continues to proudly provide quality entertainment for every member of the family, across America and around the world. (Official Disney website, 1 July 2007)

The Walt Disney Company has remained faithful in its commitment to producing unparalleled entertainment experiences based on its rich legacy of quality creative content and is known for their exceptional storytelling (Official Disney website, 1 July 2007)

Working with values and a strong organisational culture is a profound part of the Disney Company since the commercial experience is said to be co-created between the customer and the employee. This in turns makes the organisational values of great importance and needs to be shared by the members of the organisation. Two examples of working with the selection strategy are described.

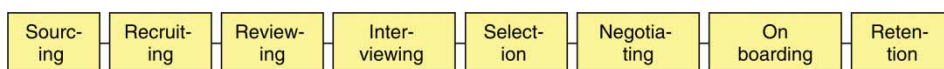


Figure 4. The Disney Casting/Staffing process when hiring personnel.

Process of recruiting

Starting off with the recruitment process, or also called Casting/Staffing at the Disney Company (Figure 4). The process was explained to us in November 2006, by Duncan R. Dickson, former staffing executive at the Disney Company and with more than 20 years of experience within the organisation. The process itself is nothing new or extraordinary, but the way they focus on values, behaviour, and beliefs throughout the procedure, and especially during interviewing, provides a good example of working with the selection strategy.

According to the 'Disney-way', they do not merely hire employees, but instead recruit Cast Members to play a part or a role, which helps to create a special way of thinking and performing in the Company. When working with commercial experiences, it is of great importance to have employees who are willing to fulfil, or rather exceed, the needs of the customers since the customer experience is co-created between the employee and the customer. According to Mr Dickson, a survey carried out at the Disney Company in 1998, showed that 68% of the guests that did not return, were put off by an attitude of indifference on the part of an employee. They can always build a great facility, with fun-filled, joyful activities, but the big difference and probably the greatest challenge is to have the right staff in their parks, contributing to creating a wonderful experience for their guests.

The recruitment process at the Disney Company focuses on hiring personnel with the 'right' values to become new members of the organisation. This demand for great awareness among the leaders involves knowing which the right values are for the company. Of course, competence and skills also are important factors when hiring, but not as strong as having the right values.

In order to find and hire new Cast Members with the right values, the task of hiring personnel is handled by a special Casting Centre. This contributes to a standardised work procedure that can give the same initial information to all job-seekers. Managers within the organisation initiate the process by presenting their needs to the Casting Centre who continues the commission by finding new Cast Members.

Before hiring, there are several steps of action. It really starts with what they call manpower planning, management looking over staffing needs. The manager needs to have a good idea of what competence is already available in the crew in order to see what the future needs are. Historical turnover is one way used in order to plan future activities. The Disney Company like to think of their recruitment as proactive instead of reactive. 'They don't just sit around and wait for the right people'.

The Casting/Staffing process is an eight-step procedure, shown in Figure 4, where all steps are important. It begins with Sourcing, looking at where the needed talent can be found. This requires an active hiring manager, e.g. when the Disney Company planned on opening Animal Kingdom in Florida, they started hiring people (cast members) 6 years ahead.

The second step is Recruiting, followed by the Reviewing. The Disney Company works according to the motto; 'Don't believe everything you read, check that the CV has accurate information about education and work experience'.

The fourth step, the Interviewing, is maybe the most important part when it comes to hiring the right values. Before the personal interview, Casting Centre shows all the applicants a short film which provides information about the Disney organisation, its history and organisational culture and of course presents some of their values, which is of great importance. The company has worked a lot with their own identity and has a clear

picture of their own values. The film gives an indication, to the applicant, of what can be expected. This is essential information and leads to about 15% walking out of the door, feeling that their individual values differ from those of the company, which helps the Disney Company in finding the ones that do fit.

During the personal interview, the Casting Centre meets with the applicant and can form an opinion on values and behaviour. This is where the recruitment process is strong. The managers do not select the right people, Casting does that, so every applicant receives the same information and introduction. The manager then does a secondary interview. The Casting Centre asks questions along the lines of: *Why did you choose the school you did?* or *Why did you decide to work at a hospital?* They also ask questions like: *What was your childhood like?* and *How have you acted in different situations in the past?* and hypothetical questions like: *How would you handle an upset guest in the park?* The key here is to find out the applicant's behaviour and values. Then they try to match the behaviour with the role. During the interviewing, there is also more information to extract than just the verbal. Is the person animated or real in their way of answering the questions? How are the facial expressions and body language? Is there a high level of energy? What emotions are shown? According to Chatman (1989), the most successful recruitment is made when there is a match between the individual values and the organisation, which leads to a person–organisation fit.

The belief within the Disney Company is that values and beliefs are reflected in our behaviour so if the 'right' behaviours (past, present or future) are recognised, the assumption is that they are based on the 'right' values. This is also the assumption underlying Pinders (1998) argumentation.

After the Selection of the new employee, the Negotiating starts. This is when a contract between the two parts takes form. With a smooth On boarding, the new employee feels welcomed and appreciated.

The last step of the process is Retention. It is really important to work on keeping your employees. They have been taught skills which you do not want to lose. The Disney Company keeps their employees by caring about them, letting them know they are appreciated and comfortable. They carry out a lot of activities such as barbecues, discounts, and many other things, which are appreciated by their employees and provide several examples of how they follow-up the selection with socialisation.

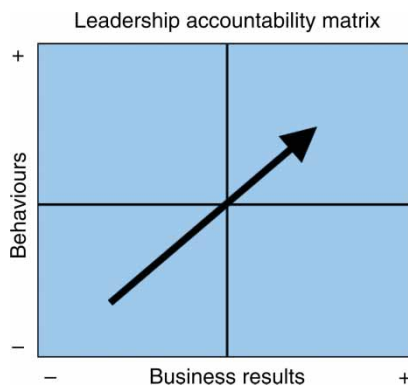


Figure 5. The Disney leadership accountability matrix (V. Oberle, personal communication, November 17, 2006).

Leadership accountability matrix

Another example of the selection strategy is the 'leadership accountability matrix' (Figure 5). At the Disney Company where many of their leaders are recruited within the organisation, there is a mindset that you should be able to work your way up if you are devoted and interested. It is also a way for the Disney Company to form their leaders in accordance to the value base that is required. Since the leader is pointed out to be the bearer of the values in an organisation (Schein, 2004), the Disney Company is constantly working with the behaviours of their leaders in combination with business results. One method used for this purpose is the leadership accountability matrix, which was used during a period of weak results.

The upper management decided to do an overhaul to assess not only how well their leaders performed, but also how well they matched the company values. All managers were measured by means of a graph with their business results on the *x*-axis and their behaviours on the *y*-axis (Figure 5). They were given 1 year to improve, and the goal was to end up in the upper-right corner of the matrix, where they both achieved positive results and had the desired behaviours. The business result was easily measured for each of the leaders, and in order to demonstrate the desired behaviours, stories were told to exemplify these. When the year passed, the leaders who did not live up to this mission, did not keep their position as a leader, they were either dismissed or more likely transferred to another position of the company. This is supported by the 'screen out those who do not fit' described by Chatman (1991).

Improving TQM implementation

As a result of theoretical studies and examples from the case study, we suggest that the way of implementing TQM can be improved by taking the selection strategy into greater consideration. The model suggested by Hellsten and Klefsjö (2000) (Figure 2) seems to focus on working with the socialisation strategy. Both working with techniques such as, process management, or employee development and tools, such as the Ishikawa diagram or the Tree diagram, are ways to help co-workers understand and secure the company core values, and therefore could be said to represent the socialisation strategy from Chatman (1989).

A developed model is therefore suggested in Figure 6, as an attempt to prevent some of the problems related with the failure to implement TQM. The proposed development is adding a strategy for selecting members of the organisation, with the intention of helping the organisation to select people sharing the defined core values. This includes planning which new members to recruit and how to use existing co-workers in a better way, by putting the right person in the right place. This might even include dismissing members of the organisation who do not share the selected values. To support this

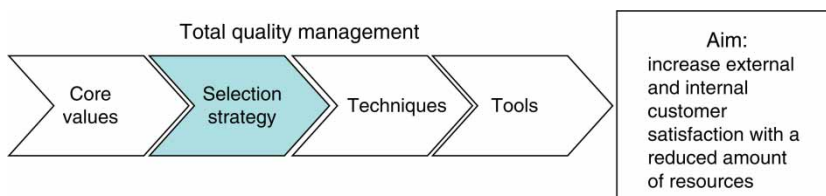


Figure 6. New suggestion of implementing TQM.

selection strategy, new techniques and tools might need to be developed in order to reach the final aim of TQM.

Conclusions

In our literature studies, many examples of Chatman's socialisation strategy were found. The described techniques and tools of TQM are examples of how to work with the socialisation strategy to train and encourage preferred values. However, it appears that the equally important Selection strategy seems to have been neglected. Can this be a deficiency and one reason why organisations fail to succeed with TQM implementation? We think so.

In order to develop and improve the implementation of TQM in organisations, we suggest a strategy of selection based on defined organisational values. A strategy that should be used both as guidance when recruiting new members and when selecting among already existing employees. Since values are difficult to change, we want to point out the importance of beginning by hiring members holding the desired values. Numerous companies hire people mainly focusing on educational degree and skills but sometimes forget to learn about the new employee's fundamental values and behaviour. The Disney case study provides an example of how to consider the selection strategy in work procedures.

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