

## THE MYTH OF THE MISSION

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*Men my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping something new:  
That which they have done but earnest of the things that they shall do.*

*Tennyson*

### ABSTRACT

In management text books and teaching in Business Schools Vision and Mission are shown as pre-requisites for determining Objectives, Strategy and Tactics (VMOST). From a survey of Management staff from 500 organisations (world wide) it was found Vision and Mission statements in 80% of organisations are not considered in tactical planning and day to day operations management. The reason being that few, if any organisations, publish Mission Statements that reflect reality. In general they are myths which might give senior management a nice warm feeling but for middle management and below they are no more meaningful than the tooth ferry. The word Vision suggests almost a mystical occurrence (Joan of Arc), or an ideal (such as expressed by Martin Luther King, "I have a dream"). Like wise most religions began with some body having a Vision. If the Visionary had enough charisma missionaries would be sent out with the Mission of converting the unbelievers to the "true faith" as envisioned by the visionary. The same connotation is found when looking at a Vision in the organisational context. It is said that a leader with a vision is a leader with a passion for an ideal. Nanus (1992) says that 'the right vision is so energising that it in effect jump starts the future by calling forth the skill, talents, and resources to make it happen', p.8. El-Namaki (1992) also stresses 'future reality' p.25. In this he follows Polak (1961) who says vision is where tomorrow begins, for it expresses what you and others who share the same vision will be working hard to create. Polak uses great visionaries such as Moses, Plato, and Karl Marx to illustrate his point. 'Themselves under the influence of what they had envisioned, they transformed the non existent into the existent, and shattered the reality of their own time with their imaginary images of the future. Thus the future always operates in the present, shaping itself in advance through these image makers and their images', p.124. Polak defines vision as a 'concept for a new

and desirable future reality that can be communicated throughout the organisation' p.124. But unless the vision can happen, it will be nothing more than a dream. As Langelier (1992) observes 'grand, abstract visions may be too inspirational. The company may wind up making more poetry than product', p.46. Stacey (1993) adds that 'The ultimate test of a vision is if it happens', p.234. The survey found that 90% of Vision and Mission statements focus on customer service, provision of world class quality and in many cases to be an employer of choice. All of this would be fine if management published Visions and Missions that actually happened. The finding of the survey is that the true Vision and Mission is to be the biggest and to have high profit returns. The paper concludes with a change model using a true mission statement based on customer satisfaction to achieve world class performance.

**Key Words** Vision, Mission, Culture, Change, World Class

The results of a questionnaire survey of 500 middle managers from United Kingdom, Scandinavia, South Africa, Hong Kong and New Zealand over a five year period found that mission statements, although in 90% of the cases have a strong customer focus, often are not in harmony with what actually happens. The reasons for this lack of harmony were found to be;

1. missions which are not genuine. 60% of the respondents said that their mission statement did not reflect reality. Rather than customer service the reality was pressure on middle management to reduce costs and that there was an obsession with financial ratios such as return on assets.
2. lack of understanding as to what customers want. 32% of the 500 managers said no real effort is made to determine what customers want
3. shortage of key resources. 35% had less than adequate numbers of skilled people with the 'right' attitude, and had severe shortages of other resources.
4. an inappropriate focus of management appraisal systems. (it was found that the personal appraisal system does not support customer service as the first objective. Customer service was fourth in importance in a list of

appraisal criteria after keeping to budget, reducing costs including staff numbers, and achieving financial ratios

The conflict between the mission as stated and what actually happens is the manifestation of an effect rather than being the cause. As Ishikawa (1976, 1985) found, if the cause of a negative effect can be determined then action can be taken to eliminate the cause so as to achieve a positive effect. Likewise the elimination of the cause of conflict, or operational disharmony, should give the positive effect of operational harmony. Operational harmony will be to the benefit of the efficient long term success of the operation measured in terms of customer satisfaction coupled with more efficient use of resources as evidenced in the financial performance statement ratios and measures.

Collins and Porras (1991, 1996) suggest, for the operational manager and for operational staff (those in the firing line), an operation with clearly defined and harmonious objectives will be conducive to the creation of a culture of performance excellence. Or, as Bart (1999) says 'To move toward this state requires, first, that every person in the organisation has knowledge of and understands the mission. Without this knowledge and understanding, there would be no focus and it would be impossible to harness the organisation's collective energy and intelligence and direct it toward the goals embedded in the mission. This is not to say that everyone would not be working hard. It's just that everyone would be working as an individual rather than as a part of a team striving towards the same end. Thus knowing the mission is essential for success', p.33.

The purpose of this paper is to speculate on how organisations can harmonise the twin objectives of customer satisfaction and efficient resource utilisation. The speculation that follows is grounded on a literature review, and from direct personal experience as a senior executive in four large international companies over a period of 18 years (actionable knowledge). Solutions for the problems identified from the 500 questionnaires would appear to be self evident, i.e.;

1. an honest mission clearly communicated to all staff members,
2. a customer focus, based on what the customer wants
3. adequate resources, including strong support of staff, and
4. an appraisal system that encourages achievement of the objective of customer service.

What is not so simple is how to engineer the major changes needed to implement the solutions. Thus this paper concentrates on how to engineer a change in structure and culture of an organisation so as to overcome the problems. The overall objective being to present a framework for operational harmony in decision making so as to achieve best practice and world class service. A holistic approach is taken, drawing heavily on Deming's Total Quality Management philosophy and Basu and Wright's (2005) Model for Change.

From the literature, for example Pearce et al (1987), Albrecht (1988), Creech (1994), Campbell et al (1990), Oakland (1999) and Bart (1999), Wright and Race (2004) it was found if a mission statement is to be meaningful then it must reflect what the management really wants to happen, it must be achievable, and management and staff need to be encouraged to make the mission happen.

If customer service is the focus it has to be known what the customer wants, see Kotler and Keller (2006) and Miller et al (2000).

Once it has been established what the customer wants, the question is can the organisation actually provide and sustain that level of product and service? As Wild (2002) says many an organisation has gone bankrupt despite having happy and loyal customers.

Carnall (2003) asserts 'that the most important resource of a business is its people, is increasingly meaningful not only in rhetoric but also in practice', p.7. Deming (1986) and Carnall (2003) are adamant that assessment systems must support the objectives of the organisation.

As stated in the introduction the solutions to these issues appear to be self-evident. It also appears to be equally evident that all of these issues are inter linked. It would not seem to be sensible to try and 'fix' just one of these issues and ignore the others. A total systems approach is needed if operational harmony is to be achieved.

Many total system approaches have been written about, Deming (1986) and Total Quality Management and later advances such as Six Sigma see Pyzdek (2000), Basu and Wright (2003) and Hammer and Champy (1993), and Obeng and Crainer (1994),) with business

process re-engineering, Kaplan and Norton (1996) and Norton (1999) with the balanced score card, Basu and Wright (2005) with total operations solutions, and Turner, Grude and Thurloway (1996), Carnall (2003) and Wright and Race (2004) with change management. Likewise the American Baldrige quality award and its European and Australasian derivatives also take a total cross functional score card approach towards achieving world class or best practice performance. But, as observed by Weick (1991) cited in Carnall (2003) p.67, 'scholars of organisations have developed theories that not only don't work for them but won't work for others'.

The truth is that many organisations are not in harmony. As found from the survey mission statements that stress customer service do not reflect reality, customer service is below what customers want, resources are seldom adequate and managers are not encouraged, through appraisal schemes, to give customer service first priority. Thus best practice and world class service is not being achieved in many cases.

Competitors are global and standards are world class. Organisations that are not striving to meet world class standards will soon be found out. The breaking down of national barriers (with the elimination of protective tariffs) and the opening up of world wide competition is seen by some as a threat, and by others as a great opportunity, Basu and Wright (2008). What was adequate in the past when information and communication were slower is no longer adequate for today. To reap the benefits of the new technology and the opportunities of the global market organisations must have the appropriate structure and systems in place. Knowing what the appropriate structure should be requires a knowledge of ;

1. what the organisation is trying to achieve (its mission),
2. what the customers want, and
3. what the organisation can provide and sustain, Obeng and Crainer (1994) , and Wild (2002).

The pressure is therefore on organisations to perform, and nothing less than world class performance would seem to be adequate.

The term world class is generally attributed to Hayes and Wheelwright (1984), who related best practice to German and Japanese firms competing in export markets. Schonberger (1986) used the term best practice to describe manufacturers making rapid and continuous improvement. World class in the nineties was extended to include lean production, see Womack, Jones and Roos (1990).

Fry, Steele, and Sladin (1994) and Harrison (1998) say best practice refers to any organisation that performs as well or better than the competition in quality, timeliness, flexibility, and innovation. Knuckey, Leung-Wai and Meskill (1999) explain that 'the logic behind best practice is simple: because operational outcomes are a key contributor to competitiveness and business performance, and because best practice should improve operational outcomes, by implication good practice should lead to increased competitiveness. Best practice should lead to world class service', p 23.

The approach now presented is derived from all of the above, Deming (1986), Pyzdek and Sigma (2000), Baldrige (2000), Hammer and Champy (1993), Kaplan and Norton (1996), Turner, et al, (1996), Basu and Wright (1998, 2008), Wright (2004), Carnall (2003)

As found in the literature to achieve operational harmony requires;

1. a honest mission clearly communicated to all staff members,
2. a customer focus, based on what the customer wants,
3. adequate resources, including strong support of staff, and
4. an appraisal system that encourages achievement of the objective of customer service.

The model below shows how each of these issues stems from the mission and is inter-linked. It begins with the mission. The argument is that the mission has to be honest. From the research it is found that without customers an organisation will not survive, unless the staff are motivated the organisation will not achieve world class service, and stakeholders in the form of owners, investors, and financiers require a profit on their investment. An honest mission gives the true objectives of a business. The objectives will include customer satisfaction, motivated staff, and profit for the owners and other stakeholders. The mission will also include the reason for being of the organisation, i.e. the specific market or goods

and services to be provided. Once the objectives have been set and encapsulated in the mission statement, actions will be required to make the objectives happen.

The actions are to communicate to the staff the need for a customer focus, so that every person in the organisation understands what customer focus means in terms of specification (product or service), cost and timing and the standards of service expected. Likewise staff have to understand the objective of efficient use of resources, and standards of performance have to be communicated and understood. To reinforce the need for customer satisfaction appraisal systems need to be aligned to service standards to encourage staff to be self-motivated to achieving the goals of the organisation. Finally adequate resource have to be provided commensurate with the objective of customer satisfaction.

If the above actions are taken, the outcome will be a harmonious operation well placed to attaining world class performance. Harmony includes a positive culture. A positive culture is where everyone in the organisation will instinctively act in any situation in the way in which management would hope they would act, and a positive culture also includes the conscious aim of every person to make continuous improvement in customer service and resource utilisation. The result will be a profitable organisation with satisfied customers.

Figure 1.

**MODEL FOR OPERATIONAL HARMONY IN DECISION MAKING**

**And the achievement of World Class Performance**

<b>MISSION</b>	<b>====&gt;</b>	<b>ACTIONS</b>	<b>====&gt;</b>	<b>HARMONY</b>
Customer satisfaction		1. Customer Focus		1. Positive culture
Motivated people		2. Clear Objectives		2. Continuous
Profit		3. Appraisal aligned to Objectives		improvement
		4. Adequate Resources		3. Profitable organisation
				4. Satisfied customers

According to Skinner (1995) and Harrison (1998) no organisation can do all things equally well, and firms differentiate themselves based on their own strengths and weaknesses. La

Rooy (1998) adds that best practice suggests incremental improvements, but that “it may well be the case that a large and radical change is required initially or at other times” p.26, and as Hamel (1996) said ‘...pursuing incrementalism while rivals reinvent the industry is like fiddling while Rome burns’ p. 69. However, In ‘Total Operations Solutions’ Basu and Wright (2005) argue that all parts of an organisation have to be equally strong. Towards this end they provide a systematic procedure for evaluating all aspects of a company to identify areas where improvement is needed so as to attain world class performance. Likewise Kaplan and Norton (1996) with their Balanced score Card approach argue that an organisation to be world class has to be balanced in all departments.

The approach given by Kaplan and Norton (1996) and refined by Norton (1999) is to use measurement to communicate (rather than control) the objectives of the organization as a whole. Basu and Wright provide measures for all the ‘functions’ of an organisation, with 200 self bench-marking questions. Norton advocates measures for four areas covering the whole organisation; i.e. financial as an outcome, customer satisfaction as an outcome, internal processes as a driver and learning and growth as a driver.

Both the Total Operations Solution and the Balanced Score Card approach have been adopted in various world class organisations, for example New Zealand Steel, and Hallmark Cards, for Total Manufacturing Solutions, and IBM, Mobil, and Cigna, for the Balanced Score Card. Adopters of both approaches report success and it is evident that organisations can put into practice a whole system approach so as to achieve best practice across the board.

The relevance to this paper being that some organisations do have a total systems approach where they aspire to be world class across the board.

### Total Quality Management

Total Quality Management (TQM) has its origins in Japan. In the 1960s Japan went through a quality revolution. Prior to this ‘Made in Japan’ meant cheap or shoddy consumer goods. The approach used in Japan in the 1950s and 1960s to improve quality standards was to employ consultants from America and Europe. The most famous of these consultants was Dr W Edwards Deming. Deming’s philosophy was to establish the best current practices within an organisation, establish the best practice as standard procedure,

and train the workers the best way. In this manner, everyone would be using the same best way. Deming's approach was to involve everyone in the organisation and to win them over. He believed that quality was everyone's business. Deming said that to find the best way meant getting the facts, collecting data, setting standard procedures, measuring results and getting prompt and accurate feedback of results so as to eliminate variations to the standard. He saw this as a continuous cycle. Deming emphasised that people can only be won over if there is trust at all levels. This means that management are prepared to allow and encourage employees to take responsibility and that employees are prepared to accept responsibility. Employee participation, through understanding objectives, processes and contributing through improvement suggestions, is a serious part of the Deming philosophy. He claimed that cultivating the know-how of employees was 98% of the quality challenge - as Gabor (2000) says Deming has been criticised for hyperbole. However, Gabor adds, quoting a Ford engineer "Deming understood that you can't turn quality on like a spigot (tap). It's a culture, a lifestyle within a company" p.293. Deming's 14 points of quality begin with 'Create constancy of purpose toward improvement of product and service' and his second point is 'Adopt the new philosophy....management must take leadership for change'. Deming (1986), Walton (1986) and Gabor (2000). The overall philosophy of TQM is one of incremental and continuous improvement, not revolution.

### Six Sigma

In mathematical terms six sigma equates to 3.4 defects per million opportunities. According to Gabor (2000) the Six Sigma management philosophy has its roots in Deming's Total Quality Management. Erwin and Douglas (2000), proponents of Six Sigma, claim that 'practising the concepts of Six Sigma leads to virtual perfection', p. 6 Erwin et al also claim that it is not difficult to change a company culture, if Six Sigma is adopted. They cite Motorola, General Electric, Citibank, and the highly successful Indian exporting company Wipro Corp., as organisations that have reaped major benefits from adopting the Six Sigma approach. Six Sigma, unlike Hammer and Champy's re-engineering, does not require tearing down an existing corporate structure and starting again, but builds on current successes. The first step is having a chief executive with the understanding and vision of Six Sigma, the next step is a common mission of total customer satisfaction, obtained by talking to the customers. Other components include goal directed incentives and assessments for management and staff. Pyzdek (2000) and Erwin et al (2000) stress the importance of an organisational wide change in culture if Six

Sigma is to be effective. It is noted that if Six Sigma was carried through all the problems identified from the survey namely;

1. missions which are not genuine,
2. lack of understanding as to what customers want,
3. shortage of key resources, and
4. inappropriate focus of management appraisal systems,

would be overcome, and harmony in operational decision making would exist.

### Change Required

There are two basic types of change. One is the continuous and controlled change as associated with the incremental philosophy of TQM, Deming (1986) and the other is major transformational change brought about by the need to re-engineer to meet strong external forces as recommended by Hammer and Champy (1993).

La Rooy (1998), Basu and Wright (2005), Knuckey et al (1999), and Erwin et al (2000) find that lagging companies if wishing to adopt the continuous improvement approach of TQM or Six Sigma will require a major change in management attitude and vision to start the journey to being world class performers.

Carnall (2003) says that unless carefully managed any change will lead to confusion. He found that when managing change managers themselves are under pressure. This pressure undermines their own performance.

‘Some organisations (perhaps many organisations) have taken an ad hoc approach to change with a series of knee jerk reactions to major external threats and/or opportunities. With others there has been a reluctance to change and, as a compromise, matrix type solutions have been superimposed on existing bureaucratic structures. In other cases rushed major changes, in the guise of re-engineering, have been forced through without adequate planning and with very little appreciation of what the long term effects might be. In most cases, what ever the approach to the changing environment has been, there has been a general lack of understanding of the magnitude of the changes that have occurred in the last ten years, and little appreciation of what is entailed in the management of change’, Wright and Race (2004) p.309.

It is considered that change of a major nature cannot be limited to one department. For example it is not possible to increase service by concentrating on efficiency in one back room department in isolation from the rest of the organisation, Basu and Wright (2005). Effective change has to be organisation wide at all levels, and the structure has to be such that it supports the intended changes, Obeng and Crainer (1994), and Kaplan and Norton (1996).

Large organisations are still generally structured in the traditional hierarchical manner with defined functions, such as Human Resources, Accounting, Marketing, Sales, and Operations, with each clearly separated into vertical departments. Typically each functional department is budget driven, and each divisional manager guards their department from other departments and tries to get as large a share as possible of the budget irrespective of the legitimacy of other departments requirements. This departmentalisation can be compared to bunkers or silos where each department considers itself distinct and closed off from the other departments. In some cases departments become suspicious of the motives of other departments, power is jealously guarded and, in short, a bunker mentality emerges. Departments tend to become inward looking with their main concern being to meet the budget. Apart from the duplication of effort and wasted time in fighting other departments and in guarding borders and responsibilities, it is equally likely that customers seeking information will be passed from department to department with no one wanting to accept responsibility, Basu and Wright (2005).

The main problem, where the hierarchical structure of functional silos or bunkers is retained, is that improved communications technology has only served to speed up data collected within the silos, but communication blocks between departments have not broken down, Creech (1994). In short the silos or bunkers now have more data, but information dissemination is at best no better than previously, and the power of each department has been most assiduously retained. Drucker (2000) refers to the need for knowledge management to overcome this phenomenon. While organisations retain functional departments the benefits of improved communication and the real progress offered by becoming more open and more team orientated will be squandered, Basu and Wright (2005).

'Re-engineering' means breaking down the silos and re-organizing around the process to gain real advantages from the investment in technology. This might sound dramatic, and it is. Indeed, Hammer and Champy (1993) describe their book 'Re-engineering the Corporation' as a manifesto for business revolution. The term re-engineering emerged during the nineties but many managers appear to be confused as to what the term means. A number of companies, especially in the United States, claim to be re-engineering but are, in reality, using the term to describe cost reduction and major restructuring. Major restructuring, involving the elimination of several layers of management and the creation of massive redundancies, is not re-engineering if the basic functional silos are still retained. Obeng et al (1994).

Re-engineering, properly applied, means that any activity that doesn't add value to the product, or any organisational or communication block that gets in the way of satisfying the customer, or anything that costs money without truly adding value is eliminated. This means the whole organisation has to be questioned and re-aligned. It means getting a blank piece of paper and starting from the beginning as if nothing existed. The problem is that of course something will exist, (the paper won't be blank), and that people at all levels will have a vested interest in maintaining the present structure, Devine (1993). It therefore seems sensible to follow the Six Sigma approach and to build on existing strong points, but at the same time hypothetically take a blank sheet of paper, perhaps using the Total Operations Solution gap analysis approach, to determine weak points with the intention of re-building or incorporating these points into the whole, Basu and Wright (2005) .

People can change. Too often the business process engineering approach has led to the scrapping all the middle managers (and then subsequently hiring young graduates straight out of university). Many organisations are now regretting this approach. Loyalty and knowledge are hard to recreate, Carnall (2003). Many organisations believe the only way to get a new culture is by getting rid of the existing staff (it is thought that they will be set in their ways) and to hire new people with open minds. The belief being that it is human nature to resist change or in many cases it is simply not possible for people to change. McGregor (1960) would term these managers as being 'type X', negative people, who see workers as naturally being lazy and unreliable. The people who hold these sentiments don't believe that they are 'X' people, as of course they are the enlightened ones - they can change, it is everyone else who can't.

The only thing that happens if managers are fired without anything else changing (assuming that the managers who are dispensed with were actually doing something) is that, given time, the layers of management will return. Changing titles and changing people doesn't change anything, it is like re-arranging the deck chairs on the Titanic, an exercise in futility.

Re-engineering can however mean some redundancies, and definitely some restructuring, and it is likely that a more horizontal and flatter structure with fewer levels of managers will result. With re-engineering, the structure is designed to support the process. For instance it might take on a circular form with several teams, each supporting a process, loosely connected, and communicating electronically. Obeng and Crainer (1994) suggest re-engineering produces a fist-full of dynamic processes more akin to a basket of writhing snakes.

The essence of re-engineering is an appreciation that the focus is the satisfaction of the customer through increased quality and by the reduction of costs that don't add value. Work is organized around processes and outcomes and not around tasks. Hammer and Champy (1993).

The old organisations were organised around functions and the flow of information was important for people at the top to have information of what was happening down the line. The bigger the organisation, the further the information had to flow. Information was pushed up the line until it reached a person in the organisation who had the authority to make a decision, Lewis, Goodman and Fandt (2001). Today with cell phones, faxes, electronic mail and its derivatives information is instant, accurate, global and cheap. This gets rid of one structural shibboleth. As Obeng and Crainer (ibid) point out the structure of the organisation no longer needs to be the same as the information or reporting structure.

Likewise, in most organisations, control is managed by setting departmental budgets and targets and by the allocation of resources to departments. Departments therefore were organized to fulfil a function and were usually groupings of specialists, such as accountants plus various levels of bookkeepers in one group, marketing people in another group, and so on. The result being that each individual was set targets and then measured against these

targets by their managers. Thus the aim was to keep to budget and to meet management requirements and the first priority was the function and not the overall process. (The process was only completed and the service supplied to the customer after each of several functions had had a direct or indirect input). The way in which these inputs occurred was partly to comply with the system and partly through informal networks, Jones et al (2000) and Lewis et al (2001).

The relevance to this paper is that even if the organisation chart does not change it is likely that the informal network will take over if the customer focus culture is strong enough. However, it would seem prudent to review the structure and consider the relevance of the structure, if a genuine change to a total quality system is being made. With open communication and clear objectives a formal structure is no longer required.

With re-engineering, one of the approaches is first to determine the key processes, secondly to recognise what has to be done and what resources and inputs are needed, and then to make those processes happen as efficiently as possible, always with the customer in mind. Attention will be paid to what really happens, and how the information networks exchange information and become meshed to make the process happen. In doing this, suppliers are regarded as part of the process. The functional structure is ignored in the analysis, the aim being not to let the existing structure inhibit but to determine where value is being added. Porter (1985), Ross (1998), Basu and Wright (2008).

Adding value - quality of service and efficiency of operations - is seen as everybody's responsibility. Churchill once said that war is too important to be left to the generals. So too with adding value, everyone in the organisation has to be involved and everyone, in the words of Peters, et al (1986), must have a passion for excellence. But efficiency is more than an in-house concern, it is the concern of all involved in the extended supply chain. The supply chain begins with the suppliers of material and flows through the process to the customer. Anything in the process where value is added to the product or service, makes up the supply or value chain. Anything that doesn't directly add value to the product or service, is outside the supply chain, Basu and Wright (2008).

With the supply chain approach, not only are all members of the organisation involved in quality and have the aim of making a daily improvement to the level of quality, but the

suppliers are also expected to be imbued with the same enthusiasm. Likewise, if customers can be involved in advising and specifying what changes of improvements they would like, they too are a part of the supply chain and consequently are expected to be an integral part of the quality culture. 'In this sense, the suppliers and the customers will, along with the in-house people involved in adding value to the product, be expected to incrementally force quality improvement on a daily ongoing basis. This is the basis of Deming's Total Quality Management. Quality is everybody's business - not just the managers', Wright and Race (2004) p.316.

Ross (1988) is adamant that the organisation has to be structured around the whole extended process from supplier through to customer - ever mindful of technological changes and the competition - with the focus on adding value and the elimination of non value adding activities.

With change, nothing is sacred. This can be a problem. Organisations that have been successful tend to look backwards for what is tried and true. Pendlebury (1987) describes this as the creative destruction /population ecology view of the firm 'where the better a business performs, the more its decision makers believe they are right, and become complacent; failures are seen as aberrations; and decisions based on judgement and experience become routine policies and procedures', p.37. The only problem is that conditions that apply today are not the same as those of even five years ago, as evidenced by the recent financial recession.

No organisation can afford to be complacent. Change is here to stay, Carnall (2003) and Axelrod (2001).

### Vision

As Erwin et al (2000) and Pyzdek claim for Six Sigma, so does Wright and others claim for Total Quality Management (TQM) 'The vision of TQM must begin with the chief executive. If the chief executive has a passion for quality and continuous improvement, and if this passion can be transmitted down through the organisation, then paradoxically, the ongoing driving force will be 'from the bottom up rather than enforced from above, and with everyone sharing the same vision', Wright and Race (2004) p. 318. For similar view

points re TQM see Crosby (1979), Ishikawa (1985), Schonberger (1986), Albrecht (1988), Collins et al (1991), Creech (1994), Dulewicz et al (1995) and Gabor (2000).

The word 'vision' suggests almost a mystical occurrence (Joan of Arc), or an ideal (such as expressed by Martin Luther King "I have a dream"). The same connotation is found when looking at vision in the organisational context. A leader with a vision is a leader with a passion for an ideal. But, unless the vision can happen, it will be nothing more than a dream Wright and Race (2004), also see El Namaki (1992), and Langelier (1992). To make a vision happen within an organisation, there has to be a cultural fit. Corporate culture is the amalgam of existing beliefs, norms, and values of the individuals who make up the organisation ('the way we do things around here'), Peters et al (1982, 1986). The leader may be the one who articulates the vision and makes it legitimate but, unless it mirrors the goals and aspirations of the members of the organisation at all levels, the vision won't happen, Albrecht (1988). As Stacey (1993) says 'the ultimate test of a vision is if it happens' p 234.

Culture and values are deep seated and may not always be obvious to members. As well as the seemingly normal aversion to change by individuals, often there is a vested interest for members of an organisation to resist change. Middle management often is more likely to resist change than are other members. Machiavelli (1513) wrote 'It must be considered that there is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful to success, nor more dangerous to handle, than to initiate a new order of things'. Human nature hasn't really changed much since the 16th century!

Organisations are made up of many individuals, each with their own set of values. The culture of an organisation is how people react or do things when confronted with the need to make a decision. If the organisation has a strong culture, each individual will instinctively know how things are done and what is expected. Conversely, if the corporate culture is weak, the individual may not react in the manner that management would hope, Peters et al (1982, 1986) and Carnall (2003).

To engineer or change a culture there has to be leadership from the top. Leading by example might seem to be a cliché but, unless the chief executive can clearly communicate and demonstrate by example a clear policy, how will the rest of the people know what is

expected? Leadership does not have to be charismatic, but it has to be honest. Leadership does not rely on power and control. Basu and Wright (2007) find that real leaders communicate face to face not by memos.

#### Mission statement to signal change

A new mission statement would seem to be a logical way for a chief executive to signal a change in direction for an organisation. Ideally the mission statement should be a true statement as to the reason for being of the organisation. It should be realistic and state the obvious. Profit is not a dirty word, Friedman (1970). Customer service is important, Zeithaml et al (1990), Kotler and Keller (2006). The key resource lacking in many organisation is quality people Barlett and Goshal (1994), Mintzberg (1996) and Knuckey et al (1999). Therefore it would seem obvious for any mission to say we are in business to make a profit, and we will make a profit by providing the customers with what they want, and that we recognise that our most important resource in making this mission happen is our people. It is important that the new mission be in tune with what the people of the organisation believe (the culture). To achieve a mission that fits the culture it would seem sensible to get the involvement and interest of all the staff in writing of the new mission. Thus in this manner a change in culture could begin with the determination and the buy in by staff into the new mission.

From the mission the strategy should be derived, Collins and Porras (1996). The first step being to determine what the customer wants, and then to establish if the organisation can afford to provide the customer with what they want in terms of specification, cost and timing, Wild (2002). If the resources (machinery, reliable supply chain and the people) are not adequate then the mission can't happen Slack et al (2006).

'If employees, organisation wide, are going to accept change, and them-selves individually change, they will need to learn certain skills. Skills such as;

- under-standing work processes,
- solving problems,
- making decisions, and
- working with others in a positive way.

All these types of skills can be taught. The main message that has to be learnt is the need for cultural change, and for people to trust each other. In particular management has to win

the trust of lower level staff and have to learn how to change from autocratic management to coaching and mentoring. Lower level staff, in turn, have to learn to trust management', Wright and Race (2004) p.319, also see Hall (1999) and Axelrod (2001) who express similar views.

Change is painful

Change will be painful and it will not happen overnight. Most writers and management consultants agree that to change a corporate culture will take at least three years, Turner (1993), Wright (2004) Knuckey et al (1999). Research by Kreigsman (1996a and 1996b) found where a company has to change its culture to develop into a world class firm will take 8-12 years!

Most organizations cannot afford to wait 8 to 12 years.

Not with standing it is generally agreed that change requires careful planning, harmonious collaboration and a willingness to listen and to accept criticism and suggestions. The first step for a chief executive will be to win the Board over, and then senior managers have to be convinced. Until there is whole-hearted agreement and a determination at senior management level it won't be possible to sell the changes to the lower levels. At this stage, it is likely that some senior managers will opt for early retirement or will move on. Change and the 'giving up' of power will be too difficult for them to handle. As the change cascades down through the organisation, it will also be found that some middle managers and quite a few supervisors will also opt to leave. The problem is that organisations have been for too long built around those who give orders and those who take orders and it is hard for people to give up power and to trust the lower echelons to get things right. Some, too, will find it difficult to give up the trappings of power, Basu and Wright (2005) Wright (2004), Perry, Davidson and Hill (1995) and Knuckey et al (1999).

As the re-engineering process takes hold together with the philosophy of total quality and value adding, and is accepted at all levels, executive privileges will become less important. 'A leader leads by example; a leader does not need a separate office; a true leader will want interaction and will want to be where the action is', Wright (2004) p.320. Also see Crosby (1979) Deming (1986) Carlzon (1989) Juran (1989), and Oakland (1999).

The action is in the front line

‘The action is not to pore over figures and budgets and draw up new mission statements; the action is in the front-line. With a quality culture, there is no room for people or for expenses that do not add value to the process. It is best to let people go who don’t want or who can’t change. This will be one of the hard decisions that will have to be taken’, Wright (2004) p.321.

The method for obtaining commitment and acceptance of change is, first, for senior management to agree on the need for change. Once the need is agreed, understood and accepted, the changes can be rolled down through the organisation. This will involve strong leadership, discussion and agreement at all levels.

Thus to achieve a quality culture will require a vision of total quality from top management. Top management has to sell the vision and the rank and file has to buy into its vision. Once the rank and file is won over they will be the force driving the quality bandwagon. Once the culture of quality has been firmly entrenched within the organisation it will permeate outwards to embrace suppliers and customers. Once this happens management will no longer be attempting to dictate the level of quality and directing how the level might be achieved. Customers, suppliers and in-house lower-level staff will be making daily incremental improvements and giving suggestions to management for larger, far-reaching improvements. The drive will now be from the bottom up rather than enforced from above and with all sharing the same vision, Deming (1986), Wright (2004), Bart (1999), Hall (1999) and Pyzdek (2000). Creech (1994), believes that structural teams provide the best means of distributing authority and accountability as they facilitate leadership that operates bottom up as well as top down. Creech believes that a decentralized team approach permits empowerment at all levels, especially at the front line, so that enthusiastic involvement and common purpose are realities, not slogans. He contends that it doesn’t matter how often the word empowerment is used in the annual report, as long as centralised control is retained, leadership will not be able to operate from the bottom to the top.

Schein (1988) points out that any change process involves not only learning and believing in something new, but unlearning something that is already present. Thus, no change will take place unless there is a motivation to change and the need for change is fully

understood. All changes have to be negotiated, that is agreed to, before a stable change can take place.

If it is accepted that change has to be organisation wide, and requires the development of a strong corporate culture, and that people can change, what then is required of management? Managers will have to learn how to make the transition from being autocratic to become a mentor and coach. What of staff? Staff have to be given the opportunity to learn new skills and new technology. They also have to develop skills of working with people and working as a team, La Rooy (1998) and Wright (2004).

Many organisations start a change program without going through the earlier stages of identifying the real requirements. A change program that is not carefully planned and managed is doomed to failure, because not only is it likely that the improvement strategy will be wrong but also the necessary commitment and culture will not have been developed, Carnall (2003).

Making changes and improvements should be a continuous process, but to sustain continuous change is as difficult as initiating and implementing change. To keep the momentum going, it is necessary to evaluate if the change process has produced results and to keep developing ongoing improvement activities, Ishikawa (1985), Masaaki. Imai (1986), Perry et al (1995), Kaplan and Norton (1996), Basu and Wright (2003), and Wild (2002)

The success of any project is underpinned by management commitment, organisation and resources. Building a commitment for all the stakeholders, inside and outside the company, involves the understanding of why improvement is needed and the nature of improvement. It is a common phenomenon for various factions to appreciate why a change is required but at the same time to believe that the need to change does not necessarily apply to them. The culture of the organisation has to be such that everyone from the cleaner to the chief executive believes that they have a personal part to play in making changes. The prerequisite for change is the vision and the will to change based on a culture that will accept change, Wysocki, Beck and Crane (2000).

It is vital that detailed discussion and agreement occurs throughout the company as to what, how, when and where change should take place and whom should be involved, Turner et al (1996).

The model for change given below is based on that developed by Basu and Wright (2005) and consists of four stages:

Start up.

Self analysis.

Making changes.

Follow up.

### Start Up

The key task for senior management is to decide what improvement opportunity areas have the greatest impact for the business. However a significant number of companies that initiate a change program do so because either they feel threatened for survival. Our recommendation is before any improvement is attempted that self analysis to identify the weaknesses and the gaps in performance take place. A self analysis process does not start on its own. Any benchmarking program requires full commitment, preparation and planning. It is vital that top management and the board wholeheartedly recognise the need for a change program. This recognition may be prompted by a reaction to current company performance, threat from a new competitor, or a strategic change (e.g. merger or an internal report from any of the key stakeholders). The Board and Management must believe that serious action has to be taken.

Major panic driven changes can destroy a company. Poorly planned change is worse than no change. Change has to be planned, methodical and relentless. At this stage it may be helpful to conduct a limited number of consultation workshops with key stakeholders to acquire agreement and understanding about the need to change. The outcome of this will be the full commitment of top management and the support of the stakeholders.

### Self Analysis

It is important for organisations to be sure of what their vision and mission and key values are, and to honestly ask 'how well are we performing against our stated vision and mission?' The basic concern being are resources, organisation structure, and people

capable of meeting the mission. For TQM and Six Sigma the philosophy includes internal and external quality measures. Internal measures are the amount of waste and scrap, reworks, and the identification and costing of any non value adding activities. External measures revolve around customer satisfaction and the reliability of suppliers. Measures include the number of late deliveries, failure to meet specification, recalls and the cost of putting right. Wild (2002) categorises quality costs as being; investment, prevention, appraisal, correction, usage (replacement, failure, disruptions), and consequent costs of management overhead and market reputation.

Internal analysis should not only be to determine shortcomings but, as per the Six Sigma approach, it is important to determine strengths and strong points and to celebrate successes. The aim is to foment a positive culture, not to be negative or to condemn.

### Making Changes

Communication and training of people throughout the organisation is essential.

Key communication benefits and needs are:

1. The objective is to share information and change processes among the stakeholders at all levels of the organisation:
2. Top management, and the Board, must understand enough about the improvement programs to know how the changes will affect the business. They must be able to know what is happening and to show leadership so things will happen.
3. Middle Management and Staff Education - While everyone cannot be on project teams everyone has a role to play in the improvement program. Therefore everyone on the staff must be informed of how their work will be affected
4. .Employee Training - No change process will work if the employees in the front office oppose it either directly or indirectly. Employee involvement and training is vital for an implementation.
5. Communication to trade unions. It is critical that the representatives of unions and other staff representative bodies are kept informed at critical stages of the implementation of how the change process will affect their members.
6. The communication among the stakeholders should be full and open. A change program cannot be built upon any false pretence. Success depends on trust. Secret agendas don't remain secret for long. Leaked information is always more damaging than official information. Damage control can be costly and time consuming.

7. Learning programs should be properly structured:
  - a. There should be a learning manager with a focused role.
  - b. On the job learning should be accomplished through team leaders.
  - c. An external human resources consultant may be valuable to guide the learning and to effect a culture change.

The installation of the changes involves the planning and physical actions necessary for putting the changes into place. This stage consists of a large number of concurrent and parallel activities including selection of equipment, revising layout, improvement of process capability, commissioning, training and so on. It is useful to prepare a project schedule showing the critical path and all the necessary resources.

Some people understand a system conceptually but cannot accept it unless they can see it in action. Pilot projects can demonstrate results and validate the purpose of the change. It can be a great advantage to move along the learning curve by a trial at a group of branches rather than going organisation wide in one hit.

#### Follow up

Follow up involves the continuous need to sustain what has been achieved and to identify further opportunities for improvement. It is at least as difficult to sustain changes as it is to design and install them. Keeping the change process going by regular feedback is a different process from that of making changes. This phase contains two inter-related milestones - evaluation and continuous development.

The progress of the changes should be monitored at regular intervals usually by comparing the actual results with target performance levels.

All the people of the organisation have to understand the purpose of the changes, believe in them and give whole-hearted support. The lead must come from the top of the organisation.

The above model for change is for organisations that are not currently working in harmony. The findings of the survey were that up to 60% of organisations are not in harmony.

The recommendation is not for total revolution that tears down structures as and which results in wholesale redundancies and restructuring. It is considered naïve to believe an

organisation can start with a blank sheet of paper, it has to be recognised that a rather grubby piece of paper already exists! It is recommended that by structured self analysis that organisations discover not only their weaknesses but their strong points and should build on these strong points. However, it is not recommended that lagging organisations can change by adopting a continuous improvement approach. First a major change in culture will be needed, everyone in the organisation has to appreciate that change is necessary to survive in a world class market. Such recognition, and change in culture, has to be led from the top.

This paper builds on the findings of the survey and the literature and recommends a holistic approach to achieve organisational harmony.

The problems highlighted in the survey were:

1. Missions which are not genuine.
2. Lack of understanding as to what customers want.
3. Shortage of key resources.
4. Inappropriate focus of management appraisal systems.

It was noted that all these issues are inter linked. It was therefore considered that a total approach was needed to effect changes. The need for organisations to move to world class performance was considered. Various total approaches to improve operational performance including TQM , Six Sigma, Re-engineering, Balanced Score Cards, and Total Manufacturing Solutions were considered. Drawing on these approaches a model was developed as to the components of a world class organisation. These were found to be;

1. vision and leadership from the top,
2. an honest mission with a genuine customer focus,
3. customer involvement,
4. a quality culture,
5. an appraisal/incentive system that supports the mission,
6. the elimination of all non value adding activities, and
7. a supply chain approach to determine the organisational structure.

It was recognised that many organisations have adopted a whole systems approach, and include IBM, Toyota, Motorola, and General Electric. Some use a score card approach,

others the Six Sigma approach. Despite these well publicised successes it was found that many organisations are lagging behind world class performance. It was accepted that for a lagging company the concerns were with day to day operations and that total organisation change could well appear to be daunting. It was therefore recommended that organisations identify strong points and build on these. At the same time weak points have to be identified and strengthened and non value adding activities identified and eliminated. The recommendation being that a revolution will be needed for the laggards, but a revolution of the culture rather than initial major restructuring.

From the literature it is universally found that the most important element for success in an organisation is the people. People include management and staff at all levels. It is contended that if the overall culture is right then there is very little that an organisation cannot achieve. The mission of the organisation has to begin at the top, and has to be accepted by the staff. If the mission is to become reality resources and assessment systems have to be in place to support the mission.

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