

Enhance your company through quality assurance

Quality Assurance ensures the setting of measureable objectives which translates into measureable outputs

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Quality assurance is the process of systematically and logically monitoring and evaluating programs and processes in an institution to ensure they meet specific requirements. These can be measured through internal or external quality systems to ensure that objectives set are met and implemented. This ensures that drawbacks are addressed to refine the objectives and ensure efficient and effective service delivery, policy or programme development.

Quality assurance ensures the setting of measureable objectives which translates into measureable outputs. This process can be applied to all sectors in an organisation such as governance and leadership, marketing, accounting, human resources, testing and examination as well as corporate affairs.

The myths

Myth #1: Most employers and employees view Quality Assurance practices and systems as fault finding efforts. Thus, there is organisational resistance when internal or external reviews are conducted. Instead, QA measures evaluate past progress of projects and performance, assess the current status, and gives recommendations for improvement.

Myth #2: Quality assurance adds unnecessary cost and time to a project: Employees believe that QA measures add unnecessary tasks to their already tedious jobs. However, when you think of how much money or how many potential customers are lost due to inefficient systems or damaged goods; it indicates that QA processes are not a luxury or option

but are mandatory and essential to an organisation's success.

Myth #3: Quality Assurance is only management's responsibility: This is everyone's responsibility to ensure quality standards are measured, achieved, and maintained at all levels of the organisation. This provides for achievement of targets and efficient and effective service delivery by all employees.

Myth #4: Quality Assurance programs are used to monitor individual performance. It is used to catch employee mistakes: a reactive process of review and discipline. However, a QA system is used to evaluate an organisation's performance. For individual employee performance, a proper performance appraisal tool is sufficient.

Myth #5: Quality Assurance is only a system for reviewing hard data. Quality assurance is an organisational philosophy that combines QA (quality assurance) with QM (quality management). Quality Management is a system of motivating concepts and principles; whereas QA is a system of checks and balances, measures and controls to ensure adherence to the organisational mission and standard operating procedures. Therefore, an effective QA program anchored on a stable QM philosophy is a proactive process which not only uncovers mistakes but also successes as well.

The facts

Quality assurance has several advantages to individuals and the organisation as a whole. It can increase customer confidence in your organisation through transparent and policies and procedures, and accountability of the organisation. Additionally, it can improve your company's credibility in the industry as all processes and procedures are transparent and can be interrogated. Moreover, quality assurance improves the work processes in an organisation



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to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of programmes and policies. In addition, a proper quality assurance system gives your organisation through recruitment of new customers and linkages and retention of previous ones a competitive edge. An organisation is able to measure the productivity of its employees thus enhancing revenue. Quality assurance assists in the reduction of costs and reduces wastage by having control measures that enhance performance. This also increases employee accountability and promotes departmental excellence.

Mission, objectives and goals

For an organisation to have an effective quality assurance system and achieve its mission, it should have a clear understanding of its mission, objectives and goals and clearly defined written policies and procedures governing job tasks.

It should also have a rigorous and quality employee screening process that selects top performing individuals who have the requisite skills to meet quality expectations. That should be in addition to having a strong and supportive training program that provides individuals with the knowledge needed to meet quality expectations and having a fair and equitable performance appraisal system that sets the standards for quality performance, achievement, and rewards

How do we measure productivity and quality in higher education? What makes Harvard or Yale the top ranking universities in the world? Ivy League universities have a reputation for providing excellent education and attracting the top students. Can universities in Kenya be the same? Of course!

Some tips for universities

Each organisation should map out key performance indicators in each department and encourage faculty to churn out publications and presentations locally, nationally, regionally, and internationally.

The faculty and staff should have active memberships in professional organisations and also have viable internship and attachment opportunities that equip students

with relevant industry skills before graduation and among other things.

Recommendations

Organisations should set measurable objectives. If these are not measurable, nothing will be achieved. Recommendations made after an IQA or EQA will only be achievable if there is a person responsible to oversee the process. They should also have specific activities that will aid in the accomplishment or implementation of that recommendation and realistic timelines to give ample time for implementation of findings. Evaluation strategies should be put in place at the departmental and management level to assess the process of implementation and to ensure that the set objectives were met. If they were not met there should be an assessment and decision made on way forward.

Benchmarking mechanisms

Every organisation should set up an Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) system to monitor and evaluate their progress, processes, and procedures. Additionally, there should be External Quality Assurance (EQA) benchmarking mechanisms by peer organisations. This is to enhance performance and the streamlining of policies and programs. Employers should, however, know that transition into a QA system is a process and not an event, and therefore, they should invest time, effort, and resources to achieve it. A Quality assurance system implemented without adhering to a stable and committed quality management philosophy is destined to fall short of expectations. The tenets of a strong QM philosophy are focus and commitment, responsibility, trust and respect, open communications and continuous improvement. This QM philosophy forms the culture of the organisation. Thus, in order for a QA system to succeed, the culture of the organisation must be one that encourages continuous improvement in an open, supportive and positive atmosphere. If the QA system is supported by management good will, it will be more effective, efficient and sustainable. ☉

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