



USE OF TQM IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

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Abstract:

Quality in the library deals with everything the library does towards the satisfaction of their users. Activities that will encourage users to regard the library as one of the best. Those activities are highly satisfactory to the users. The quality is a measure of the achievement of the library activities in terms of user satisfaction. Total Quality Management deals with the product/service in its totality. It tells about continuous improvement in process till the desired quality of the end product or service could be achieved.

Introduction:

Today, all kinds of organizations are becoming customer oriented organizations to survive in this world. So, they need to provide quality products and services to their customers. Total Quality Management (TQM), provides the tools and the direction to improve quality. Libraries has always been committed to provide a high quality of services to its users. In the past, consuming more resources, buying more books, and moving to large premises are considered as improving quality. But that approach is not valid today. One of the good solutions to improve quality is to provide right information to a right user at right time. This requires a through change in the approach an approach based on user requirements and user satisfaction. It is believed that this can be achieved by implementing TQM. Thus, TQM approach is slowly getting popular in today's libraries.

History:

Total Quality Management is a management approach, which is becoming more and more popular in the growing industries. W. Edwards Deming and Joseph M. Juran introduced a similar concept in 1950 in Japan and termed it as Total Quality Control in production. This approach became popular in 1980 and came to be called as Total Quality Management.

TQM describes the culture, attitude and organization of a company in order to provide such types of products that can satisfy the requirements of the customer. This method helps in increasing business and reducing losses by combining the quality and management tools. It is considered that an organization is made up of many processes and the main objective of TQM is to ensure that an organization should improve these processes by the knowledge and experience of the workers. Earlier this method was used only for manufacturing operations but due to substantial advantages offered by the method in quality, production and competitiveness it came to be used increasingly in all fields such as marketing, engineering and sales. Some of the companies which adopt this technology are the ford motor company, Phillips semiconductor, SGL carbon and Motorola.



Definitions of TQM:

The term TQM has been defined or interpreted by different people in different ways:-

British Standard (BS 5780) define TQM as –

“Management philosophy and company practices that aim to harness the human and physical resources of an organization in the most effective way to achieve the objectives of the organization.”

Termer and De Toro:

“A basic business strategy that provides goods and services that completely satisfy both internal and external customers by meeting their explicit and implicit expectations----- This strategy utilizes the talent of employees to the benefit of the organization in particular and society in general and provides positive financial return to the shareholders.”

According to Brockman:

“TQM is a Management philosophy embracing all activities through which the needs of the customers and the community, and the objectives of the organization are satisfied in the organization are satisfied in the most efficient and cost effective way by maximizing the potential of all employees in a continuing drive for improvement.”

In short TQM is a way of managing to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, flexibility, & competitiveness of a business as a whole. It involves whole companies getting organized and committed to quality in each department, each activity and each person at each level.

Total Quality Management (TQM):

Total quality management is an approach that an organization takes for improving its performance on systematic and continuous basis. This is achieved by involving all employees throughout the organization in satisfying all requirements of every customer, whoever the customer may be – either external or internal. Quality management is the basis for library management in general. Such principles of TQM as meeting the customers needs, exact assessment, continuous improvement, teamwork, and enthusiasm of the leaders are typical for library service.

Total – everyone in the organization is involved in creating and maintaining the quality of the services and products offered.

Quality - the organizations through individual and collective actions focuses on meeting customer needs, recognizing that customer perception identifies quality.

Management – in managing the system, the emphasis lies on continuously improving the system in order to achieve the best results.

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Characteristic of TQM:

1. TQM is a management philosophy to guide the librarians in meetings the challenges of the time.
2. TQM promotes teamwork.
3. TQM focuses on the users.
4. TQM recognized internal and external users of the library.



5. TQM aims to install prevention not an inspection.

6. TQM is a process and activities based approach.

TQM and ACADEMIC LIBRARIES:

Libraries have faced many difficult times in their history. Even in present time some of those difficulties are still in existence as challenges. Library continuously expanding and the size of the library is remaining or decreasing. Expectations increase while resources are limited. Information explosion places new information technology and knowledge resources before users. As users are the key persons of the library. Library staff has stress how to combat this situation and how to provide more with less to the users. This situation thrust information professional to think about TQM. The concept of TQM is also applicable to Academic libraries. TQM plans for future.

The success of any TQM depends to a large extent how carefully and skillfully crafted the vision. In the light of vision academic libraries must develop system philosophies and strategies for managing quality. The primary purpose of an academic library is to support the teaching. Research and other academic programs of its parent organization which delivers products personally to the customer and user part of the academic community.

Key Elements in TQM Process:

1. Focusing on Users expectations :

There are three basic functions of modern library. These are acquisition of information, organization of information and dissemination of information. The first two are the behind the screen activities are called housekeeping operations whereas the third one represents the on-the screen activities called service oriented operations. However, the user directly or indirectly involved/affected/concerned with the above activities. So identification of users expectations regarding any service is very important for rendering efficient and effective library and information services to user's community. While knowing the user's expectations library authorities should know the accountability, affordability, availability and appearance of service offered by the library from user's point of view.

2. Developing a Quality Measurement System :

This task is associated with finding measurement that will help to understand user's dissatisfaction and productivity of library service. While developing quality management system it is necessary to specify some quality standards so that the quality of service should be measured. There should be some parameters to decide the quality. Every library service should be properly analyzed and then establish some standards for quality measurement.

3. Identification of Root Causes :

User's dissatisfaction, negative feedback, conflicts in rendering library service, problems in interaction with the users etc. are some symptoms of poor quality. However, the real cause of these problems is usually hidden and difficult to identify. The real cause may be poor techniques, insufficient training to staff or poor management practice. To identify the root causes, quality management consultants have developed several tools to identify the root causes. These tools help to organize and analyze information so that it is easy to trace the problem.



Statistical control process, check sheets, brainstorming, flow charts, Pareto charts etc. are some of the tools and techniques to identify the root causes.

4. Developing a Communication System :

Quality management is an information related management system. An efficient communication system is an important requirement for the functioning of quality management systems. A good communication systems must be developed that can give us up-to-date information about user's needs and expectations from various library services. There should be proper communication among users and library staff. It is also important to communicate with employees about the progress of quality management and the corrective actions that are being taken. Suggestion and feedback system is very important not only in ascertaining users needs and expectations but also useful to make necessary correction and modifications in library systems and services.

5. Employee Motivation :

One of the most challenging questions facing every manager is how to motivate the employees. The role of employees is very much important in quality management. Even though quality can be defined by the library users and quality can b defined by library users and quality objectives by library authorities, it is the library staff who will finally make quality improvement possible. Quality objectives can only be fulfilled when employees are motivated to implement them. Allowing employees to be involved in the decision making process is one of the important ways to motivate them to work towards the quality improvements. There are some other management skills to motivate employees towards the quality management of libraries.

6. Training for quality :

Quality management is a new culture and a new way of thinking, so without education and training such changes of culture cannot be achieved. So necessary training and education are every important in the quality improvement process. So the library managers and other professionals have to be educated in quality management objectives and tools. More importantly, all other library staff have to be educated to understand the importance of quality, users satisfaction etc. Quality management is an information based management system and only education and training can provide employees with the necessary information.

7. Implementing Quality Improvement :

Collecting informations, making measurements, identifying root causes, arranging training programmes are all important, but nothing changes unless someone does something. The implementation of such strategies will encounter more than a few challenges. Changing the culture is not an easy objective to achieve. People are often resistant to essential change. When planning for long-term objectives, the short-terms problems, that may or may not be related to the main problem, cannot be ignored. Balancing all these and doing something is an art. As discussed earlier, identifying user's expectations to training for library staff, are important for the smooth implementation of TQM is libraries but the implementation process will not be smooth and trouble free if everything else is done perfectly.



Benefits of TQM in Libraries:

If implemented carefully, quality management principles yield positive benefits libraries such as (Miler & Stearns) : Incremental changes lead to continuous improvements – quick solutions may yield only partial results.

1. Forces library managers to develop leadership skills interested of replaying on power within position to obtain results.
2. Increase staff participation in decision-making, thus increasing the feeling of “ownership” of decisions and directions once charted.
3. Improves the level of training given to staff, thus increasing skills.
4. Helps break down barriers between library departments and improves communication within the organization.
5. Provides a method of improving services to users in a period to similar resources.

Conclusion:

Libraries in India have traditionally underfunded. But the information age is already superb and has even greater potential, but needs to change older mind and work style. Librarians have to respond to the challenge and making sure that they get their share of the information age. We must seriously reflect on the implications, relations and conflicts raised by the information oriented process in libraries. In the case of libraries technology has made their activities easier and they have changed them. The work done by the information services is an enterprise that requires commitment and good deposition to devote time, delivering and communicating this attitude, converting ordinary things into extraordinary achievements.

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