

IN SEARCH OF A QUALITY CULTURE: THE AWKWARD TRUTHS OF AN INDETERMINATE MAXIM

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ABSTRACT: The paper explores the evolutions and realities of institutional “Quality Culture” (QC) and unpicks blurred definitions of QC that are to determine whether it has a valid voice in the modern quality assurance vernacular. The authors question whether QC is a practical and achievable goal, or if it is little less than a theoretical conceptual buzz-term that ignores the realities of existing impregnable structures or individual malaise barring real progress towards a process of quality enhancement. It queries whether a QC is equally achievable in the private sector and public sectors. Taking a tertiary educational institution and a cultural institution (opera company) as examples, the authors demonstrate how a culture of quality can be bread via a process that is at once both systematic and organic, individual and inclusive, guided yet self-monitored.

KEY WORDS: quality, culture, universities, opera company, change, management, leadership

1. CONTEXTS AND DEFINITIONS

Much has been written about the evolution of modern work place terminology often from the exasperating perspective of the real issues facing organizations being clouded or even papered-over by saccharine new jargon amounting to little more than redesigned platitudes to make managers and leaders appear current and effective (Poole, 2013). Typical buzz-terms that are regularly used but largely go undefined include “stakeholders”, “deliver” and “competencies”. Other modern boardroom wisdom attracts constant ridicule for bastardizing normal phraseology such as “blue sky thinking”, “drilling down” and “sunsets” which almost descend into virtual minced oaths territory. Each of these phrases is deserving of an analysis of their realities and real uses, but that is not the landscape of this paper. Here we will look at another often quoted, often used and often confused term: a “quality culture” and specifically how to create or sustain one. In many ways, it should be a falsehood to in any way include “quality culture” in the same grouping as “drilling down” et al, however the truth is that unfortunately the implementation of a “quality culture” is still as much just “blue sky thinking” as it ever was for the vast majority of organizations both public and private. This paper aims to explore the questions of how a quality culture emerges and what it actually looks like when it does. We will also look at differences and difficulties in building quality cultures in both the public and private domains, and how organizations can find their own illusive cultures of quality.

Attempts at a strict dictionary definition of what is a quality culture are largely as erroneous as they are unhelpful. Given the almost ethereal nature of a prevailing culture, pinpointing a set of criteria, does not do justice to the breadth and depth of its influence on everyday activities. Indeed, it has been argued previously that if you need to ask what a quality culture is, then you don’t have one (Wells and Gilder, 2009). What is perhaps more useful is to ensure that we distinguish between related issues. Vettori (2008) distinguishes between the *control oriented* and the *participative quality culture* and holds that, if

in the control scenario quality is something that can be created and managed, being a top down implementation of quality standards and strategies, in the participative model quality, it is more organic and emerges in a dynamic way. In so doing, it comes with the permanent negotiation of quality notions, and a process of participative development whose implementation may have uncertain results. Vettori further defines what he calls *Principles of a Quality Culture* as:

- Empowering the stakeholders to develop their own quality goals, initiatives and measures;
- Guaranteeing transparency and common standards without succumbing to a purely formal quality approach;
- Showing trust without disregarding the risks involved;
- Strengthening reciprocal communication processes;
- Balancing the delegation and acceptance of responsibility;

The current paper will draw on these foundation principles to explore the building of a quality culture.

2. REVOLUTIONS AND RESOLVE

An understanding of what any culture is may be a useful starting point. Is a specific culture something that can be mechanically established or launched? The answer is both yes and no. The 1960s Beat Generation (sub)-culture of Ginsberg and Vonnegut et al could arguably be described as an example of a conscious decision by a group of individuals to create something new- a new culture. Others may argue that this was less determined and evolved from disquiet revolution to a mainstream culture with parallels to the Renaissance. Whichever the point of view, the Beat Generation culture like so many other sub-cultures was entirely based on individual choice – the choice to join in or opt out. No one was forced to take part and nobody was left behind in life because they couldn’t understand the culture or didn’t want to. Other cultures are however less easy to ignore or shake off. Belonging to a national culture by birth makes the individual part of the fabric of that culture whether they wish to be or not – and that includes diaspora choosing to live beyond national

borders. Arguably, even by change of nationality and passport, an individual's true cultural origins remain where they spent their formative years and where their ancestral backgrounds lie.

New complementary cultures will continue to evolve and take shape as human lives and life on earth evolves. They can develop over long periods of time as a result of science, discovery and natural curiosity or they can spring up suddenly during periods of extreme revolution or powerful sub-movements that challenge and disturb the status quo with determined resolve. We are now experiencing a high knowledge revolution that has surpassed both the industrial and technological revolutions and we have all unwittingly become part of the knowledge culture and the knowledge worker generation. Our new cultural currency is high quality, precision, perfection and performance. And, unlike the Beat Generation, we cannot choose to opt out. Nobody and no organization can afford to be left behind. A single ride on any city's metro system around the world will observe virtually every person under twenty with a cell phone complete with cameras, email, twitter, Facebook, audio clouds, etc. This is not a technological revolution – that already took place in the last century. This is the new quality culture that demands now, new, better, easier, faster, clearer, longer, cheaper.

It is therefore possible to resolve to create a culture by design rather than for it to evolve organically providing that everybody around sees the benefits or rewards. Apple didn't create the i-culture, people did by acknowledging that it made their lives simpler, faster, etc. For any culture to thrive it needs participants to accede to and believe in what it stands for and to abide by its rules and constraints or in a basic sense its membership rules; It is impossible to be a part of the knowledge culture without subscribing to email and cell phone technology; likewise to be an active part of the new wave of an organization's culture, it is necessary to subscribe to its values, notions and belief systems. An organization's quality culture is no different: to be part of that organizational culture you need to subscribe to its belief systems, ethos, vision and mission. Individuals need to ask of themselves: Do I believe in what we are doing? Do I believe I am doing the best I can? Do others believe this? What would I do to change for the better what I do, how I do it and for whom? Would I do this for the good of the organization rather than my own personal good? Am I prepared to challenge, nurture or remove others that do not share our vision and beliefs? When was the last time I asked my colleagues "Why do we do it like this? Why don't we try it this way instead?" These very personal questions and motives moves us into the choppy waters of identifying the incentives and obstacles for forging a quality culture based on change, innovation and creativity.

3. INCENTIVES AND DISTURBANCES

Possibly one of the most instrumental keys to the building of a quality culture is indelibly linked to the buy-in of human capital – i.e. the commitment of employees to the culture's principles. The *motivation* to do something is just as important as *doing* it. Or, to put it another way, disinclination equals a negative return on the time and energy invested. At the basest of levels – the real question is: What is in this for me? Why should I even care whether we have a quality culture or not? Not every employee of an organization will be concerned about the wider environment in which his or her organization operates. They will not see it as their role to be preoccupied with what the competition is or is not doing, and they may often say as much quite openly. They therefore will very often fail to appreciate that the competition in their field of activity

(be it in public or private domains) is there ostensibly to take away their own clients or customers, to eliminate them as the competition and by default take away jobs from the very same employees who don't care about them. It is the responsibility of the organizational leadership to nurture and build the bridges over this intrinsic gap between the immediate "*more than my jobs worth*" mentality and the longer-term sustainable mission and vision culture.

Similarly many employees of an organization do not believe that their role in it is important and can thus disturb the process of quality culture building. Again, senior management need to make it clear that *everybody* has a part to play and that however seemingly insignificant, *every single person* is actually exponentially significant. No organization hires people they don't need, hence every employee must be needed and valued because their function is required to make the whole operation run as effectively as possible. It is essential that everyone understand (and believes) that their work is valued and that the consequences of their own individual performance reflect on the overall quality of the organization as a whole. It needs to be also emphasized quite clearly that this approach has to stretch from the boardroom or rector's office to the loading-bay or post room. Simply because strategic decisions are made at the senior executive level does not mean that employees in these positions are immune to a "*devil-may-care*" attitude to quality.

It may be useful to consider some specific examples at this point. For instance: What are the consequences of a telephone being left to ring and going unanswered? Firstly, it says very clearly to the unknown caller that the organization or company or institution does not care about who might be calling and that they don't want to deal with whoever is calling and about whatever they want. The consequence of this is that the caller will, of course, go elsewhere: she will place a major lucrative order with your competition; the potential new international student will look to another university; the journalist looking for an informed comment or useful interview will interview someone else giving their organization free publicity. And the list goes on -all consequences of the actions of just one person – one person who doesn't see anything wrong in not answering their telephone because they are "just the secretary" or "assistant" or whatever their position. What is even more worrying however is that often the phone goes unanswered (or an email enquiry unanswered) because the person who should be replying or answering believes they have saved themselves unnecessary extra work by doing so. He or she has just made their job a lot simpler. What they do not consider is that they are destroying the reputation of their organization and effectively destroying their own job.

Examining this problem from another angle, it seems necessary for a reminder of the extensive damage that seemingly harmless cost-saving measures or poor working conditions can have on building an effective quality culture. Employee motivation will be severely undermined by poor canteen/restaurant facilities, poor ventilation, poor bathroom facilities, dirty office spaces, physical neglect of offices and premises. Such things not only send a poor image to customers and clients, they also tell employees that the owners and organizational leadership don't care about them – a view that is only compounded when they then observe senior management arriving in expensive company cars. The awkward truth returns: Why should I answer the phone that's ringing and ringing if "they" can't even be bothered to provide me with coffee or install air-conditioning? Testing employees' goodwill never works in anyone's favour.

Following on from this we must turn to the inevitable question of salary and wages and enquire what, if any part salary levels and financial status play in building a quality culture. We alluded to this aspect earlier, and concluded that there is no direct correlation or evidence that a higher level of remuneration and position will necessarily lead to a more committed level of quality culture building. Having said that, clearly the higher the salary package and position within the organization, the more an individual has to lose should things go dreadfully wrong and the organization fails. On the other hand, highly remunerated professionals and senior management are typically more professionally mobile than other employees, and although they may understand better the need for a quality culture, or be more cognizant of the “bigger picture” discussed previously, they also believe that they can work for the competition if they choose to. One only needs to track the career trajectories of leaders of failed investment banks to know the extent of this.

4. A CULTURE OF CONSULTATION

The preceding discussion deliberately sidestepped the issue of the quality of an organization’s, company’s or institution’s actual products and services, for the simple reason that it really goes without saying that without a high quality product or service then any contemplation of developing a quality culture is utterly meaningless. Unlike the operational or support staff that glues an organization together, there is nothing to hold together without a solid quality product – whether that product is a mobile phone, a vehicle, opera production, degree program or health care provision. Given the tangible nature of many products and services and/or their proximity to dealing directly with clients, professional staff and crafts people tend to be more quality aware in their professional capacities, and are quick to look at improving quality when it is needed. Teachers, lawyers, opera singers, engineers, care-workers, technical machinists, chefs etc. generally know the importance of maintaining the high standards and quality norms of the products or services for their sector or skills trade. The electrical goods engineer on the manufacturing floor will do exactly what she/he is told to in order to meet the strict quality control criteria often laid down by trades associations or international standards. For opera singers, the need for pitch perfection is achieved by constant practice, as is the need to continually master new operatic works to satisfy paying customers and compete with other arts and entertainment medias and outlets. Likewise a doctor will do everything in her power to help patients given whatever resources and constraints she faces. The same argument applies for teachers, lawyers etc. Their quality culture is often driven externally from benchmarks and expectations, but this is not universally the case. It is just as important that a teacher (for example) be continuously looking for better ways to teach a subject and better learning materials or resources rather than waiting for system-wide initiatives or inspections. The same goes for a university professor, who not only needs to continually reevaluate how they teach, what and to whom, but also needs to create new courses and programs to reflect the changing nature of knowledge and knowledge acquisition. This constitutes a professional culture of quality.

It is important also to recognize that these employees have a vital role to play in the intangible aspects of the organization as well. They can and should make changes to the process and procedures that operationalize how they perform their professional tasks. Are teachers or professors ever consulted on how students are recruited? Are doctors consulted on how

patients are handled on admission? Are skilled crafts people or production-line engineers encouraged to take an active role in the greater organic quality culture that forms the backbone to the organization they work with? The organizational leadership needs to ensure that it is standard practice and institutional policy for inputs and suggestions to be sort from their professional employees, and that these are acted upon with feedback. This culture of consultation represents an essential ingredient of a quality culture whether we speak of the public or private sectors.

Which brings us to the delicate area of quality cultures in public versus private organizations. Notwithstanding the arguments of salary and benefits that tend to be quite distinct between the two sectors (although certainly not exclusively so), are there differences or differing obstacles to encouraging a quality culture in the two distinct areas of activity? One key difference is the obvious and relative increased job security that tends to come with employment in the public sector. Again, this is not always the case as government departments, schools and hospitals do close down, but the public sector is traditionally a much more stable working environment where the mantra of “a job for life” still resonates quite powerfully. Even when closures or restructuring occurs, civil servants tend to be reshuffled rather than made redundant. This prompts the next awkward question: If my job is pretty much future proof as a government employee and often on a reasonable salary scale with a good pension, why should I be bothered about any quality reviews or an absence of a quality culture within my organization, school, department, hospital? Where are my incentives? The answer lies in the abilities of public and private senior leaders to infiltrate the quality culture embedding techniques described above into daily operations and to translate words of quality wisdom into a sustainable process of actions.

5. A CULTURE OF ACTIONS OVER WORDS

Returning to one of our founding questions of how do we get buy-in at all levels with all employees to these issues, we can expand on this to ask: How do we convince everyone that we take the building of a quality culture seriously and expect it to be implemented throughout every level and with every individual of the organization? Even in the case of cultural productions, having and maintaining a culture of quality remains a must. Indeed, the issue of qualitative measuring of artistic performance in opera companies has been largely debated both in what regards quality assurance in non-profit organizations (Chaffee and Sherr, 1993; Agid, and Tarondeau, 2010) and growing economic constraints on non-profit professional opera companies (Coe, 1994; Baumol, and Bowen, 1966). Since the 1990s, the quality management literature (Hackman and Wageman, 1995) has explicitly explored existing approaches in organization theory, organizational culture and human relations management and extended these issues and concepts to cultural institutions and to the field of (performing) arts in terms of different theoretical (for example, Adorno, 1968; Dahlhaus, 1973; Boerner 2004) and practical (Lesle, 1981) approaches to artistic quality. Much like other institutions, as non-profit organizations, opera companies too must be held accountable to the public or the agents of the public in some way, so standards for evaluation needed to be clarified (Schuster, 1997). When non-profit opera companies receive most funding from public sources opera productions must be held to standards that place considerably more weight on maintaining a broader audience or preserving a particular repertoire. Nonetheless, even for-profit opera

companies benefit a lot from developing a quality culture as it provides a starting point for evaluating their performance. In both cases, the prestige and success, and ultimate survival of the cultural institution, we may add, are largely dependent on qualitative indicators and assessment of both profile quality and performance quality.

Using a tried and tested methodology used at several higher education institutions (HEI) we will look at a way to embed a mentality of continuous quality introspection and enhancement into every aspect of the organization and to explore if that is enough to breed an organic culture of quality. The process is at once straightforward and has its origins in the earliest of Total Quality Management (TQM) doctrines (Crosby, 1980), however for the purposes of a quality culture dialogue we need to keep this simple and to not propose or pontificate on anything that sounds or is indeed overly complicated. Quality enhancement is all about observing what we do, analyzing it against good practices or benchmarks and then doing what we do better. Nobody should ever feel threatened by the process or believe they may lose their job or respect in the process. The process is neither a witch-hunt for failure nor a form of stealth redundancies. That this is known and accepted by all employees is imperative for the required buy-in mentioned above. If this is not observed the whole exercise will be nullified and even be dangerous for moral and undermine the performance it was designed to address.

The simplified approach is four-fold:

1. Establish the Key Quality Criteria (KCs)
2. Establish the Key Questions (KQs) that address the criteria
3. Evaluate the current status of these criteria and how they can be improved
4. Establish improvement targets

Such an approach is intended for internal use *by everybody and for everybody*, so that they are not only a part of the process, but that they decide on how the process of quality enhancement will be directed and implemented. The KCs and KQs are devised from the bottom-up and are monitored from the bottom-up. They are not dictated by senior managers or external bodies (e.g. The Ministry of Education), they are decided internally by the people (employees) responsible for them, with each individual department setting their own quality process. In our HEI example this would be at various levels and departments, including (but not only): faculty programs, faculty departments, admissions offices, facilities management, HRM, finance, marketing and PR, ICT services, student services, international relations, etc. The Senior Management Team (SMT) oversees the process, however they are recipients of information and targets, not the ones setting them (apart from when they prepare the KCs and KQs for their own quality performance). This is fundamental to the process and for capacity building in quality enhancements. The employee(s) is/are in charge and are empowered to make changes for the better because they are after all closer to operational issues than senior management. The SMT needs to build trust in the employees and to empower them to take responsibility for their own actions and consequences.

There may be a certain unease in the SMT that the whole process could be undermined by a tendency by some departments or individuals to over value the current quality of activities and procedures and/or to set low quality enhancement objectives. This comes back to the trust element and the uncertainty of results, but is also mitigated by the evidence-based philosophy underpinning the KCs and KQs model. It is

self evident that when answers to the key questions are provided they must be supported by clear evidence and that the answers are not simply the subjective opinions of those people concerned. Again, it is the employees who will decide what type of evidence is appropriate for each KC. For example, if an admissions office believes they have an efficient and effective admissions procedure, then they just need to provide evidence that this is the case and to demonstrate via benchmarking that this is indeed representative of accepted standards. Such evidence might take the form of surveys of under-graduates, high school students, and high school teachers, Faculty Deans etc. It might be an analysis of the time taken from receipt of application forms to offers of places on programmes; it might benchmark these against similar organizations in their own country or elsewhere; it might compare the number of enquiries received each year for admission compared to the number that eventually enroll. It is important not to interfere or to accuse a department, team, unit etc. of setting low standards or inflating their current behaviours and procedures, but to ask them to provide the evidence that supports their convictions. We should also not forget that new targets and enhancements will need to be set at regular intervals and therefore improvements will have to be made (all be they more slowly than perhaps would be wished for) as a part of the process of quality culture building and that this will eventually benefit from empowerment and trust energies.

We mentioned benchmarking above and this aspect also forms a vital element of the process of quality culture building. A department or faculty or program may state that they are delivering a quality service or product – but against whom or what are they measuring and concluding this? If a university's restaurant services states that they have high quality food, diverse menus, and good standard of service they need to compare themselves with another university or HEI refectories and workplace food services. A good quality assessment of a HEI does not need to be restricted to similar institutions in either the public or private sector. The aim here is to look for, and aim for quality improvement, and benchmarking against mediocrity will not achieve this.

In a similar vein, a true culture of quality should not be restricted by financial norms or from a "within budget restrictions" constraint. It may well be that finances do prove a practical constraint and in some cases a considerable one, but that should not be an excuse for identifying where quality improvements can be made, to do so would severely hinder the building of an effective quality culture. Financial barriers to quality improvements are not the concern of the individuals or individual departments proposing quality enhancement measures. These are the problematic of senior management and leadership who accept responsibility for turning departmental proposals into actions. This may indeed necessitate redirecting funds traditionally earmarked or channeled elsewhere to achieve – and indeed this may be as difficult as it is vital. But nobody ever took on a leadership position without accepting that they will make unpopular decisions. Again it is the SMT's responsibility to build a quality culture and no leadership was ever successful in running on a popularity contest ticket. In our HEI example this may mean reconsidering traditional funding foci and re-channeling away from research, libraries and ICTs and towards campus beautification projects, student services departments, or Careers Guidance Centres.

Coming back once more to the essence of buy-in by everyone to the quality culture concept within the framework of the HEI example, consider the following: the chief campus gardeners

says that she cannot cut the college lawns or grass properly because the lawnmower is not working properly. This needs to be handled and be seen as equally important as a researcher saying that they are unable to access research funds or the student body/union asking for more computers or longer library opening hours. If an institution, be they public, private, for profit or non-profit, wishes to be a truly quality driven organization with an organic and continuous culture of quality, everybody needs to acknowledge, demonstrate and support the backing (and funding) of each and every quality enhancement initiative.

Every operational department needs to establish its own quality standards, quality goals and to monitor them, and this stands equally for our HEI example. Our final move now is to give a concrete and very practical example of how to operationalize the foundations of building a QC within an organization. Again we will use the example of an HEI to illustrate how it is possible to build a culture by embedding quality into everything an organization does and its employees do. The following is a model adapted from an Australian quality procedure applied at a higher education institution.

Model 101.

In our current higher education institution model, the College of Music's quality assurance model rests on seven Quality Key Criteria (KCs) and for each of these Key Criteria, they have established Key Questions (KQs) the answers to which lead to the evidence in support of each KC (Adapted from the Program Quality Assurance methodology used at the Higher Colleges of Technology (2001-present), United Arab Emirates. The PQA model is itself an adaptation of a similar quality enhancement model applied at universities in Australia. The full methodology is an internal process and not for publication outside the institution). The specifics of KCs and KQs can and will differ from department to department or faculty to faculty, however by their very nature there will also be a strong element of heterogeneity.

KC 1. Student Learning and Progression

KQ1. What is the student progression rate through each program?

KQ2. What is the retention rate for each program?

KQ3. Are there any courses or program stages that appear a hurdle?

KC 2. Learning Resources Optimization

KQ1. Do we have sufficient learning resources for our program?

KQ2. Do we have suitably qualified and sufficient teaching faculty?

KQ3. Do we have appropriate and effective professional development programs to support learning?

KC 3. Facilities Optimization

KQ1. Do we have the correct level of physical resources to support the program?

KQ2. Are our resources in sufficient level of repair so as to encourage pride in our institution and trust in our programs?

KQ3. Do we have a realistic master plan for renewal and regeneration of resources?

KC 4. Community Satisfaction

KQ1. Are industry and the external community satisfied with our graduates?

KQ2. Are Alumni engaged with our institution?

KQ3. Are high schools engaged with our program/College?

KC 5. Student/Graduate Satisfaction

KQ1. Are students satisfied with our program? What are they most/least satisfied with?

KQ2. What do graduates think about their program 1-year/2 years/5 years after graduation?

KQ3. What does the Student Council think about our program(s) and learning resources/environment?

KC 6. Administrative Process Optimization

KQ1. How efficient and user friendly are our admissions and registrations processes?

KQ2. How efficient and friendly are our financial policies both for students and faculty?

KQ3. How well are scholarships and student loans administered?

KC 7. Benchmarking

KQ1. How are we measuring our College and program's performance?

KQ2. Which benchmarking indicators have we identified to compare our activities and programs?

The above is purely illustrative and each KC would have as many KQs as deemed necessary by each department. The point is for each department or faculty etc. to unpick all the variables that can be measured under each KC to understand and effectively continuously improve on the performance of their own KCs. As has already been emphasized, for the above to form the backbone of a quality culture model *everybody* in the organization/institution needs to be involved in the formulation of both the KCs and the KQs that underpin them. And equally *everyone* needs to be involved in analyzing the current status of these and how they plan to improve them.

Having established the KCs and KQs, started looking for answers and setting quality goals as a result, there is one final step to be taken that will assure that the process is at once both dynamic and continuous, but that it also fits seamlessly into the very fabric of the organization and in everything it does. That is, it becomes a normative part of the organization's culture. The simplest and most effective way to do this is ensure that reference to the KCs and/or KQs is made in *every* working document, report, proposal, meeting agenda, set of meeting minutes within the respective departments, schools, colleges etc. In a quality culture, *everything* discussed and reviewed in formal meetings at *every* level will address an issue related to the organization's Key Quality Criteria and the related Key Questions used to assess and improve them. If an agenda item is not linked to the KCs/KQs – it has no place on the agenda. Every proposal for a policy or procedural change, request for funds, request for resources, must be linked to a KC/KQ and hence be addressing some issue of quality and how to improve it. If not then there is no need for the report, request, etc.

On a very pragmatic level, the secondary benefit of mapping all written documentation and decisions to the relevant quality criteria provides a mechanism for recording how an organization is approaching, monitoring, and strategizing its

culture of quality enhancement. Then, when and if internal and/or external quality assurance bodies ask an organization how it goes about quality assuring its activities, the sum of meeting decisions, reports, and proposals will together constitute an evidence-based framework from which an overarching quality review report can be elaborated that is at once both real time, transparent and accurate.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The fundamental foundation of a quality culture in any organization is an understanding that quality improvement is not quality assurance. The latter is reactive and looks at problems once they have arisen, is often regulatory, is led by management and is a snap shot at one point in time, while the former is proactive, examines quality and standards before they become problems, is a self-determined and continuous staff led process. Involving every single person in the organization is paramount.

For any culture to thrive it must be organic and not imposed. It should encourage creativity and freedom to think and act, and a culture of quality is no different. Quality as an end result is only a part of the process; a quality culture recognizes this and builds on it as the integral motivation for everything the organization does. Initially we questioned the relevance and value of boardroom buzzwords that infiltrate modern management parlance. A “quality culture” is in fact far from than a mere à la mode addition to quality circuit of terminology. It constitutes the foundations on which any quality initiative should be built. Taken in isolation, the static review of “quality assurance” or “quality monitoring” will not generate a culture of quality. Embedding a process of continuous quality enhancement into everything the organization does, revitalizes the workplace, breeds creativity, dynamism, forward thinking and success, and an organizational culture that everybody wants to be a part of.

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