Quality Improvement Plan

Benjamin Njemo

School or Institution Name (University at Place or Town, State)

It is a well-known fact that an organization is a complex system designed with the aim to add value to the stakeholders of the business. The purpose of these organizations is to fulfill the needs of stakeholders. Despite the type of organization and its processes, it is essential for a business to meet the quality standards to remain profitable and build its reputation. To direct and control the quality in an organization, ‘quality management system' has been introduced which is aimed at continuous improvement. An organization has to consider the quality management principles to deliver quality products and services. CIPOS is a strategic process improvement tool that implies the features of six sigma a quality improvement tool. This model uses the outside-in approach by putting oneself in the customer's shoes and designing the whole process based on customers' needs and wants. This paper is aimed at conducting a quality improvement plan based on the COPIS model of quality management.

The justification for a quality improvement plan:

In the modern business environment, the importance of quality can’t be neglected. To achieve the quality in the product, service and processes, it is important to focus on the continuous improvement in all the areas for the success of the business organization. Continuous improvement is focused on identifying the sub-optimal processes and changing them in order to reduce the defects and improve the quality. A quality improvement plan is important to reduce the number of errors or defects. Defective products can cause huge costs to the businesses, and it affects the business reputation. Focusing on quality improvement plans helps identify the potential causes of the problems and fix them to avoid future issues.

The philosophy of quality improvement makes sets an organization to adopt the changes occurring in the business environment, take advantage of emerging opportunities and avoid threats. Moreover, continuous improvement leads to increased productivity of the organization in long-run. In addition, it increases employee morale because it helps in the identification of where the problem arises. Problems generally occur due to the poor work design, failure of leadership, vague instructions, not in the people performing the processes. Having a quality improvement plan helps an organization to evaluate its performance and increases its efficiency over time.

Approaches to customer service:

The customer is the most important asset any business organization can have. None of the organization wants to lose their customers. In the modern world, where every organization battling to win the same customers, improvement in customer service can lead to high retention and acquisition rates. There are many approaches to customer service which aims at winning the heart and soul of customers. These include the personalization the customer service, training to service agents, focusing on the retention while providing them services etc.

The most important approach is to interact with the customer in a way that wows them. This approach is known as a second judgment and discerning approach which advocates that the customers must be treated in a way the employees of the organization wants to be treated if they are the customers. For this purpose, the organization must hire people who have caring and courteous attitudes. Output satisfaction is directly related to customer loyalty, the more a customer is satisfied with a product or a service, the more is the likelihood of him being loyal to the company. Satisfied customers remain faithful to the business and spread the positive word of mouth which helps company acquiring more customers without spending huge money and putting efforts. Therefore, organizations must be focused on the output satisfaction to gain the loyalty of their customers.

Output-control and measurement approach to improve process performance:

Process Improvement is focused on measuring the output of a particular business process and then making changes in it to increase the output and efficiency to increase the effectiveness of the process. Process improvement is a process which is employed to increase the performance or efficiency of a process. To improve the process based on output control and measurement DMAIC methodology can be used (De Mast & Lokkerbol, 2012). It is a data-driven strategy that helps in the process improvement. It has five phases that are, Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve and Control. It is an initiative of six sigma aimed at improving the quality of business processes.

In the first phase, customer requirements are considered, and a room of improvement is identified and defined. The next step is aimed at measuring the current output and performance of the process. After this step, the process is analyzed to identify the causes of variation in the process. Based on the results obtained from the output measurement and analyzing the process, the process is improved to eliminate the issues and errors. For the complex system design of experiments is used to solve the issues. In the end, a control plan has to be developed to control the improved process and future performance of the process.

Process-improvement and management approach:

As the quality of processes is essential for the success of any organization. Since the interest in Total Quality Management has emerged, several approaches to process improvement have been developed to improve the quality of business processes. Variety of methodologies are available for the process improvement which includes six sigma, lean management, re-engineering, kaizen and just-in-time etc. Six Sigma is a data-driven approach used to remove the defects and make the process close to perfection (Pande & Holpp, 2001). Statistical representation of six sigma shows the performance of a process. Re-engineering is the redesign of the process to improve the outcomes. Just-in-time is a concept emerged from the Japanese auto industry which reduces the defects of the quantity.

Lean management is also the technique used to eliminate the waste from the process. The second idea of lean management is to evaluate the business process at every step. Quality standards have also been developed, ISO 9000 is the international standard for the quality, and it heavily relies on the documentation of the process. These standard programs are aimed at continuous improvement of the business process. Another program is a theory of constraints, which focuses on the ideas of focusing on managing the bottlenecks in a process. TOC is focused on process flow analysis, and it can perform best in the TQM environment.

Recommended process-improvement approach:

The Six Sigma quality standards are a subset of Total Quality Management (TQM) and incorporate all the philosophies and tools present therein. Thus, nearly all of the requirements under TQM are more or less implemented in a Six Sigma project. Nevertheless, looking into the past history of TQM and analyzing the causes and factors which contributed to its failure led to various improvements that were later integrated into Six Sigma. One of the causes of TQM's failure was the lack of participation and support by the management, whereas, in the case of Six Sigma, the involvement of sponsors and champions, belt structures, and the overall management was clearly defined. Secondly, TQM did not require projects to be handled by groups and conversely saw it as an end run by the management, which essentially avoided forming a genuine culture that valued continuous improvement.

In contrast, Six Sigma emphasized groups to lead and handle projects and on creating a culture that values continuous improvement to accomplish quality objectives. Furthermore, TQM based itself on a prescriptive methodology that involved a series of sequential steps to be followed and implemented in order to lead towards success. Six Sigma followed the same methodology and provided clear and well-defined models for improvement, such as DMAIC. The DMAIC defines five stages for every project that ends with the accomplishment of success and subsequently to maintain it. Moreover, Six Sigma also makes use of advanced statistical analysis tools which allow them more opportunities for substantial improvements. Although TQM did not fail because of a lack of such tools, it also did not provide the same improvement opportunities that Six Sigma did utilize them.

Input-measurement and management approach:

Six-sigma COPIS model is focused on translating the customer voice into the output and business processes (Ramanan, Kumar, & Ramanakumar, 2015). The customer’s opinions and requirements lead to the identification of the output, business process, determination of inputs and then approaching the best suppliers. The input of the business process includes all the resources that are used in a process to achieve the desired output such as land, labor, capital, organization and equipment. Input measurement and management include assessing all the inputs required form the suppliers as well as from the other departments and business functions.

Gaging inputs include the number of resources required to develop, maintain or deliver the product or service based on customer requirements. Input management and measurement help in the management of the business process as one function is dependent on another. This cross-functional dependency requires the management of the inputs required in the business process — for instance, the sales and operations department of the organization.

Supplier-management approach to improving input and supplier quality

The supplier is an independent entity which sells the products and products to the business organization. These suppliers are not only the external entities but also the internal suppliers because of the cross-functional business dependencies. When it comes to quality management, the suppliers are an important part of the process. The final quality of the products and services is highly dependent on the quality of the supplier's products and services. There are many ways suppliers can be involved in the process of six-sigma quality improvement plan.

One way to involve the suppliers in the process is to ask them to adopt the six-sigma or buying from those who use and implement six-sigma processes. Another way to involve the suppliers in the process of quality improvement is to have access to the supplier’s processes. If the supplier allows transparency then getting involved in the process can be helpful. Suppliers can also be involved in the training related to six-sigma implementation and quality. Another proactive approach is to conducting six-sigma awareness sessions, selecting suppliers on the basis of business readiness for six-sigma and training and providing resources for training.

Conclusion

Quality management is important in all the areas of an organization in order to improve the overall quality of the products and services. However, to enhance business performance. It is important to identify and continuously improve the areas that have a direct impact on customer satisfaction. COPIS model is directed at converting the customers' needs and requirements into the business processes and making it the foundation of all the other activities (Ramanan et al., 2015). To achieve customer satisfaction and customer-centric improvement strategies, the organization has to identify the areas of improvements based on the feedback as of customers. Then the most important area must , and short-term improvement plan has to be implemented. Later long-term plans need to be focused. Always involve customers in part of any improvement strategy. In addition, monitoring and evaluation must be done to achieve the desired results of customer satisfaction.

References

De Mast, J., & Lokkerbol, J. (2012). An analysis of the Six Sigma DMAIC method from the perspective of problem-solving. *International Journal of Production Economics*, *139*(2), 604–614.

Pande, P. S., & Holpp, L. (2001). *What is six sigma?* McGraw-Hill Professional.

Ramanan, L., Kumar, M., & Ramanakumar, K. P. V. (2015). Knowledge Gap and Its Impact on Product and Process Quality. In *Applied Mechanics and Materials* (Vol. 813, pp. 1176–1182). Trans Tech Publ.