

## Ways to Manage Quality

### Quality Control

The objective of quality control is to ensure each finished product meets the standard set out by the business for a quality product. The traditional method by which a firm tries to achieve this quality standard is by having a separate Quality Control department whose inspectors check the finished items and reject defective or substandard products.

This method therefore **detects** quality problems at the end of the production process before they reach the final customer. The Quality Control department would then try and change an aspect of the production process and procedure, in order to solve quality problems that seem to occur most often.

This approach hopefully stops defective products getting to the market place and harming a firm's reputation but evidence shows that it has limited success at reducing the number of sub standard products being produced and therefore wasting a firm's resources.

### Total Quality Management

An alternative and increasingly popular method of ensuring quality is known as "**Total Quality Management**" or "**TQM**". TQM is best described as being an "attitude" in a business where everyone in the business is committed to achieving quality – not just the people in the Quality Control or production departments. It means that quality is being checked at every stage of the production process, as all employees are trained to check their own work (self-checking).

Two of the main aims of TQM are "**zero defects**" and "**total customer satisfaction**". "Zero defects" refers to the aim of producing goods and services with no faults or problems. To achieve this requires:

- ▶ Strong teamwork
- ▶ Open sharing of information about what quality problems are arising and how they are caused
- ▶ Investment in improving and refining production processes

There are various advantages and disadvantages of introducing TQM:

Advantages	Disadvantages
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Improves reputation- faults and problems are spotted and sorted quicker (zero defects)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Initial introduction costs- training workers and disrupting current production whilst being implemented
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Higher employee morale– workers motivated by extra responsibility, team work and involvement in decisions of TQM	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Benefits may not be seen for several years
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lower costs – Decrease waste as fewer defective products and no need for separate Quality Control inspectors	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Workers may be resistant to change – may feel less secure in jobs

There is no guarantee that TQM will be a success and there have been cases of firms abandoning their new TQM initiatives. This is often because after several years the benefits have not yet been fully achieved and have not offset the initial costs. The success of TQM will depend upon the attitudes of workers throughout the business and how readily they accept the changes to their traditional working practices.

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