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Implementing Total Quality Management

In the Commonwealth of Virginia

by

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IMPLEMENTING
Total Quality Management
IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

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LDSP 498
Senior Seminar
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INTRODUCTION

As the result of an internship with the Division of Legislative Services of the Virginia General Assembly during the Fall 1993 semester, I came to the realization that the public sector and state government in general are in need of change. Although this is something that has been recognized for some time, it was the first time that it touched me on a personal level. During my internship, my journal entries reflected my frustrations at getting tasks accomplished. I attended meetings that seemed to accomplish nothing, except to waste the time of those in attendance. I witnessed processes that took ten steps instead of one or two. When I studied the Pay for Performance system and recommended an implementation plan for Incentive Pay within Legislative Services, I noticed that state employees are supposedly rewarded with Incentive Pay, but their evaluations do not reflect their efforts as a team. Next, I witnessed the creation of yet another state-run organization, the Advisory Board of the Virginia Administrative Conference, whose responsibilities will fall under the Code Commission. I also observed negotiations surrounding the choice of a publisher for the Virginia Administrative Code. Overall, I sensed that these activities were well managed, but they lacked the guiding force of visionary leadership.

When the Jepson School's Senior Seminar course presented me with the task of "making a difference" or creating change in society, I sought to find a way to tie my "make a difference" campaign to state government. After my internship experience, I wanted to contribute to improving the way that things operate at the General Assembly and within the State. However, this appeared to be an enormous task, one that I didn't know how to even begin. I was challenged to find a project that would allow me to utilize what I have learned from my courses in the Jepson School of Leadership Studies, as well as "make a difference" or create change within the public sector.

Finally, it dawned on me that influencing long-term change with the goal of making the systems and the processes of state government work more effectively requires Total Quality Management (TQM). Leadership, not management is the essence of TQM. It's goals are to make

continuous and lasting improvements for customers and employees alike. Although TQM has worked effectively and produced measurable results in the private sector, it is a relatively new movement in the public sector. However, if implemented correctly, the potential for TQM to bring results to the public sector appears great.

Over the course of the semester, I devoted time to researching Total Quality Management initiatives in the public sector, with particular emphasis on state-wide programs. I then analyzed this information to discern the key elements for implementation across states. I worked in conjunction with the Task Force on Continuous Quality Improvement, a sub-group of the Commission on Management of the Commonwealth's Work Force. I presented the results of my research to the Task Force on April 8, 1994. At the same time, I made recommendations for implementing quality principles in Virginia My hope is that the recommendations that I made will eventually develop into a realistic plan that the Governor will approve. If the Governor becomes the champion of TQM and advocates the use of quality principles, the Commonwealth of Virginia will be able to achieve its highest potential in serving the employees and citizens of the state. Until such a time, the quality initiative can begin by developing a formal network among organizations which currently practice TQM.

The following report provides background information on Total Quality Management, addresses the dilemma over whether Total Quality Management can successfully bridge the gap between the public and private sectors, summarizes the work of the Task Force on Continuous Quality Improvement of the Commission on Management of the Commonwealth's Work Force, explains the research methodology, analyzes the elements of a total quality initiative in the public sector, presents three structural approaches to implementing a quality initiative, discusses the critical elements necessary for a successful initiative as identified by the Task Force on Continuous Quality Improvement, describes the barriers to implementation within Virginia, outlines the next steps that need to be taken, and concludes with my personal reflections about working on this project.

BACKGROUND

State government is in need of change. For the most part, there is a lack of coordination and communication from the top-down, bottom-up, between agencies, and within organizations. On the one hand, this can be attributed to the inefficiency of the public sector in general because it is one in which politics impacts every aspect of the government, but on the other hand, the culture of the public sector can be attributed to the leadership that is responsible for shaping this sector of society. The layers of bureaucracy and unnecessary procedures seem to frustrate everyone, but very few proactive steps are taken to correct the situation. Citizens and employees alike who utilize the services of the government are beginning to lose faith in the public sector because the private sector operates much more efficiently. An analysis of how organizations in the public sector establish a customer service strategy reveals that "government agencies must meet the cost and quality standards set by the private sector because these are the standards by which all organizations are judged."[1] For these reasons, the public sector desperately needs to make some changes in the near future in order to keep up with and match the services offered by the private sector.

Over the course of the past year, there has been an increased emphasis on the services that the state of Virginia provides to its citizens. The Gubernatorial election in November brought greater significance to these issues. The election changed the political identification of the key party in the state from Democratic to Republican, thus reflecting the citizens' desire for change within the state. In addition, Republican Governor George Allen has identified reform in government as part of his commitment. It appears that the time is right for the state of Virginia to review its processes and their impact on employees and citizens.

TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT

The gap between the public and private sectors can be explained by the emphasis on Quality. Since the 1980's, private sector organizations have employed techniques of Total Quality Management (TQM) suggested by W. Edwards Deming in his book *Out of the Crisis*. Deming's ideas include strategic thinking about the need for cultural change and management's responsibility for leadership.[2] Joseph Juran, another leader in the quality movement, and Deming both agree that eighty to ninety percent of an organization's quality problems stem from management systems and processes, rather than from workers' mistakes.[3] Within the private sector, the quality movement has changed the way that business is done. Impressive results are evident in organizations, such as Xerox Corporation. Using quality principles, Xerox was not only able to regain their market share from the Japanese, but they also improved customer service and empowered their employees to work together in teams, thus increasing motivation and dedication to the organization. Total Quality Management has been successful in private sector organizations because they are generally smaller in size, easier to manage, and less prone to changes in leadership that are found in the public sector.

Yet, what exactly is it that enables the Total Quality Management philosophy to influence such large scale change? The Federal Quality Institute defines TQM as:

> a strategic integrated management system for achieving customer satisfaction. It involves all managers and employees and uses quantitative methods to improve continuously an organization's processes. It is not an efficiency ("cost cutting") program, a morale-boosting scheme, or a project that can be delegated to operational managers or staff specialists.[4]

The *Journal of State Government* defines TQM as:

> a set of principle, tools and procedures that provide guidance in managing and achieving organizational goals and objectives. TQM is about results. It involves everyone in continuously improving how work is done to meeting customer expectations of quality And through iteration, the process improves. And, finally and importantly, TQM is an attitude.[5]

A much simpler definition is that TQM is "doing something right the first time, on time, and all the time."[6] On the one hand, TQM appears to be an easy strategy for fixing a complex problem, yet on the other hand, can success in the private sector be duplicated in the public sector? Does TQM have the potential to be a viable and effective solution to bridge the differences across the public and private sectors?

After the 1990 publication of David Osborne and Ted Gaebler's book, *Reinventing Government*, much attention has been given to implementing TQM in the public sector. Osborne and Gaebler recognize that TQM has the potential to assist government to do its job better. If this is true, why is it taking so long for TQM to take hold? Many skeptics consider TQM in the public sector a fad that will disappear with time because there is little evidence of the quick results that occurred in the private sector. In 1992, David Osborne answered this question himself by stating, "when transplanted in public soil . . . Deming's ideas need a few additions. TQM's enormous strength is its use of simple, powerful, hands-on tools that help employees solve real problems. We just have to make sure we're aiming those tools at the right problems."[7] Osborne explains that within the public sector there are:

> several different, and often conflicting missions; hence they need to start by
> getting clear about their mission. They then need to weed out the bureaucratic
> underbrush that gets in the way of achieving it: rules and regulations, line-item
> budgets, procurement policies and the like.[8]

In his article, "Total Quality Management in the Public Sector," A. Keith Smith acknowledges that the government is ripe for TQM philosophy and methodology because many government processes are by nature, repetitive, standardized, error-prone, and customer hostile.[9] Steven Cohen and William Eimicke of the Columbia University Public Policy Research Center argue that "TQM is not just one of a series of new methods with potential. We believe that it is the single most powerful yet easily applied "new" tool available to public managers."[10] At the same time, Cohen and Eimicke acknowledge that TQM is difficult to implement. First, it requires large scale of change to bring TQM into an organization - "it is nothing short of a paradigm shift in how an organization is managed."[11] Second, the "bureaucratic form of organization itself may

be ill-suited to the rapid adjustments in work processes that result from TQM."[12] Although it is clear that it will not be easy, it is evident that TQM can be successful within the public sector.

Implementing Total Quality Management in the public sector is not enough. True commitment to quality principles is essential. In order to produce results, "all managers must be involved in the process of achieving quality. They must take the lead in establishing a workplace environment that supports innovation, risk-taking, flexibility, and continuous improvement."[13] Actions speak louder than words. Leaders must reinforce the Total Quality Management philosophy through their actions so that others will learn that it is real. Leaders need to involve everyone in the organization in process improvement and quality control. Instead of spending time on monitoring, auditing and correcting work, the time should be spent on doing things right the first time. Together, the organization must identify their internal and external customers and their needs. Then, they must work towards satisfying these expectations. An effective way to accomplish this is through the use of teams. Teams can be formed based on issues, functions, or any other way that makes sense. Within these teams, communication is vitally important. Team members should work together with the goal of continuous improvement. This will motivate and empower them to constantly think about ways to do things better. As each of the teams strives to meet their goals, the organization itself should develop a strategic plan, including the short-term and long-term goals, objectives, and mission statement of the group. While the organization works through this process, they should review and evaluate their progress to make sure that they are meeting expectations. Finally, there must be some means of measuring an organization's success. Measurement makes the sometimes slow process of continuous improvement all the more worthwhile.

When the principles of TQM are broken down and viewed in this manner, it is easy to see the potential for implementing TQM within the public sector. Regardless of whether the vision comes from the top-down or the bottom-up, TQM has the potential to make a difference in the processes of state government.

COMMISSION ON MANAGEMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH'S WORK FORCE

TASK FORCE ON CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

In 1993, Senate Joint Resolution No. 279 created the Joint Commission to Study the Management of the Commonwealth's Work Force. House Joint Resolution No. 677, also from 1993, directed the Commission to review and recommend a strategic approach to meeting the human resource management needs of state government. Under the Commission, there are five Task Forces charged with reviewing the current policies in the Commonwealth and making recommendations for future change. The Task Force on Continuous Quality Improvement is charged with recommending ways to introduce quality principles into management of the Commonwealth's human resources. Last fall, the Task Force developed a mission statement and objectives. During the 1994 Session, the General Assembly passed House Joint Resolution No. 26, expressing the sense of the General Assembly concerning a vision for management of the Commonwealth's work force. The mission and objectives of the Task Force are as follows.

Task Force Mission

The Task Force on Continuous Quality Improvement developed the following mission statement to guide its activities.

> *To make recommendations for the continuous improvement of the*
> *Commonwealth's work force that help agencies become high performance*
> *organizations and to propose mechanisms necessary to measure, monitor, and*
> *communicate their successes.*

In addition, the Task Force adopted a six-step process that it will follow in making recommendations to the Commission. These six steps are now considered the objectives of the Task Force.

Step One: *Create a Vision*

Step Two: *Identify a Process to Establish Quality in the*

Commonwealth's Work Force

Step Three: *Identify and Prioritize Critical Elements for Success*

Step Four: *Develop a Structure for Top/Down Implementation*

Step Five: *Develop Specific Recommendations for Implementation*

Step Six: *Evaluate the Results of the Task Force*   ·

Task Force Objectives

The Task Force has completed the objectives contained in steps one through three. The results of their work and their plans for completing the remaining three steps are detailed below.

Objective Q-1: Create a Vision. The Task Force proposes that the Commission approve a vision for the management of the Commonwealth's work force as a recommendation to the 1994 General Assembly. The vision proposed by the Task Force is as follows:

To attract and support a highly satisfied, effective and productive work force, a

culture must be created which fosters high performance organizations, within a

framework of trust and cooperation, that:

> *1.   Includes strategic planning in a cascading process that produces goals that staff understand and support and that are focused on the customer:*

> *2.   Define customers and their requirements and the contribution each step of the work process makes in meeting those requirements;*

> *3.   Encourage and reward innovation and initiative and use processes that identify and remove barriers which prevent agencies from achieving their mission;*

4.   *Promote cost effectiveness by examining resource allocations and basic business processes;*

5.   *Are proactive and committed to achieving results that support the organization's mission;*

6.   *Couple accountability with the decentralization of authority and skills for decision making to the closest point possible to where work is performed; and*

7.   *Are able to adapt to changes in the needs of the customer on an ongoing basis.*

Objective Q-2: Identify a process to establish quality in the Commonwealth's work force. The Task Force believes that the quality management initiative must begin at the top of state government, but the process can be replicated throughout all the agencies.

Objective Q-3: Identify and prioritize critical elements for success. These are the elements that the Task Force believes are essential for successful implementation. The items are presented in priority order.

1. Leadership Development

> *Supportive and congruent with and actively establishes a quality culture*
> *Customer and employee focused*
> *Uses data, not opinion, in making decisions*

2. Quality Process Training

> *Incorporates "Why, What, How"*
> *Includes leadership, facilitator, process and tools, and team training*
> • *Available "just in time"--as close as possible to when it will be used*
> *Ample resources so that it is easy to start and easy to accomplish*

3. Policies and Procedures

- *Frameworks rather than mandates, allowing decisions to be made at the lowest possible level*
- *Prescriptive, rather than prohibitive*
- *Supporting the vision, mission, goals, and leadership styles*

4. Clear Assignments

Authority and responsibility built in at every stage
Well-defined duties
- *Tasks have standards which are measured, evaluated, rewarded and addressed in the personnel system*
All performance is evaluated on at least four factors: customer satisfaction, use of quality tools, employee satisfaction, and business results

5. Clear Communication

- *Vision and quality process communicated to all employees*
Employees understand the vision, how quality is a means of achieving the vision, and how their roles relate to the vision and mission of the organization

Objective Q-4: Develop a Structure for Top/Down Implementation. The Task Force believes that implementation of total quality management is most successful when it begins and is championed at the top. Quality is everyone's job, but a certain infrastructure is necessary to make it work, including quality councils, staffing, schedules, and milestones. The Task Force will develop and recommend a structure for top/down implementation from the best models in both the private and public sectors.

Objective Q-5: Develop Specific Recommendations for Implementation. The Task Force also believes that new support systems, employee and management skills, and organizational behaviors will be necessary to achieve the necessary changes. New information systems and measurements may be needed to evaluate customer needs, current service quality, and to identify improvement opportunities. Perhaps most importantly, a strategy will be needed to communicate the vision for

the Commonwealth's work force throughout state government because management must be able to communicate the key issues and goals.[14] The Task Force will gather additional information about current practices and develop recommendations for how these steps might be best accomplished with the necessary leadership, support, training and resources to make the effort successful.

Objective Q-6: Evaluate the Results of the Task Force. Consistent with a quality process, the final step and objective of the Task Force will be to evaluate its own results. The Task Force will select specific performance and effectiveness measures to monitor its progress in fulfilling the mission.

Currently, the Task Force is at the stage of Objective Q-4. In order to develop a Structure for Top/Down Implementation, the Task Force found it necessary to examine quality initiatives in the public sector with a specifc focus on state-wide programs. Although the members of the Task Force all have expertise in the field of quality management, their experience lies in the private sector or in small state agencies. Therefore, they looked for research on practices in other states so that the best practices could be considered in developing an initiative for the Commonwealth of Virginia. Background information on programs in other states coupled with the expertise of the Task Force will enable them to develop a plan that will suit the specific needs of Virginia.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A review of literature from the Federal Quality Institute, the National Governor's Association, the Council of State Governments, and the National Council of State Legislatures revealed that more than thirty states are currently practicing some form of Total Quality Management. Inquiries to many of these states resulted in a proliferation of brochures, newsletters, strategic plans, success stories, guidebooks, and words of advice. Arkansas appears to have been the first state to implement quality management on the state level in 1990. Other states followed Arkansas' lead, but are using different approaches. In fact, no two states seem to utilize the same approach.

The states of Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Kansas, Massachusetts, New York, Oklahoma, and South Carolina provide an overview of a variety of approaches currently being used to implement quality in the public sector. These states do not necessarily represent the best approaches; they simply allow for a complete picture of practices across all states. Each state has tailored its approach to its unique needs, thus strengthening the notion that TQM can be adapted for the public sector. An examination of these states reveals that there are seven basic elements of a quality initiative. These include: Origin, Focus, Organizational Structure, Resources, Communication Strategies, Award Programs, and Results. An analysis of these elements will introduce and summarize the best practices available on the state level.

For a detailed and indepth examination of the practices in each of the states according to the above-mentioned elements, refer to the Appendix. In addition, the Appendix contains materials provided by the states in order to give a visual picture of some of the different approaches. These materials were provided to the members of the Task Force at their meeting on April 8, 1994. The agenda and visual aids used for the meeting are also included.

ELEMENTS OF A TOTAL QUALITY INITIATIVE

Origin

In the majority of states, the quality movement originates from the top-down, often initiated with an Executive Order from the Governor. The quality initiative stems from the need for reform, reorganization, restructuring, or budget problems. A group such as a Quality Council is responsible for prior planning. After this group secures the support of the Governor, the group's function often shifts to an advisory role. Leadership for the quality program may come from several different sources. In New York, the Governor's Office for Employee Relations oversees the entire program. In Florida, the responsibility rests with an existing agency, the Department of Management Services. The Governor of Arizona created a new office, the Office for Excellence in Government. South Carolina utilizes a network approach, the South Carolina State Government Quality Network. This network consists of a cross-section of over thirty state agencies working together to increase awareness of quality management principles and demonstrating their applicability to the public sector. In Colorado, a decentralized approach means that the state's strategic plan serves as the guiding force for the quality movement.

The name of the program in each state often reflects the commitment to quality. For example, Kansas titled its program, "Kansas Quality Management" to convey that the program was tailor-designed for Kansas. New York refers to its program as "QtP - Quality through Participation." Colorado uses a motivating slogan - "many paths to excellence."

Focus

The focus or reason for implementing quality in each state is often expressed as the vision, mission, or goal. Borrowing terminology from the private sector, service orientation is evident in that "customers" are perceived to be both the employees of the state and the citizens. Most often, the emphasis of the program expresses a desire to reform or reorganize government for a reduction in costs or budget savings. In Massachusetts, the goal is to "transform government

service and the way that people think about government." New York's vision is to "lead the nation with the quality of public programs and services." Arkansas's goal is to "exceed the expectations of its customers, the people of Arkansas."

Organizational Structure

Essentially, programs fall into one of two categories - centralized or decentralized. Under these two categories, either all the agencies in the state are involved, or there are "pioneer projects" to set examples and gain results at the onset of the movement. In each case, the initiative is overseen by a Quality Council, Task Force, or Steering Committee, if the responsibility does not fall under an office or department. The organizational structure can be generically organized into three models - the Network approach, the Top-Down approach, and the Modified Top-Down approach. These structural models will be discussed in detail at a later point.

Resources

Funding for the quality movement takes one of three forms. In Oklahoma, legislative allocation provided $116,000 for the start-up of the program. Other states have not been as successful at obtaining funds from the legislature and resort to utilizing pre-existing funds from agency budgets. In Kansas, the Governor directed each agency to work within the agency's budget because extra funds were not available. A third approach is best exemplified in California. Due to the budget deficit, the Governor's Office sent out a "Request for Volunteers" to the private sector. Over 150 volunteers were requested to assist the public sector by pairing up with agencies. Forty volunteers responded to the request. On the agency side, each organization that desired participation in the program had to fill out an application, similar to applications used in the private sector. This process served to enable organizations to assess their current climate and eliminated the organizations that weren't ready to receive help. Currently, there are twenty-four pilot programs in progress.

Other states have used the services of consultants. Arkansas obtained the services of an executive from Arkansas Eastman, at no cost to the state. Massachusetts uses the services of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Center for Quality In contrast, Florida prefers not to use the services of consultants in order to maintain an internal approach.

Communication Strategies

It is evident that some form of communication is absolutely essential to a successful quality program. It is vital that each state conveys its vision of quality to its employees and customers. A user-friendly orientation guide to quality is one example. Oklahoma and Kansas both publish guides that detail the origins of the quality movement, provide an explanation of what it involves, and display the measurement tools that can be used. A state-wide newsletter is also a source of communication. South Carolina publishes the Quality News Network on a quarterly basis. Arizona includes "P.S. cards" (pay check stuffers) into its employees pay envelopes each month. Other states utilize employee newsletters.

It is also helpful if training seminars are coordinated by a single entity. This ensures that everyone receives the same message. In addition, resources should be available for the employees to obtain if they are interested. Several states publish lists of videos, books, and consultants that are available for their employees to use.

Finally, the emphasis on quality needs to be communicated to the citizens. In Arkansas, a tri-fold pamphlet includes a page for customers to fill out and return to the organization. This sheet asks the customer to evaluate the services that he or she received and make suggestions for improvements.

Award Programs

Award programs may be used a means of assessing progress. The public sector seems to follow the private sector's Baldrige Award criteria which awards corporations on the national level. On the state level, New York and Florida offer very similar award programs, recognizing

quality commitment in private sector manufacturing and service, the education sector, and the health care sector.

An approach which eliminates the competition would further quality principles. Instead of having just one recipient per year, the applicants should be judged against a set of criteria. All those who meet the criteria should be recognized, regardless of the number. This system furthers the use of an awards program as a means of assessing progress. Furthermore, awards should also be presented to individuals and teams who contribute to the quality process.

Results

Results must be continuous, yet measurable. The quality movement within the public sector is relatively new. Since each state has incorporated a different emphasis, there are different ways of reporting its results. Even though results are abundant, it is difficult to compare what has been accomplished, especially in terms of budget savings and cost reduction. In addition, some states recycle the dollar amounts that have been saved back into the organizations. Other states measure their results in terms of the number of employees who are trained and the number of new processes that have been established. Arkansas has published a booklet of "Success Stories" detailing their successes on the agency level. As quality continues to be established on the state level, results will increase, as will a uniform method for evaluation.

In addition to measurable results, the "customers", both employees and citizens, must be able to observe the results and feel that the changes are beneficial. If the change in work processes is not evident as an improvement to the customers, then the systems may still need to be adjusted. Observable results are a means of ascertaining whether change has taken place.

STRUCTURAL APPROACHES TO IMPLEMENTING A QUALITY INITIATIVE

The seven elements detailed above are evidence of the numerous approaches for implementing quality principles in the public sector. There is not one approach that is any better than the others because the approach that is adopted must reflect the culture and environment of the state. Therefore, three generic models of structural approaches are recommended as a starting point for implementing a quality initiative.

Network Approach

The Network approach is similar to the model used in South Carolina where there is a group of more than thirty organizations working together in pursuit of common goals. A Network approach is decentralized with the intent that each agency will implement quality principles in the manner that will best suit their needs. Colorado's Strategic Plan exemplifies how the state can suggest a plan for implementation, but the framework need not be uniform across all agencies. Relationships in this model are informal even though guidance and coordination comes from a core group. The core group might have a rotating Chair or it could be overseen by a committee of officers. It might also be supported by the staff of a particular agency, such as South Carolina's Division of Human Resource Management. The Network is relatively easy to establish because it does not require legislative approval or allocation. The participating organizations can most likely work within their existing budgets. Since some agencies already utilize total quality principles; thus, this approach would catch on fairly quickly. However, it might take awhile for the entire state to become involved. The members of the Network are typically very committed to implementing quality; however, due to the loose structural organization of the Network, their goals may be ambiguous or inconsistent. In addition, such an effort might lack a guiding vision or unifying force for the whole state.

Top-Down Approach

The Top-Down approach is most similar to the model utilized in New York with its Governor's Office for Employee Relations. The Top-Down approach is initiated by the Governor and is overseen by his staff. If funding is necessary for this approach, it can be supported by the Governor or funds can be utilized from existing agency budgets. In addition, the state sponsors most of the training and monitoring functions. The Top-Down approach is hierarchical, translating into easier communication of goals. It also reduces some of the ambiguity of responsibility found in the Network structure. The formal Top-Down structure ensures constancy, consistency, and continuity. However, there are drawbacks to the Top-Down approach in the public sector. The model will always require the support of top leadership. If the administration changes hands or there is a shift in political parties in the state, then the effects might be detrimental to the quality initiative. In addition, the structure of this model might dictate too much, too fast, and too soon. Some agencies may be hesitant or not ready to commit to large scale change, especially if they sense that it is dictated from the Top-Down.

Modified Top-Down Approach

The Modified Top-Down approach has a centralized focus and begins with an initiative from the Governor, but the responsibility rests with another organization. Therefore, it may require the creation of salaried positions. Arkansas is an example of state utilizing a Modified Top-Down approach. It's Office of Quality Management is staffed by a Director and a trainer. This arrangement serves to keep costs down and also ensures that the organization will not be lost if the leadership in the state changes hands (due to the fact that it is not tied directly to the Governor, as it is in the Top-Down approach). Additional funds may be obtained from the legislature or utilized from pre-existing agency budgets. The formality in this model is found in support from the Governor, yet at the same time, it is not perceived as a political entity because it does not fall directly under his or her administration. Efforts are coordinated and resources are shared among agencies. The loose structure of this model means that it can reach all agencies

quickly; however, similar to the Top-Down Approach, it may take longer to see the expected results.

These three approaches represent a generic means of implementing a quality program in the public sector. Each state utilizes its own model, depending on its unique needs. The models can be further modified so that the approach is adaptable to the organizational structure of the government. Regardless of the model, a state-wide communication system and an awards program are vital to the quality initiative. With a Top-Down Approach, these two elements will ensure that those on the "bottom" will get the message that is being transmitted by those on the "top." For the network approach, the use of communication and awards will spread the word about the quality initiative so that others will buy into the vision.

At a meeting on April 8, 1994, the Task Force on Continuous Quality Improvement reviewed the research on elements of a quality initiative, examined the three structural approaches and discussed what they found important for the state of Virginia. Using all of the information, they drafted a list of the critical elements that they believe are necessary for a successful quality initiative in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

CRITICAL ELEMENTS NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENTING QUALITY IN VIRGINIA AS IDENTIFIED BY THE TASK FORCE ON CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

D-R-A-F-T

1. Statement of Recognition of Need for Cultural Change from the Governor

2. Commitment of Resources, including:

    Core Transition Team

    - Staffing

    - Training

3. Definition of Process for Implementation, including:

    - Methods to Institutionalize

        Quality Council

    - Public/Private Sector Coordination

        Transition Team

        Chief Quality Officer/Coordinator

    - Strike Force/Work Force Coordination

4. Definition of Quality Policy Framework for Programs, including:

    - Vision

        Key Processes

        - Performance Indicators

        - Customers

        - Products and Services

5. Definition of Quality Policy Framework for Human Resources

BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTATION WITHIN VIRGINIA

After analyzing the elements necessary for a successful quality initiative on the state level, it appears that the Task Force on Continuous Quality Management may encounter several barriers as they attempt to implement a quality initiative in Virginia. As discussed earlier, the unique nature of the public sector itself may cause some resistance to change. Changes may become necessary in the political environment, economic environment, social environment, and technological environment in order to facilitate a quality initiative.

To begin with, the political environment within the state must be examined to determine if the time is right for Virginia to implement a quality initiative. It may be difficult to convince the leadership that a new strategy like TQM is worth the risk. The differences that result from "politics" may impede the organization's ability to function effectively. On the other hand, "the political pressure to produce measurable results can help change agents in a bureaucracy to prevail."[15]

After analyzing the political environment, the economic environment is a key factor. The current status of the economy may pose barriers to gaining funding for a new program. On the other hand, "fiscal pressures are often cited as a very important potential catalyst for change in public sector organizations."[16] When managers have to do twice as much with fewer resources, they may think critically about their processes and adopt quality principles.

Next, the social environment will determine whether there is cooperation between employees, middle management, and top leadership. The vision and sense of culture that is expressed by top leadership will cascade down. Therefore, it is important that a change in attitude comes from the top. With cooperation throughout the state, employees will be more motivated to participate in a quality initiative.

Finally, the current technological environment may hinder a quality initiative. Whether it is the phone, fax, or computer system, if it causes problems for the organization, then it could affect their output. In addition, the technological environment is becoming more closely related

to communication systems. Voice mail, electronic mail, and faxes have replaced phone conversations. These systems must also reflect an organization's committment to quality.

A barrier that needs to be addressed involves assessing the concerns of employees. Many public sector employees have been in their current positions for years. They have grown so accustomed to the way that things work that they may no longer be able to identify problems. The thought of changing a process that has worked in the past may frighten some employees, especially if the change results in shifting work responsibilities and positions. If employees are highly specialized, they may resent having someone else come in and tell them how to perform more effectively. Establishing an employee commitment to focus on total quality could become a stumbling block within the state. Organizations will need to shift from the mentality of a "Standard Operating Procedure" to a mindset of continuous improvement. This necessitates the committment of middle managers, as well as top leadership.

Another barrier is found in identifying the pre-existing resources that can be used to support a quality initiative. The responsibility could fall under a Department of Human Resource Management; however, Virginia currently lacks such a department. In many states, the Department of Personnel and Training (or its equivalent) serves as staff to the Quality program. However, Virginia's Department of Personnel and Training is in a state of transition and may not be ready to take on the added responsibilities of supporting the quality initiative. Yet, in a recent interview, the Department's new Director, Charles James, acknowledged the necessity of TQM to boost employee morale within his agency. In addition, he believes that it will lead to superior work and efficiency in state government. James stated, "Reducing steps necessary to obtain a desired result, while building prevention into the process will improve efficiency in state government."[17] In the future, the Department of Personnel and Training might become the agency to oversee quality in the state.

Yet, another barrier may be found in the structure of the Task Force as it currently exists. The members are woking to push the need for a quality initiative on their own. Once they develop a plan, they will take it to the full Commission. Then, it will go to the General Assembly

as legislation. As of yet, no other state has approached a quality initiative in this manner.

Finally, as introduced earlier, the administration may pose a barrier or a solution to the quality initiative. At present, the Governor has established a Blue Ribbon Strike Force to examine the need for reform in government. It seems that it would be a logical coordination for the Task Force to combine its efforts with this organization. First, the Task Force would need to secure the Governor's involvement. Together they would work on an implementation structure. However, they may disagree on whether the structure is more important than the results or whether the desired results should drive the structure. If funding is needed, it may have to be obtained from the Legislature or utilized from already tight agency budgets.

To overcome these barriers, open communication and cooperation are critical at every statge of the process. Clear communication of vision, goals, and the means to achieve them should be conveyed to everyone involved. Finally, a Strategic Plan (similar to the plan developed in Colorado) may help to identify and overcome barriers, as well as guide the state in its mission towards Quality.

CONCLUSION

The Task Force on Continuous Quality Improvement has a strong grasp on the complexity of this project. Each member is extremely committed to Quality and to the state. Together, they will achieve their goal, but it will be a lengthy and involved process. First, they must determine what their involvement will be with the Governor's Blue Ribbon Strike Force. This involves bringing their proposal to the Commission, then developing a strategy for gaining the Strike Force's attention. If they choose to work together, the Task Force may have to forfeit some of the ownership that they have over the project. The Task Force originally identified the Governor's support as absolutely crucial to a quality initiative. This reflects their belief that the message must come from the top-down, so it appears that this is the route that they will take.

In theory, gaining the Governor's support should be easy because it seems that the Blue Ribbon Strike Force and the Task Force share common goals. The Strike Force is currently examining four areas - intra-governmental affairs, privatization, procurement, and human resources. With the new administration, it could be either difficult or easy to get the Governor to buy into another new idea. It seems that his administration is most interested in results. Without clear evidence that a Quality Initiative will bring about the results that his administration desires, it will be difficult to gain the Governor's support. In her analysis of TQM as a tool for efficient management of state programs, Regina Kay Brough asserts:

> Results must be measurable. Good feelings are not enough. We have to know whether we have achieved results. And we have to explain to our stakeholders, the legislature, the press and the taxpayers what results we are
> producing and how this year's results are better than last year's. [18]

It appears that the Governor is most likely looking for short-term results because they will be most visible during his short four year term. Unfortunately, a quality initiative that will reach across all levels of state government will take a long time to implement. The results may not occur quickly. Right now, the mission of the Task Force is to get the Governor to buy into their vision, realizing that both sides may have to forfeit some of their objectives to reach shared goals.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

I doubt that I would have been able to accomplish this project, had I not been introduced to the courses that I have taken in the Jepson School of Leadership Studies. The nature of Total Quality Management demands leadership. In addition, it is easier to understand the necessary elements of a quality initiative if one has a strong grasp of both leadership theories and practices. Although the *Foundations of Leadership Studies* course introduced me to the concept of leadership, the later courses played a much greater role in giving me the tools necessary to undertake this project. The four "Core" courses that I have taken - *History and Theories, Critical Thinking and Methods of Inquiry, Ethics and Leadership*, and *Leading Groups*; the "Context" courses - *Formal Organizations* and *Leadership of and in Community Organizations*; and the "Competencies" courses - *Decision Making* and *Understanding and Leading Individuals* have worked together to develop a framework that I relied upon in completing my work. In addition, the "Context" and "Competencies" courses that I have not studied would have furthered my knowledge.

From the *History and Theories* course, I learned the important role that leadership plays in carrying out the vision; in this case, it requires the Governor as the champion of TQM in the state. First, I reviewed the history of TQM to assess its potential for success. Then, I relied upon leadership theories to identify and analyze the elements of a quality initiative and make recommendations for the structural approaches. In doing so, I utilized theories of trait and behavioral leadership, compared and contrasted situational theories of leadership, and examined the difference between leadership and management to discern what is important to TQM. The theories of leadership also assisted me in examining the role of power in the three structural approaches. Each of the three approaches places a different emphasis on the amount of power held by top leadership. Finally, the *History and Theories* course introduced me to ways of measuring change that result from leadership. I utilized this knowledge as I attempted to examine the results in each state.

The *Critical Thinking and Methods of Inquiry* course enabled me to employ different research methods as I began this project. Recognizing the importance and value of combining several approaches, I made phone calls to obtain advice from experienced individuals, reviewed the literature, and conducted surveys. I then critically analyzed the reasons why TQM has been successful in order to determine whether TQM could be used to bridge the gap between the public and private sector. I used methods of inquiry to identify and interpret the elements necessary for implementation. Throughout the entire process, I was open to receiving criticism and advice from those that I encountered. The majority of criticism that I came across addressed the notion that TQM is a fad that is on its way out. However, I argued that the emphasis on continuous improvement means that TQM will always be useful.

The *Ethics and Leadership* course enabled me to develop a vision for the future with an emphasis on quality. My vision encompasses the sense of moral responsibility on the part of the state to serve its citizens to the best of its ability. With a total quality initiative, the leadership of the state will shape the moral environment with quality principles. Morality in the public sector can have far reaching consequences which should influence the citizens of the state in a positive manner.

From what I learned in the *Leading Groups* course, I developed theoretical frameworks for implementing quality principles, keeping in mind the effects that each approach would have on group dynamics. In order to do this, I had to understand the role of the administration and agency heads in relaying information to their formal and informal groups. Leadership holds the most important role in implementing TQM because leaders must convey the vision to others. This incorporates examining group behavior, stages of group development and important characteristics of groups, decision making processes within groups, and group effectiveness. The state of Virginia has a unique environment, unlike that found in any other state. Concepts of group structure, group conflict, and role differentiation all influence the approach that the state of Virginia will eventually adopt. A complete analysis of these elements will determine which structural approach will work best.

The course *Leadership in Formal Organizations* has perhaps been the most helpful in completing this project because it fostered an understanding of leadership theories and research within and across formal organization settings. I was able to identify the differences between the public and private sectors, as well as the unique requirements for implementing TQM in each sector. In addition, my work in the "Organizational Structure" sub-group of my *Formal Organizations* course enabled me to analyze the importance of the structural hierarchy in implementing TQM in the state. I also considered the importance of vision and mission statements, environmental scanning, climate and culture, and the way that all of these can work together to create a quality environment.

From the course *Leadership of and in Community Organizations*, I obtained the idea of the importance of leadership in service to society. Aside from the non-profit sector, the public sector is the next best arena for serving society. Public officials are often identified as "public servants." A true TQM program will capitalize on this idea so that citizens of the state will feel that they are receiving the best services available.

The course *Decision Making for Leaders* not only allowed me to make decisions, but it also enabled me to examine my own decision-making process. This consciousness helped me to assess all the information that I obtained in order to determine what was most relevant to the state of Virginia. I also attempted to find creative solutions, such as pulling together all the elements of a quality initiative and developing generic structural approaches. Using models ensures that the process of implementing TQM in Virginia will be tailored to the state's needs, instead of just adopting an approach that it used by another state. I also recognized the value of using experts and the significance of making decisions in groups. Therefore, the final decision about an implementation structure will be made by the Task Force on Continuous Quality Improvement, relying upon their expertise on the subject and the numerous ideas that the group will be able to generate.

I am currently taking the course *Understanding and Leading Individuals*. This course is helping me identify my own personal concept of leadership as well as understand the role that

individual differences play in leadership. Just as I am a unique individual, so is everyone else in the state. These individual differences must be taken into account in implementing a quality initiative. Individuals have different needs and expectations. These must be identified and generalized so that everyone has the perception that their needs are being addressed as part of the quality initiative.

During the course of completing this project, I often wished that I had taken the courses *Motivation, Conflict Resolution, Leader as Change Agent, Problems, Policy and Leadership*, and *Leadership within Political Systems*. The value of each course is evident in its name; however, familiarity with political systems and policy setting would have been most useful. Each of these courses would have enhanced my knowledge and skills and enabled me to perform my task more effectively.

This project also enabled me to meet the curricular goals of the Jepson School of Leadership Studies. To begin with, I continued my development as a leader by *self-directed learning* because this project was essentially self-directed. The topic that I chose shows that I am *imagining a worthwhile vision* for the future of the state of Virginia and its citizens. In making recommendations to the Task Force, I *inspired others to join me in bringing about change*. The project required me to *exercise courage and moral judgement* because of the enormity and complexity of the task that I undertook in the sensitive environment of the public sector. A large part of my work involved examining the alternatives and *thinking critically* about the type of leadership necessary for the state to implement quality principles. I *applied several modes of inquiry* in gathering my research materials, yet I also relied upon the knowledge bases developed in my courses to interpret the information. I *searched for creative solutions*, instead of just relying on approaches that have been developed in other states. I *developed cooperation and teamwork* with the members of the Task Force in my working relationship with them. I am *holding other leaders accountable* because the success of quality management rests on the efforts that the Task Force will make towards the leaders at the top of state government. Finally, I *served in both formal and informal leadership roles* as I completed my work. Informally, I laid

the groundwork for a quality initiative; formally, I served as a reference for the Task Force.

In conclusion, I believe that I have accomplished my goal of "making a difference" in state government. The curriculum of the Jepson School of Leadership Studies enabled me to integrate theory with practice as I demonstrated my leadership potential. The entire process has been personally rewarding. However, I feel that it will take quite awhile before the results of my work are evident. My leadership role has been in laying the groundwork for large scale change to take place. The hard work lies ahead. The Task Force must strategize to obtain the support of the Governor I have faith in their ability to do so and am confident that they will succeed. Meanwhile, I do not feel that my work on this project has come to an end. I plan to attend another meeting of the Task Force on April 28, 1994 and strengthen their understanding of the results of quality initiatives in other states, so that they may share the information with the Commission and possibly, the Governor. In the future, if I remain in Richmond, I will follow the efforts of the Task Force and assist however I am needed. In this manner, I will carry out the mission statement of the Jepson School of Leadership Studies and perform leadership in service to society.

On a personal note, I hope that I will be fortunate enough to work in total quality organizations. If not, I am sure that I will strive to change the environment. Before working on this project, I would have been hesitant to say that I would attempt to make such a change; however, the completion of my task has convinced me that I can be successful in utilizing what I have gained from the Jepson School of Leadership Studies.

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