

The Importance of Human Resources in European Quality Management

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Abstract

On European level, the involved human resources have an important role in ensuring a high competitiveness of some organizations. The quality management is a field with a spectacular rising, due to the beneficial effect on the organizations.

Therefore, being familiar with the typology and the specialists' role in this field is very relevant for the research of the human resources importance on improving the organizations activities. The human resources involved in this process are mainly the consultants in quality management, whose skills and abilities objectively determine the performance growth of organizations having called for their support.

Keywords: consulting, European market, human resources, quality management, services.

The typology and the role of specialists

The internationalization and European integration process for ensuring the free shipment of products, services, people and capitals involves the institutionalization of some departments for certification of products, management systems, services, persons etc.

The International and EU standards, designed and developed in an unitary conception encompass the certification services in several fields such as: human health, government services, tourism as well as certification of personnel involved in quality management activities, environment and safety .

On European level we can talk about strategy and quality policies where the European system of specialists' qualification is a leader. The European Organization for Quality (EOQ) has its own " harmonized scheme for the qualification and registration of quality professionals ."

This harmonized scheme has its applications in positions such as: expert/ quality specialist, quality auditor, manager of environmental systems, environment auditor, leader of TQM (Total Quality Management), TQM assessor, manager of health and labor safety systems, auditor of the above mentioned systems etc.

We can mention as well known organizations the national and European ones dealing with training and qualification of personnel in quality management, environmental management, as well as in labor safety or health management.

Hence, the qualification and/ or specialization courses in the fields of quality and quality management, organized by the consulting companies are looking for the following specialists' jobs such as: professional in quality management system, manager of quality system, auditor of quality management system, quality assessor, head of laboratory, metrology specialist, executive technical manager, projects supervisor, technical expert.

Personnel certification is only for the quality audit function and as a consequence there is possible the creation of professional certification body based on professional standards.

The most common human resources in quality management are the consultants.

The customer generally calls the consulting services of one or more persons for various reasons, such as lack of time, higher costs to internally fix the problem and - perhaps most importantly – for objective and detached approach specific only to an outsider.

A consultant is considered to be a professional who gives advice, indicates with an accurate precision or draws conclusions on matters relating to his specialty, and whose work has a major impact on the counseled Organization.

A consultant's work rhythm is quite alert due to a strong *projects guidance* alternating periods of intense work with short deadlines and with other routine activities such as: research and documentation.

Taking into account the connection between the consultant's level of experience and his time to complete the tasks in one day, we can estimate that the more experience he gains, the more activities he will do in a shorter period and with a greater efficiency.

The consulting industry and especially the companies specialized in offering pure strategic advice are famous for their high level of difficulty and complexity in the recruitment process, aiming at attracting and retaining individuals capable to successfully cope with daily activities specific for a consultant (deadlines, heavy workload , specific knowledge , skills and so on).

In this respect, there are used the tests and case studies with an increasingly frequency and they are nothing but a way of assuring the employer that a candidate will successfully pass this recruitment process and cope with this job of consultant.

Besides the operational work, being consultant means to communicate with multiple parties such as: suppliers, project manager and his team and so on). However, a consultant must go to the client's company headquarters to discover and correctly solve his problems.

When a consultant wants to create a career as an independent consultant he has to take into account several decisive factors for success, (Kintler 1998) such as:

1. *The commitment*

The commitment is the first ingredient for success in this field, and that is why the future consultant should invest more for personal development before launching on the market.

The complete involvement in the consultant's decision to make a career in the consulting business is absolutely essential.

2. *Focus on consumers' needs*

The services provided by the consultant are as important as the consumers' actual needs. Therefore, the in-depth knowledge of clients' desires will make a big difference in services quality provided by a business consultant.

It is very easy for a consultant to focus on the previous success and experiences, but the client is not interested in these kinds of experiences unless they are directly connected with the problems he confronts with at the respective time.

3. *The development of an individual offer*

From the outset of a business meeting the consultant still has the opportunity to explain his customer why the provided services should be taken into account.

4. *The designing of a professional image*

First, the consultants' look, speech and behavior are checked. The first impression may represent the first step in developing a business partnership.

Therefore, we pay careful attention to clothing, to verbal and non-verbal language, to promotional materials as well as to the quality of offer presentation. All these may depend on the fee the consultant will get after an eventual signing of the contract.

5. *The availability of a financial reserve*

It is very important the allocation of some adequate funds, for running a business plan according to the consultant's willingness

6. *The setting up and the development of a clients' database*

The consulting is a business that involves people and the more the consultant comes in contact with them, the more the business will thrive. If in the first year the success was entailed by the

number of consultant's acquaintances as well as by their references, after this period, the business depends on the consultant's ability to establish new contacts.

7. *The promotion activity*

This part of activity consists in advertising, such as publishing articles in specialized magazines.

8. *The concentration on results*

The results are the main motivations for a customer when he decides to call a specialized consultant.

The consulting has lately evolved from providing professional advice to focusing on benefits and results, meaning that the consultants deal with solving the customers' problems.

Before accepting the tasks of consulting, the specialist must identify the desired outcomes with his customer.

9. *Proves providing*

This considers the demand of some clients' statements regarding the consultant's performance, using these statements for the discussions with a new customer.

10. *The exceeding of clients' expectations*

This means that any activity that adds value and does not require special efforts from the consultant, guarantees a good long-lasting business relationship with the customer.

Consulting is the starting point towards a manager position in a top company because the person who worked in consulting before, has an overview of the organization (systems, processes, people) and a mentality oriented to the department's and company's profitability and last but not least to the shareholders' dividends, where there are legal companies, as joint stock companies.

When an organization uses a consultant's services to implement the quality management system, the organization and the consultant must ensure that the quality management system:

- meets the general targets and the organization's needs;
- is effective regarding the costs to meet the customers' and other shareholders' needs;
- does not generate excessive paperwork and documentation.

Moreover, the consultant must ensure that the top management of organization is aware of:

- The fact that the success of quality management system does not depend only on the consultant, but first and foremost on the top management involvement and commitment;
- the need to involve employees at all levels to integrate quality management system in general operations of the organization;
- The mandate given to consultant to interact with the management and employees of organization at all levels regarding the organization's processes assessment;
- The opportunity to use the quality management system as an efficient management instrument, even if the initial implementation met a contract or a market demand;
- The potential for the quality management system to provide a foundation for a steady improvement of the company performance;
- The advantages of solving the needs and expectations of all the parties interested in the most advantageous way, using the standards ISO 9000.

A consultant must have the proper skills for the purpose of the provided consulting service. The consultants of the quality management system must prove the following abilities in order to:

- be able to set concepts clearly connected to management, to understand the whole mechanism of the organization and accept the quality management principles;
- usefully communicate with the staff, at all levels in order to actively involve him in carrying out the quality management system;
- show the company into the thorough identification of the useful processes for his own quality management system and define the importance, sequences and the interconnection of these processes;
- help organization to identify the necessary documents, going to ensure the effective planning, the functioning and control of processes;
- guide the organization towards the implementation of the quality management system in the approached processes, according to its own culture, characteristics and specific environment;
- assess the efficiency of the quality management system and stimulate the company to scrutinize the opportunities for their development;
- promote the continuous development of the quality management system, assessing the policy of quality, objectives, systematic use of Deming cycle (PDCA);
- find the staff's training and education demands;
- be able to go on maintaining the quality management system once the consultant activity fulfilled;
- support the organization, whenever necessary, in finding the connections between the quality management system and other management systems (environment, health, labor safety) and facilitate their integration.

The consultants must know the quality management principles, methodologies and techniques such as: the processes development, statistical techniques, audit techniques and methods, quality economy, techniques of team building, principles elaboration, the map of processes,

warning techniques and instruments, problems solving techniques, techniques of rating the customers' satisfaction, brainstorming techniques.

On the other hand, according to ISO 9001:2008 standard, the staff whose work influences the products or services quality must be competitive regarding the accurate education, training, abilities and experience. The company must:

- determine the adequate skills for the staff whose work influences the products and services quality;
- train or enterprise other activities to meet these needs;
- assess the efficiency of the enterprised activities;
- be sure that its personnel is aware of its activities relevance and importance as well as of its contribution to the quality objectives achievement;
- to keep proper records of the tuition, training, abilities and experience.

For instance, within a business consultancy company, the staff working in the department of quality ensuring service has the following liabilities:

- develops the documents for the quality insurance programs, such as: the quality book, the specific documents and the company instructions;
- controls and reports the results regarding the implementation of the quality program guidelines;
- elaborates and introduces the yearly audit plan;
- explains the demands of quality insurance from valid codes and ensures that these demands are comprised in the specific documents or the company's instructions;
- points out the issues regarding the implementation of the demands stipulated in the quality insurance program and records the specific database;
- analyses all the specific documents and the main instructions in order to keep the standard frame, the compliance with the statements in the quality insurance book and the rejection of duplicates or controversial information;
- supervises the company's activities to see whether the procedures are respected and to record and report any breach of them for corrective solutions;
- other liabilities are stipulated in the specific documents and instructions of the company.

The head of the quality insurance service deals with monitoring and assessing the implementation of the quality insurance program through the audit and surveillance program and makes a report for the CEO.

The way the customers perceive the services quality is highly important for the performance and fame of the company. Hence, the development of the staff's competences and conducts represents the core of the services quality.

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