THE 2012 QUALITY MANAGEMENT HANDBOOK

Quality 101 material for new or experienced quality management professionals seeking to enhance their QMS strategies or refresh their knowledge of quality basics.
Introduction

Whether you are a seasoned quality management professional looking for a fresh start, or a young quality manager just starting your first position, it’s important to know and be aware of the basics of quality. The following is a comprehensive compilation of facts, tools, and other information you can use to help you take your quality management techniques to the next level, and was actually compiled by individuals preparing to take the ASQ Quality Improvement Associate certification exam. We recommend that all quality professionals prepare for and take this exam to enhance their knowledge of quality.

This handbook is a great resource for you to keep in mind the basics of quality, prepare for this exam, or a great place to start when considering a career in quality. You’ll find the concepts and work of the great W. Edwards Deming, other quality gurus (like Crosby and Juran) and their philosophies, a detailed depiction of quality improvement tools and how to use them, and even an exclusive “experience” section where experienced quality professionals outline the top mistakes they made early in their careers. So let’s get started!

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W. Edwards Deming "14 Points" Explained

The need for a working understanding of basic quality management system statistical principles is at the heart of Deming's teaching. While accepting the ASQ's Shewhart Medal in 1955, he commented that "Statistical theory has changed practice in almost everything. Statistical techniques, in their ability to aid the discovery of causes, are creating a science of management and a science of administration." His quality process message, directed primarily at management, is stated succinctly in his famous 14 Points for Management:

1) Create constancy of purpose for improvement of product and service. Inspire the workers to stay competitive in the market and remind about the importance of stability in jobs and new opportunities which may come up in later stages, as inducing a sense of purpose in producing quality products will work as the inspiration to work efficiently.

2) Adopt the new philosophy. The customer demands and taste change very fast and the competition in the market grow at a rapid rate today, and we have to accept new philosophies according to the market trends and technology revolutions.

3) Cease dependence on mass inspection. Instead of inspecting the product for quality after production, infuse quality at the beginning itself with production quality control, as this will ensure no raw materials are wasted for the sake of quality.

4) End the practice of awarding business on price tag alone. Instead, minimize total cost - move towards a single supplier for any item, on trust.

5) Constantly and forever improve the system of production and service. Enterprise systems and services must keep growing indefinitely in order to catch up with the competitive market.

6) Institute modern methods of training on the job. A trained worker has more productivity and quality than an untrained one, so giving training sessions will drastically improve the quality of the person and directly it helps in better product quality performance.

7) Institute modern methods of supervision. A company can display stunning growth if potential leaders are identified and encouraged.

8) Drive out fear. Creating a fearful impression in the employees does not give more quality and productivity to work. If a person is not working willingly with satisfaction then he can never do a work perfectly even if he has the intention to be perfect in conscious mind, so driving out fear is essential.
9) Break down barriers between staff areas. The workers in design, sales, and production must work together to face problems and resolve them, which takes the company to better quality assurance management and also other profit with better planning.

10) Eliminate numerical goals for the work force. Slogans or exhortations call for more quantity in production than focusing on quality control in manufacturing, which will severely damage the quality management process. Employees should have a calm and quiet quality atmosphere in the company.

11) Eliminate work standards and numerical quotas. This focuses on quantity rather than quality of product.

12) Remove barriers that hinder the hourly worker. Supervisor responsibility must be focused on quality, not numbers. Abolish annual or merit rating and MBO completely.

13) Institute a vigorous program of education and training. A person must grow after joining a company, and letting them learn new technology and techniques will increase employee longevity.

14) Create a situation in top management that will push every day on the above points. Just like products and services, every employee in a company must work to accomplish the transformation.¹

Deming's 7 Deadly Diseases of Management

W. Edwards Deming "14 Points" express Deming's philosophy of management: specifically, they break down the need for a working understanding of basic quality management system statistical principles. In addition to Deming's 14 points, he also outlined Seven Deadly Diseases, which describe the most serious barriers that management potentially faces within an organization. Outlined below are his Seven Deadly Diseases of Management, as well as an explanation of each.

¹ Sources: W. Edwards Deming, ASQ. Edwards W Deming’s 14 Management Principles Explained
1. Lack of constancy of purpose to plan product and service that will have a market and keep the company in business, and provide jobs.

As long as the focus is on short term thinking, management will fail to plan adequately. Without good long term planning, worker efforts will be irrelevant: Total Quality Management (TQM) cannot be a fad, as long-term forward progress should always be the ultimate goal for any organization.

2. Emphasis on short-term profits.

This disease of management focuses on short-term thinking - the opposite of constancy of purpose - in order to stay in business, fed by fear of the push from bankers and owners for dividends. Boosting short-term profits is easier, at it typically involves the cutting of any expense related to the long term: training, quality assurance management, maintenance, etc.

3. Employing personal review systems, or evaluation of performance, merit rating, annual review, etc. for people in management, the effects of which are devastating.

Management by objective, on a go / no-go basis, without a method for accomplishment of the objective, is the same thing as management by fear. The essential problem with merit systems is that they reward results rather than process improvement - results will almost always have a lot of system luck mixed in. Some managers want to reward people who cooperate more or who seem to have better attitudes, and will insist that they can recognize the people who are most cooperative and have the highest work ethic. Instead, managers should understand that the best way to develop cooperation is by focusing on the nature of work environment, not monetary rewards.

4. Mobility of Management: Job-Hopping

The simplest and yet one of the most deadly of quality systems management diseases, management mobility (or when top management changes organizations every 3-4 years) means continuous improvement efforts will be broken and disjointed as new leaders come on board. With changes in leadership, there is a change in management philosophy. Managers who have an eye on the next promotion want results - now - to gain the next rung on the ladder.

5. Use of visible figures only for management, with little or no consideration of figures that are unknown or unknowable. Some facts are simply unknowable. Knowing this, Deming
insisted that leaders must still make decisions and manage a situation. This leads to a basic dilemma -

- How do you know what would have happened if you had kept on your prior course?
- How do you put a dollar value on the customer loyalty won through quality improvement efforts?

You can't, because these numbers are unknowable - and this must be taken into consideration.

6. Excessive Medical Costs. For the economy as a whole, health care as a percentage of overall expenditures has steadily risen for decades, which gradually pushes numerous businesses into a state of crisis. Potentially the only remedy for this disease would be a political system attempting to reform health care.

7. Excessive costs of liability. W. Edwards Deming blamed America's lawyers in part for the problems of American business. The US has more lawyers per capita than any other country in the world, and they spend much of their professional time finding people to sue. Like health care costs in #6, Deming believed the remedy to this disease will probably have to come from the government.²

The Founding Fathers of Quality Philosophies

While we already covered the great Deming 14 Point System, the following are great additional core quality assurance and quality control philosophies of Joseph Juran and Philip Crosby to help you to brush up on your "quality" history!

Joseph J. Juran's Trilogy of Quality Management

In addition to Deming, Juran was another great Founding Father of quality, and was responsible for the famous Juran Trilogy concept. This quality philosophy consists of three steps: Quality Planning, Quality Control and Quality Improvement.

1) Quality Planning: The quality planning phase is the activity of developing products and processes to

² Source: W. Edwards Deming's Fourteen Points and Seven Deadly Diseases of Management
meet customers' needs. It deals with setting goals and establishing the means required to reach the goals. Below are the steps in the quality planning process:

- **Establish** quality goals
- **Identify** the customers: those who will be impacted by the efforts to meet the goals
- **Determine** the customer’s needs
- **Develop** processes that are able to produce those product features
- **Establish** process controls, and transfer the resulting plans to the operating forces

2) **Quality Control:** This process deals with the execution of plans and it includes monitoring operations so as to detect differences between actual performance and goals. It is outlined with three steps:

- **Evaluate** actual quality performance
- **Compare** actual performance to quality goals
- **Act** on the difference

3) **Quality Improvement:** This is the process for obtaining breakthrough in quality performance, and it consists of several steps:

- **Establish** the infrastructure needed to secure annual quality improvement
- **Identify** the specific needs for improvement- the improvement projects
- **Establish** project teams with clear responsibility for bringing the project to a successful conclusion
- **Provide** the resources, motivation, and training needed by the teams to diagnose the cause, stimulate establishment of remedies, and establish controls to hold the gains.³

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**Philip Crosby's Zero Defects**

Philip Crosby, the Guru of Quality Management, was a legend in the discipline of quality. A noted quality professional, consultant, and author, he is widely recognized for promoting the concept of "zero defects" and for defining quality as conformance to requirements.

**Zero defects** is a performance standard and method states that if people commit themselves to watching details and avoiding errors, they can move closer to the goal of zero defects.

Zero defects is a way of thinking and doing that reinforces the compliance management notion that defects are not acceptable, and that everyone should "do things right the first time". The idea

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³ **Source:** *The Juran Trilogy*, Pradeep Kumar
here is that you can increase profits both by eliminating the cost of failure and increasing revenues through increased customer satisfaction. Zero defects is NOT about being perfect, it's about changing your perspective, and it does this by demanding that you:

- Recognize the high cost of quality issues.
- Continuously think of the places where flaws may be introduced.
- Work proactively to address the flaws in your systems and processes, which allow defects to occur.

"Zero defects" is not a program, nor does it have distinct steps to follow or rules to abide by: which is perhaps why zero defects can be so effective, as it's adaptable to any situation, business, profession or industry.  

**Systems and Processes and How They Work Together**

Processes and systems can be easily confused terms in the quality management systems space. In reality, the terms are in fact related to each other, but represent two different entities: a process is a set of interrelated / interacting activities that transforms inputs into outputs, while a system is a set of interrelated / interacting processes.

The use of an integrated system of processes within an organization is called process management. This is based on the ability of an organization to:

- **Identify** all of its processes
- **Recognize** the inputs and outputs for each process
- **Document** the processes for easy implementation
- **Measure** the outcomes of the implementation
- **Continually improve** the efficiency and effectiveness of company processes

When individual processes work together to form an integrated management system, such as within process management software, the goals of a company are achieved much more efficiently. Process improvement efforts are typically focused on removing a situation where a process is not operating at its normal level. A great approach to take is analyzing the process to identify the Supplier, Input, Process, Output, Customer and Feedback (SIPOC) links with a SIPOC Analysis.

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4 **Source:** Zero Defects, Getting It Right The First Time, MindTools.com
To create your own SIPOC diagram, (pictured above), follow the steps below:

1. **Create an area that will allow the team to post additions to the SIPOC diagram.** Take the template provided above in some blank form with the S-I-P-O-C headings and provide to team members individually.

2. **Begin with the Process.** Map your process it in four to five high-level steps.

3. **Identify the Outputs of this Process.**

4. **Identify the Customers that will receive the Outputs of this Process.**

5. **Identify the Inputs required in order for the Process to function properly.**

6. **Identify the Suppliers of the Inputs that are required by your Process.**

7. **Discuss with Project Sponsor, Champion, and other involved stakeholders for verification.**

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**The Purpose of Teams and What Makes Them Work**

A team is a group of people organized to work together in order to accomplish a specific objective. Individuals within the team, which involves two or more people, are all equally accountable for the accomplishment of the goals the team has been tasked with. Ideally, team members have complementary skills, so that the combination of their knowledge, experience, aptitude, and attitude achieves a common purpose.

Teams can be initiated for a variety of purposes. They can be started to improve a process, complete a project, or solve a problem. They can also be initiated within a company to conduct a study of best practice, or investigate a discrepancy within an organization. Teams are appropriate in three major instances:

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5 **Sources:**


*SixSigma.com: SIPOC Diagram*, By Kerri Simon
1) **Objective involves more than one organizational function.** For instance, an environmental quality management team might contain members from purchasing, materials management, production, and key suppliers.

2) **Some element of separation from mainstream work is desirable to focus on the specific objective or issue at hand.** This could involve a team working on a year-long project to implement a new quality management system.

3) **Specially trained team members are "on call" when a need arises.** This can range from team members who must assemble to review a proposal, to a quality control in manufacturing review board that assembles to go over a nonconforming product to determine disposition.

The length of duration of a team depends on the nature and purpose of the team. Some teams are set for a predetermined life span; others are limited by available resources. Most importantly, the length of team activity is measured and permitted to continue based on the progress being made, the value of the team's outcomes, and the overall team effectiveness.

**What makes a team work?**

If you have recently organized a team or were placed as team leader and want to see the team's objectives succeed, here are several tips on how to make a team work. Each team member should:

- **Agree** on the team's expected outcomes
- **Be** clearly committed to the team's goals, and understands why they are on the team.
- **Accept** assigned responsibilities and commits to help with whatever actions need to be taken in order to secure team success
- **Have** respect and no hidden agendas for their fellow members, and agree to freely share opinions and ask questions.
- **Provide** access to whatever information the team requires when it is needed in order to accomplish the team's objective.
- **Build and maintain trust** with other members in order to achieve the team's purpose.
- **Feel** they can make a difference with their contribution.
Support decisions made by the team. It's also important for management to accept these decisions.

Manage internal team conflict effectively so that it produces a win-win outcome.

Maintain a dual focus of both team process and anticipated outcomes.6

Improvement Tools Cheat Sheet

Walter Shewhart and W. Edwards Deming began development of quality improvement tools in the 1930s-40s, and in 1976 the Japanese Society for Quality Control Technique Development expanded on their tools for a more comprehensive list of quality control tools. Today, we use these tools as devices to help accomplish purposes of our quality improvement techniques, with these tools alone or incorporated within quality control software.

1) Flowcharts are graphic representations of the flow of processes.

Description: Flowcharts display the order of activities using shape visualizations that represent activities - the rounded rectangle indicates the beginning or end of a process, boxes indicate action items, and diamonds indicated decision points - all can be easily created, uploaded, imported and viewed within ISO compliance software.

When to use: Flowcharts can be used to communicate the steps in a work process, identify areas that may be problem sources or improvement opportunities.

2) Histograms are bar chart representations used to plot the frequency with which different values of a given variable occur.

Description: Histograms evolved from a need to evaluate data that occurs at a certain frequency, and are built to examine the characteristics of variation and are used as a great visualization quality improvement tool for varying data.

When to use: Histograms are used to identify the range of variables, examine existing patterns, and to suggest a central tendency in these variables.

3) Pareto Charts (pictured above, right) are graphical representations of the frequency of which certain events occur.

Description: Pareto Charts are rank-order bar charts that display the relative importance of variables, prioritized in descending order from left to right: invented by Vilfredo Pareto, who was an Italian economist at the end of the 19th century.

When to use: The Pareto Chart displays the relative importance of variables in datasets that may be used to set priorities regarding improvement opportunities.

4) Scatter Diagram (pictured left) is a chart in which one variable is plotted against another to determine whether or not there is a correlation between the two.

Description: Scatter Diagrams show pattern relationships between two quality and compliance variables that are thought to be related, and the purpose of this diagram is to demonstrate what happens to one variable when another is changed.

When to use: Scatter Diagrams are used to plot the distribution of information in two dimensions, and are useful to rapidly screen for relationships between two variables.

5) Run Charts are line graphs that show data points plotted in the order in which they occur.

Description: This chart is used to reveal trends and shifts in a process over time, show variation over time, or identifies an improvement or decline in a process over time. It examines both variables and attribute data.

When to use: The run chart shows the history and pattern of variation, and can be used to summarize occurrences of a particular situation, identify trends or unusual events, display measurement results over time, or determine a common cause vs. special cause variation.

6) Cause and Effect Diagram, (pictured on the next page) also known as an Ishikawa Diagram or a Fishbone Diagram, illustrates the relationship between an outcome and all influencing factors of the outcome.
Description: This diagram displays the factors that are thought to affect a particular output or outcome in a system - factors are often shown as groupings of related subfactors that act in concert to form the overall effect of the group displayed in the diagram.

When to use: The Cause and Effect Diagram should be used to identify potential causes of a problem or issue in an orderly way, and can help answer questions such as "Why is our environmental quality management system suddenly producing so much waste?"

7) Checklists or Check Sheets are forms used to record the frequency of specific events during a data collection period.

Description: A check sheet is a simple form that quality managers can use to collect data in an organized matter and easily convert it into useful information quickly.

When to use: Check sheets can be used for almost anything, from checking off defect occurrences to counting and tracking expected occurrences.

8) Affinity Diagram (Figure 4, left) facilitates organization and consideration of a group of ideas of a particular issue through a consensus decision within a team.

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**Description:** Affinity diagrams are used to organize verbal information into some type of visual pattern, and starts with specific ideas to help work toward broad categories.

**When to use:** An affinity diagram can help organize and give structure to a list of factors that contribute to a problem, or identify key areas where improvement is most needed within an issue.

9) **Cost of Quality** is a methodology that allows an organization to determine potential cost savings when process improvements are implemented.

**Description:** Cost of Quality helps quality managers determine the extent to which an organization's resources are expended on activities preventing poor quality. Cost of Quality can also be assessed by viewing prevention costs, appraisal costs, internal and external failures.

**When to use:** Cost of Quality is an important communication tool that describes the long-term impact of quality effort within a specific organization. Once a quality cost system is established, it should dynamically have positive impacts on the organization's mission, objectives, and goals.

10) **Benchmarking** is an evaluation technique by which an organization can compare its performance of a specific process against best practices of a recognized industry leader in a comparable process.

**Description:** Benchmarking can be used in several different approaches to compare organization performance, including **Competitive, Functional, Performance, Process, and Strategic.**

**When to use:** Conducting a benchmarking evaluation can help an organization identify its own shortcomings and help to establish a baseline standard to measure its progress against when implementing a quality assurance program.

11) **Brainstorming** (pictured left) is a group process used to generate ideas within a group or team in a nonjudgmental environment.

**Description:** Team or group members are presented with an issue and are asked to be broad in their thinking about the issue at hand, and requested not to criticize the thoughts of others.

**When to use:** The purpose of brainstorming is to generate a great deal of ideas about a central issue, and team members can interact with each other to generate further ideas within a single brainstorming session.
12) **Audits** of a [quality management system](#) are carried out to ensure actual practices are conforming to the documented procedures within an organization.

**Description:** Audits are systematic and independent examinations that determine whether quality activities and related results comply with planned arrangements, and whether the arrangements are implemented effectively and are suitable to achieve desired objectives. Quality audits can be conducted manually or more effectively with [auditing software](#).

**When to use:** While audits should be conducted on a regular schedule, audits are for establishing facts rather than finding faults. They indicate necessary improvement and corrective actions, as well as determine whether processes are effective and whether responsibilities have been correctly assigned.

13) **Control Charts** (pictured right) are used to measure sequential or time-related process performance and variability, such as [quality control in manufacturing](#).

**Description:** Control charts utilize a variety of concepts - a typical chart contains a centerline, which represents the average value of the quality characteristic corresponding to the in-control state of data represented. The upper and lower control limits are drawn above and below the centerline, which are chosen so that when a process that is seen as "in control" is graphed, the sampling points are seen as falling between them.

**When to use:** Control Charts may indicate an out-of-control condition, either when plotted points fall above or below the set control limits or when the points display some pattern of behavior.8

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**Management 101: Employee Involvement and Empowerment**

**Employee involvement** is a vital aspect of total [quality management solutions](#), and also in the success of any business. The need to both grow and succeed in an increasingly competitive marketplace has seen the implementation of various quality initiatives in different companies and organizations.

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8 **Sources:** W. Edwards Deming, ASQ.

   *Edwards W Deming’s 14 Management Principles Explained*
Problem-solving and process improvements are crucial to the company's quality initiatives, and demonstrate proactive actions are being taken to prevent problems. **Total Quality Management (TQM)** is a continuous process that strives to increase customer satisfaction, lower costs, and minimize defects and variations in every process of the business. TQM involves a number of concepts like "Just-In-Time", quality circles, employee involvement, continuous process improvement, empowerment, and world-class quality. The basic philosophy of TQM is to involve every employee in the organization along with its suppliers and distributors to improve product quality and thus enhance customer satisfaction.

**EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT**

One of the important concepts of Total Quality Management (TQM) is **employee involvement**. This is contrast to conventional quality assurance management practices, where management takes all decisions and workers just follow them to accomplish their jobs. This top-down management style is slow, inflexible, and has little room for competition, especially where survival in today’s time-starved, customer driven market requires rapid response times from quality control in manufacturing or other businesses for the ever-changing needs of the customer.

Employee involvement is very important in any TQM initiative, as it is a system wherein employees are encouraged to use their expertise and knowledge to suggest methods for improvements in their work areas. These suggestions could relate to improvements in the job, the product, the work atmosphere or the company as a whole. Many companies have ventured into a participation-style of management by involving employees in the problem solving and decision making processes.

Some of the most successful companies are those that have achieved a close relationship between workers and the managers. The policies in these companies fostered teamwork, participation, continuous learning and flexibility.\(^9\)

**EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT**

In addition to employee involvement, **employee empowerment** is another management concept – the basic theme of which is to give employees the means for making important decisions, and making those decisions the "right" ones. When done right, the results are heightened productivity and a better quality of work life.

\(^9\) Source: Employee Involvement - A Vital Aspect of Total Quality Management Part 1
While the actual practice of employee empowerment varies across organizations, empowerment is based on the fundamental concepts of job enlargement and job enrichment. **Job enlargement** involves changing the scope of the job to include a greater portion of the horizontal process. **Job enrichment** involves increasing the depth of the job to include responsibilities that have traditionally been carried out at higher levels of the organization.  

**Benefits Employee Involvement & Empowerment**

While both employee involvement and employee empowerment are each distinct practices and are usually mutually exclusive to one another, the benefits of each can be similar. The main benefits of employee involvement and empowerment are enhanced morale, more productivity, healthier coworker relationships and creative thinking.

1) **Improved Morale.** Involving employees in decisions and policy changes that directly affect their jobs while also empowering employees to be more autonomous, greatly improves company morale at large. When employees are treated as an asset and their input is given consideration, confidence increases among every team member, and the organization sees significant gains in different facets such as productivity and loyalty. Improved morale can also increase employee longevity with the company, as the longer an employee is associated with the company, the more experienced they become. This makes them mentors to new employees and therefore indispensable to managerial staff.

2) **Increased Productivity.** Both quality management practices also translate into increased productivity. Employees with an investment in the best interest of the organization increase their role in the company, and foster a stronger work ethic. When employees are given independence and expected to be more self-sufficient, they eventually become more efficient as they learn to navigate their responsibilities with minimal interference and/or relying less on

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10 Source: ASQ, [Overview of Employee Involvement](http://www.asq.org/)

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managerial staff for direction. This allows managerial staff more time to tend to their own responsibilities other than giving assignments to subordinates and decreases micromanagement, which minimizes productivity.

3) **Team Cohesion.** Employee empowerment fosters better relationships between employees and with their managers, as employees that are given more independence tend to form better working relationships. Each sees the other as mutually benefiting from their working relationship. In addition, more self-governance in the workplace lessens dependence on managers and supervisors and redirects that reliance laterally to coworkers.

4) **Innovation.** Employee empowerment cultivates innovation, as employees that have a stake in company growth and sustainability will offer more ideas and problem-solving solutions when obstacles arise. As the employee meets particular challenges or finds improvements in policies, procedures or products, it will foster growth and more critical and imaginative thinking. Employees can offer different perspectives than a manager’s, and be able to offer a creative solution not otherwise considered by staff.11

12 Steps to Improve Your Company Process

Process improvement is an important responsibility for quality professionals: assuring that the company process is performing optimally to be as efficient as possible can greatly impact company costs. While companies can elect to do this manually, the use of process management software can often aid the quality manager in driving home change.

To help you get started, IBS America, Inc. has identified the following 12-Step process outline for a generic process improvement to help you succeed in your new endeavor.

1) **Identify WHAT** needs improvement.

2) **Decide HOW** you will measure success. This can include metrics such as reduced turn-around time, reduced cost, fewer defects, etc.

3) **Draw** as detailed as possible process map with iterations, loops, and handshakes clearly identified.

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11 Source: [Benefits of Practicing Employee Involvement-Empowerment](#) by Owen E. Richason IV, Demand Media
4) **Collect** data on the measure you are using, which you identified in Step 2, in order to create a baseline to understand where you are now - you may want to consider implementing quality management software to assist your reporting.

5) **Define** a target on how much you want to improve.

6) **Review** the process map to identify, reduce, and eliminate "non-value added" activities. For example: if you have a step of approval and data shows that nothing was "disapproved" in last x months, then consider removing the approval step.

7) **Do** a cause-effect diagram to identify high-level and detailed level causes that are negatively affecting the outcome.

8) **Deep dive** into the causes using the "5-Why" Technique. This will help in identifying the "root cause".

9) **Do** a brainstorming session to identify solutions to address the identified causes.

10) **Implement** your new solution.

11) **Continue** to collect output data, as done in Step 4 to check and ensure that you are getting the desired results 12. If desired results not achieved, repeat the above steps.

Not listed in this process are steps such as team creation, and management approval: steps like these and other additional process improvement steps may be added or removed per your company's process improvement requirements.

### Top 10 Mistakes Made by Quality Professionals

Now that we’ve covered the basics of quality management, IBS America asked seasoned quality and compliance management professionals what they felt as though their biggest mistakes were when first starting on the job so you can tackle your new quality responsibilities with this wisdom, or take a fresh look at your current quality management strategies. We combed through the most thought-provoking tips based on the responses we received, and have compiled this list for budding quality management professionals to take into consideration when launching their new careers.
1) **Frightening people into compliance.** "I think my biggest mistake was in using the Warning Letters as a beat stick, to frighten people into compliance. I was also a gunfighter, not a team builder. It worked well for a short time, but when I needed help everyone was afraid that I would 'shoot' them."

2) **Not getting a concrete auditee agreement before submitting audit findings.** "We had a practice of sending the draft audit report first to the auditees, then gave them some time to raise concerns - if any - due to differences in the findings briefed during the audit closure and those documented in the draft report.

After this report, findings would be logged in an internal audit management tool for formal tracking - but in one instance, I logged the findings directly and an auditee reported high dissatisfaction, claiming that such a finding was not conveyed during the Audit at all. It took many rounds of discussion to ascertain the validity of the finding. Though the auditee was convinced, too much energy was spent that could have been averted."

3) **Spending too much time at one company.** "My biggest mistake was working for my first employer for 18 years! Staying with a company too long can limit your rate of growth and breadth of experience. Set a time limit after which you can review the pros and cons of staying a little longer vs. moving on to gain more experience from other organizations."

4) **Working in organizations in which top management was not engaged in quality and really valued it.** "Quality was 'necessary because customers expect a quality function'. If top management does not understand the total business value of the quality/reliability function you as a quality professional will be marginalized just as the function is."

5) **Not taking any Quality Certification courses early enough in my quality career.**

6) **Wanting to achieve perfection in my first attempt.**

7) **Emphasis on putting out fires rather than finding competent staff to prevent problems.** "Putting out fires tends to overwhelm a truly comprehensive QMS in many cases.

Finding competent staff and showing trust in their skill sets and experience is key to the lean quality management system (QMS) staffing available at many project builds. Staff knows when it is well led."
8) Looking for errors, and finding fault with the person who had performed the work. "I found that no person deliberately commits a mistake. There must be faults and loose ends in the system in which they are working. I started looking for those instead, and very soon found knowledge gaps in persons due to incomplete Work Instructions (WIs), an unhealthy production quality control process, and work allocation mistakes as inexperienced persons were allocated difficult projects, inadequate training, etc."

9) Trying to "boil the ocean". "Start small with focus on a pilot area or project. A quick sustained win is good for both your career and a stepping stone for the future."

10) Don't make excuses, do the hard thing and make it right. "My biggest quality mistake was as a new production supervisor one of our 'minor' pieces of equipment was not fully completing the cinch of a cable connector to the cable. It mostly held unless you pulled on the wire, but since the wire harness was covered that 'shouldn't' have happened; of course, many of the connections came open but only after shipping. It's the little things that don't look all that bad but still matter in a big way."[12]

Need a single, dynamic solution for all of your compliance needs?

CompliantPro is the most comprehensive compliance management software solution on the market today, offering the advantage of a robust, extremely flexible environment, adaptable to virtually any IT infrastructure.

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- Streamlines compliance processes.
- Minimizes complexity and cost.
- Centralize all your compliance activities.
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