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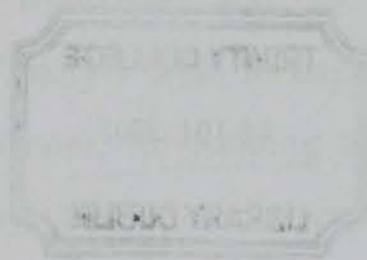
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REDISCOVERING QUALITY THROUGH GROUNDED THEORY

Case Studies in an Irish Context



A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Business, Economic and Social Studies in
Candidacy for the Degree of Masters in Letters

By
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School of Business Studies
Trinity College Dublin

31st October, 2001

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THROUGH GROUNDED THEORY

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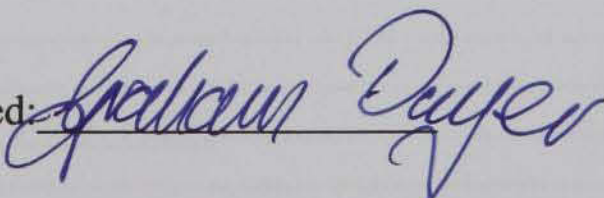
Case Studies in an Irish Context

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This thesis explores and describes the quality management phenomenon in five broadly comparable organisations in an Irish context. Its main aim is to generate meaning and reality with respect to quality management initiatives, which is faithful to the real world context in which it was observed.

- Quality is a fluid and diffuse concept, which has remained an important part of management discourse. An analysis of the literature proves quality over a number of generations to have remained faithful to the founding fathers who are often referred to as the gurus. An analysis of their major writings highlights the evolution of the quality concept from a technical fix to a general strategy for organisational change.
- The major writings of the gurus have left a legacy in the form of an array of quality management initiatives. An analysis of these quality management initiatives shows much similarity between the initiatives. In recent years these initiatives have come under increasing attack. The attacks bring into focus areas where practitioners may encounter barriers with respect to implementation of a quality management initiative. Beyond the title of these initiatives and barriers two schools of thought are prevalent. A hard-rational-quantitative school stressing the importance of quality acting at the level of systems and processes and, the soft-normative-qualitative school stressing the individual responsibility of employees with respect to quality and their need to correct behavioural flaws. The introduction of an Irish context highlights informative research but little by way of methodologies which explore and describe the quality phenomenon in a real world context.
- The predominance of positivist methodologies means that there is little research in the areas meaning and reality in the vast literature on the quality phenomenon. This has resulted in a little research, which attempts to understand meaning and reality with respect to quality. Alternative methodologies such as case studies and grounded theory have the potential to allow researchers develop patterns and insights, which are faithful to the real world context where it is developed. This study uses a case study methodology guided by the principles of grounded theory to get beyond the rhetoric and

hype, which surrounds many of the quality management initiatives in the management literature.

- A series of stand-alone case studies based on narratives from interviewees allow data in a real world context to “speak for themselves”. An array of patterns emerge, which provide the basis of a qualitative analysis for generating insights that are faithful to the real world context from which they emerged.
- A case study methodology guided by the principles of grounded theory can capture and analyse the emerging patterns, which arise as a result of organisations embarking on a quality management initiative. Through qualitative analysis, it is possible to observe insights, which are pertinent to the quality process in the context in which they were observed. This develops findings, which have a meaning and reality relevant to the context from which they emerged.
- A return to the literature based the on findings from case studies illustrates tension between the theory and practice of quality management. As a result of this tension one observes, as a grounded theorist, a definite meaning and reality of the quality concept and associated initiatives in an Irish context.

INTRODUCTION

Most discussions of quality improvement programs such as Total Quality Management assume a realist ontology (e.g., key performance indicators tell us how the world is operating), a rationalist epistemology grounded in objectivity (e.g., decisionmaking based on facts), and a change strategy based on transformation (e.g., TQM is a quantum change). Suppose that in the interest of theory development and practice improvement around themes of quality, these assumptions were altered and TQM were recast using the ideas that social construction tells us how the world is operating, rationality is an account rather than a tool, subjectivity is the feedstock of practice, and incremental change is the basis of renewal, these ideas being brought together loosely by an emerging theory of sensemaking. What would the result look like? (Weick, 2000:155)

Background to Topic Selection

This thesis began with an interest in whether or not quality and associated initiatives still have a meaning and reality. The thesis was practitioner led. It was only after the author was satisfied that the case studies were completed that the author completed the literature review which can be found in chapters one and two. Those interviewed found the writings of the gurus and their associated tools and techniques to be most helpful in their endeavours to understand and implement quality in their organisations. Chapter two outlines five initiatives which the practitioners in the five case organisations used to implement quality. These initiatives have been analysed in the chapter to provide the reader with the theoretical background to the initiatives described from the experiences of practitioners in chapter four. A scan of the literature shows that quality has become a vague and obscure term but one still deemed necessary for organisations to pursue. The literature also reveals much research generated from positivist methodologies, which is informative but offers little scope for exploring meaning and reality. This thesis adopts a sensemaking approach to quality, analysing humanist patterns from case studies to distil whether or not quality has a meaning and reality in a selection of Irish organisations.

Outline to Dissertation

Chapter one contains an historical review of the literature on quality. Though a definition of the concept remains aloof, an examination of the writings of the gurus in chronological order highlights quality to be characterised by evolution and continuity. A range of qualitative and quantitative tools have emerged from their writings, which have been used to implement quality in many organisations over a number of decades.

Chapter two highlights the legacy of the quality management gurus'. The gurus' writing has spawned a number of quality management initiatives such as Business Excellence, ISO 9000, Service Quality, The Balanced Scorecard and Total Quality Management. The array of initiatives has meant that critical analysts have attacked the initiatives dismissing them as rhetoric. However a review of the initiative documents similarity with respect to content even if their titles are different. This calls into

question the attacks of the critical analysts. The initiatives are quite similar based on the principles of the gurus. One can observe two schools of thought revolving around a technical orientation and a normative orientation with respect to quality. The Irish context is introduced as the setting for testing whether or not quality still has meaning and reality.

Chapter three highlights the methodological approach chosen for the current study. In an Irish context we know little about patterns that emerge from quality management initiatives, which contain the meaning and reality of the initiative to specific organisational settings. This research will attempt to explain and describe the humanist patterns, which evolved as a result of five broadly comparable organisations, engaging in five different quality management initiatives. Much of the research in quality management to date has been concerned with positivist methodologies at the expense of humanist methodologies, which have the potential to document meaning and reality about many organisational issues. This research project will employ a case study methodology guided by the principles of grounded theory as a balance to many of the positivist research approaches, which have been taken to date in the quality literature.

Chapter four presents the empirical core of the research project by presenting five case studies. The case studies will highlight and bring together the diverse range of issues discussed across the three chapters to date. The author has deliberately placed emphasis on description and explanation rather than on prescription and prediction. Each case study is stand alone, the intention being to “let the data speak for themselves.”

Chapter five makes sense of the latent humanist patterns with respect to quality, which have emerged from the dialogue recorded in the case studies in the previous chapter. The qualitative analysis in this chapter is guided by grounded theory building resulting from the author’s immersion in the real world context where patterns induced from quality emerged as a result of the organisations embarking on quality management initiatives. The methodology has revealed that quality has a meaning with respect to its philosophy; energy and motivation; trajectory; sociotechnology and participation; and participant reflections.

Chapter six returns to the focus of the thesis, which is to explore meaning and reality with respect to quality in an Irish context. Based on an analysis of the selection of case studies this author concludes that quality has a definite meaning and reality in a selection of Irish organisations where quality and associated initiatives were observed. The meaning and reality revolves around the findings from Chapter five.

The Epilogue gives my own reflections on the research project.

CHAPTER ONE

Introducing Quality: An Analysis of the Guru Writings

CHAPTER ONE

Introducing Quality: An Analysis of the Guru Writings

1.0 Introduction

This Chapter begins by describing the difficulty of distilling a meaning and reality for quality. A number of definitions and classifications are offered to introduce the reader to the concept before returning to the guru literature to rediscover the essence of the concept. The analysis of the guru literature is in chronological order based on their major writings, to document the evolution of the concept. One observes that the quality concept has been in a constant state of evolution, but has remained true to many of the seminal guru writings. Based on the chronological analysis of the guru literature one can observe the emergence of qualitative and quantitative tools and techniques, which have been used over many decades since the 1930s. The Chapter concludes by re-iterating quality as a fluid concept, which has become synonymous with organisational change in the wake of the major guru writings.

1.1: Definition of Quality Management

Trying to define quality management for research and practical purposes is most difficult. Precisely defining such a multi-faceted construct such as quality is difficult given the number of possible alternatives available (Hardie and Walsh, 1994) cited in Fynes (1998). Typically, researchers and business practitioners around the world understand quality as 'conformance to standard.' Some of these groups understand it as 'fitness for use' and talk about quality 'meeting customer expectation.' Others talk about reliability, maintainability, price, delivery, and value, while others argue that quality changes with the nature of the product and the needs of the customer, and with the context in which it is being used (Anand, 1997:195). Reeves and Bednar (1994:414) have stated that the 'quality construct space is so broad and includes so many components that there would be little utility in any model that tried to encompass them all.' The complexity and multiple perspectives historically associated with quality have made theoretical and research advances difficult. Ultimately, the search for a universal definition of quality and a statement of law-like relationships has been unsuccessful (Edwards, 1968).

The first formal attempt at classifying quality in the academic literature came from Garvin (1984; 1986; 1987; 1991). Garvin's framework captures the definitional ambiguity by differentiating definitions of quality, which are:

- **Transcendental** – excellence of the highest standard;
- **Product-based** – dependent on the attributes;
- **User-based** – satisfying or exceeding the wants of customers;
- **Manufacturing-based** – conformance to requirements, and
- **Value-based** – value for money

Several authors have described the confusion created by the existence of distinct definitions of, and perspectives on, quality management (Chatterjee and Yilmaz, 1993; Dean and Bowen, 1994; Gehani, 1993; Krishnan et al., 1993; Sitkin et al., 1994; Wilkinson and Willmott, 1995). Despite thousands of articles in the business and trade press, quality remains a hazy, ambiguous concept. According to Garvin, 'Quality is an unusually slippery concept, easy to visualise and yet exasperatingly difficult to define' (1988:xi). Wilkinson, Redman, Snape & Marchington (1998) point out that 'quality normally conveys notions of nebulous factors that are not readily measured or tied down. The appeal of the term is that it can be used to legitimise all sorts of measures and changes in the name of self-evident good.' Thus 'quality is robust enough to pertain to products, innovations, service standards, and calibre of people. Everyone at every level can do something about it and feel the satisfaction of having made a difference. Making products that work, or providing first class service is something we can identify with from our own experience' (Pascale, 1991:248).

1.2: Why Quality?

People's expectations and demands for quality are increasing all the time. Their impatience with systems, which are poorly planned, services that fall short of expectations and managers who fail to manage well is increasingly vocal (Bank, 2000:ix). Quality and quality management continue to be a unique opportunity to improve organisational effectiveness while revealing how organisations actually work in practice.

Quality now permeates all areas of society from business and industry to commerce and education, from health and welfare to public life and professional organisations (Hackman and Wagerman, 1995). Unlike management fads, the quality phenomenon has proved to have staying power as a unifying business philosophy. This is because quality programmes remain true to the ideas of the founders of the quality movement. Furthermore, they have received much publicity due to a number of high profile multinational company's success stories (see Garvin 1984; 1986; 1987; 1991). The concept of quality has not been devalued or debased despite its widespread popularity. Quality today as much as at any other time is still a necessary reality, with a potent sense of purpose that can capture the imagination of managers and employees alike and truly motivate them to excel. Institutions specifically chartered to promote quality have been established and a discernible quality ideology has developed and diffused throughout the managerial community.

The discourse surrounding quality has shifted considerably over the years. The concept of quality management has been broadened to such an extent that it has been deemed a synonym for 'sound management' (compare Deming, 1939 with Deming, 1986). To better understand these shifts and their interrelations, the following is an historical perspective and description of what is the prescriptions of those referred to as gurus.

1.3: The Quality Gurus

In every field of human thought and endeavour there is continual change and development. Many ideas and approaches to addressing specific issues are considered and tried but few withstand the rigours of testing to become established in the mainstream of theory and practice, becoming accepted wisdom in the field. Those writers and practitioners whose ideas come to form this body of accepted knowledge, who lead and advise a movement, become known as 'gurus' (based on Boyett and Boyett, 1998; Huczynski, 1993). This is the description of a guru which has guided the author in this chapter.

The quality movement is no different from other fields in this respect; in fact, it is prominent for its many gurus. This section focuses on the theory and practice espoused by seven writers and practitioners of quality management. These are the quality gurus. The following will consider the contributions to the quality movement of W. Edwards Deming, Joseph M. Juran, Armand V. Feigenbaum, Philip B. Crosby, Kaoru Ishikawa, and John Oakland. The review is based on the original work of each and associated literature. These gurus have been selected on the basis of consultation with quality experts in an Irish context and with practitioners who have lived through quality management initiatives (see Chapter 4). The review was written after the semi-structured interviews were completed. This meant that the author was clear about the theoretical underpinnings which guided the practitioners in their understanding of quality. The review of each guru is considered under the headings, philosophy; assumptions; methods; critique; in chronological order according to their major writings.

1.3.1: W. Edwards Deming (1939, 1986, 1994a, 1994b)

1.3.1.1: Philosophy

Deming's work built on that of Walter Shewart urging management to focus on the causes of variability in manufacturing processes (see Shewart, 1931; Shewart and Deming, 1939). His book *Out of the Crisis* (1986) contains all his key beliefs and assumptions underlying his methods. Deming asserts that there are 'common' and 'special' causes of quality problems. 'Special' causes are seen as those relating to particular operators or machines and requiring attention to the individual cause. 'Common' causes are those, which arise from the operation of the system itself and are a management responsibility.

Deming's belief was that quality is a function of continuous improvement based on reduction in variation around the desired output. Deming advocates the implementation of a statistical quality management approach. He considers it critically important that top managers acquire knowledge, or at least a clear appreciation, of the usefulness of statistical tools for achieving enhanced quality and increased productivity. His statistical methods provide a 'systematic, rigorous

approach to quality' (Bendell, 1989:4). Deming believed in the use of Statistical Process Control charts for identifying special and common causes and assisting diagnosis of quality problems (Oakland, 2000; Stuart, Mullins, and Drew, 1995). Statistical Process Control enabled the production process to be brought under control. Remaining quality problems were considered to be related to common causes. Eradication of special causes enabled a shift in focus to common causes to further improve quality.

A further strand of Deming's work was the formulation of a systematic approach to problem solving – the Plan, Do, Check, Action cycle (PDCA) (Deming and Shewart, 1939). This is a simple iterative cycle, which once completed it recommences without ceasing. It provides the basis for a 'self sustaining quality programme' (Logothetis, 1992:55). The later work of Deming describes seven beliefs about bad management practices, which he believed must be eliminated before management could be transformed to support the implementation of a successful quality initiative. These are referred to as the 'Seven Deadly Sins'.

Sin 1, 'Lack of constancy', is concerned with how a company can remain in business and provide jobs if there is a lack of constancy of purpose to plan product and service that will have a market?' (Logothetis 1992:46). This is seen as urging an absolute and constant commitment on the part of senior management to quality, productivity and innovation (Zemke, 1993; Beckford, 1998).

Sin 2, 'Short-term profits', is a castigation of short term thinking which defeats constancy of purpose to stay in business with long term growth. Deming was critical of companies pursuing the quarterly dividend and short-term profit. Long term planning is deemed the only chance for long term and sustained progress.

Sin 3, 'Performance appraisal', is regarded as 'devastating' by Deming as it encourages negative activities such as rivalry and isolation; it nourishes fear, demolishing teamwork and mutual respect. The major criticism from Deming's point of view is that it may ascribe to individuals faults that may well be caused entirely by the system in which they work (Bendell 1989).

Sin 4, 'Job hopping', regular movement of management between jobs either within or between organisations, is considered to lead to instability and further reinforce the short term orientation of the organisation. Logothetis (1992:39) cited in Beckford (1998:69) suggests that it destroys teamwork and commitment and ensures that many decisions are taken in whole or partial ignorance of the circumstances surrounding them.

Sin 5, 'Use of visible figures only', considers that managers who believe that everything can be measured are deluding themselves and suggests that they should know before they start that they will be able to quantify only 'a trivial part of the gain'. Deming (1986, 1994a; 1994b) criticises failure to recognise and evaluate the intangible aspects of the organisation such as satisfied customers, benefits to productivity and quality derived from people feeling part of a success story. The final two sins 'Excessive medical costs' and 'Excessive costs of liability' are more concerned with society at large rather than individual organisations and are not relevant to the discussion in this context.

From the above analysis of Deming's work it is possible to extract the following assertions about his philosophy and beliefs towards quality. His philosophy and beliefs are based around:

- Quantitative, statistically valid, control systems;
- Clear definitions of those aspects under the direct control of staff (special causes) and those under the responsibility of management (common causes);
- A systematic, methodological approach;
- Continuous improvement.

Deming (1986:xi), like Crosby (1979) believes that quality should be designed into the product and the process. Logothetis (1992) hypothesises that Deming himself would have summarised the whole of his philosophy in just two words: Reduce variation. This statement is compatible with the principle of continuous improvement and to the achievement of consistency, reliability, and uniformity.

1.3.1.2: Assumptions

Deming (1939; 1994a) assumes that it is first necessary to focus on existing processes to derive immediate improvement followed by the management process. He believes in the need for transformation before continuous improvement can take root (see Yoshida, 1989; Deming, 1994a). Though management are to be responsible for this transformation he does not offer any suggestion as to how the transformation can be achieved.

The second assumption sees Deming putting faith in statistical methods to deliver evidence to support the necessary changes to a system. However Flood (1993) points out that Deming's outlook of the organisation is mechanistic implying a lack of flexibility.

The third assumption is that continuous improvement is both possible and desirable. This is to combat against short term thinking which is deemed to be detrimental to organisation survival.

1.3.1.3: Methods

Deming has four principal methods for achieving his version of quality. They are the:

- the PDCA cycle;
- Statistical Process Control (SPC);
- 14 principles of transformation;
- the 7 point action plan;

The PDCA cycle has been discussed under Deming's philosophy. The second method, SPC, is a quantitative approach based on measurement of process performance. A process is deemed under control or stable when its random variations fall within determined upper and lower limits. A control chart is used to record the value of a measurement associated with an event in a process. Statistical analysis of the values recorded will reveal the mean value. Normal variation from this mean value for the particular process in its established state is taken to be + or - 3 standard deviation of the mean (see Shewart, 1931; Duncan, 1956). Events falling outside

normal variation are said to be 'special' and merit individual diagnosis and treatment. Events falling within the norms are considered to have 'common' causes, that is, they are a product of the organisational system and require treatment at the system level. Deming speaking about his own experience states that 94% of problems belong to the system while 6% are deemed to be special (Deming, 1986:315).

Deming's later work (1994a; 1994b) embraced wholesale attitudinal change throughout the organisation (a qualitative approach), supported where appropriate by reliance on validated statistical analysis (quantitative). The following are the principles according to Deming (1986:122).

Principle 1 – Create constancy of purpose to improve product and service.

Principle 2 – Adopt a new philosophy for the new economic age with management learning what their responsibilities are and by assuming leadership for change.

Principle 3 – Cease dependence on mass inspection to achieve quality by building quality into the product.

Principle 4 – End awarding business on price. Award business on total cost and move towards single suppliers.

Principle 5 – Aim for continuous improvement of the system of production and service to improve productivity and quality and to decrease costs.

Principle 6 – Institute training on the job.

Principle 7 – Institute leadership with the aim of supervising people to help them do a better job.

Principle 8 – Drive out fear so that everyone can work effectively together for the organisation.

Principle 9 – Break down barriers between departments. Encourage research, design, sales and production to work together to foresee difficulties in production and use.

Principle 10 – Eliminate slogans, exhortations and numerical targets for the workforce since they are divisory and anyway difficulties belong to the whole system.

Principle 11 – Eliminate quotas or work standards and management by objectives or numerical goals: leadership should be substituted instead.

Principle 12 – Remove barriers that rob people of their right to pride in their work.

Principle 13 – Institute a vigorous education and self-improvement programme.

Principle 14 – Put everyone in the company to work to accomplish the transformation.

To enable these principles to be implemented, Deming (1986) proposed a seven point action plan. Essentially this is a series of steps to about what managers should do. They are:

Point 1 – Management must agree on the meaning of the quality programme, its implications and the direction to date.

Point 2 – Top management must accept and adopt the new philosophy.

Point 3 – Top management must communicate the plan and the necessity for it to the people in the organisation.

Point 4 – Every activity must be reorganised as a step in the process and the customers of that process identified. The customers are responsible for the next stage of the process.

Point 5 – Each stage must adopt the **PDCA** – as the basis of quality improvement.

Point 6 – Team working must be engendered and encouraged to improve inputs and outputs. Everyone must be enabled to contribute to this process.

Point 7 – Construct an organisation for quality with the support of knowledgeable statisticians. (Deming 1986)

1.3.1.4: Critique

Overall it is possible to deduce certain strengths from the work of Deming. There is an obvious systemic logic as opposed to a chaotic approach. The PDCA acts as a useful tool for organisation learning and is a tangible vehicle which can be used for operationalising continuous improvement. However at no time does Deming offer an explicit explanation or definition of quality so one can implement one's systems against an ideal type.

The prioritisation of management before technology represents a watershed in management thought. All too often new technology or techniques 'get rendered invalid or and pointless because they are implemented in a piecemeal way with frequent shifts from one idea to another giving the impression of fad, fashion or flavour of the month' (Bank, 2000:91). Management constancy is necessary to make cultural or organisational changes required for a new idea to flourish. If an

organisation is to follow Deming's approach to quality then it is assuming that 94 percent of problems belong to management. It is essential that management take responsibility for these problems before any new technology is introduced.

It is obvious that Deming favours measurement within a system. The favoured form of measurement is based on physical measures (Deming, 1986). However his later work marked a definite shift towards qualitative methods such as management communicating with employees (Point 3) and moving away from a blame culture towards an environment, which embraces teamwork (Point 6) (see Deming, 1994). This highlights how quantitative and qualitative improvement measures in an organisation can co-exist alongside each other resulting in synergistic benefits.

The major drawback of Deming's methods is that they are very prescriptive. His work suggests what to do but does not offer any clear method. There is an inherent contradiction here. On one hand Deming expects management to adopt his philosophy but does not give a clear methodology as to how they might achieve quality. Deming's work on qualitative measurements of system performance is somewhat underdeveloped. He did not try to merge his work with the human relations theory, which was developing around the time he was developing his **PDCA** cycle (e.g. Trist and Bamforth, 1951).

It is accepted that Deming has probably made the most substantial contribution to quality management. The author would echo Beckford's (1998:85) conclusion that 'enthusiasm must be tempered with the knowledge that a clearer method, a more explicit and developed recognition of the human aspects and a precise focus on what constitutes quality of service in the contemporary world would enhance the value of his work.'

1.3.2: Joseph M. Juran (1951, 1964, 1974, 1988, 1993)

1.3.2.1: Philosophy

Juran (1951) sees quality as a planned process. Fitness for use is at the core of Juran's philosophy (see also Shiba, Walden, and Graham, 1995). He is in agreement with

Deming in his belief that it is senior management who must control the process. The emphasis of his work is on planning, organisational issues, management's responsibility for quality and the need to set goals and targets for improvement (Bendell, 1989).

Juran (see 1951, 1964, 1974) expresses his essential message to managers through the three basic quality related processes: quality planning, quality control and quality improvement (Bank, 2000). This has become known as Juran's quality trilogy. This simple approach encapsulates the demand for substantial action inherent in all of Juran's work (Beckford, 1998). Juran's emphasis in this respect is in three areas. They are, changing management behaviour through quality awareness, training and then spilling down new attitudes to supporting management levels.

Another belief of Juran's (see 1988) was the avoidance of slogans and exhortations. Logothetis (1992:64) cites Juran's view as being 'the recipe for action should consist of 90% substance and 10% exhortation, not the reverse!' Juran (1993: 3) has recommended a formula for results which comprises of four stages:

1. **Establish specific goals to be reached** – identify what needs to be done, the specific projects that need to be tackled.
2. **Establish plans for reaching the goals** – provide a structured approach going from here to there.
3. **Assign a clear responsibility for meeting the goals.**
4. **Base the rewards on results achieved** – feed back the information and utilise the lessons learned and the experience gained.

We can see that Juran places a lot of emphasis on planning which implies a clear reliance on quantitative methods. Flood (1993:19) refers to Juran's concern that, 'Quality has become too gimmicky, full of platitudes and supposed good intentions, but short on real substance'. Juran's philosophy is based on management being responsible for quality. This was at the core of his Quality Control Handbook in 1951. The only means of quality improvement can be through planning and any plans or objectives must be specific and measurable.

1.3.2.2: Assumptions

The assumptions underpinning Juran's philosophy are firstly based around the idea of managing quality as a planned process, which can be monitored for variance. Variance results in processes becoming incapable of producing products, the long term result being waste and needless duplication of work. Such waste needs to be eliminated. This line of thinking is similar to much of the management thinking based on organising ventures on process lines and on 're-engineering' those processes (see Hayes and Pisano, 1994; Hammer and Champy, 1993; Hayes and Jaikumar, 1988). This implies a continuous improvement philosophy.

The second assumption underpinning Juran's philosophy is that relating to quantification. Juran's work focuses very clearly on measurement and specific objectives. However many aspects of quality, particularly in the service sector are difficult to accurately measure and quantify. This perhaps puts a certain limitation on the application of his ideas in the service sector.

1.3.2.3: Methods

Juran's overarching methodology for achieving quality is the 'quality road map'. Recognising both internal and external customers, the road map offers a nine-step guide.

Step 1 – Identify who are the customers

Step 2 – Determine the needs of those customers

Step 3 – Translate needs into our language [the language of the organisation]

Step 4 – Develop a product, which can respond to those needs

Step 5 – Optimise the product features so as to meet our [the company's] needs as well as customer needs

Step 6 – Develop a process, which is able to produce the product

Step 7 – Optimise the process

Step 8 – Prove that the process can produce the product under operating conditions

Step 9 – Transfer the process to operations

1.3.2.4: Critique

The application of Juran's work has been successful in industry. However the work has not been universally applied and can be seen to be less effective in the service sector than in manufacturing (see Shiba, Walden and Graham, 1995). Juran's methods and emphasis on quantitative issues ensure that management concentrate on process issues. This can be seen as avoiding hype, which has come to typify so much of the literature surrounding quality management, but may reflecting a non-humanist orientation.

Juran was the first of the gurus to identify every stakeholder in the organisation as a customer. Like the other gurus he sees management commitment and involvement as crucial. This is not only because by Juran's measure 80 per cent of the total quality problem resides there, but also because the power, control and leadership resides there (Beckford, 1998:119).

Like the other gurus, Juran takes a somewhat 'mechanistic' view of the organisation (see Burns and Stalker, 1961). There is an undertone running through his work suggesting that what is good for the organisation - higher quality - is also good for the employee at an individual level. However the interests of the organisation and the individual may come into direct conflict. The organisation wishes to improve quality to preserve and protect its customer base, to reduce its costs and ensure its survival. Employees may recognise these same attributes can have different consequences for them such as job losses, pay freezes, reductions in overtime, loss of other benefits. Often it can lead to 'deskilling' of jobs and the loss of craft skills in which individuals take justifiable pride.

The 'Quality Trilogy', 'Quality Road Maps', and 'Ten Steps to Quality' may all be considered to be a systemic approach to management. Though Juran established a new concept of the customer (internal and external), the strong emphasis by Juran on management responsibility fails to adequately address the needs and aspirations of the employees. He does not take into account the contribution that that they can make to the achievement to of quality, nor does he provide the mechanisms through which this can be done. As a footnote to conclude, it is worth raising the issue of the applicability

of Juran's work. It seems to be most suitable for the industrial manufacturing sectors. It seems to have limited application in service organisations since it does not adequately deal with human issues.

1.3.3: Armand V. Feigenbaum (1971, 1983, 1996)

1.3.3.1: Philosophy

Feigenbaum (1971; 1983; 1996) suggests there are two aspects to quality. Products can be said to incorporate quality if they are 'best for customer use and selling price' (see Feigenbaum, 1971; 1983; 1996). This takes into consideration the monetary value that customers put on product. In Feigenbaum's work one observes for the first time that selling price has been mentioned in conjunction with quality. His work was also the first to explicitly mention the idea of a 'total' approach to quality and quality as a general strategy for managing an organisation.

Feigenbaum (1996: 33) gives a definition of his own concept – a total quality system:

'Total Quality System is the agreed company-wide and plant-wide structure, documented in effective, integrated technical and managerial procedures, for guiding the co-ordinated actions of the people, the machines and the information of the company plant, in the best and most practical ways to assure customer quality satisfaction and economical costs of quality.'

This approach to quality is systemic as 'it recognises and deals with interactions across arbitrary organisational boundaries and at all levels within them as well as with the suppliers, customers and other stakeholders in the enterprise' (Beckford, 1998:87). There is no mention of words such as function or department in Feigenbaum's work. Clearly this marks a move away from quantitative methods with respect to quality to more qualitative methods such as job design, organisational structure and teamwork and participation. This complements his assertion that quality should be built into the product rather than failure being inspected out. This recognises that organisations do not only manufacture products, they also design and develop them. This suggests that

many quality problems can be eradicated from both the products and the manufacturing process by paying attention to the quality idea from the conception of the idea, right through to product delivery. Logothetis (1992) refers to this as quality mindedness throughout the organisation.

From this analysis of Feigenbaum's work it is possible to deduce his philosophical outlook. He advocates a total or holistic approach to quality attainment. There is a recognition of and a reliance on the human side of achieving quality. The underlying principle is that investment in proper quality planning and prevention activities can lead to a substantial reduction in failure costs and even in appraisal costs (the cost of inspection).

1.3.3.2: Assumptions

Feigenbaum adopts an open systems view of organisations. Interrelationships exist between all aspects within the organisation and also between the organisation and its external environment. In his definition of quality control, the integral nature of the quality process stressing 'co-ordination' of maintenance and improvement efforts across groups is a clear assumption that the social organisation and human relationships are a basic issue in quality achievement (Bendell, 1989). Feigenbaum's (see Feigenbaum 1971; 1983; 1996) constant re-iteration of commitment to full customer satisfaction, implies the need for constant awareness of customer needs and expectations within the organisation and the need for change to satisfy them.

1.3.3.3: Methods

Feigenbaum's ideas about quality are similar to both Deming and Juran. However, he believes in reliance on statistics where appropriate but encourages management to use discretion in their choice of measurements. This is most evident in his four steps to achieving a quality control system (Feigenbaum, 1971:19):

- Step 1 Setting quality standards.
- Step 2 Appraising conformance to these standards.
- Step 3 Acting when standards are exceeded.

Step 4 Planning for improvements in the standards.

Feigenbaum has a very serious, money-oriented approach to the management of quality. His major contribution to the subject of the cost of quality was his recommendation that quality costs should be categorised and separately managed (Zairi, 1996; Beckford, 1998). He identifies four major categories associated with the cost of quality: prevention costs (quality planning), appraisal costs (inspection costs), internal failure costs (scrap and rework) and external failure costs (warranty costs and complaints). Beckford (1998:92) reiterates how the categories of the cost of quality extend and encourage a total approach to quality extending it from product development right through to product use, that is, product quality in the hands of the consumer.

Bendell (1989:16) points out that reductions in quality costs result from establishing a quality system because:

Lack of existing effective customer-orientated customer standards may mean current quality of products is not optimal given use.

Expenditure on prevention costs can lead to a several fold reduction in internal and external failure costs.

1.3.3.4: Critique

The major contribution in Feigenbaum's work is recognition of quality as a way of running the business rather than a subset type activity. Like Deming, Feigenbaum places great emphasis on the support of management to the process. However, because the approach is total quality, management have an extra task - that of selling quality to the organisation through participation. However Beckford (1998:93) points out that the idea of selling the quality idea suggests a certain resistance by employees to accept the concepts of quality. While the participative approach can be acknowledged as useful for developing and encouraging support for change and enabling creativity the question has again to be raised – how is such participation to be achieved? This is an issue of major importance for contemporary managers.

The lack of a well-developed, clear methodology telling managers how to proceed with his approach is major drawback. Personal and management styles are much greater factors in the success or failure of a Total Quality Control initiative than is normally recognised (Carter, Smeltzer and Narasimhan, 2000). The adoption of teamworking and collaboration as a working pattern is not easily achieved or maintained. However Feigenbaum does offer strong guidelines on how to measure cost through the four steps, which help in cost reduction and also identifying where costs arise. As a final point, it is worth noting that Feigenbaum's work is explicitly focussed on the industrial sector. However in recent times his concepts have become the cornerstone of the services industry with its overtones of collaboration and external failure costs built into the quality process.

1.3.4: Philip B. Crosby (1979, 1996)

1.3.4.1: Philosophy

Crosby's philosophy is seen to be captured in his five 'Absolutes of Quality' (see Zairi, 1992, 1993; Gilbert, 1992; Flood, 1993; Beckford, 1998). The following will examine each of these absolutes with a view to gaining an insight into the philosophical outlook of Crosby.

First is Crosby's definition of quality. Crosby's definition is concerned with 'conformance to requirements', not as 'goodness' or 'elegance' (see Shiba, Walden and Graham, 1995; Zairi, 1996). This implies that a quality product or service is one that meets the requirements of the final customer (Beckford, 1998). This means in turn that those requirements must be defined, in advance, and that measures must be taken to continually determine conformance (Flood, 1993). Ultimately this suggests that the first fundamental beliefs are that quality is a measurable aspect of a product or service and that quality is achieved when expectations or requirements are met.

The second absolute is that there is no such a thing as a quality problem. Flood (1993) suggests that this is levelling criticism at incapable management for poor quality. The implication is that quality problems do not create themselves or exist as a separate entity from the management process. The final product is a result of the management

process and if this process is designed with quality built into it then a quality product will emerge. In essence management must provide necessary leadership to the organisation if quality products are to be an outcome of an organisation (see Zairi, 1993; Oakland, 1989).

Thirdly, it is always cheaper to do it right first time (Beckford, 1998). This absolute is pointing out the cost of inspecting in quality after goods have already been produced. Having to re-run production is expensive. Crosby believes that a more efficient and effective a method is to design quality into a product while it is being produced, the more satisfied a customer will be (Bendell, 1989). This is based on the assumption that quality can be deemed conformance to requirements and that management can develop a process which, from the outset, has no expectation of failure. The essence of this belief is that prevention of error is considered better than rectification.

Fourthly, the only performance measurement is the cost of quality. This is underpinned by an assumption that quality is always measurable and that this is the only way to measure performance. Logothetis (1992:85) suggests that cost is the 'price of non conformance'. Beckford (1998) asserts that as a practical measurement of quality this may be considered useful although it cannot be considered as the only measure of business performance.

Finally, the only performance standard is zero defects. This brings together the previous four absolutes (see Zairi, 1992, 1996; Zbaracki, 1998). The idea is that perfection is the standard to aim for through continuous improvement and, underpinning this, zero defects is an achievable and measurable objective. Management define a process and set standards, which workers must conform to. Perfection is suggested as the target.

There appear to be three strands to Crosby's perspective on quality (Bendell, 1989; Zemke, 1993; Zairi, 1996; Beckford, 1998).

- Quantification

- Management leadership
- Prevention rather than cure

1.3.4.2: Assumptions

Firstly, Crosby (1979) assumes that the management process is a key driver of quality. If management do not view quality as one of their core functions then a quality product or service will not arise. Management must define conformance to requirements and communicate these to stakeholders. 'Conformance must be met for every aspect of the process - the product, its design, its function and its price. If management do not seek to conform to such requirements then quality problems will be eternal due to a mismatch of requirements between the organisational set-up and stakeholders' needs and wants' (Crosby, 1979:13).

Secondly, 'zero defects' implies a belief that a perfect product can be achieved. This means that a product can be reliably made, in relevant volumes, entirely free of defects. Working within Crosby's absolutes it is possible to determine a defect free product if it conforms to requirements defined by management (Beckford, 1998).

The third assumption follows on from the second. It is assumed that it is possible to establish a company that does not start out expecting mistakes, where errors are not expected or inevitable. This is the most rigid assumption and the one most likely to break down when applied to the real world. Differing cultures, levels of training and capability, staff turnover and products are all aspects of an organisation, which change over time. To achieve and maintain a consistency of expectation may be seen as impossible both operationally and where qualitative, subjective and normative aspects of organisation life apply. This loops back to the issue of requirements – what are they, how are they defined, who defines them?

The major weakness of the Crosby's assumptions is that specifying requirements is difficult in terms of products such as food or services. Specification of such requirements is not only difficult but also exacerbated by trying to know whether or not requirements have been met. Circumstances may get to the stage where requirements are so loosely specified as to be almost meaningless.

1.3.4.3: Methods

Crosby's method for achieving quality is his fourteen-step programme.

Step 1 – Establish management commitment

Step 2 – *Form quality improvement teams*

Step 3 – *Establish quality measurements*

Step 4 – *Evaluate the cost of quality*

Step 5 – *Raise quality awareness*

Step 6 – *Take action to correct problems*

Step 7 – *Zero defects planning*

Step 8 – *Train supervisors and managers*

Step 9 – *Hold a 'zero defects' day*

Step 10 – *Encourage the setting of goals*

Step 11 – *Obstacle reporting*

Step 12 – *Recognition for contributors*

Step 13 – *Establish Quality Councils*

Step 14 – *Do it all over again*

Crosby's 'Quality Vaccine' (Logothetis, 1992:83) is an essential part of activating the method (see Shiba, Walden and Graham, 1995). The administration of this vaccine requires three management actions or attitudes:

1. Determination – awareness that the management needs to take the lead in the new economic age. The times of cheap energy, low labour rates, captive markets and inexpensive materials are gone.
2. Education – for the managers, who should become the educators and modern leaders, rather than mere supervisors.
3. Implementation – concentrating on the effort of creating a hassle-free and motivating working environment, providing adequate guidance on the never-ending road to quality improvement, and involving everybody.

1.3.4.4: Critique

There are a number of strengths and weaknesses to Crosby's work. The strengths are:

1. Clarity

Crosby is very methodological, offering management a series of a steps to follow in order to achieve conformance to a requirement. However Beckford (1998) points out that such clarity and simplicity are somewhat superficial in the event of increasingly complex problems.

2. Recognition of worker participation

This is deemed important because workers may be the only people who can recognise the roots of a particular problem. Any programme, no matter how well it is designed will require the appropriate attitudes and behaviour from employees if it is to be a success. Participation is also necessary as it encourages employee ownership of the process, which can encourage people to design quality into the product at the time of production.

3. Rejection of a tangible quality problem, acceptance of the idea of solutions

The conception that all quality issues can be resolved is very useful in provoking ideal goal seeking behaviour amongst the participants in a quality programme. 'Zero defects' and perfection are neither wrong nor bad objectives for organisations to aim for. Acceptance that certain problems cannot be solved could be seen as reinforcing behaviour and attitudes, which ensure that they never will be. This assertion aims to overcome the self-fulfilling prophecy.

With respect to weaknesses, Crosby's work has been attacked as 'trying to achieve quality through slogans and platitudes (see Juran, 1993). Also Crosby believes that the only goal of the organisation should be 'Zero Defects.' This highlights the isolation (Crosby spent much of his career with ITT Corporation) in which Crosby developed his quality management methods. Though Crosby's methods were extremely successful at ITT, where it may have been possible for him to identify a defect free product, it is much more difficult to say with confidence what a defect free product is in a service environment. However his concepts have been adopted in many manufacturing organisations. Finally, Crosby asserts that achieving quality is a way of uniting the entire workforce of an organisation. Though this may have been the case at ITT, there are many organisations where workers will not deem quality to be a worthwhile endeavour.

1.3.5: Kaoru Ishikawa (1985, 1986)

1.3.5.1: Philosophy

The philosophical roots of Ishikawa's work lies in the concept of 'Company Wide Quality Circles'. Gilbert (1992) suggests that he is the first of the guru's to recognise that quality improvement is too important to be left in the hands of specialists. According to Bank (2000:97), Ishikawa's Quality Circles were a blend of the best of the American practices such as American flow line production techniques, and Japanese practices fused with traditional European craftsmanship. He developed the idea bringing craftsmanship back to groups rather than individuals. Ishikawa himself remarks that 'the results of these company-wide Quality Control activities are remarkable, not only in ensuring the quality of industrial products but also in their great contribution to the company's overall business (Ishikawa, 1995: 13). This is similar to the 'total' approach advocated by Feigenbaum. The level of involvement proposed is significant. Ishikawa asks that the programme not just be company-wide but that it involves active participation (Ishikawa, 1985; Beckford, 1998:97). His approach to participation emphasises greater worker involvement and motivation. An analysis of Ishikawa (1985), (1986) this involvement and motivation as being created through:

- An atmosphere where employees are continuously looking to resolve problems
- Greater commercial awareness
- A change of shop floor attitude in aiming for ever increasing goals

There is a definite shift to qualitative methods in Ishikawa's work. According to Logothetis (1992:95), Ishikawa was a strong believer in 'the provision of a proper quality control education, initially to factory foremen and supervisors, and subsequently to grass-roots workers.' This requires a cultural shift in organisations. Implicit is an acceptance from management that workers have the ability to recognise both problems and solutions (see Wilkinson, 1995). There is also acceptance that management will either accept the need for change and implement proposals or explain why a proposed change is not possible or desirable in a way which maintains

the employee's enthusiasm. This marks a shift in traditional employer – employee relations. Here we see a more unitarist approach to relationships in the workplace.

In his work *Guide to Quality Control*, he has prescribed simple methods such as data collection, histograms, cause and effect diagrams, check sheets, binomial probability and sampling as methods for helping to make workers more alert to competitive pressures facing the organisation. Bendell (1989:17) has stated that Ishikawa saw 'open group communication' as critical, particularly in the use of his tools for problems solving. The simple techniques for data collection and the emphasis on communication see the quality concept straddling the realm of qualitative and quantitative methods (see Beckford, 1998). To conclude, it is possible to assert that Ishikawa takes a holistic approach to quality as advocated by his view of 'Company – Wide Quality'.

1.3.5.2: Assumptions

Ishikawa views the world from a less rigid view of the worlds than the other gurus. Like Feigenbaum, Ishikawa assumes that quality is the responsibility of all organisational stakeholders. Underpinning this assumption is an ideal that people will be willing to participate and commit to the ideal of quality. This implies that quality is to become a super ordinate goal overriding all others as a requirement for organisational success. However little is said as to how to achieve this goal. At no point does Ishikawa indicate that members of quality circles should receive any extra payment for their increase in efforts; the achievement of quality is considered to be its own reward.

Ishikawa assumes that the needs of the organisation parallels with the needs of the individual. In any organisation there is a presence of power and politics between organisation participants (see Davenport, Eccles and Prusak, 1998). Ishikawa is silent on this aspect and how it may be addressed; perhaps reflecting the strength of his own position, or a lack of awareness of the problems faced by others, who are less educated, or in less privileged positions. Alternatively it may reflect the strongly collective nature of the Japanese value system. Finally, Ishikawa assumes simplicity as best for technique and method.

1.3.5.3: Methods

Ishikawa's principal method is 'company-wide quality control'; the achievement of this goal is through the 'Quality Circles' techniques and the 'seven tools of quality control'.

Quality circles are Ishikawa's principal method for achieving participation. These groups are composed of between 4 – 12 workers from the same of activity and led by a supervisor. Based on Ishikawa, (1985), Bendell (1989), Oakland and Porter, (1994) one may identify three aims:

- To contribute to improvement and development of the enterprise;
- To respect human relations and build a happy workshop offering job satisfaction;
- To deploy human capabilities fully and draw infinite potential.

The writings of Ishikawa (1985), Bendell, (1989), Zemke, (1991), Gilbert (1992) suggest a number of essentials concerning the quality circle concept:

- Top management support;
- Operational management support and involvement;
- Voluntary participation of the members;
- Effective training of the leader and the members;
- Shared work background;
- Solution oriented approach;
- Recognition of the quality circle efforts;
- Have an agenda, minutes and rotating chairmanship;
- Keep to the time allowed for the meeting;
- Members should inform bosses of meeting times;
- Make sure that quality circles are not hierarchical.

These are the qualitative methods which Ishikawa deems to be important to achieving Total Quality Control. This is complimented by a quantitative approach. There are

seven tools. They are 'Pareto charts' which are used to identify the principal causes of problems. Secondly there are 'Fishbone diagrams' which are charts of cause and effect in processes. This is probably Ishikawa's most enduring contribution to the quality concept. This is a goal-oriented picture of a problem situation. The goal is placed at the head of the fish and contributing factors are categorised. It has proved useful in enabling and encouraging participants to express their views. Thirdly there is 'stratification' which is technique placing each set of data successively on top of the previous one. Fourthly 'check sheets' are used to provide a record of quality. Fifthly, histograms are used to display frequency of various ranges of values of a quantity. Sixthly, there are 'scattergraphs' used to help determine whether there is a correlation between two factors. Finally there are 'control charts' used as a device in Statistical Process Control. In conclusion, Ishikawa uses both qualitative and quantitative methods to achieve a more robust type of company wide quality.

1.3.5.4: Critique

The development of user-friendly tools by all organisational stakeholders is of undeniable value. They enable people at all levels in the organisation to make a contribution, in their own terms, to the process of achieving quality. Promoting creativity and increasing motivation have value both for the organisation and the individual. However the whole process relies on the willingness of the individual, which is often not easily found. Also Flood (1993) highlights a contradiction in terms between participation on the one hand and Quality Control Circles on the other. Quality Control Circles are a useful method of encouraging teamwork and participation, however they negate against breaking down functional barriers as they are groups where people are focussed on a single area, or workshop, rather than being formed along interacting processes (see Dwyer, 2001).

By using both qualitative and quantitative methods Ishikawa is seen as encouraging a broader understanding of quality than would be achieved with a simple focus on either a single tool or a purely qualitative or quantitative approach. However the mixture of methods and the emphasis on simplicity can be criticised for ignoring the complexity and interrelationships of organisations (see Juran, 1988; Deming, 1994a).

Finally there is no overarching methodology which binds together the various strands and integrates all the different strands of his thinking. Though Quality Circles have been successful in many organisations, there have also been many failures (see Ciampa, 1992). They stand alone as a device for quality improvement rather than being seen as one part of a complete process of management leading towards quality improvement. Taken in isolation, Quality Circles seem doomed to failure since the changes in management attitudes and the development of a common language and a common set of problem solving tools have not been developed to go with them. However they have been used as a key facilitator to the implementation of various quality management initiatives (see Dwyer and Keating, 2001).

1.3.6: John S. Oakland (1989, 1994, 1996)

1.3.6.1: Philosophy

Oakland is acknowledged as the European guru. The characteristics of his work draw heavily on the work of the gurus that have gone before him. His concepts of 'monitoring' and 'eliminating causes of quality problems' are very similar to Deming's belief of eliminating variance. Highlighting quality problems as being interdepartmental is similar to Ishikawa's notion of quality being a 'company wide' phenomenon. He coined the phrase Total Quality Management (TQM) as a way of managing. The assertion the 'quality must be managed' is very similar to Juran's suggestion that quality must be planned, as well as Feigenbaum and Crosby's emphasis on the responsibility which senior management have for quality. He claims that the reputation enjoyed by an organisation is built by quality, reliability, delivery and price (see Oakland, 1989:10). Reputations for poor quality last for a long time, and the management of quality can be learned and used to improve reputation (Oakland and Porter, 1994).

Oakland sees quality as being a cornerstone of organisational requirements. Quality is seen as the most important of competitive weapons. In the 2nd edition of his book, *Total Quality Management* he comments:

'We cannot avoid seeing how quality has developed into the most important competitive weapon, and many organisations have realised that TQM is the way of managing for the future'.

Based on Oakland, (1989), Zairi (1996), Beckford (1998), and Bank (2000) one may conclude that (TQM) is an organisation wide and fundamental requirement, driven by top management commitment and created through reliable, consistent organisational processes.

Oakland, (1989; 1994) and Oakland cited in Beckford 1998, outlines seven key characteristics of TQM. He is the first of the gurus to actually use the term TQM. The characteristics are:

Quality is meeting the customers' requirements.

Most quality problems are inter-departmental.

Quality control is monitoring, finding and eliminating causes of quality problems.

Quality assurance rests on prevention, management systems, effective audit and review.

Quality must be managed, it does not just happen..

Focus on prevention not cure.

Reliability is an extension of quality and enables us to 'delight the customer'.

1.3.6.2: Assumptions

It is possible to extract a number of assumptions underpinning Oakland's work. For Oakland, quality is seen as the key issue for organisational survival. Secondly, he assumes that quality is driven from the top down. This assumption is in line with the assumptions of the other gurus. Thirdly, he assumes that errors can always be prevented, through planning, design and effective processes. Perhaps this is true, but there is a need for a change in the mindset of employees. While the process operation can be designed to operate in an error free way, the actual minute-by-minute delivery of service depends on the personal interaction between customer and supplier. People have a key role to play in determining whether or not quality is the successful outcome of input and processes. This highlights a systematic approach to quality

management. This assumes the involvement of all people through communication, teamwork and participation, which requires a change in culture.

1.3.6.3: Methods

Oakland draws on the many well-established methods, tools, and techniques for achieving quality. Like Feigenbaum and Ishikawa before him he relaxes considerably on statistical methods as being the only way of achieving quality. Oakland focuses on the total process of achieving a TQM organisation without relying inordinately on either qualitative or quantitative methods (Beckford, 1998:127). There is a definite leaning towards the qualitative methods. This is clear from his list of ten points for senior management. These points are:

Point 1 – Long-term commitment;

Point 2 – Change the culture to ‘right first time’;

Point 3 – Train the people to understand the ‘customer – supplier relationship’;

Point 4 – Buy products and services on total cost;

Point 5 – Recognise that systems improvement must be managed;

Point 6 – Adopt modern methods of supervision and training and eliminate fear;

Point 7 – Eliminate barriers, manage processes, improve communications and teamwork;

Point 8 – Eliminate, arbitrary goal, standards based only on numbers, barriers to pride of workmanship, fiction;

Point 9 – Constantly educate and retrain the in house experts;

Point 10 – Utilise a systematic approach to TQM implementation.

It is clear from the above that Oakland relies heavily on absolute management commitment and leadership of the quality process supported by a wide selection of tools and techniques.

1.3.6.4: Critique

Many of Oakland’s concepts draw on the well-developed ideas of the previous gurus. Oakland is clearly concerned about management commitment and a systematic/

methodical approach to achieving quality. There is an explicit statement about embracing the process view of the organisation. Also, Oakland goes a step further than Ishikawa's quality circles to highlight the validity of teams to achieving quality. Probably the most positive feature of Oakland's work is generality which means it can be utilised in both a service and manufacturing context.

1.3.7: Summary

There are similarities and differences between the contributions of the gurus. Each standpoint has evolved from the different backgrounds, knowledge and experiences of the various writers. Each is based on the particular guru's point of view of the world and is valid from his theoretical and practical perspective. One can also relate to the philosophy of each guru when one examines the national context in which each guru has developed his theories. Deming is a case in point. His concepts were initially concerned with statistics and the reduction variation while in America (see Deming, 1939 and compare with Deming 1986, 1994a). However when he went to Japan he married these concepts with methods and values espoused by Ishikawa (1986). There is a clear evolution of emphasis with respect to the quality concept from a technical orientation concerned with reducing variation in processes to managing an organisation through methods such as quality circles. This is evident from the chronological order with respect to the major writings of the gurus.

1.4: Tools and Techniques

The writings of the guru literature stretch from the early 1930's to the mid 1990's. Over this time, the quality concept has gone through a metamorphosis from the early writings of Shewart and Deming (1939) and Juran (1951) who were very much concerned with solving the quality problem through quantitative statistical methods to Feigenbaum (1971), Crosby (1979), Ishikawa (1985) and Oakland (1989, 1994) who believed quantification was important but it needed to be tempered with methods that acknowledge organisational factors. Deming also came to this realisation in the mid-1980's. The fluidity of the concept of quality has spawned an array of tools and techniques developed over the course of generations for the specific needs of that

generation by the gurus. These tools and techniques have remained in use in industry today. They are still used to achieve quality in many modern day organisations in a variety of industry settings (see Dwyer and Keating 2001; Dwyer, 2001). Like the guru literature, these tools and techniques fall under a classification of quantitative and qualitative methods, which are used in the pursuit of quality and have provided the basis for two schools of thought in the quality management literature.

1.4.1: Quantitative Tools

When quality first appeared in the management literature it was a hard-rational technical concept. Shewart and Deming (1939) did not define quality but they believed it was something, which could be achieved by understanding a system through monitoring and controlling variation. It was Juran's (see Juran, 1951) contribution of a definition of a quality product as one, which is fit for use and Feigenbaum's (see Feigenbaum, 1971) attachment of the price cost relationship that enabled organisations to use the tools and techniques of Shewart and Deming (1939) to work towards a product, which they could call a quality product. The quantitative tools and techniques provided the rationale for Crosby's (see Crosby, 1979) definition of a quality product as conformance to requirement. This meant that by defining the requirements of a product one could achieve a zero-defect product and hence quality. Clearly the methods were most suitable for the manufacturing industry, which was the most prominent industry when the quantitative tools and techniques were being developed.

This section introduces the essence of quantitative tools, which are used in pursuit of quality from a technical process orientation. The emphasis is on reducing variation and specification of acceptable error have clear similarities to the work of Shewart, Deming, Juran and Crosby. It relies on three pillars:

1.4.2: A Predefined Process

Defining a process in an established manufacturing environment is a straightforward activity as the process is largely defined by the flow of manufacturing. In a service environment it is often difficult since processes are not recognised as such, their

elements being linked across separate functional areas. Once a process has been defined it can be analysed. Of particular concern in the quality management context is the recognition of where error or failure does or may occur in the process (see Deming, 1986; Feigenbaum, 1993). This enables a focus to be maintained on those aspects of the process which are most in need of improvement or redevelopment (see Chambers, Piggot and Coleman, 2001). It also provides cues for key measurement points at which SPC techniques may be most usefully applied (see Shewart, 1931; Shewart and Deming, 1939).

1.4.3: An established measurement system

Construction of a measurement system consists of deciding what should be measured and where, developing a recording and reporting system and, to be effective, taking action on the results. Decisions about the measurement system should be relatively straightforward once the process chart is constructed and enables the construction of control charts much favoured by Deming, Juran and Taguchi (see Deming, 1986, Juran 1988, Taguchi, 1986). The platform for measurement is regular calculation and recording of standards achieved to establish a pattern of system behaviour over time. Plotting the performance of measurements enables the calculation of control limits based on the actual performance of the process. Variations fall within these limits (see Oakland, 2000). Overtime the objective is to eradicate causes of variation outside the limits of what Deming calls 'special causes'. Once these cause have been identified it is the responsibility of management to make the necessary changes. Consistent and continuous effort is required to maintain the system in a stable state and reduce variation.

1.4.4: Operational (practical) definitions

Operational definitions are specifications for a product or service, which include the acceptable limits of variation and the criteria against which they may be measured. Specifications are important as they provide the targets towards where the process should be orientated. To have a process which is in statistical control but producing parts which do not meet the specifications, is useless (see Alwan and Roberts, 1995).

1.4.5: Benchmarking

A further prominent quantitative tool has been benchmarking. Though it was developed in the mid 1990s it has a clear link to much of what Shewart and Deming (1939), Juran (1951) and Crosby (1979) were implying but not explicating in their major publications. Benchmarking is a process of comparison between the performance characteristics of separate, often competing, organisations and is intended to enable each participant to improve its own performance in the marketplace (based on Camp, 1995; Karlof, 1995). The objectives of benchmarking are first to obtain a clearer understanding of process and customers, which will lead to reduced complaints and higher levels of customer satisfaction. Discovering process improvement will assist in reducing the costs associated with rework, rectification, waste and other quality problems (see Zairi, 1992; Watson, 1992). Benchmarking will also enable innovations to spread more rapidly through an industry and across industries where appropriate. Based on an analysis of the literature (Camp, 1995; Karlof, 1995; Fisher, 1996; Keegan, 1997), the following represents the five principle steps involved in benchmarking:

1. Identifying what characteristics to benchmark
2. Identifying benchmarking partners;
3. Designing the data gathering methodology;
4. Selecting analytical tools;
5. Implementing changes.

Based on an analysis of the literature (see Zairi, 1992; Watson, 1992; Camp, 1995; Fisher 1996), two major limitations on performance improvement can be usefully addressed through benchmarking. First is the limitation to knowledge, which so often affects organisational performance (see Nonaka, 1994). The experience and knowledge that most people have of a process or product is gathered in a particular environment. Unless they have the opportunity of advanced training or some form of collaboration, they are largely closed off from developments which could improve their process. Thus they become satisfied with the way things are because they know

no different. Secondly, benchmarking helps to overcome what Argyris (1992) refers to as organisational defence mechanisms. If the employees who will be affected by a change are involved in its design through the benchmarking programme then they will be much less likely to resist the change and more likely to develop unique aspects which will make it work in their particular organisations.

1.4.6: Qualitative Tools

Though quantitative methods pioneered vast improvements with respect to quality in industrial processes, the subsequent emergence of qualitative tools proves the fluidity of the quality concept as well as the need to balance quantitative methods with qualitative methods. It is here that Feigenbaum (1971; 1983) stands out on his own among the gurus. It was he who first realised that quantitative methods are key to business improvement but there is a need for them to be balanced with methods that facilitate their use in the entire organisation. This was the assertion of his 'Total Quality System' idea. However it was Crosby's (1979) development of the quality vaccine, Ishikawa's (1985) development of Fishbone diagrams and the simplification of statistical methods for shop-floor employees, which enabled the quality concept to evolve into a general strategy for change management in modern business organisations. The work of Oakland (1994; 1996) has been a facilitator in bringing such ways of improving business to a European context. The principles of the qualitative tools revolve around notions of teamwork, participation, involvement and empowerment.

1.4.7: Teamwork and Quality Circles

An examination of any quality management literature illustrates teams to be a core component of any quality management initiative (e.g. Ishikawa, 1985; Deming, 1994a). At the top and bottom of the organisation and in every function and department in between teamwork is necessary. Teamwork enables various parts of the organisation to work together in meeting customer needs that can seldom be fulfilled by employees limited to one speciality (see Adams, 1990; Collins, 1996; Pastor, 1996). The philosophy of quality management initiatives recognise the interdependence of various parts of the organisation and uses teams in a way to

coordinate work. The following are typical of the teams, which are used under the auspices of a quality management initiative:

Steering Committees - This is the executive team responsible for guiding the implementation and evolution of quality management as a change strategy throughout the organisation.

Problem-Solving Teams - These teams work to improve quality by identifying and solving specific quality-related problems facing the organisation. The two main types are Departmental teams and Cross-functional teams.

Self-Managed Teams - These teams would replace rather than compliment the traditional work organisation. In place of a first level supervisor and a set of employees with narrowly defined jobs is a set of associates with broad responsibilities, including the responsibility to manage themselves (based on Dwyer, 2001).

Teamwork needs to be developed if quality management initiatives are to be effective (see Ishikawa, 1985; Ciampa, 1992; Mak, 2000). The steering committee needs to be the driving force behind any quality management initiative as they are the senior management component of any quality management initiative. Only by uniting under the auspices of a steering committee is it possible for senior management to unite leadership with a view to removing barriers to implementation (see Ishikawa, 1985; Oakland, 1989). They must define the process and engage the other teams in this process definition. It is crucial that the steering committee bases its decisions on the output from the various tools and techniques.

1.4.8: Empowerment

Empowerment is a natural extension of employee involvement concepts such as worker participation and has become regarded as a critical success factor for any quality management initiative (see Hales, 2000). It represents a high degree of involvement in which employees make decisions themselves and are responsible for

their outcomes. For empowerment to occur, management must undertake two major initiatives (Kochan and Rubinstein, 2000). They are:

to identify and change organisational conditions that make people powerless.

to increase people's confidence that their efforts to accomplish something important will be successful.

Empowerment is an application of the teamwork principle of total embodying 'vertical' teamwork between managerial and nonmanagerial personnel (see Ishikawa, 1985). There is a need to empower the workforce in order for quality to succeed. For example, Juran (1993:4) wrote, 'ideally, quality control should be delegated to the workforce to the maximum extent possible. This means that employees must know their units goals and their actual performance and have a means for changing performance if the goals are not met.'

Although empowerment is relevant for all aspects of organisational performance, it plays a special role in quality improvement. Quality requires people to make real changes in the way work is done and relies upon in-depth understanding of the current system (Olian and Rynes, 1991; Jablonski, 1992). Only employees involved in the system day-to-day possess such an understanding, which is why employee empowerment is an integral part of achieving quality in organisations (see Deming, 1994a).

1.5: Conclusion: Towards a definition of quality management?

Juran's (see Juran 1951, 1964, 1974, 1988, 1993) concept of quality as meaning 'fitness for use' coupled with Feigenbaum's (see Feigenbaum 1971, 1983, 1996) incorporation of customer use and selling price for products and Crosby's (see Crosby 1979, 1996) idea that products must conform to a set of requirements, capture succinctly the meaning of quality management. The history of the quality concept shows it shifting from its origin in a narrowly defined set of technical interventions as

developed by Shewart and Deming (see Shewart and Deming, 1939), into a general strategy for engaging all organisational stakeholders in process with a view to achieving continuous improvement. This brings a paradox into focus. The gurus have very clear definitions and methods of achieving quality, however an array of tools and techniques and quality management initiatives have emerged which prove that their clear definitions and tools and techniques are not as straightforward as the gurus themselves may have first believed. One may deduce from an analysis of the guru writing and their associated tools and techniques, that the concept of quality in an industrial setting had nothing to do with the vast array of quality management initiatives which today masquerade as strategies for transformational change. For example when asked about the future of TQM, Deming replied, 'There is no such a thing! It is a buzzword. I have never used the term as it carries no meaning' (Romano, 1994:22). Deming as cited in Senge (1992) claimed that TQM, is an example of one such initiative that is a vacuous term and mere hype that perverts his work.

It seems the quality concept was a response to the need to offer products and services, the characteristics and attributes of which corresponded to what customers had been promised (Giroux & Landry, 1998). This was the underlying principle for which the gurus advocated the promotion of company wide quality as the only means to improving product quality. The possibility of reducing production costs by reducing rejects and reworking due to poor quality was an incentive, a happy consequence or almost a bonus that occurred in concert with an improvement of quality. However, as industry has evolved, the role the qualitative tools and techniques have emerged as facilitators for broadening the concept of quality to such an extent it is now at the heart of many change management initiatives.

CHAPTER TWO

The Legacy of the Gurus

2.0 Introduction

Chapter one highlighted the evolution of the quality concept based on the major writings of the gurus. Quality is a concept which is in a constant state of flux. One can observe a transition from the management of quality (Shewart, 1931; Shewart and Deming, 1939; Juran, 1951) to management by quality (Feigenbaum, 1971; Crosby, 1979; Ishikawa, 1985; Oakland, 1989). The writings of the gurus have left a legacy. Since the 1930s, good quality management systems have been designed and developed using the qualitative and quantitative methods of the gurus. However, in the latter half of the last decade, the quality concept as a result of associated initiatives, is increasingly being labelled a fad, hype and/or rhetoric.

The concept of quality has been broadened to the extent that authors have linked it with notions such as 'the high commitment organisation' (Lawler, 1986); the 'HRM organisation' (Sisson, 1994); 'the high performance work organisation' (Brown, Reich and Stern, 1993); the 'excellent company' (Peters and Waterman, 1982) and the 'World Class Company' (Schonberger, 1986). This has resulted in the quality management initiatives increasingly coming under attack, being labelled mere hype and rhetoric. Such hype has resulted in much criticism for the quality concept and associated initiatives, particularly from critical theorists in the UK. This chapter will introduce and distil the essence of various quality management initiatives to get beyond much of the hype that surrounds them to see if they have any content. The barriers to achieving quality with the quality management initiatives will be documented as will the schools of thought which have emerged as classifications for the various quality management initiatives. The chapter concludes with an examination of research surrounding the quality concept in an Irish context as a lead into the investigative focus of the project.

2.1: The Legacy of the Gurus: The Quality Management Initiative

According to Tuckman (1994), the central feature of many quality management initiatives is the idea of culture change grafted onto earlier quality management theory and practices. In the new age economy, quality management initiatives (i.e. Business

Excellence, ISO 9000, SerQual, Balanced Scorecard, Total Quality Management) have become products to be sold, borne by the popularity of the concepts of competitiveness and excellence. The quality concept is continuing to become more elastic, just as it did from the initial writings of Shewart and Deming (1939) through to Oakland (1996). The emergence of various quality management initiatives highlights the controversy and difficulty surrounding the quality movement. Quality management initiatives are the concepts, which management have used to introduce quality into their organisations. An extensive literature review paints a picture of quality management initiatives as having a broad application, being based on a general philosophy for involving employees in the pursuit of quality objectives as outlined by the gurus (see Dwyer and Keating, 2001). Quality management initiatives in recent years have begun to place a greater significance on techniques for achieving an increase in employee commitment and the development of high trust relationships (see Mak, 2000; Simmons, Shadur and Preston, 1995; Snape, Wilkinson, Marchington and Redman, 1995; Rees, 1995; Storey, 1994; Bowen and Lawler; 1992). The non-tangible and cultural elements of quality management initiatives seem to have become the keystone to strategic change, with the operational techniques and group problem-solving forums being the method for gaining employee involvement (Dawson cited in Storey, 1994:105).

The problem of defining a strategy for the development, implementation and the sustaining of quality management initiatives stems from the development of such initiatives as a general philosophy of change. Certainly many quality management initiatives have roots in the principles of quality management as espoused by the gurus. However they have come to encompass a broader and more strategically orientated change management model aimed at revising existing organisational attitudes and belief systems. This cultural dimension of quality management initiatives is often heralded as the 'unquantifiable heart' of modern quality programmes and as of yet has proved very difficult to delineate and define. Nevertheless, observation in organisational settings, coupled with a focus on a range of quality management initiatives and commentaries on such initiatives, suggests there are a number of common characteristics which tend to be present in discussions and debates on quality management initiatives. These will serve as a useful starting point for explaining the core principles of quality management initiatives. The

following is a distillation of practices based on the key literature surrounding Business Excellence, ISO 9000, Service Quality (SerQual), Balanced Scorecard and Total Quality Management (TQM). The following table contains the central tenets of each initiative from which the author's discussion of the distillation evolves and follows.

Table 2.1: Analysis of Quality Initiatives

Quality Initiative	Authors	Central Tenets
Business Excellence (see Appendix 1)	European Foundation for Quality Management (1999)	Non-prescriptive framework based on nine criteria. Model based on nine criteria. Five of these are 'Enablers' and four are 'Result'.
ISO 9000 (see Appendix 2)	International Standards Organisation (2000)	Prescriptive standards based on worldwide research across all industry types on what constitutes quality and a quality management system.
SerQual (see Appendix 3)	Parasuraman, Zeithemal, Berry (1988)	A satisfaction model for organisations to assess their standards of quality with respect to service based on Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Empathy.
Balanced Scorecard (see Appendix 4)	Kaplan and Norton, (1996)	Prescriptive, strategic, measurement based management system providing a method of aligning and balancing business activities to strategy and monitoring performance of strategic goals overtime.
Total Quality Management (see Appendix 5)	Oakland, (1989)	Management and control activities based on leadership of management and involvement of all employees focusing on customer satisfaction.

Based on a review of the literature (see Appendices), the following will distil the essence of quality management initiatives under six headings, to assist in gaining insights and meaning to what have been frequently referred to as 'diffuse fads' (see Zbaracki, 1998; Wilkinson and Willmott, 1995).

2.1.1: Emphasis on continuous improvement or incrementalism

The aim of the above mentioned initiatives is to institutionalise a system of continuous process improvement. This is based on a practice called *kaizen*. The word comes from two Japanese words: *kai*, meaning change and *zen*, meaning 'good (for the better)'. Hence *kaizen* means continuous improvement as applied to companies means a system of taking small steps to improve the work place (Dean and Evans, 1994: 80). This can be deemed the appropriate culture necessary to foster quality. This culture is applied organization wide, throughout all activities and functions, and manifested in a fundamental and shared belief in customer satisfaction (Huq and Martin, 2000: 81). The principle of ongoing change in process operations is established as normal operating practice. Minor developments and changes in process operations are no longer viewed as a threat to established working relationships, but rather become an employee expectation and form part of a new routinised way of working based on incremental change and process numerical improvement. As a result there is gradual unending improvement for achieving ever higher standards in meeting changing customer and market requirements (Walker, 1993:36).

2.1.2: Need for application of appropriate quality control techniques

Statistical methods are used to support the objective of continuous process improvement. Techniques such as the Plan, Do, Check, Act Cycle are used to collect quantitative data (see Stuart, Mullins and Drew, 1995; Alsup and Watson, 1993). This data is then recorded in comprehensive log sheets and charts are used to monitor processes. Traditionally quality control was the responsibility of the quality inspector. The quality management system under the auspices of the chosen quality management initiative will supply management with the tools and techniques which identify and eliminate problems at their source.

2.1.3: Use of group problem solving techniques to process operations

The aim is to maximise the number of suggestions through encouraging the participation of all members (see Ishikawa, 1985). Brainstorming is a common tool used during the initial stage of identifying organisational processes which are generating variation in the system, thus negatively affecting organisational performance. The aim is to maximize the number of suggestions through encouraging

the participation of all members and ensuring that no evaluations are made about which process should be the focus of the group's attention (Oakland and Porter, 1993). Following this the team may identify few important items and act accordingly. Flow charts may then be used to increase the groups understanding of the processes in question. They are mainly used to break down problems into smaller parts and simplify complex structures and inter-relationships (Kaplan and Norton, 1996). The next step involves measuring the process through collecting various data, which can be represented, on simple charts and histograms (see Shewart, 1931). The group may then decide to run a further brainstorming session to identify the range of problems generated by the data.

2.1.4: Focus on 'internal' and 'external' customer-supplier relations

A common theme in the quality management literature should have an internal customer and under the philosophy of continuous improvement, should aim to meet the requirements and expectations of that customer. In order to meet customer needs it is first necessary to clarify what those needs are and this requires open and regular communication between the various customer and supplier groups (see Juran, 1964; 1974; 1996). This encourages intra-organisational communication. The external customer – those who buy the products and / or services of the organisation provide the revenue necessary for the organisation to survive are deemed to be amongst the most important stakeholder in all organisations (Aune, 1998). Quality management is the philosophy which can motivate internal customers to work together to achieve excellence based on conformance to requirements and zero defect work or endeavour to eliminate variation from processes. Such endeavours force internal customers to liaise with each other articulating what the needs and wants of the external customer are. Hence quality management initiatives have the latent power to unify strategy across the organisation.

2.1.5: Building of high-trust relationships and development of non-adversarial systems of Industrial Relations

Through the development of stronger internal relationships and the implementation of policies which seek to devolve greater decision-making to operative groups, quality management initiatives aim to create and sustain high trust relationships and employee co-operation on the shop-floor (Glover and Fitzgerald-Moore cited in

Mabey et al., 1998). The communication process is the central means to building trust between senior management, middle management and other employees within the organisation. The objective is to bring about a shift in attitudes and remodel the traditional adversarial system of industrial relations through a more open and participative management approach which actively seeks and places a premium on knowledge and experience of employees. This means the change is initiated through teams and supported by management rather than being imposed by management on the workforce.

2.1.6: New organisational arrangements

Organisations operating under the management philosophy of a quality management initiative would normally have introduced new organisational arrangements to accommodate such a change (Oakland and Sohal, 1996). Typically there would be a steering committee formed by the Board of Directors in the organisation who would set policies and quality programme objectives, recommend and approve quality groups, monitor and evaluate progress and ensure that the quality management initiative fitted with the overall strategic direction of the company (EFQM, 1999).

2.1.7: Summary

Based on the work of Dervitsiotis (1998:117), one may conclude that there is much similarity between quality management initiatives.

- All aim to create a new culture in organisations that recognise the need to transform themselves.
- All strive to have organisations develop their human resources, as individuals and in groups, to the fullest extent possible.
- All focus on satisfying the genuine needs and expectations of all stakeholders.
- All insist on formulating and solving problems with information based on facts.
- All emphasise the long-term view rather than looking for a quick fix.
- All draw on vast reservoirs of knowledge from different scientific fields.

Empirical research based on case study evidence on the development of a quality management initiative in a hospital proves that it is possible to distil a meaning with respect to quality management initiatives in a real world context. The following table

is based on the work of Huq and Martin (2000). Based on the authors semi-structured interviews the model is deemed a useful tool to quantify the essence of quality as described in chapter one. Table 2.2 highlights the practices, which would fall under the auspices of quality management initiative activities and identifies changes, which would prove that a quality management initiative is 'alive' in the organisation.

Table 2.2: Descriptor/ Identifiers of Quality

Dimension Label	Descriptors/Identifiers
Familiarity with quality	Dissemination of quality knowledge through formal training programmes, intra- and interdepartmental communications and commitment to quality as reflected in its strategic plans.
Measures of costs of quality	Measurement of prevention, appraisal, internal failure, and external failure costs. Not a workforce cultural variable on the surface, but knowledge of the costs can influence employee behaviour towards the care process.
Worker empowerment	Use of employee suggestion systems to creation of self-managing teams by entrusting (responsibility and accountability), enabling (ownership of process), and encouraging (skill and motivation) of the employees.
Performance appraisal system	Team based/results oriented performance appraisal system as opposed to individual-based/activity-oriented appraisal system.
Commitment to continual improvement	Separation and study of common (system defects) and special (employee-induced) causes of quality variation and commitment to improve quality as indicated by application of various quality improvement tools.
Problem-solving approach	Use of team approach that goes through idea generation, alternative evaluation, and consensus building.
Activities to remove barriers for reaching consensus	Process focus where activities are organized around information flow, and teams use list reduction, pro/con charts, criteria rating forms, weighted voting, nominal group techniques, etc., to arrive at consensus decisions.
Education and Training	Training programs for various levels of employees in areas of interpersonal skills, problem-solving tools, statistical quality control, and general quality management concepts.

Source: Adapted from Huq and Martin, 2000

Based on an analysis of the literature coupled with a case study approach of organisations, one learns that it is possible to distil the essence of quality management initiatives. It is clear that quality management initiatives urge organisations to move away from supervisory approaches to quality control, where all employees, from top management to the shop or office floor, are committed to continuous improvement as an integral part of their daily work (Dwyer and Keating, 2001; Oakland and Sohal, 1996). However, there has been a body of critical research which has been vehement

in its attack on quality management initiatives because it has become such a diffuse concept. The following will document this criticism.

2.2: The Critical Theorists

The critical theorists (see Wilkinson, 1996; Wilkinson and Ackers, 1995; Wilkinson and Willmott, 1995; Wilkinson 1995a; 1995b; 1994; 1992; Wilkinson, Redman and Snape, 1993; Wilkinson, Allen and Snape, 1991) assert that the quality management initiatives have adopted a universalistic approach to management. The legacy of the gurus still transcends much of the quality management literature. The critical theorists claim the literature on quality management initiatives espouses the virtues of a general strategy for change, without questioning if that change is the best thing for the organisation. They also argue that quality management initiatives result in increasing subordination of employees in return for little or no extra reward. They view quality management initiatives as the latest in a long line of work intensification techniques, albeit a more sophisticated one than traditional Taylorism (Boyd and Bain, 1998; Sewell and Wilkinson, 1992; Mc Ardle, Rowlinson, Proctor, Hassard and Forrester 1995; Tuckman, 1994).

This group of theorists sceptically casts doubt upon the promise of quality management to expand employee autonomy, facilitate teamwork and promote participation. The contention is that the benefits of quality management initiatives must be balanced against their contribution to the undermining of collective efforts to improve the opportunities, terms and conditions of groups of employees, such as ethnic minorities, women and / or union members. Quality management initiatives degrade the meaning of 'involvement' to the acceptance and resigned pursuit of managerial priorities, representing the politics of employment relations as an impersonal imperative of the market (see Legge, 1995)

Furthermore, these writers assert that it cannot be assumed the workforce will necessarily welcome a quality management initiative especially since the development of quality management initiatives are drawn from the guru perspective of people which pay scant regard to the needs of people. What quality management

writers see as an issue of motivation and training may come up against problems of demarcation and job controls. What quality management writers see as an unambiguously positive impact on employees may be seen by others as increasing pressure on employees by getting them to take on more responsibility (Wilkinson, 1991). Wilkinson stresses that much has to do with the corporate culture of the organisation: 'if quality management is to be fully implemented then it requires considerable re-evaluation of existing personnel policies. This includes doing away output related pay systems and placing greater emphasis on personal development and training and removing divisive barriers within the company' (Wilkinson, 1992:326). If organisations emphasise the soft side of quality management with devolved structures and high discretion to operatives this requires much in the way of human relation skills in addition to quality techniques.

It has been suggested that the literature on quality management initiatives is distinguished by a normative thrust (Kerfoot and Knights cited in Wilkinson and Willmott, 1995:221). The critical theorists believe many questions and issues require further examination. Do advocates of quality management initiatives who emphasise the importance of employee involvement or urge respect for humanity regard such values and priorities as unassailable virtues, or are they viewed principally as a means of raising productivity? Do quality initiatives enable employees to develop a collective sense of purpose and identity at work, or do they act to intensify work and tie employees more closely to objectives that are defined by others? These theorists believe that such questions are either not examined or are cursorily treated within the quality literature. Dale and Cooper (1992), posit that all genuine aspirations to improve quality are known to be moving in the same direction. However, there is little attempt to specify what counts as 'genuine', or why the 'direction' of the movement is to be welcomed.

From this overview we can conclude that quality management initiatives are particularly relevant to those with an interest in the management of people. This is also highlighted in chapter one where the gurus acknowledge the importance of people in achieving quality but offer little by way of insights on how various quality management initiatives may impact on work life (see Dwyer and Keating, 2001; Hughes, Williams and Ryall, 2000; Huczynski, 1993). This author believes the

arguments of the critical theorists with respect to quality management initiatives to be questionable. Having conducted a grounded enquiry and written five case studies it is clear to this author that in a selection of organisations, the quality concept had a meaning and reality within specific organisations. It was also found that people were enthusiastic about quality management initiatives where a conscious effort was made to engage them in the process of change. Furthermore there is a trend of evolution in the guru literature showing quality management and associated initiatives to have evolved to encompass organisational issues. The guru literature has been prominent in quality management theory and practice over a lengthy timeframe suggesting that the tools and concepts are robust. The critical theorists contribute little in terms of how to answer the questions which they raise. However, their assertions are compelling in that they bring into focus many of the barriers which practitioners may come up against with respect to implementing quality management initiatives. The next section will consider these barriers.

2.3: Barriers to Quality

Despite promising much by way of improvement in business performance there are barriers to achieving quality which were over looked by much of the early guru literature. Regardless of which initiative an organisation embarks on to achieve quality, there are any numbers of barriers which management face. Based on a survey of the literature, this section groups the barriers under four main headings as alluded to by Crosby, (1996); Ishikawa, (1985); Bendell, (1989); Deming, (1994a); Storey, (1994); Beckford, (1998); Bank, (2000); Dwyer, (2001). The four headings are:

- Systems and procedures
- Organisation design
- Culture
- Management Perspectives and Political Barriers

2.3.1: Systems and Procedures

To achieve business improvement under the auspices of quality management initiatives will require organisations to change in a systematic manner (Deming, 1994a). In many instances the introduction of a quality management initiative is a result of the organisation being closed to changes in its environment. In such an organisation, life is often routinised with the precision demanded of clockwork (based on Burns and Stalker, 1962). People are frequently expected to arrive at work at a given time, perform a predetermined set of activities, rest at appointed hours, and then resume their task until work is over. Such organisations are deemed to be bureaucratic and operate in a way, which is deemed to be routinised, efficient, reliable and predictable (Morgan, 1997:13).

One of the major challenges for many modern organisations is to replace such a model. Very often the closed, mechanistic bureaucracy was developed in an era when such a model was appropriate. However the modern day economy demands that organisations become an open system. Morgan in 1997 commented:

‘As we enter the 21st century we find bureaucracies and other modes of mechanistic organisation coming under increasing attack because of their rigidities and other dysfunctional consequences. The total quality movement (TQM) with its emphasis on flexible, team-based organisation that came into prominence in the 1980s and 1990s signalled an early response to these problems and the need to find other non-mechanical ways of organising. From a historical perspective, the mechanistic approach to organisation belongs to the mechanical age’ (p.31).

The problem arises when such systems and procedures become ‘frozen’ into the organisation such that pressure for change and adaptation encounters high resistance (see Lewin, 1947; Argyris, 1992). In an economy where information and technology are becoming increasingly important there is a need for organisations to become more systematically open. The idea is that organisations become more concerned with more general issues of survival, organisation-environment relations, and organisational

effectiveness. However, systems that have existed since the organisation's establishment are not easily transformed. Over time people will build up loyalty to their function in the hierarchy and not wish to embrace the concepts of loyalty to the process and teamwork which a quality management initiative advocates as necessary in the pursuit of quality (based on Argyris and Schon, 1978). Most companies today are under severe pressure to proceed with needed organisation transformation in order to cope with increasing rates of environmental change and turbulence.

2.3.2: Organisation Design

The literature illustrates a number of barriers to quality in this area. The first and most frequent is what Beckford (1998:26) refers to as 'institutionalised' conflict. This is where an organisation has been designed in such a way that conflict between quality and some other characteristic is inherent. In such a situation quality is subordinate to some other function. As a result quality will be sacrificed depending on the demands of the function to which quality is subordinate (see Crosby, 1979; Deming, 1986; for examples of such phenomena). A structure must be created where the quality function is respected in its own right. This should mean that quality is inherent in the product, the process and, the culture. This leads to a situation where rather than rejects and errors being inspected out, quality can be built into the product (Flood, 1993:210). If one is to take the views of Feigenbaum (1971), Ishikawa (1985), and Oakland (1996) that quality creates a common goal for individuals who strive for social interaction and acceptance, then our organisational structure will be very different. It will allow employees to coordinate their activities for the common good without organisational impediments (Grant, Shani & Krishnan, 1994:32). This implies that companies must reconceptualise their structures. This means moving to a 'shamrock organisation' as spoken about by Handy (1990), or Mintzberg's 'adhocracy' (Mintzberg, 1978) or the 'organic' structure as described by Burns and Stalker (1961).

2.3.3: Culture

The move towards a quality organisation goes hand in hand with culture change in an organisation. Deming (1986) spoke of 'transformation' of activities before implementing a quality initiative. Feigenbaum's (1971) notion of Total Quality

Systems implies quality as being a company wide philosophy, while Ishikawa's idea of quality circles implies a new way of working while Crosby's (1979) 'zero defect' philosophy and Oakland's (1996) emphasis on the need for work to be done 'right first time' stresses the need for a new mindset. All of the above fall under the umbrella of culture in an organisation. Schein (1999) has defined culture as:

a set of behavioural and attitudinal norms, to which most or all members of an organisation subscribe, either consciously or unconsciously, and which exert a strong influence on the way people resolve problems, make decisions and carry out their everyday tasks (pg.15).

This implies that culture is the values, attitudes, norms and underlying assumptions that govern organisations. Embracing a quality management initiative will mean embracing a whole new organisational culture. Quality management initiatives will pose change in the pervasive culture of the organisation and in the operating climate that culture instils in its employees. Entrenched norms of behaviour are some of the most difficult aspects of an organisation to change (see Schein and Bennis, 1965). Where achievement of quality has previously not been considered important in comparison to the achievement of some other target, it requires considerable determination and effort to change the established values (see Ciampa, 1992). This presents a barrier to quality. The interests of particular groups must become aligned with, or subordinated to, the interests of the organisation in pursuing quality. It is the acknowledgment of these difficulties by the gurus in their later publications of the gurus which leads them to the assertion that senior management must be responsible for any quality initiative.

Quality achievement will require values, attitudes and norms, which embrace the concept of continuous improvement, which means that a certain level of innovation is required. This will call for a new type of culture, which tries to 'drive out fear' that Deming (1982:107) believes exists in many organisations. Argyris (1998) points out that very often it is the errors, which people are afraid of making which represent opportunities for learning and are the basis for modifying a process or system to inhibit or prevent future occurrences (also see Cole, 1999). However, often managers will seek to blame rather than take responsibility for their own mismanagement. It is

the conservatism that has built up in the organisation system and a bureaucratic, hierarchical structure, which give rise to a functional culture whereby people can hide behind defence routines at the expense of quality (based on Argyris, 1998; Schein and Bennis, 1965).

2.3.4: Management Perspectives and Political Barriers

In order for an appropriate attitude to be developed towards quality, the concept must be recognised as a case for concern. Most changes in organisations have a social component because change usually involves people. Management must become cognizant and accordingly plan for the social challenges that will arise from proposed change initiatives.

There is a need to develop a 'quality culture' (Dale and Cooper, 1992; Hill, 1991). However before this can happen there is a need for a fundamental reorientation of employees' attitudes towards quality. Wood and Peccei (1995) believe that before any implementation of a quality programme can take place there is a need for the development of high levels of quality consciousness. This a basic precondition for a quality management's ultimate success and a primary aim to be achieved during the early stages of most quality interventions. 'While solutions to the technical issues of designing appropriate systems and procedures are fully specified there are lacunae in the treatment of social factors' (Hill, 1991:556). Quality consciousness is defined as 'the relative strength of an individuals concern for the quality of his/her work output and the relative importance which he/she attaches to the achievement of quality as a work goal (Wood and Pecci, 1995). One may deduce of discussions from those working in the area of quality management and associated literature that quality consciousness is treated as having three main elements:

- a willingness to engage in continuous improvement;
- a strong concern and awareness of the need to satisfy (internal and external) customer requirements;
- a strong commitment to and a belief in the importance of doing quality work.

The details of how management effects changes in employee attitudes, and how it might evaluate whether a heightening of quality consciousness has really been achieved, have nevertheless been neglected in the voluminous literature on quality management. In particular we know relatively little about which aspects of quality management initiatives are most effective in engendering quality consciousness. The writings on the impact of quality management on people have mostly been impressionistic and we have little understanding of the mechanisms by which this has been brought about. This omission is important from a policy point of view because quality invariably entails the introduction of a package of new practices and initiatives such as training in quality management, quality circles and team building, which will impact upon the organisation.

Based on an analysis of quality management initiatives, the critical labour process theorists and the barriers that their debate brings into focus, this author believes that to enhance our understanding there is a need to look at quality management initiatives in terms of two schools of thought. The two schools are the hard-rational-quantitative school and the soft-normative-qualitative school.

2.4: The Two Schools of Quality Management Initiatives

As quality is an ever-evolving concept with an array of initiatives and barriers to its attainment, this author has decided it is counterproductive to try and rigidly place quality management initiatives in a particular paradigm. Exact definitions of quality and quality management initiatives are rare. This author has chosen to understand quality as a classification in terms of two schools of thought. The first is based around that which is hard, rational and quantitative. The second is based around that which is soft, normative and qualitative. The former are associated with the systematic control of work using statistical methods, while the second emphasises organisational and human aspects (Hill, and Wilkinson, 1995).

This implies that there are two versions of quality. One version of quality is of a technical construct incorporating some fairly well defined organisational interventions that have clear rules for the use and analysis of information. A second version of

quality is of a more rhetorical construct, has exploded into a broadly used, ambiguous term with unclear organisational implications save that it presumably improves an organisation (see Zbaracki, 1998 for similar type analysis). The following analysis documents two schools of thought.

2.4.1: The Hard-Rational-Quantitative School

The guiding principle of the rational school is the importance of management acting at the level of systems and processes. This school reflects the production orientation of the quality gurus. The claim is that statistical methods allow managers to make more enlightened decisions regarding not only product quality, but also the need to intervene in a given process during manufacturing. Statistical process control represented an important break with the traditional view of quality control, which until then had been limited to product inspection (Garvin, 1988).

Even today the rational school views statistical tools as a fundamental ingredient of quality management in a context of large-scale production using standardised components. However Deming (1986) did argue that statistical tools are inadequate if managers use them improperly or impractically (i.e. looking for a scapegoat or a culprit). In essence, the data on product quality and process stability are useless unless management subsequently acts to rectify the situation or if management's actions are limited to laying blame and exhorting improvement (Deming, 1982, 1986). This was in essence the message found in Deming's 14 point plan and Juran's (1951) 'Quality Road Map'. Within the rational school there is a clear emphasis on changing management practices based on quantitative methods.

Feigenbaum's concept of Total Quality Control (TQC) represented a turning point in quality management because it attributed the responsibility for finished product quality to a large number of key individuals (Feigenbaum, 1983). Ultimately, responsibility was spread over the entire company – 'Company-Wide Quality Control' – and involved not only functions directly related to product creation but also all company services involved in supplying production support and resources. Within this framework, it is no longer enough to manage the quality of finished and

unfinished products, but attention must also be paid to the quality of raw materials, worker training, equipment, etc. (Ishikawa, 1985).

To summarise, the rational school presupposes that individuals want to do a good job. If they do not the reasons are twofold: they may be hindered by the obligation to conform to methods prevailing in their workplace, or they may not possess the necessary information to manufacture good products. Within this framework, any attempt at improving quality can only succeed by means of a systematic, critical examination of existing management systems and by developing tools to gather and analyse data about the quality produced.

2.4.2: The Soft-Normative-Qualitative School

The normative school stresses the individual responsibility of employees with regard to quality and the need to correct behavioural flaws. This school emerged in the 1960s with Crosby's 'zero defect' theory arguing right first time as the only way to ensure quality and that the only measure of quality is the price of non-conformance resulting from a lack of prevention, this is what led to his slogan 'Quality is free'. Crosby's solution to non-conformance consisted of involving individuals and refusing to accept that 'to err is human' (Crosby 1979). This school initially received very little attention.

In 1974, Juran argued that Crosby's perspective was based on spectacular examples in which human error was the cause of a catastrophe and that these examples were not representative of poor quality encountered by managers. Juran believed that the arguments put forward by the normative school were not valid. Despite Juran's statements of an imminent demise of the normative school his trajectory was proved wrong as in the 1980s the normative school grew in importance with the emergence of a new dimension to the quality movement – the dimension of excellence which was associated with quality, 'zero defect' and as well as with the rise of economic liberalism with its emphasis on individual responsibility (Peters & Waterman, 1982 cited by Giroux & Landry 1998: 187).

The “soft” school focuses on the management of people in the organisation and lays particular emphasis on the need to change culture. Hence quality is seen as comprising of both production oriented and employee relations orientated elements. This highlights the tensions between, on the one hand, following clearly laid down instructions whilst, on the other, encouraging employee influence over the management process.

The hypothesis of this school is that poor quality can largely be attributed to worker negligence and to company wide carelessness. In this context, the objective is to develop and disseminate a flawless argument to illustrate the role played by the individual in attaining quality and to stress economic rationality and the performance obligation facing companies. By means of engaging people, the goal is to allow for the integration and actualisation of this vision in daily behaviour.

These two schools of thought may be used to classify research with respect to quality and associated initiatives. The focus of this research will now shift from the general context of academic literature concerning quality to the Irish context where the author has conducted research. The next section introduces the quality research in an Irish context, to assess the state of play. By introducing a specific context it is intended to give the work of the gurus and quality management initiatives a meaning specific to that context.

2.5: The Irish Context

There has been significant interest in the quality phenomenon in Ireland. This is reflected by the fact that by early 2000, c.1500 companies operating in the Republic of Ireland had been registered to the ISO 9000, by the National Standards Authority of Ireland. Also, in 2000, Excellence Ireland conducted 1800 system audits for the purpose of assessing the adequacy of companies quality assurance programs (Excellence Ireland Auditors Report). Such interest is fuelled by national survey findings which reveal that ‘people regard quality as the most important feature when buying a product’ (IQA (now Excellence Ireland), 1994). This is reinforced by separate survey findings across a sample of Irish service companies which show that

'quality significantly overshadowed price (86 per cent versus 14 per cent) in competitive pressures (IQA, 1994).

In Ireland little specific research has been undertaken on the meaning and reality of quality and associated initiatives. Drew (1998) concluded from a benchmark national survey of manufacturing and service companies that nearly one third of respondents had adopted a "Total Quality" approach to quality management. Also, the research highlighted ISO 9000 as being sought as a driver of a company quality initiative. Furthermore the research found that employee involvement is becoming an intrinsic part of the way organisations are functioning. Finally the research asserts that there is a high correlation between the drive for quality and customer satisfaction. The research is highly informative but lacks exploration of quality management initiatives. This study reinforces much of the findings of previous studies of quality in an Irish context.

Monks, Buckley and Sinnott (1997) conclude from their research on Total Quality Management and Human Resource Management that there are indicators suggesting some Irish organisations are operating a dual system: new team-working and involvement initiatives are functioning alongside the command and control structures of conventional management. Though the research informs one that the quality phenomenon is changing the nature of the human resource function in organisations, there is little exploration of what is meant by a quality management initiative, which makes it difficult to determine the nature of how quality initiatives are changing the human resource management function.

In an Irish context quality has been seen as a key component and a driving force of major changes and there is an acceptance by both management (Cogan, 1995; Donnelly, 1995) and unions of the need to rethink traditional ways of managing in the context of these developments. Gunnigle, Mc Mahon, and Fitzgerald (1999), in a text specific to Irish industrial relations take 'TQM' to be synonymous with the quality movement. They rely heavily on the work of Wilkinson, (1992) to claim that hardly any organisations in the UK or Ireland adopt a total approach to 'TQM'. They also state that quality is a strategic issue rather than an operational one and outline short-

termism; organisational structure; a lack of management support and; a lack of employee support as the reasons why 'TQM' fail. They conclude by highlighting the pluralistic nature of Irish industrial relations highlighting three categories of response, opposition, pragmatic scepticism and shaping the agenda, which Irish trade unions have identified due to the ever-growing numbers of organisations pursuing quality management initiatives. These may be regarded as primary considerations for any practitioner who considers embarking on a quality management initiative.

Research by Morley (1995) highlights that individuals experienced enhanced work variety and autonomy a result of a quality initiative. Kromkowski and Murphy (1996:272) state that the introduction of a total quality programme 'released the repressed energy and tacit knowledge of the workforce' with considerable benefits to the organisation. However a survey of 402 employees in nine manufacturing firms (Turner and Morley, 1995) suggests that employees were certainly working harder as a result of these changes and other research has indicated that quality management initiatives may be associated with more intensive work systems and closer monitoring of performance (Geary, 1994). Roche and Gunnigle (1995:22) point out that 'quality enhancement approaches often incorporate a more with less focus, whereby organisations seek concurrently to achieve increased productivity and lower employment levels'.

The research to date suggests that there have been both positive and negative effects surrounding the organisational experience of quality management initiatives in Ireland. Like much of the literature surrounding the subject of quality, 'TQM' is taken as the quality movement. This has also been the case in much of the Irish research. There has been extensive discussion of the origins and overall significance of quality management but little which tries to increase our understanding of the vast array of quality management initiatives which exist. There are many assertions made in the literature but little which helps one to understand the quality phenomenon in terms of meaning in a specifically Irish context. Much of the research has been generated from methodologies which are positivistic by nature confirming the presence of relationships between quality and other organisational variables. However there is a lack of insight generated by alternative methodologies such as case studies and

grounded research, which do have the capability illuminate meaning with respect to quality and associated initiatives.

2.6: Conclusion

At the present time there is an impasse in the evolution of the quality management concept (O' Toole & Harrington, 1999: 148). Research in the discipline, from an evolutionary perspective, is still very much at a preliminary stage of development and does not match the level of sophistication apparent in other management disciplines (Fynes, 1999: 131). This is reflected in the Irish context. Views of quality management have been polarised between those who view quality from a hard-rationalist orientation and a softer normative perspective. Theory development in the quality discipline is a relatively recent phenomenon (Allan, 1998; DeCock, 1998; Lawrence and Phillips, 1998; Leonard and McAdam, 2000). Much of the guru research is prescriptive based on positivist research methodologies championing the cause of the hard-rationalist orientation of quality management (see Weick, 2000). Conversely the soft-normative school has, under the auspices of the critical labour process theorists, proved that there are many organisational barriers to overcome if practitioners are to achieve quality. Research methodologies have been predominantly positivistic both in the Irish context and in a more general context. The nature of the present research will be exploratory and descriptive in Irish organisational context, using case studies guided by the principles of grounded theory to enable theory generation, which is critically reflective and reflexive with respect to the quality phenomenon.

CHAPTER THREE

The Methodological Approach: Case Studies through Grounded Theory

3.0: Introduction

This chapter highlights the methodological approach chosen for the current study. Chapter one documented quality as a complex phenomenon, which has remained true to the gurus who are the founding fathers of the movement. Chapter two distilled the essence of quality management initiatives which have become the legacy of the gurus. As we enter the new millennium one witnesses the quality phenomenon coming under attack with few attempts to classify quality management initiatives for the purposes of analysis. This has resulted in stagnation with respect to theory development and resulting research has been developed from positivistic methodologies which are informative but offer little by way of meaning with respect to quality and quality management initiatives in a real world setting. This Chapter will highlight the complexities of methodological decisions and state the investigative approach of this research project. A section on grounded theory has been included to capture the key ideas of the major writers in the area. For the readers benefit a diagram represents a simplification of the author's methodology. This is expanded on in the body of the Chapter.

3.0.1: Grounded Theory in Social Science Research

In 1967, Glaser and Strauss pointed to the importance of writing manuscripts that richly illustrated theory. They called for written accounts which enabled the reader to see and hear the actors in the studied social scene. Hence, resultant theory would be intimately linked to rich observational data. Mobilising a grounded theory approach has the potential to develop research that allows focus on contextual and processual elements of the phenomenon under investigation (Strauss, 1987).

Grounded theory is clearly one where the research approach is oriented towards the inductive generation of theory from data which has been systematically obtained and analysed (see Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss, 1987; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). The aim is that the interpretations and perspectives of actors in their own and others' actions become incorporated into our own interpretations. This means that knowledge

is viewed as an experiential process rather than a mirror of independent reality (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The conceptual categories and the broad interpretative frameworks developed should result from the researchers interaction with and closely conform to the situation studied (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

At the heart of the grounded theory is idea is that the researcher begins his or her study with the “with the abstract wonderment of what is going on that is an issue and how is it handled” (Glaser, 1992:22). However Strauss and Corbin, (1990) suggest several sources of research problems including suggested or assigned, the technical literature, and personal and professional experience. This is in direct conflict with Glaser who emphatically stresses that the research problem itself is discovered through emergence as a natural by product of open coding, theoretical sampling, and constant comparison.

There appears to be two trains of thought which have evolved within grounded theory literature. On one hand Strauss and Corbin (1990) argue that the coding process is at the heart of grounded theory. There are three types of coding:

1. Open coding is the initial process in grounded theory which involves breaking down, analysis, comparison and categorisation of data. Incidents or events are labelled and grouped together via constant comparison to form categories and properties.
2. Axial coding represents the delineation of hypothetical relationships between categories and subcategories.
3. Selective coding represents the process by which categories are related to the core category ultimately becoming the basis for the grounded theory.

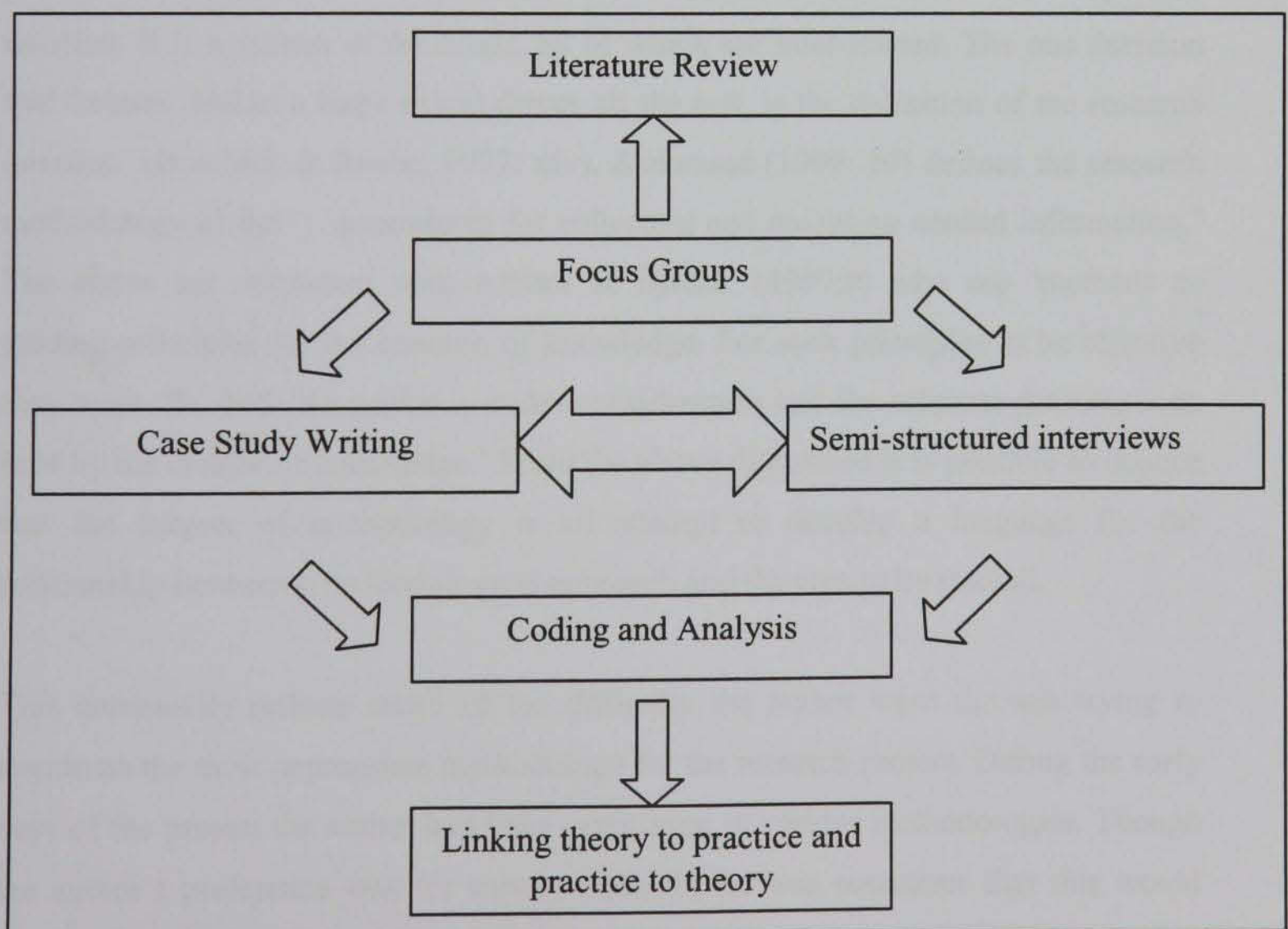
Glaser takes exception to the systematic guidelines outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1990:97), particularly with respect to axial coding which he viewed as a process of putting “data back together in new ways by making connections between categories and subcategories.” This is done through conceptual elaboration of categories by means of a coding paradigm denoting causal conditions, context, action / interactional strategies, and consequences. In Glaser’s view, this process can result in researchers missing the relevance of the data by forcing it into a preconceived framework. He believes this is an overemphasis on extracting detail from the data by means of a

prestructured paradigm which may result in full conceptual description at the expense of theory development or generation.

This author has chosen a grounded theory approach to research to capture the complexity of the quality phenomenon. The emphasis is on placing those who live through the phenomenon on a daily basis at the heart of the research to link theory to practice and practice to theory.

To remain faithful to grounded theory approach, the author presents five case studies in Chapter 4 in the form of richly descriptive narratives, organised under headings inductively derived from a semi-structured interview process. Chapter 5 adopts the coding process to illustrate the findings for the purposes of analysis in Chapter 6 where the practice from Chapter four is linked with the theory from Chapters 1 and 2. Figure 3.1 below summarises the approach to structuring the thesis.

Figure 3.1: Thesis Structure



3.1: The Complexity of Methodology

Methodology is complex subject area. Contributions to its developments have come from various fields such as philosophy, sociology, logic and mathematics. There have been few attempts to make methodology for creating business knowledge concrete (Arbnor and Bjerke, 1997; Hussey and Hussey, 1997; Mitroff and Linstone, 1993). Hence it is important not to neglect the subject. Research methodology can be defined as:

‘The overall approach, and within that the individual research methods and tools used to meet a given research objective. A clear and unambiguous statement of the research objective is therefore necessary to enable the selection of an appropriate research methodology and data collection techniques’ (Adam and Healy, 2000:152).

Others are less specific, defining research methodology ‘...as a decision making process where each decision made is affected by, and in turn influences every other decision. It is a system of decisions, all of which are inter-related. The one decision that focuses, and to a large extent drives all the rest, is the definition of the research question’ (Brannick & Roche, 1997: xiv). Zickmund (1999: 59) defines the research methodology as the ‘...procedures for collecting and analysing needed information.’ The above are consistent with Arbnor & Bjerke, (1997:9) who see ‘methods as guiding principles for the creation of knowledge. For such principles to be effective they must ‘fit’ both the problem under consideration and the ultimate presumptions held by the creator of knowledge.’ From the above discussion it is possible to deduce that the subject of methodology is an attempt to develop a language for the relationship between a methodological approach and the area to be studied.

This complexity reflects much of the difficulty the author went through trying to decide on the most appropriate methodology for the research project. During the early days of the project the author had little experience in various methodologies. Though the author’s preference was for survey methods, he was conscious that this would merely reinforce existing research findings without adding new insights. To overcome this dilemma two focus groups were conducted with academic colleagues from

disciplines such as operations management, human resource management, quality management and organisation theory to advise the author on various ways of generating new insights using exploratory methods. This resulted in the author being invited by the quality management specialist within the group to his class at a management training centre to conduct a focus group.

The class consisted of many students who had lived through the experience of a quality management initiative. During the focus group, the author noted that many of the class members were very willing to discuss their experience at length. This encouraged the author to proceed with the more high-risk grounded research inquiry (based on Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Continuing with this grounded perspective the author was able to secure commitments from the class members for arrangements to visit them in their work place to observe the phenomenon and perhaps use their experience as the basis for a case study in the research project. It was only through ongoing and continuous dialogue with practitioners and academic colleagues that the author's investigative focus emerged. This project will document the patterns via an analysis of narratives, which emerged from five case studies to gain insight with respect to meaning and reality with respect quality management initiatives.

3.2: Investigative Focus

Most discussions of quality improvement programs such as Total Quality Management assume a realist ontology (e.g., key performance indicators tell us how the world is operating), a rationalist epistemology grounded in objectivity (e.g., decisionmaking based on facts), and a change strategy based on transformation (e.g., TQM is a quantum change). Suppose that in the interest of theory development and practice improvement around themes of quality, these assumptions were altered and TQM were recast using the ideas that social construction tells us how the world is operating, rationality is an account rather than a tool, subjectivity is the feedstock of practice, and incremental change is the basis of renewal, these ideas being brought together loosely by an emerging theory of sensemaking. What would the result look like? (Weick, 2000:155) This is the central focus of the thesis.

There has been extensive discussion of the origins and overall significance of quality management but little that tries to increase our understanding of the vast array of quality management initiatives, which exist. This is because most studies have assumed all quality management initiatives to be Total Quality Management and research has been conducted using predominantly quantitative research methods. Such

research operates in a positivist paradigm, which by nature offers results that merely confirm or refute hypothesis. This has resulted in the development of the quality discipline from a strong prescriptive standpoint. There are many assertions made in the literature but little which helps one to understand the meaning and reality of the quality phenomenon in an organisational setting.

In an Irish context we know little about patterns that emerge from quality management initiatives, which contain the meaning and reality of the initiative to specific organisational settings. This research will attempt to explain and describe the humanist patterns, which evolved as a result of five broadly comparable organisations, engaging in five different quality management initiatives. There is a need to look at the people and organisational dimensions both as inputs to, and outputs from, quality management initiatives. When change is introduced under the auspices of a quality management initiative, little is known about the negative and positive impacts on worker skill levels, on work intensity, task variety, employee morale and job satisfaction. Such issues are at the heart of the critical analyst's contentions.

Through in-depth research via accessing the quality phenomenon as demanded by case study research, the author aims to move beyond the hype and rhetoric which so often surrounds quality management initiatives with respect to the introduction of a package of new practices and initiatives such as training in quality management, quality circles and team building. Much of the research in quality management to date has been concerned with positivist methodologies at the expense of humanist methodologies, which have the potential to document meaning and reality about many organisational issues. This research project will employ a case study methodology guided by the principles of grounded theory as a balance to many of the positivist research approaches, which have been used to date in the quality literature (see Alvesson and Wilmott, 1996; Grint, 1995; Miles and Huberman, 1984; Glaser and Anselm, 1967 for similar approaches to research).

Such issues have been the breeding ground for so many attacks on quality management initiatives. This research will seek to establish a degree of truth with

respect such issues through in-depth discussion with those who have lived through a quality management initiative in a real world setting.

3.3: Type of Research

Different types of research are rooted in differing conceptions of the nature of science. In research, the term 'paradigm' refers to the progress of scientific practice based on people's philosophies and assumptions about the world and the nature of knowledge; in this context, how the research is conducted. A common theme in the literature is for authors to classify types of research under two main paradigms (Hussey and Hussey 1997; Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Lee, 1991; Kaplan and Duchon, 1988; Bell 1987). These two headings are:

1. *Qualitative Research*, is based on methods of data generation which are flexible and sensitive to the social context in which data are produced (Hussey and Hussey, 1997; Phillips and Pugh, 1994). The nature of reality is defined by the interaction of the researcher with the phenomenon under study. Under the auspices of grounded theory researchers should take advantage of, rather than avoid, applying their own perceptions and assumptions to the research study (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Van Maanen, 1979).
2. *Quantitative Research*, which assumes that there is a single objective reality. According to this view, two independent researchers can use standard research methods to study a phenomenon, and both will arrive at the same conclusion. In such research, researchers emphasize careful control and measurement by assigning numbers to measurements (based on Hussey and Hussey, 1997).

Based on Hussey and Hussey (1997) the following list captures the key features of the two main paradigms.

Table 3.1: Feature of the Two Main Paradigms

Qualitative	Quantitative
Uses small samples	Uses large samples
Concerned with generating theories	Concerned with hypothesis testing
Data is rich and subjective	Data is highly specific and precise
The location is natural	The location is artificial
Reliability is low	Reliability is high
Validity is high	Validity is low
Generalises from one setting to another	Generalise from sample to population

Based on Hussey and Hussey (1997) and Phillips and Pugh (2000)

An extensive but not an exhaustive review of the literature (Adam and Healy, 2000; Sekaran, 2000; Zikmund, 1999; Brannick & Roche; Yin, 1994) identifies three types of research, which operate within the qualitative and quantitative paradigms. These types of research are called:

1. Exploratory research is undertaken to progressively narrow the scope of the research topic and transformation the discovered problems into defined ones, incorporating specific research objectives (Sekaran, 2000:124).
2. Descriptive research is undertaken in order to ascertain and be able to describe the characteristics of the variables with a view to answering who, what, where, when and how questions (Sekaran, 2000:125).
3. Explanatory/casual research is conducted to identify cause-and-effect relationships among variables where the research problem has already been narrowly defined (Sekaran, 2000:125).

The aim of the research is to discover a meaning and understanding of quality management initiatives in a selection of comparable Irish organisations in terms of how the quality management initiative is implemented and shaped by the organisational scene. Based on this focus, the author feels that this research is located within the qualitative paradigm adopting an exploratory and descriptive approach. This approach will be guided by the principles of grounded theory (see Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

This approach emerged as a result of the author immersing himself in the situation or culture under study. This immersion process lasted for nine months. The author has observed and interacted intensely with the research participants, often taking copious notes. Eventually the author developed organising principles, categories, case studies and qualitative analysis to explain what was observed. These are the exploratory and descriptive concepts which guided the author in his collection and analysis of data. As more data was collected, it was almost always necessary to change, modify, or extend previous findings and analysis based on the new information. The author then returned to the field to continue data collection to further develop the case studies. The literature reviews of chapter one and two were written to contribute to the awareness of issues in quality management.

The literature review contributed to the author's awareness that theory development in quality management research needs to incorporate practice-oriented feedback. This approach will encourage researchers and practitioners to become more reflective so research and practice can learn from each other. Such theory development requires more "how" and "why" type questions. This has forced the author to recognise the value of alternative methodological approaches such as grounded theory and action research. Being guided by these alternative methodologies has forced the author to pay particular attention to issues of reliability, validity, selection of cases and data analysis which, in the authors experience, have become taken as given where researchers have used more quantitative methods. The author firmly believes that this pluralistic approach to methodological issues has served to enhance research rigour.

3.4: Research Design

Having decided the paradigm (qualitative), spoken to a range of academics and practitioners, selected a research topic (quality management) and completed a literature review, the author was in the position to decide on his research design. Research design 'is the science of planning procedures for conducting studies so as to get the most valid findings' (Vogt, 1993:196). Research design is closely associated with the researcher's chosen paradigm. The choice of design is restricted by one's

chosen paradigm. The research design should demonstrate how one will answer the research questions and demonstrate any inherent weaknesses in the design and how the researcher intends to cope with them. The following illustrates the author's decisions with respect to choice of research design.

Yin (1994:6) lists five different types of research design. They are experiment, survey, archival analysis, history and case study. He states that there are three conditions which should be considered when determining the most appropriate research design. These are:

1. The type of research question posed
2. The extent of control an investigator has over actual behavioural events
3. The degree of focus on contemporary events as opposed to past events.

Table 3.2: Relevant Situations for Different Research Designs

Strategy	Form of research question	Requires control over behavioural events?	Focuses on contemporary events?
<i>Experiment</i>	How, why	Yes	Yes
<i>Survey</i>	Who, what, where, how many, how much	No	Yes
<i>Archival analysis</i>	Who, what, where, how many, how much	No	Yes/no
<i>History</i>	How, why	No	No
<i>Case study</i>	How, why	No	Yes

Source: Yin, 1994:6

Based on table 3.2, the present study the research question is one of how and why based on an historical intervention. This researcher does not require control over the relevant behavioural events to conduct this research. The qualitative paradigm is justified because:

- Results of the research are complex and rich taking the form of narrative descriptions or lengthy explanations. The results of the research closely fit the reality of the persons or cases studied.

- The approach to research has been flexible and intuitive, not adhering to a predetermined set of research steps, but adhering to a strict protocol with respect to collecting and analysing data.
- The theory generated by the research is less generalisable beyond the organisations or interviewees studied. Generalisability is sacrificed in favour of obtaining a rich and complex understanding about the particular situation under study.
- The research assumes that there is no objective world that exists independently of one's observations. One recognises that the very act of observation affects the phenomenon being studied. The researcher's subjective perceptions, feelings, and interpretations, and those of the study participants, are all considered legitimate data.
- The process of data collection has favoured methods that allow for complex responses and for individual perspectives. Hence the author has collected data through open-ended semi-structured interviews and participant observation. An objective of the research has been to get close to the persons studied in order to enhance one's general knowledge about complex events and processes with respect to the quality phenomenon.

3.5: Case Study as a Methodology

Yin (1994:13) defines the case study as 'an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.' This allows the researcher to determine not only what happened but also why it happened. These are the features of case study which attracted the author to the methodology. Rather than seeking degrees of freedom from a large standardised data set, the case study tests theory with degrees of freedom coming from the multiple implications of theory (based on Miles and Huberman, 1984). The process is a kind of pattern matching. The case study builds on descriptive information and practical experience. It is the unique ability of

the case study to build on practical experience which has encouraged the author to select it as a methodology and its suitability for addressing how and why type questions, which are the focus of this research.

By virtue of its larger database, the case study approach has an advantage over the more mathematical, statistical, and analytical approaches that have dominated quality management research (Mitroff and Linstone, 1993). The case study method builds on descriptive information and practical experience, which is severely lacking in quality management initiative research in an organisational context. The oral, descriptive and experiential database is incomparably larger and more complete, and richer in knowledge about dynamic behaviour, than the numerical databases which are already plentiful in quality management research.

The author acknowledges and has grappled with the fact that even in case study research wherein many of the pressures and inputs to decisions are revealed, written information is more fragmented than in mental data bases that have continuity in a particular real-life situation. This is a shortfall of the author's chosen research design. However, one justifies this shortfall of method because one perceives the more permanent written quality management literature, as in textbooks and histories, withdrawing to a broader perspective from which the working reasons for decisions and prescriptions are lost. The author wishes to capture the patterns which have resulted in quality in each organisation studied. There is an overdue need to address this concern in the quality management research. Hence the author has chosen a case study methodology.

However the argument against case study as a research methodology is as compelling as any justification in favour of the case study. The case study method has no adequate way of interpreting its generous database into trustworthy dynamic implications. The case study is excellent as a recorder of decisions, reasons, motivations, and structural relationships (Leavy, 1994; Dyer and Wilkins, 1991). However it cannot act as a dynamic stimulator of the behavioural implications of a complex policy structure. At best, the case study is an extension and development of the researcher's mental database. By building on mental data, the case study approach tries to organise multiple perspectives into a balanced description of objectives,

policies and structures (Leavy, 1992). To overcome this issue the author has developed qualitative tables containing the essence of key themes, which emerged from the dialogue with colleagues, the interleaving literature and data, and the researcher continually interacting with all elements through inner dialogue throughout the duration of the project. The author maintained a journal to capture this inner dialogue as a repository for stray ideas as the relentless search for insight gathered momentum over a two-year period. It was from this process that a more systematic analysis emerged.

A further contention surrounding the case study methodology involves the selection of either a single case study or multiple cases, and numerous levels of analysis (see Eisenhardt, 1991; 1989; Yin, 1984). An important decision, which the researcher must make with respect to case study design, is whether or not to pursue a single-case or a multiple case strategy. In designing case research a key question is the number of respondents. If a set of questions can be reliably answered by one key informant then the research process should focus on identifying whether this person is indeed one. However when there are questions for which no one person has all the required knowledge, or the events being studied may have different interpretations or viewpoints, it will be necessary to pursue a range of informants throughout the organisation. This is particularly the case with how and why questions, which were the main questions guiding. The author was opportunistic using the contacts of the quality specialist to secure access to those who were deemed responsible for all aspects of the quality initiative by the quality specialist.

The author spent much time debating with colleagues whether or not to pursue a single or multiple case strategy. The single case can be used to determine whether a theory's proposition is correct or whether some alternative set of explanations may be more relevant. It is also appropriate to use this strategy when the case represents an extreme or unique case (Yin, 1994:40). Multiple case designs, by definition, cannot satisfy such conditions. However the evidence from multiple cases is often considered much more compelling, and the overall study is regarded as being more robust (see Culliton, 1954). Multiple case studies looking at several sites, aim to reach more generalisable conclusions than those provided in a single case. Although the number of variables change from case to case, clusters of issue dimensions build into

recognisable theme which, in turn, provide insights that reinforce and challenge current thinking and managerial action or preferences (see Fraser, 1931). Even though comparisons and differences exist, the specific insights gained and the quality of research data provides insights which are both substantial and substantive. Multiple cases augment external validity and help guard against observer biases.

3.6: Case Study Selection

Based on the above discussion the author decided to use a multiple case design. The author sought help from a quality management specialist to secure access to five organisations, which had made a serious attempt at achieving implementing a quality management initiative in the recent past. The five organisations, which have met these criteria are referred to as Case A, Case B, Case C, Case D and Case E in the body of the research.

The only prerequisite for case study selection was that chosen organisations had to have made a serious attempt at achieving quality in the recent past. Based on a network of contacts, the author was afforded the luxury of choice. The author visited fifteen organisations over a three-month period to gauge the level of interest in participating in this research project. The five organisations, based on the author's perceptions were deemed the most likely to engage in a series of semi-structured interviews. One has recognised that one is unable to generalise outside of this selection of case studies.

3.7: Research Methods

There are six different research methods available to the researcher. They are documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant-observation, and physical artefacts. The author has chosen documentation, direct observation and interviews as the research methods with the aim of triangulating between the different methods to achieve a higher degree of validity and reliability.

Table 3.3: Strengths and Weaknesses of Design Methods

Design Methods	Strengths	Weaknesses
Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stable-can be reviewed repeatedly. • Unobtrusive-not created as a result of the case study. • Exact-contains exact names references and details of an event. • Broad coverage-long span of time, many events and many settings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retrievability-can be slow • Biased selectivity, if collection incomplete • Reporting bias-reflects bias of the author • Access may deliberately blocked
Direct Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reality-covers events in real time. • Contextual-covers context of event. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time consuming • Selectivity-unless broad coverage • Reflexivity-event may proceed differently because it is being observed • Cost-hours needed by human observers
Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted-focused on case study topic • Insightful-provides perceived causal inferences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bias due to poorly constructed questions • Response bias • Inaccuracies due to poor recall • Reflexivity-interviewee gives what the interviewer wants to hear.

Source: Yin, 1994:40

For the purposes of this research the interview is the cornerstone of data collection. Yin (1994) posits that the interview is an essential source of case study evidence because the majority of case studies are about human affairs. These affairs should be relayed through the eyes of specific interviewees and informed respondents who can provide important insights into a situation. The interview, like the case study, is capable of producing data of great depth. The author was faced with a range of decisions to make about the type of interview to be use. There are various types of interviews which one can utilise. These range from structured vs. unstructured, standardised vs. unstandardised, individual vs. group. The author developed a semi-structured interview for each organisation with the purpose of gathering descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the quality phenomenon in their organisation. This is line with grounded theory as the aim is to have the participant in the research actively shaping the course of the interview rather than passively responding to the interviewer's pre-set questions.

A useful and important element of the process was having a protocol. This listed the topics and general questions that the interviewer should attempt to cover in the interview. Yin (1994) argues that the reliability and validity of case research data will be enhanced by a well-designed research protocol. Voss, Tsikriktsis and Frohlich (2000) say it contains the procedures and general rules that should be used in using

the instruments during, and indicate who or from where the different sets of information are to be sought. The core of the protocol is the set of questions to be used in interviews (see Appendix 6).

The author has followed the above steps. The semi-structured interviews were sent to the interviewees at least one week in advance of the meeting. Maintaining an open-ended approach the author wanted the interviewee to determine the subject matter of the interview so comments and feedback on the semi-structured interview questions were always encouraged and welcomed. In order to operationalise the process and test the instrument a pilot study was done. As the semi-structured interview is at the empirical core of the research the author deemed the exercise to be in line with good research practice. The author arranged a pilot interview with The Skills Development Specialist in Case A. The following points were noted:

- Sending the questions to the interviewee in advance was valuable as it gave the interviewee time to prepare and think about the interview. It also encouraged them to gather relevant archival data, which was given to the author and subsequently built into the case.
- The protocol was a key facilitator of and focus for indepth discussion about the topic and allowed the author to cover all aspects of the topic.
- The interview was conducted at the site of the quality management system. This was very beneficial for the author as he was able to observe a quality management system in action, meet people at all levels in the organisation and get a 'feel' for how the organisation works. This was useful for building interpersonal skills, confidence and professional behaviours to ensure people were comfortable speaking with an outsider.
- The interviewee was delighted to give feedback on the semi-structured interview about the nature of certain questions. This ensured that the author was limiting the bias effect as much as possible.

3.8: Data Collection

Based on the above the author collected data through interviews, observation and secondary sources. The primary source was semi-structured interviews with individual respondents. Respondents were generally two types: those who strategically develop the quality management initiative in the organisation, (high level respondents) and those who must make sense of it with a view to implementation, (low level respondents). High-level respondents were chief executive, managing directors and associate directors. Low-level respondents were managers, supervisors and team-leaders. The author conducted interviews during one-day site visits to the organisation. The interviews were taped where permitted and transcribed. Interviews typically lasted one hour. During the site visits the author kept a daily record of impressions and observations during lunch and tours of the site. These were written into the author's journal of thinking and were subsequently recorded in the case studies and analysis.

Two interview guides were used to conduct the semi-structured interviews at both the high and low levels. In both cases open-ended questions were asked to allow interviewees to relate their stories of how a particular quality initiative evolved. This was to ensure that the author was not imposing any bias on the interviewee. Based on the narrative offered by the participant, more probing questions were asked by the researcher to establish details. As interviewing is the most intrusive method of data collection on organisational time and resources it is recognised by the researcher that absolute truth may not have been obtained to due to time constraints.

Twenty-seven interviews were conducted over a nine-month period, with interviews at one institution being completed before moving on to the next institution. Of the twenty-seven, seven were conducted with Case A, five with Case B, seven with Case C, five with Case D and three with Case E. Each interview lasted on average an hour and twenty minutes, with transcripts being written up immediately after the interview in order to ensure as much accuracy as possible.

The interview sessions began with a brief outline of the aims of the research, along with an assurance of all information being treated with the utmost confidentiality. The author gave the interviewee the option of switching off the tape recorder if s/he did not wish some of their dialogue to be recorded. Sarantakos (1993) has argued that tape recording is the most successful method for capturing the data. The researcher had noticed that during the pilot interview the participant was always conscious of the presence of the tape recorder even though they had said they were comfortable with it. The interview concluded with the participants being offered feedback after the data analysis was completed, if they so desired. This feedback has taken the form of a synopsis of where their organisation lies with respect to other organisations in the selection of cases and what kind of themes are emerging in quality management literature that might benefit the organisation to know about.

Those who were interviewed were very enthusiastic about the experience and were fully co-operative. Many of them stated that the discussion helped them reflect on experience and consider what the quality phenomenon was all about. Very often the demands of day-to-day hectic work schedules do not allow people to think about their experiences in the work place. Many commended the discussion experience as thought provoking and a mutual learning experience, raising novel concepts, which they would not have had the opportunity to be exposed to. Many participants have remained in contact sending e-mails containing information which they feel is relevant but did not think of during the time of discussion.

On completion of each case study, it was sent to two interviewees of the relevant organisation in order that the case write up was a true and fair reflection of events discussed and to allow them the opportunity to make any additional comments and/or suggestions. No major corrections or changes were necessary as a result of this process. The researcher was given consent from Cases A and B to publish two articles. One for an academic journal and another for a popular management magazine. The network established from the publications has been most helpful in further developing the author's understanding of quality management systems.

3.9: Conclusion

This chapter has explored how thinking in the field of methodology for creating business knowledge can contribute to the understanding of quality management initiatives. This research project is exploring and describing meaning and reality of the concept of quality and associated initiatives in five broadly comparable Irish organisations. Case study evidence will be at the empirical core of the project and provide the basis for an analysis of interviewee narratives to generate new insights into the quality phenomenon in an Irish organisational context. The analysis will be the product of literature and data being inter-leaved with the author's perceptions, feelings and insights, which emerged from immersing oneself in the real world context where the phenomenon is in action. Chapter four will present the five case study organisations.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Empirical Core: Stories from the Field

4.0: Introduction

The purpose of this Chapter is to present the empirical core of the research project by presenting five case studies. The case studies will highlight and bring together the diverse range of issues discussed across the three chapters to date. The author has deliberately placed emphasis on description and explanation rather than on prescription and prediction. Each case study is a stand-alone piece, the intention being to let the data speak for themselves (based on Pettigrew, 1990). The cases rely heavily on quotes from the participants of the semi-structured interviews to ensure that insights inducted for the purposes of analysis are faithful to the real world context from which they were created. The aim has been to get as close as possible to the world of the quality phenomenon in an Irish organisational context and to interpret this world and its complexities from the inside. This is consistent with a grounded theory approach to conducting research (based on Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Glaser, 1992).

The author's desire has been to use case studies to describe both unique and typical experiences and events as a base for theory that is developed and related to the issues described in Chapters one and two following the steps described in Chapter 3 (based on Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The ultimate goal of this chapter is to provide a rich description of the organisational scene, to describe the context in which events occur, and to reveal the deep structure of patterns with respect to the quality phenomenon in five organisations. This will provide the basis for inductively generating meaning and reality in Chapters five and six. Each case study follows a common trajectory of; Introduction; Reasons for the Quality Initiative; Implementation Framework; Major Barriers to Quality; Outcomes of the Initiative and Reflections. These headings were inductively derived from initial interviewing and visits within each organisation. The headings were the themes, which emerged as a result of the author immersing himself in the world of the practitioner. It was the immersion process which guided the author's literature review. All direct speech from the interviewees is in a smaller font size in the body of each case study. All other text in the case studies is an aggregation of the authors perceptions from site visits and casual conversation with employees

over lunch or at their point of production or work-station in the organisations visited. All those interviewed were middle and senior manager who were responsible for the design and implementation of the quality initiatives.

The following presents each case study under a pseudonym to protect the identity of the organisations and the participants. A table summarises key company and research information to provide the reader with key events that led to the introduction of the quality initiative, an explanation of why the company was chosen for the study and list of documents that was surveyed during the site visit. It may also useful for the reader to refer to the appendices section for more detailed information on the theoretical background of each of the initiatives.

4.1: Case A – Company and Research Information

Initiative Title	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Excellence
Key Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1991 - Recession • 1992 - Redundancies • 1994 - Employee Morale Survey
Reasons for Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transformation • Rebuild morale • Rebuild market share
Interviewees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing Director • Skills Development Specialist • Business Systems Manager • Facilities Manager • Production Manager • Knowledge Management Associate
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1994 to the present
Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee Opinion Survey • Customer Opinion Survey • Business Excellence Manual
Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Excellence is the company strategy • Organisation is structured around teams
Rationale for Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irish Business Excellence Winner, 1998 • EFQM Winner (SME Category), 1999

4.1.1: Introduction

Case A is a subsidiary of large multinational telecommunications company, which employs 130,000 in 90 different countries globally. Up until 1994 the Irish operation was the telecommunications equipment manufacturing business unit within another

organisation. In Ireland, Case A employs c.600 people involved in various activities within the communications industry. The company's main manufacturing facility, located in Co. Dublin, is part of Case A's Network Products Group. Components for the Case A Systimax LAN structured cabling system are manufactured at the Dublin facility, which has benefited from the rapid growth of its corporate parent and from developments within the communications and information technology markets. In 1998 the facility became the first overall winner of the Irish Business Excellence Award and more recently was a prizewinner for the 2000 European Quality Award (SME Subsidiary Category).

4.1.2: Reasons for the Quality Initiative

Events were not always so positive in Case A. The Business Systems Manager explained, "In the 1980s the facility was firmly rooted in a functional culture. Nine executives maintained strict loyalty to their own category, each ruling their own empire vertically with no consideration of a process view. Two way and horizontal communication outside the closed shop of the boardroom was not encouraged. This was reflected at all levels in the company. This inertia at management level meant that new product development took too long, resulting in lead times which crippled any chance the product had of gaining a foothold in the market. Worse still, existing products had reached the end of their life cycle."

The Managing Director said, "It was crisis, which dawned the realisation for change in Bray. We had got to the stage where we were going to be shut down if we didn't do something about our spiralling costs. We aggressively pushed through a rationalisation programme to buy ourselves some time. The streamlined executive line up of a Managing Director, General Manager of Operations and General Manager of Human Resources embraced the concept of Business Excellence based on principles of quality as a vehicle for driving change in November 1994." The Skills Development Specialist explained, "The first step in this change was the executive line up forming themselves into a new Steering Team, learning about Business Excellence and quality concepts, and dedicating themselves to the vision of building a reputation for their company as a centre of excellence in the corporation." He also added "We were quick to realise that creating the vision was the easy part, getting the buy-in of people with a severe morale problem was to be the biggest challenge the facility would ever face." He spoke of the need to get people on board. This became known as "Engaging Our People". In order to build capability and confidence for quality the help of a consultancy was sought. The Managing Director felt that they needed some kind of external input because of the situation they had got themselves into.

The Skills Development Specialist recalled, "It was the global recession of the early 90s, which marked the beginning of the Business Excellence journey. Depression in the world economy was reducing the overall telecommunications infrastructural spend. This had a direct impact on us. The parent company had made a strategic decision not to focus on Ireland for sales because of low revenue potential." He also indicated that at corporate level the company was experiencing great upheaval. He said, "In an attempt to cut costs, a company-wide downsizing operation took place, which also affected the Irish operation. Redundancies were announced and morale took a sharp downturn. This was highlighted by the Irish operation returning the lowest employee satisfaction scores throughout Europe, Middle East and Africa."

Four of the interviewees elucidated on what they saw as important reasons for developing a quality initiative. The Facilities Manager stressed that above all the most important objective of the initiative was "to survive." The Knowledge Management Associate saw the initiative as, "An opportunity to build mutual respect between employees and management. If changes were implemented as they were documented, there would no longer be a need to shake (in fear) when the boss was around." The Production Manager saw the initiative as, "An opportunity to build a teamwork culture around core competencies in the areas of people, value, quality and customer relations." The Production Associate believed that the quality initiative was embarked on to 'grow the business', saying, "If a quality culture could be achieved and recognised by a professional body, then it would create credibility in the eyes of potential customers."

The Managing Director wanted people to become aware of the realities of the commercial world saying, "It was important that the initiative made people aware of the ever changing environment and the importance of adjusting to it. We needed to get trade unions to realise that we cannot be giving into demands for increased pay every time somebody is dissatisfied." At various times all the interviewees mentioned the need to become more flexible, adaptive, responsive and value-adding. The Production Associate said, "For everybody at my level, this was difficult to accept as never before had people realised the volatility of the commercial environment and that it could impact on their lives." The interviewees felt that it was crisis which prompted the development of a quality initiative.

4.1.3: Implementation Framework

The Production Manager acknowledged the importance of benchmarking in supporting the exercise. There were multiple visits to Nebraska in the US and other multinationals in Ireland which were renowned for best practice quality systems. He explained, "It was on the basis of these visits that the system was changed to a continuous manufacturing process where statistical process control was regarded as crucial to the proper functioning of the business. This would help us understand what's going on in our processes."

The Steering Team with the help of a consultant commenced a major strategy called 'Engaging Our People' in 1993. The Facilities Manager stressed the importance of launching the new strategy off-site saying, "It could take root in a positive atmosphere away from the functional culture which the Steering Team hoped would be replaced by this initiative. To educate people about quality and its necessity, everybody at every level was administered with a book entitled *Personal Quality – The Basis of all other Quality*." The Production Manager was given the task of distilling the practices of some of the quality gurus so their message could be sold to employees." The Production Manager said, "There was a need to develop a framework, which was easy to understand so we needed the help of a consultant."

The Facilities Manager said, "We needed to develop know-how and tools for quality development in all areas, departmental quality, product quality, service quality and company quality." The Skills Development Specialist explained, "The most important thing was to get people to focus on personal quality. This would get people to make the necessary attitudinal changes to work in a more effective way." The Facilities Manager added, "To begin quality development the Steering Team challenged individuals' performance and attitude towards quality. Initially the consultant acted as a broker between management and employees which highlighted a new role for trade unions as they eventually signed a partnership agreement." The Production Manager explained, "The plan was to get high levels of personal quality, which would contribute to high levels of quality in individual departments. This would have a knock on effect as departments with high quality levels create products and services of superior quality." The Facilities Manager picked up this point saying, "Quality at this level leads to a quality culture, which influences the whole company. If a company can consistently deliver quality then customers will be satisfied. Satisfied customers translate into better financial results, an improved image and a brighter future." The Managing Director elaborated on the philosophy behind the quality initiative saying, "A sense of pride in company achievements creates a general sense of company well being and encourages the development of a creative environment, team spirit and a higher level of personal quality."

The Steering Committee along with the trade union and staff members, decided on the Business Excellence Model to develop a framework for implementing quality as a general strategy for change in the organisation. The Skills Specialist spoke about the Irish Business Excellence Model as a framework based on the European Foundation for Quality Management Excellence Model (EFQM). He said, “My initial concern and that of many of my colleagues was that it would be too complex a model for us to use. Despite claims that it is a non-prescriptive framework that recognises there are many approaches to achieving sustainable excellence, we felt that it was very prescriptive when we first saw it. We felt we were going to have a very sophisticated model to deal with as well as a whole load of prescriptions on top of our day-to-day workload.”

Table 4:1 Content of Business Excellence Model

Results Orientation	Excellence is dependent upon balancing and satisfying the needs of all stakeholders.
Customer Orientation	The customer is the final arbiter of product and service quality and customer loyalty, retention and market share gain are best optimised through a clear focus on the needs of current and potential customers.
Leadership & Constancy of Purpose	An organisation’s leaders create a clarity and unity of purpose within the organisation and an environment in which the organisation and its people can excel.
Management by Processes & Fact	Organisations perform more effectively when all inter-related activities are understood and systematically managed and decisions concerning current operations and planned improvements are made using reliable information that includes stakeholder perceptions
Product Development & Involvement	The full potential of an organisation’s people is best released through shared values and culture of trust and empowerment, which encourages the involvement of everyone.
Continuous Learning, Innovation & Improvement	Organisational performance is maximised when it is based the management and sharing of knowledge within the culture of continuous learning, innovation and improvement.
Partnership Development	An organisation works more effectively when it has mutually beneficial relationships, built on trust, sharing of knowledge and integration, with its partners
Public Responsibility	The long term interest of the organisation and its people are best served by adopting an ethical approach and exceeding the expectations and regulations of the community at large.

Source: The EFQM Excellence Model, 1999:6

The Business Systems Manager voiced similar concerns saying, “For a non-prescriptive approach there were fundamental concepts, outlined by various EFQM publications. I think my first reaction to seeing the model was fear and the list (above) seemed to be exhaustive to me. I seriously wondered whether or not we could do this, but I didn’t say this to anybody else because our company was in serious trouble at the time and we needed something to give us a lift. Anything which would make it look as if we were addressing our problems.” The Facilities Manager explained, “The implementation could not be on one particular area or aspect of the company. It needed to be across the board. The change was acting at the level of systems and processes, but the big challenge was to get people to be their own harshest critics when it came to quality and the way they went about their work and I definitely thought the model would help us do this.”

The process of engaging people in the process began with a two-day off site meeting in a local hotel. The Skills Development Specialist explained the process. "Two representatives from each department, drawn from all levels and organisational backgrounds, took part in open and frank discussions about how the company was managed. A "Stop-Start-Continue" exercise was undertaken." The Skills Development Specialist explained, "It was an exercise to determine what should management stop or start doing to make the company a better place for everyone, and to determine if they could be doing anything right that they should continue." The Facilities Manager quipped, "It was the type of occasion where everything comes out." The Production Manager, The Skills Development Specialist and the Facilities Manager recalled that on the first day, "there was much anger and frustration", but there was a noticeable thaw by the second day. The Facilities Manager remembered, "Employees became more constructive as they realised their feelings and opinions were being listened to and taken on board." The Production Manager explained, "An early win was important as the success of the workshop resulted in a further 40 employees were brought to the hotel. Their views were listened to and taken on board. Then another 40 and another 40 people participated, until every person in the company had their say." The Skills Development Specialist explained, "Findings from these discussions were consolidated and four categories - corresponding to the major employee dissatisfiers were identified. These were the agreed areas that employees felt must be addressed in order to begin the improvement process." The four categories, which were causes for most dissatisfaction:

- Communication
- Training
- Role of managers and employees (ROME)
- Teamwork

The Skills Development Specialist recalled, "These challenges were then handed over to the employees to be tackled by cross-functional teams who would be supported by newly trained facilitators. These teams were given a mission statement, which was drafted by the Steering Team." The Production Manager emphasised the role of senior management support during the implementation process saying, "The Steering Committee, especially the then Managing Director along with the consultant ensured there was momentum driving the process forward all the time. Each team invested two hours each week and were guided by a team formation process, designed by the Teamwork Team which helped ensure that all teams operated efficiently and effectively." The teams worked through a systematic model of team formation before trying to solve problems and propose solutions moving through the various Forming-Storming-Norming-Performing stages. The Skills Development Specialist described the

importance of this precious learning experience saying, "The result was people involved in the teams coming together to capture and document in a handbook their experience to guide future teams through the teamwork process." He also said, "This was the first tangible signal that the new culture was taking hold in the company. People were beginning to take into account the needs of their colleagues both present and future."

The interviewees constantly referred to the consultant as a key to the implementation of Business Excellence. The Production Manager described his role saying, "To ensure that people were engaged and empowered in the process at all times a strategy forum was established where a Strength Weakness Opportunities Threats analysis was done to examine the competitive environment and the future direction of the company was determined. In order to develop the leadership capability necessary to deliver a quality culture and guide the company to commercial fitness, a five-day coaching and training programme was developed for all team leaders and managers." The Skills Development Specialist added, "It was designed to facilitate the transition from supervisor to team leader. The programme explored the skills required to be a coach and facilitator. It also examined leadership skills including motivation, communications, conflict management, effective performance management and change management."

4.1.4: Major Barriers to Quality

All the interviewees highlighted barriers to the effective implementation of the quality initiative but were quick to stress that they were never going to prevent the drive for change and that the barriers made them more determined to work together. The Knowledge Management Associate explained, "The initial barrier to implementation was overcoming the bad feeling which resulted from the way that redundancies were handled during the time of downsizing. What people still remembered was the lack of sensitivity concerning redundancy. People had been informed over the public address system to come to the main office and everybody knew that such an announcement was to be told that there was no longer a job here for you, which was not good for morale." The Production Manager believed that cynicism was also a barrier saying, "In the past people did not see any tangible benefit in change and it was all handled badly with fighting between management and unions. People soon lose interest in the process and began to think that change wasn't worth the hassle. This was the reason why we felt engaging people was key." Finally the Facilities Manager explained, "Getting people to work as member of a team was the major challenge. Up until the time people went on the Personal Quality course, the commonly held belief was "that's somebody else's job" or "not my responsibility". All of the interviewees explained the barriers under the following headings, which were documented from the meetings during the initial stages of the implementation. They were the following;

4.1.4.1: Structures

The Knowledge Management Associate said, "There was a lot of 'red tape' and procedures before the quality initiative." She explained, "Streamlining these procedures was important but it was necessary to proceed with caution because some of these procedures were important to the effective operation of business." The Facilities Manager highlighted that too many systems and procedures, particularly in recording information, were hindering progress in his line of work before the quality initiative was embarked on. The Production Manager said, "Systems and procedures were a barrier but they always will be regardless of the system type which the organisation operates under. However, Business Excellence has helped us examine system with a view to looking at stuff which we may not need."

4.1.4.2: Bureaucracy

The Knowledge Management Associate said that the design of the organisation was a barrier to the implementation of the quality initiative. She stated, "The organisation was rigidly bureaucratic." This was echoed by the Production Manager, who pointed to the hierarchy, which had previously existed in the organisation. He believed "that 'red tape bureaucracy' was the mentality in the organisation, and this was the subsequent mindset people held." The Facilities Manager commented, "Nobody had ever been empowered outside of the Board of Directors and this was going to be extremely difficult to achieve." The Skills Development Specialist said, "There was a need for people to have a more mutual view of problems and challenges."

4.1.4.3: Culture

All of the interviewees cited culture as a barrier to the implementation of Business Excellence. The Knowledge Management Associate said, "People had no appreciation for the business as a whole. This was reflected by the fact that there was no feedback from customers resulting in quality standards being low." She highlighted this by saying, "Customer complaints were dealt with two days after the initial complaint was made." The Facilities Manager explained, "People did not take ownership of situations" whereas the Production Manager said, "The culture was very functional and bureaucratic." The Facilities Manager recalled the first meeting as being "the first time when the old culture started to dissolve because it was the first time that people from all levels and all jobs in the company had come together."

4.1.4.4: Politics

The interviewees believed that politics were not a significant barrier to implementing the quality initiative. However they recognised that politics had been responsible for derailing change initiatives in the past. The Facilities Manager said, "Management perspectives and political barriers were not an issue. There was nobody who was against the advancement of the quality initiative. This was facilitated by the partnership agreement between management and trade unions. As the initiative gained momentum people began to see the value of the changes which were being implemented." The Production Manager explained, "The painful memories of redundancy were still to the fore in many people's minds and it was in everybody's interests to make the thing work." The Managing Director explained, "There was no significant hindrances because people knew that the alternative was plant closure which would lead to job loss."

All of the interviewees remarked on the link between achieving Business Excellence and the management of people. The Production Manager said, "The management of people was fundamental to the Business Excellence process." Furthermore, he believed that "process management is secondary to people management." The Facilities Manager said, "Business Excellence is linked to the management of people because it is a way of everyday operation." In his opinion, "The quality organisation is about having respect for the individual and being willing to give the benefit of the doubt to everyone." He stressed that this was the philosophy necessary to build trust so stakeholders such as trade unions would come on board with the process.

The role of people was also deemed to be significant to the process of quality. The Production Manager spoke of people saying, "They are important at all levels. It is not good practice to throw new practices at people. People must be engaged in the process." The Business Systems Manager explained: "Teamwork training and facilitator training were stressed as the key enablers. Training and development was vital to the process, but it was also necessary to give people the time to learn how to be quality conscious - this is why it was so necessary to foster change off site in a local hotel." With respect to training and development, the Skills Development Specialist explained, "Competency charts were and still are used to identify the tasks necessary for a department to function together with the level of competency required of each team member with respect to each task." This is what he believed to be crucial to the success of the quality initiative even if it is extremely costly in the short term.

The Facilities Manager echoed the statements of the Production Manager adding, "Everything revolves around the people and that they can only be as good as their leaders' allow them to be." He stressed, "Leadership, training and recognition were important to engage people in the initiative." The Knowledge Management Associate said, "It was important that management did not exhort that people were the most important asset because this would breed cynicism. What was more important was that people were treated with respect at all times and that management showed people that they were important with actions as opposed to just words. The initial training which people got from the quality initiative has encouraged them to become responsible for their own career development."

The Skills Development Specialist said, "It is now company policy to support and invest in peoples training even if people are not going to stay with the company for their entire career." He explained, "People must now assess for themselves whether or not they have a career with the company. Career planning and development has been enhanced through an educational assistance programme, which gives employees access to relevant further education. This was essential to support the drive for internal promotion for all appointments and is now the norm in the company." He went on to say, "Posts are advertised first on internal notice boards and the search is only taken outside if a suitable candidate does not come forward." The Production Manager added, "The education assistance program has helped many people take up positions in planning, engineering, maintenance, stores and quality, which were previously unavailable to them."

4.1.5: Outcomes of the Initiative

The Skills Development Specialist documented the various outcomes of the quality initiative. At the core of the initiative was to progress towards a teamwork organisation. The team formation process, which resulted, was the following:

- Orientation and Expectation - Welcome the members to the team and explain fully their mission and where it fits within the company's strategic goals.
- Ground Rules - Agree meeting frequency, duration, location and time. Set the rules for decision making, either by consensus or voting.

- Training - Induction training in the areas of team dynamics, problem solving and process improvement. If the mission requires a high degree of technical input then there may be need for additional training.
- Strategy and Objectives - The team may develop a strategic statement, which is a broad approach to the resolution of their particular problem or achievement aim.
- Steering team presentation - The team presents proposed actions to the Steering Team. This is to ensure that the activity is in line with the company's strategic requirements.

When each of the four teams had completed its mission and learned the dynamics of teamwork the whole company was brought back to the hotel for presentations by the four teams and the facilitation team. The brainstorming, which the role of the manager and employee team had engaged in, was recorded on an Ishikawa diagram under four key categories which were deemed to be crucial in the roles employees carry out from day to day. The Production Manager said, "This was the easiest way to highlight to people what needed to be done. It also provided them with a useful checklist of what needed to done." The categories on the Ishikawa diagram were Quality, Effectiveness, Participation, and Training and Development. The Skills Development Specialist explained, "These headings were then used as guides to develop ten employee roles. Employees at all levels worked in groups to develop these roles." They were identified as follows:

- External Customer Focus: Employees need to become more marketplace aware and more customer focused.
- Internal Customer Focus: Customer-supplier relationship should be developed and fostered.
- Continuous Process Improvement: A company wide philosophy of continuous improvement to be put in place.

- Teamwork - Task Skills: Employees should be trained in task skills, which should be routinely used in the context of an overall plan for continuous improvement.
- Teamwork - Process Skills: All employees should be educated in these concepts, which should be an integral part of continuous process improvement.
- Training & Development - Current Position: A system such as competency planning or competency modelling should be used.
- Training & Development - Career: Formal career path counselling should be available to all employees, and internal promotion where possible.
- Innovation: The work environment should give people the opportunity to implement their own innovations and to have them implemented.
- Effectiveness: Identify and eliminate the root causes of problems and avoid workarounds.
- Responsiveness: Responsiveness improves when employees know who the customers are, understand their requirements, and appreciate the marketplace facing the company.

The role of management and role of employee team also determined the positive and negative aspects of current managerial behaviours associated with each topic. These were identified as:

- Strategy: Managers should have a long-range plan c.3-5years for each business unit and have a thorough knowledge of their own business areas.
- Training & development: Managers should view the training and development of their people as an integral part of their job.

- Environment: Managers should insist on a high standard in the psychological and physical working environments.
- Communications: Managers should put in place and develop the skills to operate effectively a range of communications mechanisms.
- Empowerment: Managers should demonstrate teamwork by their actions in encouraging participation in decision making and planning.
- Coaching: All managers should receive training on leadership with a strong emphasis on coaching and mentoring.
- Role modelling: Managers should develop a much deeper understanding of human motivation so that the damaging effect of saying one thing while doing the opposite is appreciated.
- Flexibility: Managers should develop a competency in change management with a style that is more open and communicative so that trust grows and the fear of change diminishes.
- Efficiency: Managers should develop should develop a waste elimination mind-set, and the skills to identify and analyse sources of waste within the organisation.
- Performance management: Managers should use a performance management system with all employees. Time and resource should be scheduled to do this effectively.

The Production Manager said, "It was from this vision of ideal behaviours set out above that the Steering Team and employees set changing the culture of the company." The Managing Director said, "In order to change external customer perceptions and to generate a perception of best practice a Customer Solutions Centre was established within the plant." The Skills Development Specialist explained, "Establishing this venture had twin objectives. The first was to give demonstration to all aspects of the Systimax range. Secondly, in order to highlight the importance of building quality into

the product, the centre has been used to train employees about the ultimate use of the products manufactured in the plant. This means people are more familiar with all aspects of the business.” He added, “The quality initiative has changed the way the organisation is managed. Very few people are now afraid of senior management. Overall, everything is more relationship based.” The Facilities Manager explained, “As a result of the quality initiative people now understand the need to continuously improve.”

The Facilities Manager explained, “For me, the major outcome of the initiative is the fact that the company no longer has a Quality Control Department.” The Production Associate added, “Business Excellence has evolved to such an extent that quality management has been integrated into Business Excellence and become one of several responsibilities within the business excellence portfolio. Quality is no longer the responsibility of any one department or individual. It is everybody’s responsibility. Training makes this possible. Everybody is given induction training on the concepts of personal quality and the internal supplier/customer relationship.”

“Presently the emphasis is very much on strategy” explains the Managing Director. He said, “Gap analyses are used to compare visions to current situations. The company’s present situation is usually measured against ‘STEEP V’ factors (Sociological, Technical, Economical, Environmental, Political and Values). By undertaking such an analysis it is possible to deploy and review plans and actions to implement the strategy.” The Business Systems Manager explained, “This is done by using the Strategic Planning Cycle. This is the methodology by which high-level goals are cascaded down into individual and team objectives, with associated targets and benchmarking.” The Knowledge Management Associate explained, “The Quality Improvement Request is the system, which supports the Strategic Planning Cycle. Each action is monitored in a matrix and measured against the objectives, which teams are trying to achieve. Control charts are compiled and presented at monthly meetings.” Both the Business Systems Manager and the Production Manager believe this allows teams to take necessary action if it is looking likely that goals are not going to be attained.

The Skills Development Specialist explained, “Goals are now communicated to the organisation in general. At the heart of the organisations communications system is the Core Brief where monthly updates on approaches and results are shared with all employees. A monthly meeting is held and where all department managers review and discuss departmental operations. They then return to their departments and brief their team members.” The Knowledge Management Associate referred to this as a good teambuilding exercise saying, “It’s kind of a group hug situation.” She said, “The emphasis is on two-way flow of information and feedback. There is also an ancillary

communications system called 'The Tube'. This network of monitors runs continuous slideshows on areas such as technical bulletins, quality results, customer feedback, important visitors, company share value and human resource issues. The Tube is updated on a daily basis so employees are kept up to date with events as they happen in the company."

The Skills Development Specialist compacted the outcomes saying, "Since embarking on quality in 1994 the company has constantly sought to strive for excellence. In order to evaluate progress the company has used the Business Excellence Model as its guide and for assessing their progress. The model is a useful and pragmatic guide to the company's Strategic Planning Cycle. Based on the Business Excellence Model, it is possible to identify areas for improvement. These areas can then be entered into the policy deployment matrix and progress can be monitored at micro level through control charts and the plan-do-check-act cycle."

4.1.6: Reflections

Upon reflection, The Production Manager, the Skills Development Specialist and Facilities Manager said, "a task-focused culture has emerged." The Business Systems Managers said, "Today there are approximately 25 improvement teams active at any one time, addressing a broad range of issues from both hard and soft disciplines. This is a tangible indication of a task-focussed culture. Employees and teams focus on diverse areas such as Resource Management, Process Management, Customer Satisfaction, People Satisfaction and Impact on Society. Anyone can request the formation of a team, but they must justify their reasoning to the Steering Team who decide whether or not a new team is appropriate, or should the problem be tackled by a working group or even by one expert. Not all problems are suitable for a team approach. However anybody who has an idea that can contribute to the continuous improvement of the business will be given the opportunity to speak his or her mind. This is something I would never have imagined just a few years ago." The Production Manager believes, "There is now a much more collegiate atmosphere. People can nominate team members or individuals for 'The Extra Mile Award' where there has truly been commitment over and beyond the call of duty." The Skills Development Specialist said, "The main reason for the ongoing success of the initiative and the survival of the company is that people have embraced quality principles."

The Knowledge Management Associate said, "The whole thing was very worthwhile, because of the changes which were brought about as a result of the quality initiative. There is a system in place whereby information is centralised which means it can now be used as a quality improvement tool." The Production Manager said, "Business Excellence was worthwhile, particularly with the setting up of the strategy forum." The Facilities Manager emphatically stated, "Business

Excellence has been 'absolutely' worthwhile because of the positive recognition through various awards, which the plant has received in recent years." The Skills Development Specialist also said that the initiative was worthwhile saying, "It got people working together again." This was reflected by Case A's people satisfaction scores being the corporation's best in Europe, Middle East and Africa region. The interviewees acknowledged that the Steering team gave the strategic vision necessary for the quality initiative. Essentially it was the senior management who owned the initiative. The Production Manager singled out the ex - Managing Director as "the one who took a very personal interest in the initiative." He deemed his "charisma and charm" as being very important in bringing about the necessary change. The Facilities Manager said, "initially the project was a top down initiative but now Business Excellence and continuous improvement are part of the culture so everybody is in charge of the change process." The Production Manager believes that "the momentum for the continuing success of Business Excellence comes from top management." The Facilities Manager and the Skills Development Specialist shared this belief. The Knowledge Management Associate said, "is management who must create the atmosphere for changes such as a quality initiative. From this people can decide whether or not to come on board." Her experience has been that "after a period of time the majority of people will come on board provided that they can see the value of the initiative."

The interviewees also stressed the initiative was a success when measured against objectives at the outset. The Knowledge Management Associate said, "The core of the initiative was to get employees talking to their bosses again". She believes that this has been achieved as "employees now sit down with their boss to discuss objectives and any problems in a non-threatening way." The Skills Development Specialist believes the fact that the plant is still in operation is most tangible sign that the quality initiative was a success. The Facilities Manager believes that the place really should have been shut down. Ever since change was embraced in 1994, growth is on the up. The Production Manager chose to highlight the fact that the four strategic areas (communications, training, role of managers and employees and teamwork) were all delivered upon. There are now teams working in all of these areas. The Production Manager believed, "Effective two way communication was the biggest facilitator of change." He joked that "if its not done then all hell breaks loose." He also believed that "early people involvement and the recognition of efforts was important." The Facilities Manager believed that "training people about the need to embrace the quality concept in their everyday work was very important to quality initiative." He deemed the role of

the consultant as crucial in “developing capability in the organisation for quality.” The fact that rewards systems were changed was also helpful. The Production Manager explained, “when teams or individuals have excelled, they can be awarded a gold, silver or bronze award which is some kind of prize.”

Two of the interviewees believe that there have been valuable lessons learned as a result of the initiative. The Production Manager said, “as a result of the initiative people are now more objective and focussed when it comes to reviews of how they work.” Personally he feels that he can “identify the signs of a company which hasn’t implemented a total quality culture when measured against the EFQM.” He said “The exercise brought home the importance of management support and people management when it comes to any type of change.” The Facilities Manager said that both he and the organisation learned the value of the ‘can do approach’. He defined this as “no matter how bad a situation is there is always a solution.” The Facilities Manager said, “The outstanding outcome of the initiative was the fact that their work was recognised by the EFQM.” The Production Manager said that, “having the initiative so publicly acknowledged by professionals has been critical in sustaining the quality culture.” The Production Associate said, “The greatest lesson the company has learned is how to deliver quality. Causes of complaint do no longer result from bad quality. It’s more to do with bad training or communication or somebody not being clear about objectives.” The management believe Business Excellence has been a success as reflected by the 1998 Irish Business Excellence Award and the 2000 European Quality Award. However the memories of the past are still to the fore in the minds of many people in the company. They acknowledge that superior performance will not guarantee survival, but rather how they continue to meet the challenges of the future.

4.2: Case B – Research and Company Information

Initiative Title	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ISO 9000
Key Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1991 - Cost and Competitiveness• 1992 - Redundancies• 1995 - Benchmarking against best practice
Reasons for Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Re-engineer systems and processes• Generate a teamwork culture• Implement social partnership
Interviewees	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public Relations Manager• Head Supervisor• Civil Engineering Technician• Quality Co-ordinator
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1995 to 2001
Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quality Manual• Cost and Competitiveness Review• Internal Assessment Results
Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People have no interest in ISO9000• Organisation is bureaucratic and hierarchical
Rationale for Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Semi-state organisation• First organisation of its type to be awarded ISO9000• Strong trade union presence

4.2.1: Introduction

Case B is a hydro-electric development, which was undertaken by the Irish Government in 1925 and on completion in 1929 was handed over to the power generation division of the Electricity Supply Board. The construction of the power station was a mammoth undertaking for a country the size of Ireland, especially when the State was barely three years old. The cost of five and a half million pounds consumed a huge proportion of the new state's finances and caused bitter argument in the Dail and elsewhere. However the outlay soon produced return on investment when Case B joined Pigeon House as the major suppliers of electricity. In its early life, Case B could supply practically all the electricity needs of the country. The highest proportion of system demand supplied by Case B was 87% in 1936/37. Although at the present time, it supplies only about 3% of the annual demand, it is still vitally important to the system as a rapidly available source of peak power and for cover in cases of emergency or sudden breakdown of other plant.

In 1996 the facility was awarded the ISO 9000. During the interview process the participants gave a very detailed account of ISO 9000 describing it as primarily concerned with “quality management”. The standardised definition of “quality” in ISO 9000 refers to all those features of a product or a service, which are required by a customer. The Public Relations Manager explained, “Quality management” means what the organisation does to ensure that its products conform to the customer’s requirements. However it is not a product standard.” The Quality Co-ordinator , with the aid of the ISO 9000 standard explained, “The awarding body was the National Standards Association of Ireland (NSAI). ISO has been developing voluntary technical standards over almost all sectors of business, industry and technology since 1947. With the exception of ISO 9000 and ISO 14000, the vast majority of ISO standards are highly specific. They are documented agreements containing technical specifications or other precise criteria to be used consistently as rules, guidelines, or definitions of characteristics to ensure that materials, products, processes and services are fit for their purpose.”

The Civil Engineering Technician explained, “ISO 9000 came into being in 1987, followed by ISO 14000, which have brought ISO to the attention of a much wider business community. This is because these two standards are generic management system standards. These standards operate on the assumption that the organisation can manage its way of doing things by systemising it. This ensures that everybody is clear about who is responsible for doing what, when, how, why and where. The ISO’s management systems standards make successful practices available for all organisations - or so we thought.” The Public Relations Manager recalled, “In 1993 as part of a company wide supervisory development scheme, a quality management programme was embarked on in the station. We felt we would be able to put in place a quality management system if we analysed our processes. It seemed like a great opportunity to make some much needed changes in the station.”

4.2.2: Reasons for a Quality Initiative

The Head Supervisor explained, “At a corporate level, management had undertaken a benchmarking exercise, which highlighted changes, which needed to be made in power stations if they were to become best practice. We also wanted something, which would help put management back in control. A lot of things had got out of control in terms of paper, and there was a need to know the location of important documents. We liked the idea of something, which would give us a process approach to managing our affairs. Having seen the standard I was under the impression that it would be something which would help eliminate bureaucracy and excessive paperwork.” Furthermore he added, “Though there was a particular need for changes in the areas of purchasing, inventory and recording a secondary motive of the initiative was to increase morale with a view to improving

efficiency.” The following is a list of findings which was relayed by the Quality Co-ordinator, which indicates areas where management needed to make changes:

- Lower staffing levels
- Better plant conditions
- Excellent maintenance
- Centralised wage negotiations every three years
- Costs to be pared tightly
- Flexible teamwork
- Seamless effectiveness of plant personnel
- Minimal need for operator intervention
- Informal relationships

“It was against this backdrop which senior management welcomed the proposal from a group of supervisors to attain ISO 9000, but they could not be involved with the project itself because they didn’t want the thing confused with the cost cutting which was going on. People were concerned about the managerialist overtones of tones of the effort being called quality management so the chose to refer to it as “ISO” at all times.”

The Public Relations Manager said, “The journey towards ISO 9000 began because there was a need to implement new procedures in the areas of purchasing, inventory and recording. This was because the station housed some of the most important company information from the point of view of logistics. There was a need to take this information from filing cabinets and enter it into an electronic database. It was hoped that the station could manage its affairs more strategically with a quality system in place.” The Civil Engineering Technician added, “There was a need to tidy systems up. There needed to be a system in place to track problems.” The Quality Co-ordinator said, “There was a need to change and streamline standard operating procedures. We needed more people to be introduced to IT. Before 1993 there was only one computer in the entire station, which meant people were very shy about using computers.” She also added, “There was a need for a more transparent business strategy and process as well as a more responsive structure within the station. We hoped at the time that we could implement ISO quickly because the standard is supposed to be applicable to all organisations, regardless of type, size and product provided.”

The Public Relations Manager recalled from the ISO literature saying, "The whole thing really seemed to be tailor made to suit our needs. In the ISO system, standards are developed by national delegations of experts from business, government and other relevant organisations." The Head Supervisor spoke of his decision to endorse the initiative saying, "The ISO 9000 is a family of standards, which represents an international consensus on good management practices with the aim of ensuring that the organisation can time and time again deliver the product, or services that meet quality requirements. Good practices need to be distilled into a set of standardised requirements for a quality management system, regardless of what the organisation does, its size, or whether its in the private or public sector. The flexibility of the standards and their proven track would provide a tried and tested approach for managing business processes so that the station could consistently deliver a quality service." The Civil Engineering Technician added, "Really the whole thing was a drive to support and add impetus to culture change within the company. Also it was something, which may in the future be a requirement for bringing in extra business from Europe and the Middle East. Everything seemed to add up nicely."

4.2.3: Implementation Framework

The Public Relations Manager explained the development of the implementation framework saying, "We needed to tread carefully. If people felt that senior management was driving the thing then there is a danger that it would be associated with the changes, which were taking place due to cost cutting elsewhere in the company. In the end it didn't really matter because everybody thought we were out to get them anyway. It was all down to myself and the Head Supervisor to try and implement a very technical and complicated change. Senior management gave assistance through resources but did not take an active role in case the ISO change was mistaken as a cost cutting exercise which was taking place elsewhere in the company." The Head Supervisor also considered himself and the Public Relations Manager as the ultimate champions of the change. He explained, "There were also three other supervisors who were responsible. We all formed ourselves into a supervisory committee. It was hoped that the consultant would take some responsibility but the first fella didn't." Two consultants were used at various times during the implementation. The Quality Co-ordinator said, "A consultant was important because we needed somebody who knew what's expected in terms of manuals and procedures."

The Quality Co-ordinator explained, "The initial step of the group was to familiarise ourselves with the terms and conditions of the ISO." The Public Relations Manager said, "To help us understand the various terms and conditions the help of an external consultant was sought to advise us on an implementation framework." She explained how the leading team of supervisors received presentations from management consultants, and visited companies who had

already been through the ISO process. Because of the concerns about the unique nature of power station described by one employee as “a place where we constantly check to make sure everything is doing what it should be”, a decision was made to design a tailor made programme for the power station. Relying heavily on the judgement of a management consultant. The Public Relations Manager said, “We thought it would be just a matter of changing a few systems with the help of the consultant, but we were wrong.” The Head Supervisor said, “Initially I didn’t pay any attention to the whole interpersonal aspect, which needed to be addressed. As far as I was concerned everybody was on board. However it became apparent that those who said they were in favour of the initiative and carrying out the aims of the supervisory group were in fact spreading rumours and innuendo about the motives of the supervisory group.”

The Head Supervisor explained the motivation behind the supervisory team saying, “Establishing a supervisory team for the ISO programme was like trying to bring a bunch of strangers together but we eventually brought all the leaders in the station together under one banner. The role of the team was seen as very much open to people’s suggestions. We were hoping that by coming together as one we could help move ownership to the line management and employees. The station manager became an internal consultant and was supported by others to ensure early transfer of ownership. Given the broad demands of the ISO programme a substantial investment in training was needed.” The Head Supervisor explained, “This is where we realised that the whole thing is about getting people on board. The main aim was to raise awareness and generate employees’ commitment to the programme. The target was to train the workforce in the procedures associated with ISO.” The Quality Co-ordinator explained, “The consultant was supposed to train the supervisory team then work with us to bring people along. The programme involved training in brainstorming, cause and effect and measurement tools. The training gave particular accentuation to systems, audits, tools and techniques, and accreditation. This was deemed to be a key lever for gaining employee commitment to, and capability for, continuous improvement. However it seemed no matter what we did we couldn’t get people to take ownership of the ISO programme.”

The Head Supervisor explained, “Senior management provided all the necessary resources but did not have any say in the development or implementation of the programme.” The Public Relations Manager explained, “It was feared that senior management involvement would mean the initiative would be viewed as a cost-cutting exercise, which was getting underway elsewhere in the company. I think if we had even one member of senior management sponsoring the thing it would have shown people that ISO was very important for improving the power station. Then again, I suppose people look at senior management as the bearers of bad news so you just don’t know.” The Civil Engineering Technician believed, “There was a very real role for senior management in helping

us with implementation and I have a feeling many of them weren't keen on travelling down to the sticks. The essence of this change was to review and improve processes to bring them in line with the findings of the best practice study. I'm not sure how true all the stuff about not wanting to be seen as the bad guys is true."

The Head Supervisor said, "I soon began to realise that getting people to co-operate and see the benefits of the quality initiative was going to prove to be a whole load of hassle. What compounded this difficulty was the fact that never before had a power station been awarded ISO 9000 and there was extreme difficulty finding organisations to benchmark themselves against. This is where we felt a consultant was needed." The Public Relations Manager said, "The consultant embarked on a two day training programme for all the staff in the station. He was very impressive when we spoke to him displaying an impressive array of past clients. However he really upset some of our staff with his patronising style. He was basically rubbishing any suggestions, which well-meaning shop-floor employees had. This really upset the union people who had been surprisingly quiet on the ISO thing."

The Civil Engineering Technician said, "This was not the most fruitful way forward with respect to implementation as many felt that there was too much talk and not enough action. But I suppose that was the thing about the ISO. It was very detailed about what quality standards your system should meet but it does not dictate how they should be met in the organisation and I suppose we didn't deal with this very well. Things were inflamed by the consultant ignoring the opinions of those in the station which frustrated and angered many people as they were being told that there co-operation was vital to the success of the initiative." The Public Relations Manager said, "At one stage, none of us knew what was going on. The consultant was saying everything was progressing very well, but gradually people were coming to us and telling us how inadequate this guy made them feel." The Quality Co-ordinator said, "Though people generally found the training and education in the philosophy of ISO useful, it was not long before faith was lost in the consultant. After the in-house training people felt confident in going about making the necessary changes in their behaviour and jobs. However, according to the consultant it seemed none of the changes which people made were deemed sufficient and in line with ISO. This caused much anger and frustration among shop-floor employees and within the supervisory group." "The unions eventually became involved and there was also the usual stuff about not being paid for having to adapt to changes" said the PR Manager.

The Head Supervisor explained, "At shop-floor level people were being commended by the supervisory group only to be told by the consultant that the changes made were not in line with the terms and conditions of ISO. This meant a considerable amount of re-working had to be done by everyone concerned. It was also turning people against the quality programme as people felt they were being blamed for taking initiatives. It was felt that the consultant was not sympathetic towards them and was not taking into account the fact they were coming from a culture where people usually only

had responsibility to their category.” The Public Relations manager acknowledged the difficulty in developing the quality initiative, saying of ISO 9000, “It lays down what requirements a quality system must meet but does not dictate how they should be met in a particular organisation which leaves great scope for confusion.”

The Public Relations Manager said, “Something had to be done, so me and the Head Supervisor went about identifying people who could help us implement the initiative. We tried to convince people of the value, which change under ISO 9000 would bring to their work lives.” However, she recalled, “It soon became apparent that people were going to resist the initiative. There was cynicism about the initiative as people were worried that it was a downsizing operation. Even those who did not see the initiative as a downsizing operation found it difficult to see how it would improve their work practice and quality of work-life as the consultants framework was adding to their daily workload.” The Head Supervisor said, “People believed that the consultant was implementing a framework that was impossible to understand and he was adding unnecessary levels of bureaucracy to standard work practices. This fella had a procedure for everything.” The Quality Co-ordinator said, “Implementation was creating confusion within the supervisory group, which made it extremely difficult for them to highlight benefits to others if they were not clear on what the benefits of the project was themselves.” The Head Supervisor explained, “A conflict of opinions developed within the supervisory group about the value of the consultant. Some were eager to find a new consultant while others felt it was necessary to give the initial consultant time.” He added, “If I had my time over again I’d have got rid of him sooner.”

“There was consensus within the supervisory group that a change in culture in the station was needed”, said the Public Relations Manager. The Head Supervisor said, “The key group in the station were the supervisory staff. It was important this group could see the value of the initiative and sell it to those who worked in their category.” The Quality Co-ordinator explained, “The major problem was that they were rigid in how they carried out their day to day business. Their view was that they had a significant workload managing their own category without managing somebody else’s as well. There had never been a spirit of teamwork within the power station or indeed the organisation at large. The standards would not really impact on everyone’s lives and the supervisors felt that there was going to be a massive amount of extra work on their shoulders because they would have to maintain the thing. At this stage I began to think the type of culture in the station would mean there was no way that ISO 9000 could be implemented. The consultant’s implementation framework was being seriously hampered”, said the Civil Engineering Technician. The Public Relations Manager explained, “At shop-floor level, people refused to give written job descriptions because they felt it would be a convenient way for management to find out how work was conducted and outsource their

function in order to cut costs, it was clear that much work would be needed on the people aspect of change before the operation of working towards ISO could begin.”

“In order to gain the trust of people in the station it was decided that the supervisory group would meet everybody at all levels and explain the objectives of the quality initiative”, explained the Head Supervisor. “The emphasis was on two-way communication and we were particularly sensitive to understanding fears, which people had of the change process”, said the Public Relations Manager. “This was the first time, which people from all categories within the power station were brought together and given the opportunity to express their views”, said the Civil Engineering Technician. “Initially much scepticism was expressed, especially about the consultant, who was very obscure with all proposals and recommendations”, said the Head Supervisor.

The Public Relations Manager explained, “It was on the basis of a number of overwhelming complaints we decided to discontinue with the services of this consultant. With constant reassurance from the supervisory team the majority of people came on board or at least said they were on board. Once they realised that there was no hidden agenda people began to participate and suggested how it would be possible to implement new processes and procedures. They particularly welcomed the move towards transparency and were happy to document procedures and practices, which they used each day. They were also willing to make the adjustments, which were necessary under the regulation of the ISO.” The supervisory group with assistance from a new external consultant set about training people in the philosophy of ISO and the way people would have to change their work habits if the station was to achieve ISO certification. “Those who had resisted initially now began to recognise the need for their individual categories to be more flexible and adaptive. They realised that turning to the union was not always best course of action. I think the union really felt left out when the new consultant came on board”, said the Quality Co-ordinator. The Civil Engineering Technician said, “The new consultant was much more of a people person.” “People agreed that there was a greater need for more individual responsibility with respect to quality. There was also a need for people to change their behaviour so as to remove duplication of effort. There was general agreement that this would have to be done through changes in job design and work processes”, said the Head Supervisor.

Only four months after the implementation programme began did the interviewees feel that they began to make progress. The Head Supervisor explained, “People at shop-floor level no longer trusted the first consultant and neither did the supervisory group. I suppose we lost confidence in him. We could not honestly see how the changes, which he was making, were in line with ISO and felt they were inhibiting effective implementation. Even worse, it became apparent that

some supervisors in the plant were still spreading rumours about the project being an exercise for a minority to advance themselves at the expense of others, which was making it difficult to nurture a new culture. We needed to give the whole thing fresh impetus so we went and got a new consultant.” The Quality Co-ordinator added, “If the consultant was doing his job properly then such a situation would not have developed.”

“There was a need for the new consultant and the supervisory group had to act swiftly. A series of meetings were held in camera with supervisors to salvage the work, which had been done, to date and also to put an end to the rumours for once and for all”, said the Public Relations Manager. “The new consultant played an instrumental role in salvaging the process. He took on board the fears, concerns and the differences of opinion of all the stakeholder groups and was able to act as an honest broker”, said the Head Supervisor. The Quality Co-ordinator said, “The supervisors admitted to having more confidence in the new consultant. He worked alongside them praising initiatives taken by staff and at all times encouraging them to be innovative.” Overall, “He adopted a more facilitative role as opposed to a consultative one which, helped people to regain confidence in the process and themselves”, said the Civil Engineering Technician.

4.2.4: Major Barriers to Quality

There were barriers to achieving ISO 9000. The Public Relations Manager said, “Overcoming peoples’ fears of job loss was an initial barrier. People almost immediately closed ranks when they heard the word change. The assumption was that it was some kind of weapon as opposed to a tool. We hoped the consultant would help us deal with peoples’ fears but it soon became obvious that he felt he had no duty or responsibility in this area. He never explained the purpose of the ISO 9000 to workers. I think if they understood the purpose they would have been a bit more open to the idea. He had one of those off the shelf solutions and he was sticking to it. This made the whole thing unacceptable to the unions and that in itself opened up a whole new can of worms.”

The Civil Engineering Technician said, “The consultant was very confusing. He made simple procedures seem very difficult and no matter how hard people tried he would claim that the standard was not met. He never took on board the fears of the people on the ground, yet the funny thing was that he needed the information from these people if we were to document procedures. The whole thing just didn’t add up.” The Quality Co-ordinator explained, “The mindsets of people unwilling to change was as a barrier to change. Cynicism due to the level of paperwork and the fact that the ISO system is so rigid and fixed rendered people powerless at times. I definitely think there are too many standard operating procedures, which hindered day-to-day business. It would have helped things along if people felt that change was being done by them rather than to them. ISO 9000 called for so much

documentation, task definition, specific qualifications for operating staff, the existence of certain procedures and adherence to them. Ensuring that these criteria are met can easily degenerate into routine checking not requiring any real understanding of whether meeting the criteria will actually lead to the desired result. It may also deter creative thinking and the invention of new working methods. All these considerations make the implementation process difficult.”

The Head Supervisor said, “This was the first time a power station had implemented ISO so it was going to be difficult to find suitable firms to benchmark against. There was also difficulty with peoples’ attitudes. They were indifferent as to whether or not the ISO was successful because there was no bottom line or imminent crisis. There was never enough people available for administrative tasks which needed to be done because people were so busy carrying out their day to day tasks. We were trying for the standard at a time when the organisation as a whole was downsizing so any requests for extra staff were turned down on these grounds.”

All the interviewees said the initial consultant was a barrier to implementation. The PR Manager said, “We’d have been better off learning what to do ourselves. The first fella really was a waste of time and money. I should have listened to the PR Manager and got rid of him sooner. He was very arrogant and a bit of a nit-picker. He never really supported us in trying to educate the people about ISO, showing them how it could be of benefit to them. People who had been performing their jobs for years without scrutiny suddenly felt they were under observation.”

4.2.5: Outcomes of the Initiative

The Civil Engineering Technician said, “I would like to say we have achieved continuous improvement but the changes to the system have not been ongoing. Not a lot is being maintained. People only react when they know there is going to be an audit because they want to keep the boss of their back.” The Head Supervisor said, “I am disappointed the standard has not been maintained. I’m very disappointed with the leadership in the NSAI. They were so strict in pulling us up on every little thing when they were doing the initial audit. Now its as though they really couldn’t care less. We rarely ever get corrective actions and when we do they are only little things and I know there are much bigger things, which need to be fixed. People have now realised they can take shortcuts and get away with them. I’d say we’ve let things go a lot. If the NSAI auditors were more rigorous with their inspection I would say we’d lose the standard, I often wonder are we fooling ourselves with the whole thing. I suppose we really need to give a higher profile and more recognition to the Quality Co-ordinator’s role. I’d also say staff reductions have been a feature which proved peoples’ correct to have concern. I’m not proud of this because we stressed this was not a cost cutting exercise but costs ended up being cut. Technology has meant that the number of people went from 114 to 26 in the area of maintenance.”

The Public Relations Manager said, "Its a great shame that people have not maintained the standard because when the new consultant came in we could see a real difference in how people pulled together in the way they offered suggestions about how to go about implementation. I had people coming up to me and telling me how good they felt about using computers, it made them feel important. I suppose its only natural really that people returned to the old ways once they realise they are no longer being hounded. Those who were union people returned to the old ways. It was great for a while for management because people were taking the initiative and giving us time to concentrate on other things but we are almost back at square one now. Its clear that the supervisors don't want the extra workload." The Quality Co-ordinator offered a different perception of the current day situation saying, "There is now a philosophy of continuous improvement in the station and that new standards are being continuously implemented by everyone. However I think we have lost our way a bit. Ideally I would like to delegate quality functions to the supervisors, but I think I'm busier now than I've ever been which makes you wonder how well things are going. It's certainly showed me how precious my time is and this whole thing can become a disease if you let it. If I was to be positive about the whole thing I'd people are definitely more accountable but the old mindsets are going back to where they were."

The Public Relations Manager explained the outcome of changing consultants, saying, "The change of consultant was the great turning point of the process. The new consultant used the knowledge and ideas of the employees to change processes and systems while ensuring that the changes would stand up to a quality audits undertaken by NSAI. People were now doing the change and they could see how it could benefit them. He urged them to look within themselves each time they undertook a task and ask themselves how could they do it better. He also encouraged people to do things right first time and documented how aiming towards this would make the plant function more efficiently and effectively by removing the need for supervisors to inspect. People were encouraged to consult each other's expertise in the event of difficulty and come up with a collaborative solution. This would allow supervisors more time to manage. This move towards empowerment did not rest easy with some supervisors, as they feared it was eroding the status of their job. However the majority of supervisors accepted the necessary change, and gradually those who resisted came on board. In 1996 the station was awarded ISO 9000 certification, but now I'd say we will be asking to surrender it because its more hassle than its worth."

4.2.6: Reflections

Upon reflection the Quality Co-ordinator said, "The employees have now learned how to do what is necessary when they know an audit is scheduled. Nobody feels threatened by the audit. This is a great source of disappointment for those who put so much effort into to getting people to work together for a cause. This is also the Case with the companies, which were benchmarked against.

People treat quality audits with contempt.” The Head Supervisor added to this saying, “I am disappointed that we haven’t been able to maintain the standard. When we eventually started to turn things around it was great to see people sitting forward and getting on with things. I’m disappointed for those people who I know wanted the thing to work and there were a fair few, who gave so much of their time and it has really been in vain.” The Public Relations Manager also expressed disappointment saying, “I felt very proud of the station the day we achieved accreditation. Everything was against us from the start, yet we all showed the determination to turn things around. I suppose that was the big mistake - thinking that once we got accreditation, people would naturally want to maintain the standard.” As a footnote she added, “Without the people there is no way that the ISO can work. They are the ones who need to be responsible for it from day to day, without them; the whole exercise would be a waste of time. If they feel they are not being treated fairly then they will sabotage any efforts anybody makes.”

The Quality Co-ordinator believes that some good has come from the initiative. He explained, “People’s awareness of the need for quality in the workplace has been heightened.” The Head Supervisor is less positive saying, “The station personnel will not uphold standards unless they are forced to. Despite huge changes in the general organisation there is still no real urgency on behalf of those working in the station to change the way they conduct business. I think this is a reflection on the semi-state sector in general. There are so many different types of trade unions to be dealt with when it comes to developing a plan. We can never satisfy everybody, it’s even difficult to secure a small amount of support sometimes. With the ISO thing I think we did as well as possibly could.” The Public Relations Manager expressed disappointed with the role that trade unions played in the initiative saying, “We are supposed to have partnership with trade unions in this company yet they never tried to help us in any way with this initiative, indeed I think we left them behind when the second consultant won people over. Had the auditors been more thorough with the audits, perhaps the standard would be better maintained, perhaps if we had maintained the supervisory team people we could have kept things going, its difficult to know.”

The Head Supervisor does not believe he can justify maintaining ISO 9000. He said, “It has been very expensive implementing it and it has been very expensive to maintain it. It is difficult to justify maintaining something, which is not really adding value to the station. I could be using my time far more productively than flogging a dead horse as could the others who invest their time in maintaining the thing. Head Office asked us to decide whether ISO is helping the station in any way. I don’t think it is. When the auditors come back the next time I think I’ll be asking them to strike us of their register. What makes it difficult to take is that I know how long it took to put in place these standard operating procedures and now, here we are getting rid of them. I do wonder about the ISO. I think a lot of it is business hype, I’d go as far as to say it’s all about change for the sake of change.”

4.3: Case C – Research and Company Information

Initiative Title	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Quality
Key Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1996 Vision Statement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gap analysis - Benchmarking - Action Learning Project
Reasons for Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve levels of Customer Service • Build a teamwork culture
Interviewees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Director • Director for IT and Administration • Associate Director for Life Business • Associate Director for Underwriting and Branch Services • Customer Services Manager • Deputy Customer Services Manager
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1996 to the present
Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New vision statement for 2005 • Team Formation Policy
Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People welcome transparency through peer evaluation • Transparency has resulted in increased levels of work intensification • People welcome the opportunity to work as part of a team
Rationale for Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Quality Transcends entire organisation • Large Multinational Company

4.3.1: Introduction

Since 1847 Case C has grown and prospered to become one of the largest and most profitable insurance companies in the world. Case C as an organisation is among the top 30 North American insurers. They provide services to more than eight million policyholders throughout Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom and Ireland. Maintaining financial strength and stability while growing and serving the changing needs of the marketplace has always been fundamental to the management approach of the organisation. Case C's conservative management practices have served the organisation's policy owners well in both good and bad economic times. Case C began operating in Ireland in 1903, and trades in Ireland today as "Case C Ireland". In Ireland, Case C is one of the leading providers of life assurance, serious illness cover, pensions, savings and investments, with over 190,000 policyholders. Total assets under management for C Financial Corporation are Ca\$54 billion. In Ireland, Case C manages funds exceeding £1.6 billion and employs 468 people between the head office and branch network. The organisation distributes their products through a network of over 1500 independent brokers and a further 300 sales associates

countrywide. The business figures for 2000, were the best yet reported in the booming life and pensions market. The Annual Premium Equivalent (APE) value of life, investment and pension sales last year soared by 59pc to £73, while was an 82pc increase in single premiums to £305m. Case C has emerged as the top performing group managed pension fund of 2000, with a growth rate of 10.8pc. It enjoyed more than a two-point margin over its nearest competitor, Bank of Ireland (8.4pc).

4.3.2: Reasons for the Quality Initiative

Despite being a company that was thriving at the time of implementing a quality management initiative, the interviewees were concerned about a number of issues. The Associate Director for Life Business said, "There was an external perception of customer service being bad.' In 1996 the management team of Case C were looking at the area of service. Case C as a company had done a vision back in 1996, which at the time was Vision 2001. There needed to be a strategic plan developed to deliver two goals. Goal 1 was to develop world-class capability through people while goal two was to excel in customer care. Straddling these two goals was the ambition to become a "learning organisation." This was defined by the Associate Director for IT and Administration as, "A company which would be capable of transforming itself continuously through learning to the benefit of its stakeholders. This is what guided the changes under the auspices of the service quality initiative. Service quality envisaged a range of management development techniques and technologies applied in real time including action learning, coaching, benchmarking and self assessment. This had the full backing of the Managing Director."

The Associate Director Life Business made the point that it was management and employees at all levels who were calling for the change because, "Everybody has something to deliver on and everybody was tired of the poor reputation for customer service." The Executive Director said, "There was a need to move quality to new plateau. A few of us were new to our positions and keen to make a difference." We wanted to remove service as an objective of sales only and make it something, which everybody works at. The Associate Director for Life Business said "In order to achieve the world class goal there was a need for the company to establish a reputation for service, to be seen as the best. There was a need to become world class in terms of products and people. Our world-class concept goes beyond the textbook definitions. It was important that we identify who our customers were and organise the process around them. We needed to know what kind of service our customers required so we could match our requirements with theirs. We had to move quality to a new plateau." The Associate Director for Underwriting and Branch Services explained, "We had a vision to become world class. We were trying to

penetrate the broker market. This involved identifying who our customers were and organising our process around this.” The Deputy Customer Services Manager said, “The Service Quality initiative was a way of delivering excellence through service. The products offered by the company are top class but everybody has top class products. People in the company needed to change their mindsets to getting it right first time.” The Deputy Life Services Manager added, “The quality initiative was about improving service, but it would be wrong to say that the initiative was a re-engineering. There was a need to get things right the first time to try and decrease the amount of work. So we set about examining what we needed to fix.”

4.3.3: Implementation of the Quality Initiative

There were four principle tenets to the initiative. The Customer Services Manager explained, “A diagnostic questionnaire; benchmarking against best practice; gap analysis in training, measurement and process improvement and focus on delivery of customer care was the way we decided to go about doing things. Education was key. A lot of work went into raising awareness. The main tools, which we used to achieve service quality, were the plan-do-check-act cycle. We certainly didn’t use anything like statistical process control. Benchmarking was probably the main tool which we used. We benchmark first and then work together as a team to try and achieve objectives. We don’t just compare ourselves with Ireland, we also look at our European counterparts.” The Associate Director for Life Business explained, “This enables us to acquire intelligent information in order to deliver a better standard of service. If this was to happen there was everyone at all levels to work on relationship management. This would mean putting in place robust processes, which were dynamic and flexible.”

The Managing Director explained the implementation process saying, “To give people the time and space to learn new processes everything was done on a pilot basis. If parts of the process failed during pilot implementation then these failures could be analysed and corrected to suit the needs of everybody. Things could be modified during a pilot implementation. This was the time for failures, not during the actual implementation itself. The pilot implementation allowed people to make refinements and suggestions. Its like a vote of confidence and gets people engaged in the whole process and talking to each other. Without a pilot implementation I believe that we would lose the buy-in of people.”

The Executive Director also pointed out that the implementation framework was developed from benchmarking against best practice companies. Initially we looked at ISO 9000 but quickly discounted it as a vehicle for achieving best practice. The methods of team-work as suggested by the European Foundation for Quality Model

(EFQM) were deemed more appropriate for the purposes of achieving a world class service. The Associate Director of IT and Administration pointed out, "A diagnostic questionnaire was done based on the EFQM model areas. The data collected from the questionnaire highlighted the areas where there were gaps, which needed to be addressed if the company was to become world class. From the questionnaires came two areas, which needed to be addressed. These were training and process management. The management made a decision to look at process management first."

The Associate Director for Life Business explained, "This was done by everybody doing checks on one another. We needed to know why we were wasting time doing work which should only be done once. The Branch Services Manager said, "There was a need to put in place a structured process in order to deliver a better service. Very often individual departments had ideas to improve service but there was no medium to implement these ideas." The Executive Director said, "The implementation needed to recognise that quality service is a means to an end. In order to penetrate the broker market, there was a need to differentiate in terms of service. The service is something, which is less tangible and less 'copyable'. We needed to look at distribution of all our services, particularly if we were to penetrate the broker market."

The first objective of the service quality initiative was to get continuous improvement up and running. In order to break the concept in gently we brought in different experts at different times to point out to us what best practice and world class were. From these sessions it became clear that for Case C, customer satisfaction measurement, quality of contact with the customer, restructuring service delivery channels and integrating information technology. The beauty of the initiative was that there was no 'pure' consultancy. The Associate Director for Underwriting and Branch Services said, "Continuous improvement would be the driver of the world class is the goal which the company would aim for."

The Deputy Life Services Manager explained the process saying, "The initial step was to establish process owners. Everything was done through piloting and project teams. It was decided that cross-functional teams would be used to help bring people together. In order to do this the help of an outside consultant was sought. This proved to people that management were serious about the initiative. People were brought off site to seminars so they would not be distracted by day-to-day company business." The Associate Director for IT and Administration recalled, "The initial meetings were somewhat difficult as people were a bit defensive. People felt that they themselves were being audited and not the process. It was here that the consultant intervened as an objective observer and assuaged the fears and concerns which people had. At all times we focussed on tasks, process and

becoming more efficient as opposed to personalities and blaming each other.” The Chief Executive explained, “Cross sections of people from different departmental levels of management and experience were brought off site to be educated in the philosophy of continuous improvement. These were the people who emerged as key to the helping the change along. By involving people at all levels of the organisation the idea generation was both top down and bottom up. This was a good way of implanting the whole philosophy of change.”

The Customer Services Manager explained the process saying, “The teams were trained in the areas of problem solving and process review. The seven steps model was as follows. The first step was for the team to select a theme in the department. Having agreed on the theme, the next step was to collect and analyse data around the theme. This should take no more than hour. When this was completed, the group advances to identifying the root cause of problems based on the data collection and analysis. Again this should take no longer than an hour. Then, the cross functional team was given another hour to plan and implement a solution. Then another hour was given to confirming the results found from the process by repeating previous steps. When confirmation of the results was attained, another hour was given to standardise the solution. The final hour of the process was given to reflection so people could learn the new behaviours for the process. They were brought through a seven steps model for problem solving and learned the value of fishbone diagrams as a tool for root cause analysis. Matrices were used to identify problems that needed solutions. The matrix made it possible to rank problems in terms of which were going to have the biggest impact. This resulted in three project teams being set up to go through the seven step process with view to conducting root cause analysis of problems to be solved. The process involved measuring the current situation, applying the service quality model developed, implementing changes identified measuring again to show improvements and finally applying this to another process. All this forced people to focus on the way they do their job and the way they work in the company.”

The Chief Executive explained, “The emphasis on cross functionality meant that people from all different disciplines, at all different levels would be involved in examining the processes within the various departments. One thing about the cross functional teams is that people very often have ‘big’ ideas which are not possible due to resource limitation. The consultants played a key role in the early stages. The consultant played a key facilitative role and stopped people from side tracking. His principle contribution was to help people work through the seven steps for problem solving. If ever anyone got bogged down he found a way forward. It was obvious he had extensive experience. This meant that no one department would be auditing its own service capability. The individual departments ran feedback sessions so everybody throughout the organisation had a role to play in data collection and process appraisal of the quality initiative. The facilitative skills of the consultant enabled people to ask questions to those who were in different departments. This was a great way of team building and has been important in building relationships throughout the company. This meant that people from

different departments could challenge and highlight areas, which maybe improved without offending any one department or individual.”

The Customer Services Manager explained, “People became aware that their actions from day to day could hinder the business of the company. It became apparent that claims were not being followed up as quickly as they should be and in the Case of extenuating circumstances of delay, the customer was not being kept informed. People did not feel they had responsibility for company business in general. This was particularly the Case with accounts people in the company.” The Associate Director for IT and Administration said, “As a result of service quality all processes are identified so appropriate corrective action can be taken if something should go wrong. Now every department documents customer complaints and conducts regular surveys among its customers to try and continuously improve service quality. If you were forced to say anyone thing drove the process it would have to be analysing the complaints because customer complaints were at the root cause of most problems. We found out what was going on in the various processes. This involved identifying and quantifying the process and then finding out what was going on in this process which was causing us to check and re-check work so often.”

The Associate Director for Underwriting and Branch Services explained, “In life services especially we found that claims were not being followed up. This meant that customers had to make additional enquires which reflected bad on our department and the company at large. As we grew to understand our processes there were less cases of two claim cheques being sent out to the same customer. Things were getting sorted out. In pensions and underwriting it was apparent that there was a blame culture. Very often files would go missing. There was nobody taking responsibility and there was no accountability. These problems were sorted out during seminars and meetings. Complaints were analysed at these meetings. Things were done on a colleague-to-colleague basis. People could understand the impact of their work. Analysing the complaints for from claims was immediately beneficial. We were able to streamline processes and eliminate bureaucracy. This helped us cut out the crap.” The Director for IT and Administration said, “It was helpful that we got an early buy-in. An example of how doing it right first time in claims was good for highlighting to people how doing things right first time could be useful to the rest of the organisation. It created consciousness and awareness. Documenting workflow systems was very helpful for suggesting how things could be improved. All this feeds into lifting the mark. The seven-step process is now run in all the departments. Hence, it is now part of the company culture. Now each department has a monthly analysis of how well they are performing the seven steps. By running a root cause analysis the problems as opposed to the symptoms of the problem are solved. Departments now take ownership for solving problems related to service. This has resulted in a service process, which is robust, dynamic and flexible.”

4.3.4: Barriers to the Quality Initiative

The Chief Executive spoke of barriers saying, “Cost and resources is always a barrier to an initiative like this. People are bound to be committed to other projects. Obviously releasing people from the day job will always cause disruptions. I suppose the relationship with sales channel could be better but there definitely has been an improvement on the way it was before the service quality initiative. The sales channel really needed to be treated with ‘kid gloves’. This means that we have to forego the optimal solution sometimes. They’re a different animal to the other channels because they operate in the short-term. We really have to work to get the on side with them. They’re very paranoid about anything, which is going to change performance. This is because unlike the rest of the company they operate in the short term. They seem very vulnerable, maybe its because they’re so close to the customer, I don’t know.”

The Associate Director for IT and Administration explained, “The major barrier to the change was that people still had to carry out their usual workload, which meant they were unable to commit their full energy to the initiative. Its difficult enough to focus on what you are doing today and what needs to be done without thinking about improvements, which need to be made next week or six months down the road. Resource limitations have been a barrier. IT has meant that we can monitor the standard of service we offer. However there is only so much time the IT department can dedicate to the area of service quality, its got a lot of other things it must deal with. I think the vast majority of people have bought in but its difficult to keep doing new things and keep the message alive.” The Customer Services Manager explained, “Because of our youthful workforce I think that everybody realises change is a way of life. If anything we’ve probably come too far. We simply don’t have the resources to implement the ideas, which people have and people sometimes get a bit frustrated because they cannot do something, which will obviously benefit the business.”

4.3.5. Outcomes of the Quality Initiative

The Chief Executive explained, “There have been changes in the structure of the organisation. There is a lot of roll in. Everything is rolled back to head office so the branches are not tied up doing work, which is the responsibility of the head office. Head office has now been restructured along channel lines, which has resulted in channels becoming more user friendly. This resulted in the channel friendly initiative. We’ve probably realised that we cannot offload stuff onto branches. In head office we’ve got to take more responsibility for work.” The Associate Director for Underwriting and Branch Services explained “We’ve realised we can’t be sending unfinished work to the branches because we don’t have time to deal with it ourselves. This is where poor service quality often begins.

We can see that now. The pilots have been great for showing up these kinds of things. The pilots have been great for showing how processes interact with each other. I think the accountants who have always worked in the background now realise that the work that they do is not stand alone.” The Associate Director for Life Business said, “The service quality initiative has increased the service of speed and improved the quality of work. There is now less sloppiness in the basic quality of work. However the next step is to now to exceed expectations. We envisage some resistance in achieving this because it will involve listening in on people’s calls to try and advise them how they might deal more effectively with clients. Some people have already said this is not acceptable to them.”

The Executive Director said, “Quality and reliability are now fine. Turnaround times are generally good. However there is a constant need for continued growth and one thing we have not been particularly good at is getting group pensions. The high performance companies are selling lots and selling regularly. We also need more efficiency but this will conflict the needs of low costs, which customers have. There has been a big investment in IT. Without it service could not have made the leap forward. Service and administration have a higher profile now. Workflow management has had a big impact. We now have a situation where everybody in the various channels is trying to customise service. Administrators are talking to sales. They now feel they’re on the same team.” The Associate Director for IT and Administration explained, “Overall there have been changes in the structure of the organisation. We’re now what you’d call a virtual organisation. Cross-functionalism is the way we now do things. This reflected by the way people now do their work. The pay system is now performance based. Objectives are set at the beginning of each year so everybody has something, which they must deliver on.”

The Associate Director for Underwriting and Branch Services explained, “As the organisation is performance based everybody gets a performance review so pay rises based on performance. People are now encouraged to take opportunities for further study. This means people can learn the business. The company allows a certain amount of time off for study leave and pays the fees of the course. We now give everybody on the job training plans. And try to encourage further education. Another measure we have put in place as a result of the service quality initiative is the idea of job rotation. This gives people variety and gives a much better understanding of the business in general. Because people are better educated in the industry they have more confidence in building relationships with clients. The days of just selling policies in the insurance industry are long gone. It’s about much more than that.”

Everybody believed that the experience has been worthwhile. The Executive Director explained, “A multidisciplinary approach to process development and appraisal has meant that people are being forced to examine their actions and behaviours meaning that a right first time culture has taken hold in the company. There are now vision teams in every department trying to paint the

picture of what the needs of the organisation are going to be in the next five years and beyond. This enables gaps in service quality to be identified and appropriate steps can be taken to correct them. Things are much more holistic.” The Customer Services Manager explained, “People are now taking responsibility for their actions and there are good interactions among branches. This did not exist before the service quality initiative. There has been a great improvement in the standard of service delivery as shown in the regular surveys, which the company does to gauge customer opinion. Its definitely been worthwhile because people get to see how others work. It gets people talking and gives people the chance to get an understanding and feeling of other areas.”

The Associate Director for IT and Administration explained, “The fact that it is still going is the greatest measure of its success. It has not fizzled out. We continue to benchmark and continuously review our processes. Processes are now revolving around the clients, which is a good focus for the company. An off shoot of the service quality initiative has been the ‘channel friendly’ service whereby clients dealing with a specific channel can have a point of contact in that channel so their problems can be solved as soon as possible. It is important to do this because service is not symmetrical. Everybody has different needs. Brokers, customers and employees have praised this service. It provides a single stop for enquiries. It is also a useful medium for finding out how we can improve our services. This has generally helped decrease workloads.” The Deputy Life Services Manager explained, “People are now driving the idea. People are now going to determine the future direction of service quality initiatives. The initiative was worthwhile. People have learned that it is important to change one’s mindset. People now realise and respect the impact, which customers can have on the business. Everybody now focuses on the needs of the customer. People are now empowered to make changes to processes in order to facilitate the needs of the customer based on feedback from surveys and customer complaints. People are now much more tuned into the whole quality issue and how to achieve it. Because the surveys are generally positive people feel that they are part of an organisation, which is dynamic. Probably more than anything else, the service quality initiative gave people a much more general view of the organisation.”

The Deputy Customer Services Manager said, “Certainly, its very important to be willing to change your mindset. I can now see the dangers of standing still. I never really thought about how my actions and the actions of those in my department could have an impact on the client. People are now responsible for maintaining quality in the system. People are empowered. It is much more natural to allow people consult each other and decide what the solution to a problem is based on full knowledge of the facts. This protects against people calling clients looking for information, which was the way things used to done. Certainly the multidisciplinary way of doing things is great. People were and still are very much able to relate to the right first time philosophy. People are now confident about taking responsibility and there is great interaction among the branches. This has meant that people are constantly looking at processes and making whatever changes they deem to be necessary for

improvement, so improvement is continuous. The Customer Services Manager added, "It has got people talking and given everybody insights and understanding of other areas apart from their own in the business. There has been a great corporate benefit to the service quality initiative. It's generally given the organisation focus and impetus. We have now gained a model for continuous improvement that will contribute to ongoing change."

The Associate Director for IT and Administration explained, "The service quality initiative involved taking things a bit further. The goal of gaining a competitive advantage through service has become much more explicit. Cross-functional teams now go into the marketplace and interview brokers. It was discovered from this process that service from the point of view distribution networks are key. The good companies are selling lots and often. They are growing their market share the whole time. We want to be the best in terms of service. We want a reputation for excellent service, to be seen as the best. The first phase cracked service speed and the quality of work is good. The next step now is to try to constantly exceed expectations. In a sense, service efficiency is preventing us from being more caring."

The Chief Executive said, "There is still a constant need for us to care for our customers so they will continue to give their business to us as opposed to a competitor. Hence we now try to involve the customer by asking them how we can make the service better. The people who carry out the various processes are regularly asked how they feel that the processes can be improved. We have in recent times found that new recruits have given useful appraisals of processes, as they have not yet contaminated them. One thing that keeps coming up is that we must keep streamlining process. There is little doubt about the fact that our staff work hard, but staff definitely need a much more caring attitude towards the customer." The Customer Services Manager added to this saying, "I see training complimented with a good recruitment and selection process as the best way of achieving this. Selection and recruitment is now something, which we are beginning to focus on. We now try and get the right kinds of people into the right kinds of jobs. Our recruitment policy is now much more stringent. On top of this we have appointed a full time human resource person to manage these concerns. We try to have people in the best jobs to suit them, for example, somebody who is extroverted we generally put such people into customer service. By doing this we hope to achieve a mutual match between the needs of the individual and the needs of the company."

The Executive Director concluded, "There is a lot of management coaching now in the company which probably would not have come about if the service quality initiative was not implemented. We've never really used a quality manual but the training manual now takes on a new role. Training is documented here and everybody is trained. All staff are given a training program, which is structured to help people advance and learn the business. By the end of the training program people will have been exposed to all aspects of the business which helps to increase their knowledge of the business. Initially nobody is expected to be an expert but they are expected to move swiftly through the training manual."

Everybody is appointed a coaching buddy to answer any questions or concerns with respect to training. This helps people learn in a way, which is non-threatening. Training has really taken the form of creating awareness. This has been done with presentations and seminars. People were educated by the various seminars, the consultant/facilitator and the newly revamped training manual.”

4.3.6: Reflections

The Customer Services Manager said, “The feedback from customers and brokers helps us to constantly monitor and review the process. It validates the things, which we believe to be correct. The returned surveys have also suggested that our clients are happy the way the company is developing. The Associate Director for Life Business, “Staff feel the organisation has become more dynamic as a result of the quality initiative. There is no doubt that the techniques for service quality have been effective. People who might have been iffy on it have bought in because they know it makes sense. I never believed for a moment that anybody would oppose it. The whole thing has definitely been worthwhile.” The Managing Director explained, “There has been a complete revamp of services which has enabled us to move towards continued improvement, which has been appreciated by our clients as was showed from our surveys. All processes are now documented and measured. Nearly all actions are an extension of service quality initiative. There is a new culture in the company. People don’t take things personally. Something is right or it isn’t. If it isn’t we work together to fix it.”

The Assistant Customer Services Manager said, “It’s been a good experience. I’ve enjoyed the challenge of implementing the techniques involved. The involvement of two senior managers was very important in encouraging people to become involved in the project. The involvement of an external consultant and agency gave the initiative a high profile and proved to people that management were serious about the quality initiative. The consultant gave the change focus and discipline which meant we were able to get things done in six months which would have otherwise have taken us twelve. He was also very helpful in identifying areas where we needed to improve in training.”

Upon reflection the Executive Director commented, “Generally things went smoothly. A lot of its got to do with companies business is constantly growing. This made it easier to sell a new idea as there was no crisis imminent. The unique thing about our organisations is the youth of our workforce. This meant that there were no real issues around people not wanting to change. We are very lucky to have such a young workforce. People are open minded enough to realise that the days of a routine job are going, they are seeing the bigger picture. It was obvious to everybody that it made sense to do things right the first time. Many people found the initiative a nice distraction from the usual monotony of day-to-day work and it was one of the few initiatives, which brought people together. This helped people feel at ease and get to know one other. A spin off of this was people learned about the roles, which colleagues carried out from day-to-day in the company so each could understand the difficulties, which his/her colleague was going through. It was a real eye opener to have people that you would

have never met before suggesting ways of improving work practice. What made the experience enjoyable and mutual was that you were then given the opportunity to do likewise. The message was and is that by doing things right the first time the burden of work is eased on everybody.

4.4: Case D – Company and Research Information

Initiative Title	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balanced Scorecard
Key Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1989 – TQM implementation 1995 – World Class Manufacturing Implementation 1998 – Genesis of Balanced Scorecard Initiative
Reasons for Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve performance based on a holistic view of the organisation
Interviewees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing Director Market Support Director Transformation Programme Manager Finance Manager Quality and Environment Manager
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1998 to the present
Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current Balanced Scorecard Key performance indicator predictions Value Statements for Partnership
Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mixed views on partnership People feel they are now much more accountable
Rationale for Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality initiative in a manufacturing environment Strong presence of trade unions

4.4.1: Introduction

Case D owns a portfolio, which includes 18 of the worlds top brands, 100 international brands and operates in over 200 markets worldwide. In 1999 110m cases of product were produced worldwide. Production support centres for Europe, Ireland, North America and the rest of the world supervise production of Case D's wine and spirit brands in 113 owned and contracted production operations in 44 countries. The most significant centres in terms of output are UK, USA, Ireland, Brazil, Italy, Canada, Portugal, India, South Africa, Australia and the Philippines.

Case D Ireland Ltd. is located in Western Industrial Estate Dublin 12. In line with most multinational companies, share price was used as main determinant of performance. The Managing Director gave a brief historical account of quality initiatives in the organisation saying that the company has had a long record of quality management being one of the first Irish companies in the food sector to gain ISO

9000 accreditation. The company has been through many such schemes such as World Class Manufacturing and Total Quality Management because they are important to the business and they to help support the management of change. The Managing Director believes, "Where we are today has been as a result of a progression of a number of steps and I think the Balanced Scorecard is the logical end result of that." Case D produces more liqueurs than anybody else in the world. The organisation has created a whole industry. The downstream effect of this on the Irish economy has been tremendous. The organisation sells 100,000 cases of product in Ireland, which is a huge per capita consumption but very little when compared to the 5 million, which we tend to export. The Managing Director quipped, "You'll find our product all over the world. Its like Coca - Cola its ubiquitous, its everywhere."

4.4.2: Reasons for the Quality Initiative

All the interviewees felt that the Balanced Scorecard was a good idea for the company. The Transformation Programme Manager detailed the reasons why the company moved to embrace the Balanced Scorecard saying, "The board of directors had realised that to be more competitive a company needed more complete reporting on the various aspects of the business. It was important to gain more information that would guide the strategic direction of the company. By using the Balanced Scorecard we wanted to regard the measures selected as a complement to financial controls, and as a means of reducing the danger of a harmful short-term approach while at the same time making the employees of the organisation more aware of the meaning of their work and of the underlying assumptions about the future and about the company." The Market Support Director explained, "There are many people who have an interest in the company. Suppliers, customers, local community, employees, investors, etc. Though, all these stakeholder groups have an interest in D, only the needs of the major investors were being catered for. The company was losing touch with the needs of stakeholders, which did not have return on investment relationship with the company. The aim has been to break down functional walls and make them more cross functional. To facilitate this, an executive management team and a business management team was established." The Transformation Programme Manager was adamant that there was an over emphasis on satisfying shareholders which was affecting relationships between stakeholders at all levels in the company resulting in:

Misleading information for decision-making - all information on costs, revenues, and profitability was providing the foundation for company decision-making. These measures were showing the results of past activities, which were distracting people

from focussing on the future. Leadership in the company tended to focus on monthly and quarterly reports a factor, which tended to favour short-term investment decisions. This was encouraging manipulation of financial measures, so that the financial key ratios may be misleading and lack credibility for purposes of analysis and decision-making.

Obsessive focus on measurement in monetary terms - was leading the company to ignore less tangible, non-financial measures such as product quality, customer satisfaction, delivery time, factory flexibility, new-product lead time, and a higher level of employee know-how.

Abstract information to employees - many employees were being presented with information which was meaningless as they were being presented with numbers, which they did not see as relevant to their work.

The Managing Director explained, "The aim was to move towards a more quality-oriented organisation in terms of managing stakeholders. To achieve this we needed a more open management system and to decentralise decision-making. There was a need for people to take more responsibility and trust in the company. Results in the company were always measured in monetary terms. Sophisticated technologies and production processes had led to new demands on company systems of management control. Financial measures showed the effects of decisions already taken but failed to provide adequate guidance for long-term strategic development. The mission of the company is not simply to create profits and return on investments. We needed to describe what we expected from an operation, and how well expectations are being met. The company needed to develop the capability to manage all customers as well as its portfolio of brands." The Balanced Scorecard was used as the vehicle to help to assist in the delivery of this objective by:

- Drawing a comprehensive picture
- Taking a long term view
- Using the experience of everybody in the company
- Achieving flexibility in processes

This was how the Market Support Director along with the Transformation Programme Manager wished to build the scorecard. In viewing a company from four vital perspectives the Balanced Scorecard is intended to link short-term operational control to the long-term vision and strategy of the business. In this way the company focuses on a few critical key ratios in meaningful target areas. In other words, the company is

forced to control and monitor day-to-day operations as they affect development tomorrow. The company's focus is thus broadened and it becomes relevant to keep a watch on non-financial key ratios.

The Market Support Director, who is project sponsor with responsibility for business performance management based on examining key performance indicators classified the Balanced Scorecard as, "A tool used by the business to give appreciation of all drivers across a range of measures rather than uni-dimensional linkages and functions. The concept is an aid in the essential process of arriving at a shared view of the business environment and of the company. It also provides a new foundation for strategic control."

The Managing Director focussed on the strategic role which the initiative had to play saying, "The Balanced Scorecard was implemented because the first thing in management is that you have got to measure what you are doing. If you can't measure it then you can't improve it. The scorecard is giving you a metric against how you are progressing against your strategy and are you delivering your strategy. That's the core thing for the scorecard. We've converted our scorecard into the service side and the product side. We measure the various parameters and we set ourselves targets and then each month we measure these targets and see are we delivering on these targets. So it's all about measurement of strategy and are you performing against strategy. It's also about setting higher standards for yourself as you go forward."

The Finance Manager said, "We were looking at our strategy and how we formulate our strategy and it fell very neatly into customer and consumer driven areas and as a result of that we looked at the consumer end which is very cost driven and at the other end we looked at the customer where things are all about good service." The Managing Director was very keen to stress the distinction between customer and consumer saying, "We make very clear distinctions between the customer and the consumer. Service and cost is key to both these groups. The overlay on everything then is people; there is a huge emphasis on people. What I'm basically in charge of here is changing this organisation from a production company to a supplier. Supplier has all sorts of connotations. It means after sales service, it means providing the service that people expect. We needed something, which would take account of all these different needs. The producer organisation is a producer of goods producing goods and then forgetting all about them. I see this organisation as working right through the supply chain from the procurement end right through to making sure the consumer is happy. In every part in between we have a role to play. We play a role in supporting promotions, planning for promotions, delivering promotions, being aware that promotions are coming up and having product available. This all feeds into growing the company and market share. So we support marketing, sales, customer satisfaction by monitoring customer complaints or as we call them concerns. You could

examine each module in the supply chain and we have defined our role in each area from the point of view of being suppliers. The Balance Scorecard helps us manage all these diverse factors in our business.”

The Finance Manager concluded saying, “I would never say that the Balanced Scorecard was necessary, because you can still manage the business but the question is how far can you push the business, how can you manage performance and what are the restrictions so its not so much that it was a necessary thing to do. Its more that it was desirable or aspirational and it has proved itself. We are still proving it that it is a better way of managing the business. The way of managing a business historically has been through budgets. You do your plan at the start of the year. You decide what your strategy is going to be and decide your costs which, become figures for the budgets. Those figures will have sales targets, production volume targets, costs of goods, overheads, capital investment costs. These figures would be cast in stone saying this is what we’re going to do and lets measure everything around these. The problem is that each part of the budget becomes dissected. Lets say I’m managing the purchasing of spirits, I’ll manage that part of the budget. Somebody else will be managing the production line and the number of employees, they’ll manage that part of the budget. As a result, everything gets couched in isolation. While you try and look at the overall budget by adding up all the figures and seeing is the company in budget, individually you are managing your piece and this is not good business practice.”

4.4.3: Implementation Framework

The participants explained how the whole scorecard idea came to fruition through a group of companies which had come together with a mutual interest in the beyond budgeting idea. Case D became very active in this consortium of manufacturing companies. A key driver of the implementation process forming strategic partnerships with organisations who wished to take a more holistic approach to managing their organisation. The Finance Manager commented, “The whole beyond budget philosophy had been in the books for many years but never became reality.” The Quality and Environment Manager explained, “Gradually, companies throughout Europe took on the whole area of beyond budgeting. What we were exploring was can The Balanced Scorecard do for our company be a way of managing a business in reality. Basically the whole beyond budgeting went to developing The Balanced Scorecard as a way of managing business as opposed to all the traditional mechanisms. This was the whole area which was being studied initially.” The Transformation Programme Manager explained, “A number of people were very specific on how the beyond budgeting could be implemented and they came on board working with the group of companies. This group started working in Case D in October 1998 initially with our finance team. Three functional areas from the

Case D group acted as pilots to see how we could advance the whole exercise with a view to finding out how we could use a balanced scorecard to manage performance in our business.”

The Quality and Environment Manager said of implementation, “There was many meetings to develop the weighting of measures. Out of these meetings came a new number of non-conformance measures and a lot of statistical information was pulled together. This involved doing an audit in terms skills, structure, staff, style, and systems to establish whether or not the company had sufficient capability to maintain a quality system. This was done to help everybody focus on what the business was and what areas needed to be addressed. When this was completed an analysis was done of who our key stakeholders are. These were deemed to shareholders, managers, customers, employees and suppliers. It was on the basis of these two exercises that The Balanced Scorecard was built. By identifying the key stakeholders at the core of the business it was hoped to that we could get some kind of strategic fit between the two.”

The Transformation Programme Manager said, “Teamwork was crucial to the implementation of the scorecard.” The Managing Director, the Market Support Director and the Finance Manager also echoed this. The Transformation Programme Manager explained, “Two new teams were set up called ‘The Business Management Team’ (BMT) and ‘The Executive Management Team’ (EMT). There was a need for a less bureaucratic structure.” These teams still exist today. There are seven members on each of these two teams responsible for developing strategy, which comprises of continuous process and project improvements. The Finance Manager explained, “The continuous improvement process is at the core of the business. This is where most of the revenue (IR£65million) is generated. It is hoped to grow this over the next five years to IR£100million. Project improvement is an ancillary function to the continuous process. These are the methods employed to find new revenues to ensure the growth of business. This involves research into new brands, research into new customers and other such initiatives. The EMT determines the strategic direction of the company. The BMT operationalises the strategy and run the continuous process from day to day.” The Transformation Programme Manager explained, “There is a special strategy projects office, which is responsible for the various developments under project improvements. Within this office are cross-functional teams which are responsible for the idea generation. These teams dip into the knowledge and expertise of those who operate in the continuous process. This means that project work does not interfere with the day to day running of the continuous process. Though the process is now well established, a certain amount of pain was endured implementing it.”

Transformation Programme Manager documented difficulties to the various problems saying, “It soon became clear that people were unable to leave past perceptions of such projects behind. People felt that this was just another initiative to increase shareholder value and not an initiative to increase the quality of work life for everyone. What reinforced this perception was the fact

that the finance people were put in charge and they were only interested in increasing the bottom line. They set about reinforcing control and command systems, something that we were trying to move away from." The Finance Manager also documented the problems saying, "From every bottle of liquor produced in the company approximately IR£1.20 profit is made. Employees felt they were being squeezed with only 3% increases annually, suppliers were suffering from deferred payments and customers were being left to bear the brunt of prices increases."

4.4.4: Barriers to Implementation

Implementing the Balanced Scorecard has not been without difficulty. The Managing Director commented, "We've taken a lot a pain, a lot of disruption in the organisation to get it in place." The result of this was that stakeholders did not feel that the initiative was designed to help them get any benefit from the value that they were producing for the company. The Market Support Direct explained, "Cynicism, disgruntlement, apathy and low morale all greeted the initial quality movement. It was clear from the first initiative that management did not know what people's values were. There was a need to get a better balance of values and some kind of insight into cause and effect relationships. We wanted a concept and a method to help us in our discussions on where our business should be heading. It was clear that putting finance people alone in charge would not help us do this. It was decided by board to bring in an external consultant to give the change impetus. A transformation manager, which we thought would be temporary but is now permanent, was also appointed from within the company to manage the initiative as an ongoing project, not as something that was strictly going to benefit finance stakeholders."

The Managing Director believed that the key thing was to develop the strategy into a form that is easy to communicate. This was deemed key to the development of the whole key performance indicator because people knew the process in the company and what areas needed to be monitored. This meant that people needed to feel comfortable with regular reviews of the appropriateness of the strategy at their workstations to ensure that present day strategy is valid today as it was say two or three years ago when it was first developed. The Market Support Director put the people management aspects of implementation at the heart of the implementation saying, "Very important to this is correct HR policies. Are we training our people, are we looking after our people the way we should be looking after them, are we a caring employer. This is central to any kind of implementation".

Discussions with all the participants illustrated that there is an awful lot of culture change involved in The Balanced Scorecard and that this takes time. As the Managing Director illustrated, "What we're is involving people. Essentially we are giving people some kind of licence to use their full abilities. If you give people a permit or a licence to move out of the boxes, which they traditionally were in, they will move out and they'll surprise you. When shop-floor employee come to work they don't hang their brains on the coat hanger, they have brains. The whole trick in organisation like this is to turn the key to get people to use their brains to their maximum ability. This is what we have really begun to make progress on".

Trying to achieve implementation of The Balanced Scorecard has proved challenging to Case D as traditionally employee relations have been quite entrenched and antagonistic. However a more unitarist framework for industrial relations can be achieved as documented by the Managing Director. He said, "Some years ago we undertook an initiative to bring in teamwork with annualised hours. We were trying to combine a system of flexible work with a system, which meant payment by results with The Balanced Scorecard initiative to get the momentum for change going. In any kind of change we've implemented there have always been three groups. Those who are an enthusiastic bunch, those who are cool and will say lets give it a try and then those who will say no. Everybody will have an opinion so you've got to have something in place to suit these opinions so we put in place a voluntary redundancy scheme. This meant that those who didn't feel up to this new scheme had the opportunity to take a very good package and we brought in young people who were capable of filling he places and doing the roles. Those who were cool on the idea agreed to give the idea a trial of three years, which has expired this year - none of them have taken voluntary redundancy."

More practical every day barriers were also directed. The Managing Director said, "First of all we are here to do a job to make sure that the market is supplied with product X. The point at the end of the day is that doing something like the Balanced Scorecard is radically different. It requires a huge amount of up front time to get the structure up and running. You've got to find time and space in what's already a very busy schedule to do all this work. It's costly. You need manpower, and people are expensive nowadays, you need software that's expensive, you need culture change. Remember we don't have budgets anymore, we've left budgets behind and that's a huge, huge change. Budgets are retrospective and can lead to cutting value added activities." Also, the Transformation Programme Manager said, "This whole culture change is uncomfortable. There are many who are very uncomfortable not having the comfort of having a budget in front of them. However we are all learning that key performance indicators show us what direction we are going in and tell us we're going in the right direction."

Individual cases of resistance have also been a barrier to implementing The Balanced Scorecard. The Transformation Programme Manager explained, "One of the major barriers to the quality initiative was the Operations Director not embracing the change. At meetings the impression was given that he was on board and in favour of everything. However at local level he continued to get his people to produce production reports in the old way in the hope that The Balanced Scorecard and the transparent way of doing things was the latest fad, but there were too many people on the executive management team who were determined to see the initiative work. The fact that the resistance was so covert meant much time was lost."

The Finance Manager alluded to the reporting procedure as an implementation barrier saying that breaking from past culture is always difficult because human nature will always try to decrease your target so that you have a better chance of exceeding your target. He said, "People do get stressed about having too many red indicators showing that they are not balancing the needs of everybody in the business. Initially you may make mistakes when using The Balanced Scorecard but as you become more experienced in using The Balanced Scorecard your target setting becomes a much easier activity and it does feed directly from the strategic plan. The colouring with green, amber and red there is still the tendency and there's always going to be a tendency that people will start looking at red initially. The case initially was that red was negative but the more you move into it the more you see that where key performance indicators are green and totally exceeding their targets, you realise that this is equally bad. If you have a target for an area then this will form a context for your business plan and how you set up the resources to deliver in those areas. If you are overachieving on a performance indicator it will have a knock on effect and can knock processes out of control." Though the new system has required adjustment, the Transformation Programme Manager believes that it is a system, which is progressing. This is highlighted when he said, "However it has got to the stage now where people are beginning to help each other if there is a problem with the number of red indicators. We can now talk about things in an open sensible and mature manner and this has contributed to transparency and balancing the needs of all stakeholders."

The Quality and Environment Manager also difficulties with the colour code system but realises that it is progress in the right direction saying, "This has been due to a commitment from everybody to deliver better service to customers and consumers. These are the two groups under which all stakeholders fall. All departments have a joint interest to service both of these groups." The Quality and Environment Manager highlighted further barriers saying, "Making it a priority with people can be difficult. There is also the problem of accessing information so the KPIs are an honest reflection of the business performance. The Market Support Director highlighted some of the defects of The Balanced Scorecard saying, "The scorecard has not been useful

in modelling the interconnections between the various aspects of the business and its difficult to get people to discuss this. Modelling the relationships is difficult, complex and expensive. Often can result in a whole load of statistical information or mathematical stuff, which people have difficulty understanding, and it will be probably obsolete anyway by the time you do get to understand it. So the danger is that we are sometimes paying a load of cash for what's useless information. I generally found that the scorecard is best for setting the agenda for the cross functional teams. Its great as a pump primer for the cross functional teams and pointing out potential impacts of decisions but not for modelling relationships. The other thing is that it's been difficult to keep people pushing the boundary. IT has made it sexy and given it a bit of energy but its difficult to keep the energy. Its difficult to keep focussed on the content, to get new measures, targets and key performance indicators. These days it seems to be more of an IT project than anything else. The scorecard is useless for strategy development though they'll tell you this is a core function of the thing".

4.4.5: Outcomes from the Quality Initiative

Despite barriers, the organisation was perceived as benefiting from the Balanced Scorecard initiative. The Market Support Director documented an example of some of the types of success registered saying, "Recently the union called me inviting myself and my director colleagues to attend a presentation on the Balanced Scorecard. The unions feel it has been a resounding success. The quality of work life for our workers has gone up. It is estimated that they have an extra 200 free hours per year, which they wouldn't have had under previous arrangements. Under the new arrangements people were being forced to take the initiative. The machinery had to deliver certain volumes, the quality had to be to certain standards. People were taking the initiative. Where there were high levels of absenteeism, the pay levels of the overall team were being affected. People in the various teams wouldn't take this so they dealt with the offenders in their own way by lecturing them." The participants in the interviews believe that this peer pressure has been much more effective than any management pressure. Now people demand to be part of the Balanced Scorecard and all that goes with it. The Transformation Programme Manager said, "They demand to go along and examine any new machinery, which we are going to buy, because that equipment is going to dictate any output. In the old days they didn't mind if we bought the greatest rubbish. Buying rubbish meant that people had to do overtime because of preventative maintenance. This is grossly inefficient and prevents us from maintaining our role as a consumer organisation. These people have now bought into the whole change, they have been energised. I see this as a key to change in the future."

Continuous improvement has now become a philosophy for Case D. The Managing Director said, "It actually measures your continuous improvement in delivering your strategy. The scorecard helps us measure things like quality and innovation, which are very subjective and difficult to

measure at the best of times. It gives us good discipline, forcing us to sit down and debate things. It gets people debating on ways of measurement; by asking questions such as how can I measure quality, what's important in quality. That in itself is a great exercise. It sharpens up the thinking of the management team. As continuous improvement is a way of life here, we do things like this all the time." All the interviewees suggested that this has improved the flow of information within the organisation. For example the Finance Manager said, "We know what our targets are, we know what our aspirations are in terms of what we are trying to deliver overall, we know what the plans are. Performance indicators provide the basis of how well we are running our business not the profit, which was made last year or last month. It was suggested that people were weary of the various indicators being marked green, red and amber. This changed when they became comfortable with what they were trying to achieve."

Essentially continuous improvement was the major outcome of the Balanced Scorecard initiative. The Managing Director said, "We're on the way to getting a culture which is one of involvement which recognises peoples value and peoples worth. It's terribly important that people feel valued, trusted, involved. This is a huge step forward but were making it when compared against six or seven years ago when we had a very confrontational attitude when management would shout and roar at the shop-floor. By nowadays when I say something I would expect somebody to challenge me at any level in the company. I can be wrong too and I welcome that challenge to make sure I go through the right mental processes to come to a decision and ensure that I'm giving the correct leadership. That's not to say we don't have challenges we do, but they're not confrontational." The Transformation Programme Manager was also keen to stress the role of achieving involvement saying, "For any initiative - continuous improvement, total quality, balanced scorecard whatever your talking about, all these rely on people. If the people don't think its right it will never work. If people can understand and buy in then there is a good chance that things can work properly. That's why anything we do puts a huge emphasis on people training and management. We're trying to go beyond any notion of empowerment. We are not trying to grant people power. They have that power already and it's helping them release that, that's what were trying to do."

The Market Support Director said, "The Balanced Scorecard has meant that people can now see the impact they have and so take care in their work because they realise the actions they have will impact on somebody else. This has resulted in a more balanced view of things." He added that staff now participate in the development of strategy through suggestion schemes and are consulted on various policies by the communication manager and the transformation programme manager. The mission statement of the company has been changed to reflect a new set of values. Traditionally the organisation was very mechanistic made up of mainly engineers and accountants. The emphasis was on systems, procedures

and outputs. Everything was extremely rigid. Now the drive is to become more flexible, dynamic, softer, people approach. The Market Support Director said, "The Balanced Scorecard has been key to help communicate strategy to staff. It is a key to success because it highlights what impact people have. It gives a much more balanced view of the business. It has the ability to engage people by articulating the strategy and then allowing people take the necessary action to execute that strategy".

4.4.6: Reflections

All the interviewees feel that the Balanced Scorecard has been a success, however the future challenge is to sustain the Balanced Scorecard. The Market Support Director reported, "Getting new people with new ideas was important to building momentum for continuing the change." The Quality and Environment Manager accentuated the positive aspects of the scorecard saying, "The scorecard has helped to prioritise quality issues. Quality has moved to a higher plateau and there are now very definite action plans. Reports go to head office in London so everything must be in order. Overall it has been a success. We have been able to build it and work on it. We are on a learning curve, which we have to keep on developing. The initiative has been a success. The EMT and the BMT have got a very positive response." The Finance Manager stressed the positive impact, which the scorecard has had on his role in the organisation saying, "I can now investigate, negotiate and work with people to reduce costs, by travelling around the globe to meet suppliers and advise them on ways to cut their costs as well as our own based on the performance indicators found in the scorecard. In the old days a budget would not have permitted this so we would have to forgo the opportunity to improve situations." Finally, the Transformation Programme Manager also reflected positively saying, "Its about maximising, that's where the real gain is so people will see opportunities and go for those opportunities knowing that they will be rewarded for them knowing that they'll get recognition for them because The Balanced Scorecard if its set up correctly, it will reflect your contribution to the overall value of the business. It's all about maximising not minimising, that's the key to it."

Upon reflection, certain interviewees believe there has been a new role for designed for training. The Transformation Programme Manager said, "There have been a lot of changes around the area of how people work together. This has required a huge investment in training around IT in particular. Three years ago the training budget was IR£40,000 per annum. As a result of the changes, the training budget has increased to IR£500,000 per annum. Every year thirty people are put through the ADAPT training initiative. All junior managers are being sent away on personal development courses and being thought the value of project management skills." The Quality and Environment Manager also highlighted the new role for training saying, "Previously

training had been used as a dumping ground for money, which was left over from departmental budgets. If managers had revenues left over at the end of each they were in danger of having their budget cut in the future. Hence large amounts of money were being squandered for political reasons. For this reason, budgets have been discarded. Business is now conducted in a holistic fashion. If management require funding they are required to submit a project plan and present it to the executive management team. This has meant there is now transparency between departments.”

Upon further reflection the Market Support Director highlighted the importance of senior management in achieving The Balanced Scorecard saying, “Executive sponsorship has been key for the execution of the scorecard. These are the power brokers in the organisation and the one with the power to make things happen.. There is a need for continuing examination of causal interdependencies to ensure that the key performance indicators we are using are relevant. The important group here are the BMT. Managers of various functional areas need to take responsibility here. They are dealing with the scorecard from day-to-day. They live and breathe it. They are important for continuously examining how well its working and for articulating and implementing strategy. It’s a real team effort and everyone has a role to play in order to ensure the continuing success of the scorecard.” The Transformation Programme Manager highlighted the crucial role which senior management play in ensuring an initiative such as The Balanced Scorecard is a success saying, “The realisation that the Operations Director was sabotaging efforts to build a new future was undoubtedly a critical moment. For a long time I couldn’t figure out where and why things weren’t adding up. As far as I was concerned everybody at senior level had bought into the change and everything in the reporting process was in order, but something didn’t add up. The fact that a senior manager could be subverting the whole thing was amazing. Implementation certainly was not what I expected. I expected things to be much quicker. Initial attempts at implementation had no grasp of the people aspect. Previous change initiatives were split 80 20 in favour of technical fixes instead of people aspects. This has now changed.”

Overall the Managing Director said, “the venture has been a hugely worthwhile experience. Business performance management has helped us cut through change. The Balanced Scorecard has made this change real and tangible. It has brought out the strategic aspects of day-to-day work helping people realise the impact that their actions can have on the company. Much of its strength lies in developing the process because it is at this stage that people were analysing and discussing the company’s situation and capabilities. Everyone is able to get a comprehensive picture of the company inside and outside the company, which assists in sound decision making. The scorecard gives the agenda and structures thinking.”

The Transformation Programme Manager emphasised, “We have been able to move from a command to a coach structure. BMT and EMT would have been a disaster if things were not structured.

The success of the scorecard lies in tailoring the thing. Taking the scorecard off the shelf is a waste of time, it will be doomed to failure, but to take it and use it to implement strategy can be very effective. Ultimately the scorecard has brought home to us that things like quality control do not add one penny of value to an organisation because it is post the event. You're checking the level of defect, which you have just produced whereas your efforts should be at the front of the line in quality assurance. One pound spent in quality assurance will produce as much as ten pounds spent in quality control. It's before the event in training people. The way I'd look at this is taking preventative maintenance to ensure that the machinery is running correctly. I've seen bottling lines with people looking at bottles examining the labels, inspecting the bottles. However if you get people to focus on the machinery and take pride in their equipment, then the machine will work correctly. To me the analogy of Michelangelo carving the Pieta comes to mind. He didn't have other people going to Carrara to get the marble. He went and he picked the marble himself. He bought that marble and carved that marble and didn't have a fella coming to him in a white coat asking to see if it was okay. He had enough pride in his own work to realise that he had produced a masterpiece. This is where we want to go with quality in this company. We're not there yet, but we're getting there."

4.5: Case E – Research and Company Information

Initiative Title	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total Quality Management
Key Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1991 - Cost and Competitiveness • 1992 – Redundancies • 1995 - Benchmarking against best practice
Reasons for Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to build market share • Need to increase customer satisfaction
Interviewees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Services Director • Customer Services Manager • Customer Services Manager (former) • Assistant Customer Services Manager
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1995 to the present
Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Manual • Market Damage Model
Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some people are very familiar with TQM whereas others have never heard of it
Rationale for Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TQM in a service environment

4.5.1: Introduction

Case E is a company, which operates independently from but under the umbrella of Ireland's leading banking and financial services organisation. It operates principally in Ireland, Britain, the USA, Poland and Asia. It employs over 31,000 people worldwide in more than 1000 offices. The Assistant Customer Services Manager explained that

Case E is a significant business unit within a bank. There are approximately 400 staff in Case E. This is a small base of staff when compared to the rest of the organisation. Traditionally this has enabled employees and management work in close co-operation with each other which has resulted in management making numerous attempts at implementing total quality management (TQM) under a range of titles such as 'continuous process improvement' and 'world class service'. These days, "TQM and the all-inclusive way of doing things is very much the way we do business", says the Assistant Customer Services Manager.

4.5.2: Reasons for the Quality Initiative

There was consensus among the interviewees that the quality initiative was, and still is, something which needs to be sustained. The Customer Services Manager said, "We were trying to reengineer the business to implement a workflow process. We needed to improve our standard of service. There was concern at senior level that our competitors were growing their market share. Market research had shown that margins were falling and customers were getting more and more demanding. There was a hunch that we were losing customers to our competitors. We wanted and needed to open people's minds up to a new way of doing business with a view to getting people to have more of a customer focus in their everyday work task with a greater concern for quality."

Further to this the Assistant Customer Services Manager explained that this coincided with many new initiatives in the bank, which were being rolled out to encourage people to take more responsibility for their actions and behaviours in the workplace. This resulted in a three-fold TQM programme to build momentum for change. He explained, "The essence of the change was three-fold involving customer service, quality and staff development. The overarching aim was to get people to be more loyal to the process as opposed to their own individual function. There was a need to look at the business in a holistic sense. It was summed up under the maxim "think company while acting department." The former Customer Services Manager stressed there was a need for focus on bottom line considerations and customer service. Customer service needed to deliver more in terms of business growth. He pointed out, "The key thing in E is how do we make a difference. We see our TQM process as the delivering the difference. Because service is intangible, the quality of this service is the only way that we can differentiate ourselves from the competition and the only way we can do this is through our people which we are not making the most of."

A further reason for pursuing TQM was the fact that there had been a history of the quality phenomenon in the organisation. The Customer Services Director said, "The quality movement is something which has evolved in the company. The first attempt at a quality initiative was the total quality management programme eight years ago. Since then we have been trying to constantly reposition quality through value and mission statements and more recently through our vision studies for 2000 and 2003. These have been painting the ideal picture of where we wish to be in terms of our quality. The vision has also highlighted the gaps in the company's pursuit of quality. This made the decision to undertake TQM a logical one because we already knew a great deal about it."

The Assistant Customer Services Manager indicated the importance of people in delivering the competitive advantage through people. He said the key success factor indicator this is the staff at their workstation totally tuned into to how important it is to deliver consistent quality service in terms both internally and externally. He did not believe that this has been fully achieved, but this is what the goal should be. He said, "Grand aspirations such as cultural change for quality need to become part of the company. If these values remain on the walls and are not actually lived then it's just an academic exercise and it doesn't change the value that the customer gets. The value the customer gets is at the core of quality management in the company. If this could be achieved that is, a situation where the front line are aware and almost as second nature as part of their job, that they come in and deliver top class service, this would hold customers that would make for a competitive advantage." People needed to be switched onto this.

The interviewees were very aware of strong competition within the banking industry and the wider business community, which have begun to offer finance and leasing services. There is little doubt that competition will be increasing all the time. The Assistant Customer Services Manager spoke about this saying, "Ultimately the bells and whistles, which you add onto the financial services product, add a layer of complexity, which have and have not been a success but I would say fundamentally the staff attitude in terms of delivering what you promise and turnaround times would be at the centre of the success for financial products." The consensus among the interviewees was that the customer makes his/her decision to continue doing business with E based on the excellence of their people and their service. The interviewees were very aware of the need for TQM but the Customer Services Manager felt that if one was to go down to the floor and enquire about the vision for customers, many people would be somewhat indifferent about quality. The interviewees were concerned that though TQM has been promoted around the entire

organisation, there is still uncertainty as to how much people have taken on board the message. This is why they needed to renew the TQM initiative.

The interviewees constantly came back to the need for people to deliver higher standards of quality as the key reason for the quality initiative. The Assistant Customer Services Manager believed that previous initiatives tended to overlook the role of people in delivering quality. He said, "When we talk about quality we need to consider the various policies and procedures, which are in the organisation. For people in some jobs, quality will be measured according to a set of how well they conform to a set of requirements. These may include how long it takes them to answer a phone or deal with inquiries. We need to find out what type of quality we need people to deliver on in various areas and set about doing everything we can to help them achieve the quality." This was to be philosophy of the latest experiment with TQM.

4.5.3: Implementation Framework

As people were deemed to be a key asset of the company, the interviewees recognised that they must be at the core of the implementation. This has resulted in their work at the individual level coming under review. The Customer Services Manager explained, "Standards of quality are deemed a key performance indicator. This is reflected in performance appraisal and pay." The Assistant Customer Services Manager did not think too many managers would survive if they took a draconian approach to this because; the whole value system in the organisation is based on togetherness and leadership through people. He commented, "A lot of good stuff has come out of Case E over the years and I'm not just saying that. If people lived the values that were being encouraged and recommended with respect to doing business I'd say we'd be flying." The interviewees pointed out that early on people were educated in a new TQM initiatives by a number of managers presenting the new initiative at functional levels in the organisation. The Customer Services Director said, "This gave people a flavour for the various textbook definitions on quality management which they were able to relate to their concept of the quality concept. We learned from this exercise that when you speak the language of those who have responsibility for the job, it quickly becomes clear whether or not they work in a quality way. People will generally know turnaround times on releasing information or how long they should allow a phone to answer before they pick up. However for others there may be less defined guidelines for quality. It may be how they influence and negotiate with colleagues or how they interact with customer, these are things, which are difficult to measure. Then further still there are cases where quality is taken to mean how often they sell a policy to customers. There is a different quality function depending on the department in question and that's why the

implementation needs to be generic and continuous. This was a big lesson for us because we realised that we needed to develop our strategy in fluid, continuous way rather than as a once off.”

To help cope with such complexity, external consultancy was brought in to assist implementation of the new quality initiative. The Assistant Customer Services Manager explained the role played by consultancy. He explained, “They have played a quiet role. They are brought in when needed. We use two consultancy bodies. The first one has been a great asset. They are very tuned into the way that we do business and we’ve been able to build strong relationships with this body, which has allowed us become involved in societal networking. They have introduced us to a whole range of best practice organisations and have helped us learn and share best practice. We’ve heard stories from other organisations, which we felt, would have nothing in common with us. However they seem to be voicing the same frustrations as ourselves. One company had real difficulty because when the person in charge came back from learning about quality management he was told to get off his high horse about TQM. Although he is the Managing Director of the company he has a problem where he’s not being taken seriously because the ideas have not been internalised. People really don’t see the value of quality principles to their organisation. There are lessons here for ourselves, lessons which we would not be able to learn if we were not part of a societal network. If we were to go down to the canteen and rant and rave about TQM I’d say I’d be wheeled off. People just wouldn’t take it on board if it was forced upon them. The point is, yes there is urgency in the quality message but the balance with which you let it out is all-important. If we go too hard on people they are going to say what the hell is this fella on about. On the other side if you go too soft people will not make a genuine effort to change things. A gradual continuous approach is all-important.”

The Customer Services Manager spoke about the second consultancy. He explained, “These people have been useful in telling us what we have to do. They did an analysis of seven thousand customers. What clearly came out of it was the problem customers have with a documentation fee, which is still our top problem. They conducted a large-scale customer service satisfaction survey. This has enabled us compare ourselves with our vision models and with others in terms of where we need to be. The market damage model has helped us realise the dangers of not getting quality right. What this does is allow you to plug in a key figure; lets say the cost of capital. You plug in the number of customers that you’ve got and the average profit of the per customer. From this is extrapolated how much service dissatisfaction is costing you. We were able to say that service over a period of a year at the very very very minimum was costing us about a million pounds. This shows the importance of quality to our bottom line. Even with this information we were still unable to shake up the world because a lot of people wouldn’t know what to do with this information. At the moment we are really looking at our quality management and seeing how can we get best practices out of our processes through benchmarking which should tell us where we are and where we aren’t.”

The Customer Service Director explained the supports which assisting in delivering TQM. He said, "We are employing a number of quality tools. They are best described as technical and non-technical. Technical tools include items such as SPSS for analysis of customer feedback data from the welcome packs which all customers receive, which contains a questionnaire. This goes out to about 600 people a month. We're just beginning to learn how to use it now. This was recommended by the second consultancy. On the semi-technical side of things are the customer feedback surveys. The system allows us to input issues which the customer would have had. It's not going to pick up everything. It's more something, which gives us a signal. Its not going to catch everything, neither do I think it should because it could interfere with the whole flow of the business. If you try to scoop everything up, your going to end up sidetracking the whole process instead of encouraging people to deal with problems at a local level."

The former Customer Services Manager also highlighted how using quality facilitators and customer service facilitators in the context of cross functional teams were key to implementing the quality management initiative initially. He explained, "This was to make sure that the concerns of the customer were factored into any quality programme and the concerns of all the departments were represented in the strategy roll out. Essentially this phase was about talking people through the change process, trying to engage them in the whole initiative. The quality facilitators were responsible for selling the programmes at grass roots level, how well they did this is open to debate. Workshop sessions were held to focus in on how we would do quality and why we were doing it. This is where the values of the quality movement today came from. In terms of who has been driving the quality initiative it is a top down initiative. The people who have responsibility for maintaining the momentum and developing the service quality are the Service Quality Co-ordinators (SQC's). This group evolved out of the initial move to teamwork. It is a cross departmental body who meet periodically to discuss quality issues. The cornerstone of everything the SQC does is driven by customer satisfaction surveys. Cross co-operation between the departments is key to making the SQC work. We have used one of the consulting companies to train the SQCs. We brought them off site to give them grounding in a process they could use in solving problems. I was disappointed because we didn't make as much use of the opportunity as we had intended to. I wanted everybody, all four hundred people to brought through this because I feel it would help individuals at all levels become better managers and equip them with something for solving problems. These were the things we needed to be doing to nurture continuous improvement and make TQM a standard methodology."

The Assistant Customer Services Manager leads the SQC team. This comprises of one to three people from each department who meet monthly. A key aspect of this is cross-functional teams across the process line, which aims to encourage departments to co-operate with their key partners in different departments. This is the platform from which TQM operates. The Assistant Customer Services Manager explained the

dynamics of the group saying, "On a monthly basis we go into the management committee where our Managing Director has given us top priority. He wants to know all the issues surrounding the quality of our service and the findings of our team. Having the input of the management committee ensures that the quality movement maintains momentum and that the SQC team has something to continuously work on. The issues are analysed by the committee and the priorities are decided on. It goes back to the market damage model which basically asks what are the things, which are going to hurt us the most? We then determine what the key performance indicators are and the best way to manage them. This has really only started in recent times. It is very much a plan, do, check, act system, which has come about. The essence of this is to focus in on the issues, which are facing the company in terms of what the customer is facing from a service point of view. The former Assistant Manager deemed a number of parties to be responsible for the implementation. They were senior management, the Sales and Commercial Manager, Management Committee, Customer Service Officials and Quality Facilitators."

Generally piloting is used prior to any roll out in the organisation. Quality is no exception. The Customer Services Director explained, "The new TQM initiative was first piloted and then rolled out along with the customer services transformational change programme because both initiatives were going to co-exist alongside each other. The process involved people being taken from the various areas. For example a cross section would be introduced to experts in a specific area of the customer service function. It was hoped that these people would then take the message of the initiative and role it out at local level. By and large they did take the message back because they could see how growing the business would benefit them. Especially since pay is linked to reward. When this idea was initially launched there was very little happening and there never seemed to be any issues, which people would take note of from the piloting. However this has been changing over the years but I suspect there is always more that we can be doing.

The Assistant Customer Services Manager gave an insight into proceedings with respect to the implementation process. He explained, "When it comes to the implementation of things we do need to go easy but not too easy. It's important to tackle issues and show people that this is something that is going to be done in a gradual sense. If you've got a structure, which you can measure and adapt as you go along, then you can collect facts to back up your point of view as you go along. This what the SQC team has done, aided by the market damage model. If you don't do this then you're dead in the water. If I went out and just tapped people on the shoulder and asked them to change, it really wouldn't have an effect. There is a need for a systematic approach. If you go into orbit

with implementation too quickly then it's very difficult to bring everybody with you. If you go in with a sledge hammer your going for a direct hit which is very risky. Quality is one of those problems which if its within your control and your equipment its quite an easy thing to implement or solve, but if its in somebody else control then it also becomes a human behaviour factor. I would regard trying to achieve TQM is all about the human behaviour of others. If you miss this and just make the assumption that you're going to make a direct hit, your not. Essentially we need to influence the managers in their departments. There is a vacuum in the quality message between the management committee and departments if managers do not pass things on and this is not good for the process generally."

Changing the various processes in the organisation has also resulted in structural changes to the organisation. The Customer Services Director explained the changes saying, "There is now a new business support centre which used to be made up of two large functional departments. It used to be the customer service centre, which was the telephone centre, and then you had sales administration. What we did was, instead of having the customer coming here and coming out the other end you now have four teams. The teams deal with applications, set up, sanctioning, discounting right through the whole process of finance and leasing. They're focussed on areas of the bank around the country. This has come about as a result of the quality initiative. Its helped ease frustration within the branches who used to be concerned about where things like application forms were. What the market damage model revealed was that branches could get a handle on the individual application stage but it would typically have disappeared off into a queue and though they can track it, things like where is a fax amongst thousands of applications, is something, which you really don't want to do. Its very time consuming. Administration is now much more efficient. The four teams now deal with the specific parts of the process, taking a heavy workload burden away from the branches. This has helped build the team nature in the branches as well because frustrating but necessary tasks have removed. We're now going to be servicing 30 or 40 people so branches will be able to work through the team leaders so they now exactly who to go to if there is a problem. Originally files were being handed over to departments making it very difficult to pin down things. Also customer service satisfaction levels have gone up due to this. Its one of those improvements which certainly has been noted over the past while."

4.5.4: Barriers

Achieving TQM has been a complicated process. The former Assistant Customer Service Manager said, "Resistance has come from middle management who have not bought wholeheartedly into the quality movement. This probably because of there cynicism with other quality initiatives, that we have ran. I remember one very troublesome manager after a presentation saying of TQM, "Isn't that the thing we got rid of?" Such attitudes are a barrier... a big barrier. Getting people to understand it is what it's all about. We're always going to get people who will be down right suspicious

of organisational motives. My own ethos on this is that it's quite understandable. It is perfectly natural that everybody has a fear factor. I think it's essentially a territorial thing. Everyone has had ups and downs in their life and everyone has various levels of trust and deal with people in certain ways. If you go down town at night you're going to watch every corner to make sure that somebody doesn't throw a bottle at you. If you go into your family home you're going to have a whole different dynamic around you in the way that you feel in that environment. Organisations are just like this and they are full of all sorts. This made TQM difficult to sustain after the initial hype had died down. Certain managers never believed that it was their project. They believed that it was the responsibility of the Sales and Commercial manager. Also the bank continues to be slow to invest money in finding out what the customer wanted. This is more a feature of the industry in general."

The Assistant Customer Services Manager elaborated on this saying, "Probably the biggest barrier to TQM as far as I'm concerned is the lack of understanding. This shows up in the history of quality in our company. Quality management did not get off to a good start here. We have been repositioning ourselves to break away from attempts at TQM a few years ago. What happened in the past was an attempt to roll out TQM through quality manuals but the team had no facilitative skills and there was no real investment made. It was a bit like putting stickers up on the board and hoping that behaviours would change. Things have definitely improved but we still carry the past with us to some extent. We are constantly trying to reposition quality in terms of how our business is done in the new millennium and I think people are buying in."

The Customer Services Manager also documented barriers and resistance as a feature of the TQM process saying, "I think that when people come to work they can feel quite threatened everyday. This is not just during times of change, because there are a lot people that they don't know. It's fair to say that a lot of people have agendas and baggage, which they bring into work. At the end of the day everybody is human. So people don't necessarily trust everybody that manages them and that's a reality you have to face. You have to understand this and to an extent you have to try and manage it. That's why if you go in there like a bull in a china shop forcing people to accept your point of view then your not going to get people to buy in. However if you go on the coaxing side of things and you bring people along on the premise that its not a bad idea to try things out there is a chance a mutually acceptable relationship can develop. Even if you get people who give a flat "no" it is important that they are not allowed to halt progress. Many of those who object to the quality initiative don't realise that it's very much alive in the organisation and in a sense they're being brought along with them consciously knowing it."

The Customer Services Manager also documented political power play as a barrier to achieving TQM saying, "When people do take part in the quality initiative, absolute and utter integrity is key from all parties, particularly those in positions of power and influence. If you play games with peoples trust and reputation any initiative is going to be blown out of the water. This has

happened in the past here and unfortunately it is part of the organisations culture. For so long people have felt at home with the hierarchical structures in the organisation because steps are proceduralised. People will know where they stand with respect to information flow. They will know whose getting it and when. Because something like quality management loosens structures things can be open to power play and this is vulnerable to abuse. If information offered with respect to quality is not treated with integrity then people will become uneasy and not co-operate. This will prevent any success of future initiatives. If you ask somebody to chance their arm they have given you a piece of their power and if that's not respected then there is war. Unfortunately I've had very angry words with people who have information, which is to be shared in a structured way. There is a protocol, which must be observed and honoured. If people don't treat quality information properly people are going to question motives and quality is not going to work anywhere. There other side of the coin is where you have recommendations coming through which are genuine good and cost efficient and this is not taken on board, this will also be bad news. If a project group comes together, goes through group dynamics of forming, norming, storming ... and all the energy which this involves and comes up with a good idea and it is ignored there will be a real deflation. In future people will probably not bother to try. In fact, I'd say it will lead to resistance."

The Customer Services Director documented some specific cases of resistance. He explained, "There were certain individuals who I knew were not spreading the findings of the SQC team meetings to their departments. My team and I have proceeded with great caution over a number of years to move these people out of positions that they can do damage to the quality function. Time after time when I asked them for the response from their departments about TQM it was apparent that they had not informed people about the various aspects of the new quality initiative. Here we had Service Quality Co-ordinators who were supposed to informing people and disseminating all we are trying to do even if it was just copying stuff out to people, that's all they had to do. You've got to watch out for this in an organisation. Sometimes you won't even know. However I have become naturally suspicious when I hear that there are no issues or concerns about initiatives. Sometimes you can only rely things like the market damage model to gauge a sample of most problems. Ideally there shouldn't be problems occurring at the customers end that don't go into the system but to be quite honest with you, and I've said to the management committee that I would apply a multiplier of about ten against everything that is logged. Generally what's happening is that people are addressing customer complaints but not logging the complaint which is making it difficult to continuously improve."

Despite the recognition of resistance, there has also been a surprise at the number of people who have been blindly failing to take on board the quality message and who refused to listen. The former Customer Service Manager who is now in a new functional area of the business explained, "Its very frustrating to listen to people who are supposed to championing the cause of quality. They agree in meetings on courses of action and say they will sell the message to people in their area. What is more frustrating is when people should know

certain things at a certain stage. People who have the message and don't listen, I find it one of the most difficult things to accept. It's always difficult to take when people don't log issues when you know there are issues. This highlights how much of a wave you have to make and how hard we really have to work to get our message through not just with quality but any new initiative."

4.5.5: Outcomes of the Quality Initiative

The outstanding outcome of the initiative has been getting quality at the top level of the organisation. The Customer Services Director explained, "This gives a very clear message right across the spectrum. This lets people know that quality is important and here to stay. Our communication around survey feedback, is now channelled through the Chief Executive. I know he can't be signing off everything we do, but it definitely does help. When the CEO takes an interest in anything then people begin to make the right sounds and shapes. I've found and I suppose you'd expect it, a lot of resistance to the message. The lower the level the higher the number of people because of the hierarchical nature of the business. On the management committee were talking about ten people. At the middle management level we're dealing with 30 people and probably the same again at lower level. The lower the level of the individual the higher the resistance. This is why it's so important to have the senior people involved."

The former Customer Services Manager also stated that getting management to accept the need for quality in the organisation was a major breakthrough. He profiled the various groups whom he believes have been taking the quality message on board. They were:

Senior Management - The former Customer Services Manager explained, "Certainly senior management recognise the importance of TQM. They are very much on board. You can see this in the way they constantly want to know the findings from things like customer feedback surveys. Whether or not senior management have a broader knowledge of quality and its implications, I would say this is not there yet. In the new role I have I'm trying to bring senior management through a course to educate them about quality, which is time efficient. Obviously you can't take your senior management off for a week on one issue, it would be very difficult to do that. The senior management are very, very busy people, very able and very experienced people. Their time is very precious. To create the need for education is probably the next success factor, which needs to be tackled. I don't think we're going to excel unless this team is completely and utterly on the same wavelength. Certainly I'm not trying to turn everybody into experts but I do feel the common language is something, which we need to work on. I do feel there is still plenty of scope for improvement."

Middle Management - "I would say that the message is understood even less here. The participation and the involvement of this group overall with TQM is beginning to happen now. For example when the Service Quality Co-ordinators meet they take minutes. These go to the management committee and to middle managers. This is something, we only tuned into doing only four or five months ago. We began to realise that the senior management have the message, which is fantastic. The Service Quality Co-ordinators have the message and that's fantastic. However, the power to change the behaviour locally rests with the middle managers and short of dragging the middle managers into a meeting similar its not going to happen. They are going be a target of a lot of future work, which we will roll out. The values emphasis will be on dependability, engaging and pioneering. Hopefully this will show people what kinds of role they needed to fulfil. We are trying to raise awareness. Unless there is a middle manager constantly highlighting the importance of the initiative the message will be fleeting and gone. Traditionally this group have been very slow to get involved in the quality initiative but I think they are beginning to now."

The Assistant Customer Services Manager documented progress to date under the TQM initiative saying, "We wouldn't have what you'd describe as an ISO 9000 quality system but we do have procedures and policies with respect to quality which are very detailed. If you went out and spot-checked various departments and people about the standards of quality for their area they might scratch their heads and say what do you mean. However if you ask them a very specific question such as what's the timeframe in delivering a statement or a certificate, or what's the turnaround time for decisions in their area or when is the next mortgage pack going to come out they immediately know. When you start talking their language they will know what they are going to do themselves. There are general standards, which everybody has, but I would draw the distinction between standards and policy. It would cost you an arm and leg to measure everything. So I suppose quality is very much driven at local level. When I'm dealing with the SQC team I must be conscious of the language I'm using because everybody on this team will have a very different ways of doing business, very different areas and very different needs. So I suppose quality does have a different meaning for different people depending on where you are working. We have 14 departments, which are run by 10 senior managers. In each area the functions themselves carry their own challenges. There are people with particular types of skills doing particular types of functions. There are people who are afraid of what quality measurement is doing with respect to their performance review. If somebody is working in a frontline with high tech equipment then it is quite easy to determine his or her performance. There is no doubt about it. People are now much more conscious of quality as a result of the new TQM initiative."

4.5.6: Reflections

Upon reflection the Customer Services Manager said, "There are aspects of our quality initiative which need to be improved if we are to reach best practice. I think we are getting peoples' attitude right with respect to quality. As far as product development is concerned, I think we need to

have a more shared approach where customers get involved in the development of any new products. I think educating people in the principles of quality management will prove to be the next critical success factor of our quality initiative. This will be particularly relevant for senior management. There is also a need for management to be much more together in terms of communication so that there is a shared vision in terms of quality. I would like to see us using more Pareto Charts with an emphasis on the fact that 20% of things, which are wrong in the organisation, are causing 80% of our quality problems. This would allow us to pick out real problems, which need careful reflection because these are the ones, which are causing us real damage. I'd say there is also a need for more cohesive benchmarking. All of this would help us on how we structure the management of our quality. It may be useful to do an EFQM assessment to make sure that we have a structure in place that can deliver on continuous improvement. We did dabble in this but we didn't do it properly, we didn't give it the time. However, overall I would say that we are going in the right direction. It would be great if we could get higher-level people signing off on more things relevant to TQM. It would give a lot more credibility."

Further to this, the Customer Services Manager said of TQM, "If I have anything to do with TQM very definitely has a role to play in the future affairs of the company. I think this is what will deliver competitive advantage in the future. There is a whole new communication programme starting up now and this is going to be rolled out from executive level so its definitely here to stay. All things considered I would say it has been a success. You can see people beginning to take the message seriously. You can see people sitting forward and see them seeing value and participating. This shows me that the initiative has been a success, but it is a slow process. I think we are definitely going in the right direction. From my personal point of view I have found that over time there are key individuals who are taking it more seriously than they were. In trying to implement a programme like this, it's not going to happen overnight. If an effort were made to radically change the culture overnight it would fail for a lot of human reasons. Primarily it would fail because people take time to move, adapt and change. People are realising that the luxury of staying still even moderately is often taking steps backward. There has been a lot about change management focus across the bank. The message from this is that everybody reacts to change in a very similar way. The more that people understand that everybody is going through a certain amount of psychological pain and the discomfort which is fairly common then its easier to bring across the message of let's try something else or alter things a bit."

The Customer Service Director concluded, "Overall, having gone through a number of key texts and spoken to various consultants, I'd say that we certainly need to educate senior management. We need to be more together with the communication process and have a much better shared vision. These are very difficult things to crack. I could employ a consultant in the morning or get together a team here and to work on developing some values around this but you could be just creating great work for a printer. Putting values on the workstation is one thing but getting people to live them is another. Another thing, which would be very useful, would be a shared development process, which would take more cognisances on the voice of the customer. This is particularly relevant to new product

development. We tend to have a unilateral approach to product development. The same people are developing products all the time and this process is fundamentally flawed. The societal networking and the continuation of the consulting are definitely very important. The continued implementation and the utilisation of economies of scale, which we have here in the bank, are also very important. There are so many good people in the bank nowadays and so many initiatives that there isn't any point in re-inventing the wheel in many cases. We need to continuously improve.”

4.6: Conclusion

This Chapter has described the experiences of five organisations with respect to various quality management initiatives. The case study methodology guided by the principles of grounded theory has generated rich and insightful narratives. It is these narratives, which will provide the basis for shaping the patterns, which exist within and across each case study with respect to the array of issues associated with quality. The following chapter is a qualitative analysis concerned with making sense of the patterns, which are latent in the case studies.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Qualitative Analysis: Sensemaking from Patterns

5.0: Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to make sense of the latent humanist patterns with respect to quality which have emerged from the dialogue recorded in the case studies in the previous chapter. The qualitative analysis in this Chapter is guided by grounded theory building resulting from the author's immersion in the real world context where patterns induced from quality and associated initiatives emerged as a result of the various organisations embarking on a journey in search of quality. The qualitative analysis in this Chapter has enabled the author to develop meaning and reality with respect to quality, which has been overlooked by the more positivist methodologies in the literature. The author has taken advantage of personal insight, feelings and perspective afforded to him as a human being conducting research in a real world context. Hence, much of the meaning and reality with respect to patterns and insight developed during the data collection process. The following is the qualitative analysis conducted by the author to develop meaning and reality with respect to quality so one can gain greater understanding of the quality phenomenon.

5.1: Developing Meaning and Reality

The initial step in the qualitative analysis was the development of the case studies. Using this information, the author proceeded to develop tables based on recurring patterns in the case studies and continuous dialogue with interviewees. A series of tables were created to structure the patterns which were emerging. This was an iterative process whereby one revisited the case studies, archival data and case study interviewees as the patterns were emerging. The initial tables were content laden to ensure all patterns were captured. When the iterative process was completed, strong patterns were identified and entered into the tables. Initially the tables that were content laden have since been edited to capture the essence of the patterns. The author assigned a general label to indicate the main dimensions of the patterns. Each table contains a general label and four sub labels to explain the content of the general label. The assignment of labels was guided by continuously reading the case studies and

dialogue with interviewees to ensure the patterns were true to the context in which they were observed.

5.2: Philosophy and Meaning of Quality Management

The content of this pattern is based on Table 5.1. The content is explained under the labels documented below. The essence of this pattern is the title given to the initiative by the organisational stakeholders. The principles and tools and techniques represent the main ingredients of the various quality management initiatives. They are the key enablers which facilitate the organisation in achieving the bottom line deliverables that will result in improvement for the organisation.

5.2.1: Title of Quality Initiative

In Case A the quality management initiative is called Business Excellence based on the Irish Business Excellence Model. In Case B the quality management initiative was called ISO 9000, certified to 1994 version of the standard. In Case C the quality management initiative was referred to as Service Quality. In Case D the quality management initiative was called the Balanced Scorecard. Finally in Case E the quality management initiative was called Total Quality Management.

5.2.2: Principles

Teamwork is the cornerstone of all the quality management initiatives across the organisations. Communication is also a prominent feature in Cases A, B, C and D. There is also a strong association with improving process in a continuous manner in all cases. Cases B and D explicitly stress the intent to improve through measurement, to enable processes become more transparent. Case E also puts an emphasis on the desire to achieve more transparency in organisational processes.

Table 5.1: Philosophy and Meaning of Quality Initiative

	Title of Quality Initiative	Principles	Tools and Techniques	Bottom Line Deliverable
Case A	<i>Business Excellence</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Training • Role Development • Teamwork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop-Start-Continue process • Cause and effect analysis • Strategy Forum • Statistical Process Control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New product development • Company Survival • Revenue Building • Continuous Improvement
Case B	<i>ISO 9000</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring and Measurement • Process examination • Ongoing communication • Teamwork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmarking • Audits • Plan-Do-Check-Act • Brainstorming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New management system • ISO accreditation • Better maintenance • Continuous Improvement
Case C	<i>Service Quality</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process Improvement • Teamwork • Continuous Improvement • Communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diagnostic questionnaire • Benchmarking • Gap analysis • Plan-Do-Check-Act 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellence in service • Penetrate broker market • Be a learning organisation • Competitive advantage
Case D	<i>Balanced Scorecard</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Measurement • Teamwork • Transparency • Communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Performance Indicators • Cause and effect analysis • Benchmarking • Voluntary Redundancy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jettison budgets • Transparency in process • Become a supplier organisation • Grow revenue
Case E	<i>Total Quality Management</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teamwork and togetherness • Leadership through people • Integrity • Transparency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Feedback survey • SPSS • Plan-Do-Check-Act • Root cause analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competitive advantage • Reduce turnaround times • Increase market share • Systematic approach to quality

5.2.3: Tools and Techniques

The plan-do-check-act cycle is apparent in all the case studies except Case A, which uses a Stop-Start-Continue process that is similar to the plan-do-check-act approach. Cause and effect analysis is also prominent in Cases A and D and in a different guise as root cause analysis in Case E. Benchmarking is used in Cases B, C and D. Statistical methods are features in Cases A, E, and D where statistical process control played a key role in developing key performance indicators to guide continuous improvement. Diagnostic questionnaires in Case C and a customer feedback surveys in Case E were tools used by these organisations to ensure the customer was included in the improvement process. Uniquely, voluntary redundancies were used as a technique to generate impetus for change in Case D.

5.2.4: Bottom Line Deliverables

Survival and adaptation were key features of the bottom line deliverables in all case studies. Case A needed Business Excellence to change the organisation to generate sufficient revenue to ensure survival. Change was also to the fore in Case B in order to implement some kind of quality management system. It was hoped that this would result in continuous improvement. In Cases C and E the ambition was to gain a reputation for excellence in service through continuous improvement using customer service as a source of competitive advantage. In contrast, Case D's bottom line deliverable was to jettison budgets to create a more transparent business process so management could identify key performance indicators to improve performance.

5.2.5: Key Insights

Based on an analysis of the patterns in Table 5.1, one can observe that there is difference with respect to titles assigned to the various quality management initiatives. However, beyond the title an analysis of the principles, tools and techniques and the bottom line deliverables highlights similarities across the quality management initiatives as they were used in this selection of case studies.

5.3: Energy and Motivation for the Quality Initiative

The content of this pattern is based on Table 5.2. The content is explained under the labels documented below. This pattern is designed according to internal and external patterns fuelling the energy for change based on enablers and media. Consultancy is deemed a significant source of energy and motivation for the quality initiative.

5.3.1: Internal

Senior management teams provided much of the energy and motivation for the quality management initiatives in Cases A, C, D, and E. This involved the formation of teams such as “The Steering Committee” in Case A, various cross-functional teams in Case C, the formation of “The Executive Management Team” and “The Business Management Team” in Case D, and “The Service Quality Co-ordinator Team” in Case E. In Case B a “Supervisory Group” was established with senior management providing support through resources.

5.3.2: External

Consultancy was the main external driver of the quality management initiatives across all the organisations. Two different consultants were used at different times in Cases A, B, D and E. Case C used various consultants at various stages of the implementation process. In Cases A, C, D and E, the consultants were deemed to play a facilitative role through teambuilding methods, whereas in Case B, the initial consultant played a more prescriptive role. The consultancy in Cases A, C, D and E was deemed helpful whereas the initial consultant in Case B was deemed a hindrance to achieving the quality management initiative.

5.3.3: Key Enablers

In Cases A, C, D and E the management uniting leadership under the auspices of teamwork meant implementing the various quality management initiatives was given constancy of purpose. Alongside teamwork there was intensive investment on behalf

of the various organisations. This enabled the employment of consultants to develop capability within the organisation. In Case B, the Supervisory Team took on the role of interpreting the ISO 9000 model. This is what the consultant was employed to do in the other case studies. The teamwork structures in Cases A and D made the organisation more responsive to the needed changes. Voluntary redundancies were deemed important in Case D to prevent those opposed to the Balanced Scorecard derailing its implementation.

5.3.4: Media for Implementation

Across all organisations, constant meetings and dialogue were important methods for implementation. The use of brainstorming techniques in Case B and cause and effect analysis in Case C were key methods for employees of these organisations to make sense of the various quality management initiatives. Ongoing communication between the various team members and between the team members and other organisational stakeholders were deemed key to the implementation of the quality management initiatives in all the organisations.

5.3.5: Key Insights

An analysis of patterns Table 5.2 illustrated that internal energy and motivation for the quality management initiatives came from senior management. Externally, consultants were employed to add impetus and momentum. The senior management and the various consultants working collectively and collaboratively with organisational stakeholders were deemed a key enabler to achieving the quality management initiatives. Underpinning the key enablers were the various tools and techniques of the quality management initiatives coupled with ongoing communication.

Table 5.2: Energy and Motivation for the Quality Initiative

	Internal	External	Key Enablers	Media for implementation
Case A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing Director • Manager of Operations • Manager of HR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two consultants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teamwork • Investment • Facilitation skills of consultants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings among all stakeholders • Consultants training staff • Constant dialogue between stakeholders
Case B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Relations Manager • Station Head Supervisor • Quality Co-ordinator • Civil Engineering Technician. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two consultants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teamwork • Investment • Facilitation skills of the second consultant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings among all stakeholders • Second consultant training staff • Constant dialogue between stakeholders
Case C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Director • Director for IT and Administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different consultants at different times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teamwork • Investment • Facilitation skills of consultants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings among all stakeholders • Consultants training staff • Constant dialogue between stakeholders
Case D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing Director • Transformation Programme Manager • Finance Director • Finance Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two consultants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teamwork • Investment • Change of organisational structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings among all stakeholders • Consultants training staff • Constant dialogue between stakeholders
Case E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Services Manager • Assistant Customer Services Manager • Customer Services Director 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two Consultants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teamwork • Investment • On-going consultancy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings among all stakeholders • Consultants training staff • Constant dialogue between stakeholders

5.4: Trajectory of the Quality Journey

The content of this pattern is based on Table 5.3. The content is explained under the labels documented below. The trajectory of the quality journey is shaped by the timeframe that the organisation stakeholders applied to the various initiatives. The trajectory can take two forms, linear or convoluted which leads to a set of results.

5.4.1: *Timeframe*

Across all the case studies, with the exception Case C, a timeframe was put on the implementation of the quality management initiative. However management learned in Case A, C, D and E that by placing a timeframe on the implementation of the initiative, they were preventing the continuous improvement philosophy from taking root. Hence, after a period of time the management realised that achieving quality management cannot be a once off experience. In Case B the Supervisory Group felt they needed a timeframe to work within. They were not comfortable with the idea of adopting a loosely defined timeframe to ISO 9000. Despite imposing a timeframe, accreditation was achieved two years after the intended deadline.

5.4.2: *Linear*

In all the case studies with the exception of Case C, it was found that achieving quality with the aid of a quality management initiative is not a linear process. It was found that engaging people takes time as they struggle to make sense of new ideas and concepts under the auspices of a quality management initiative. There were a variety of issues that prevented the quality journey from remaining linear across the case studies. Allowing all stakeholders the opportunity to have their opinion in Case A, covert resistance on behalf of supervisors in Cases B and an Operations Director in Case D, and a lack of investment in previous attempts at achieving quality in Case E meant there were many issues which needed to be addressed before the quality journey could begin.

Table 5.3: Trajectory of the Quality Journey

	Timeframe	Linear	Convolutd	Results
Case A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intended: 2 years Actual: Continuous 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standardised team formation process Elimination of non-value adding activities International awards for excellence
Case B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intended: 1 year Actual: 3 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ISO 9000 accreditation behind schedule The required standards have not been maintained
Case C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous and on-going 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous on-going audits Service quality improvement
Case D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intended: 1 year Actual: Continuous 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisational restructuring Key performance indicators determine strategy
Case E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intended: 1-2 years Actual: Continuous 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality is now audited Service quality has improved

5.4.3: Convoluted

In all case studies, with the exception of Case C, it was found that achieving a quality management initiative was a convoluted process. In Cases A, B, D and E management learned that the dynamics of sense-making is a very time consuming exercise, as the quality management initiative comes up against many organisational phenomena, which are not conducive to achieving quality.

5.4.4: Results

An analysis of patterns in Table 5.3 shows that all the organisations have delivered on a quality management initiative. This has been recognised in the form of awards from Excellence Ireland and the European Quality Organisation in Case A and accreditation from the National Standards Association of Ireland in Case B. In the remaining case studies the interviewees are confident that they have delivered on the objectives of the quality management initiative. In all case studies the structure is now organised around the various teams that were established under the auspices of the various quality management initiatives which has resulted in closure of traditional business functions in Case A. Business Excellence, Service Quality and The Balanced Scorecard in Case D have all become way of life in their respective organisations.

5.4.5: Insights

An analysis of patterns in Table 5.3, illustrates the difficulty of placing a timeframe on quality management initiatives because they are continuous and on-going concepts. This results in the process becoming convoluted unless it is planned in a clinical manner by senior management. Each of the organisations achieved 'something', which they have referred to as a quality management initiative.

5.5: Sociotechnology and Participation

The content of this pattern is based on Table 5.4. The content is explained under the labels documented below. Each organisation has varying degrees of familiarity with respect to the quality concept. Quality has been achieved through various levels of employee empowerment and involvement which has been brought about by culture change from the quality management initiatives. The management of resistance has been key to the levels of familiarity, employee empowerment and involvement, and culture change achieved by the introduction of quality management initiatives.

5.5.1: Familiarity with Quality

In Cases A, C, D and E there is a presence of various quality management tools and techniques that are used to achieve quality. This proves that people are familiar with the concept of quality. In Case B people are familiar with the quality concept but no longer make any effort to maintain the ISO 9000 standard.

5.5.2: Employee Involvement and Empowerment

The cross-functional nature of the teamwork concept in Cases A, C, D and E has resulted in more involvement and empowerment for people at all levels in the various organisations. People have found it possible to learn from each other through pilot exercises as documented in Case C. This has evolved into partnership agreements between unions and management in Cases A and D. This contrasts with Case B where there are still many disputes around demarcation issues.

Table 5.4: Sociotechnology and Participation

	Familiarity with Quality	Employee Involvement and Empowerment	Culture Change	Resistance
Case A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. Use of quality tools and techniques. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. Teamwork at all levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. Functional to task focussed culture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. Overt
Case B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. Sparse use of tools and techniques. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. Loyalty to function only. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. Functional culture has remained. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. Overt and Covert
Case C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. Use of quality tools and techniques. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. Teamwork at all levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. Functional to task focussed culture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. Overt
Case D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. Use of quality tools and techniques. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. Teamwork at certain levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. Functional to task focussed culture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. Covert
Case E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. Use of quality tools and techniques. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. Teamwork at certain levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. Functional to task focussed culture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. Covert

5.5.3: Culture Change

There has been a great deal of culture change as a result of the quality management initiatives in the organisations. In Cases A, C, D and E people have become much more task focussed. People now realise that the actions they take can affect how customers perceive the organisation. Also, in the above named case studies employees have come to realise that their needs and those of management are now more mutual than before the quality management initiative. Case B was the exception where culture change only lasted in the short term.

5.5.4: Resistance

In all case studies people at all levels in the organisation initially objected to the quality management initiative. In Case A and B people were fearful the quality management initiatives would be mere cost cutting exercises. In Case C people were insecure about having their work functions audited for fear of being reprimanded. A similar situation emerged in Case D, where the Operations Director was found to be maintaining old reporting systems, which was distorting the scorecard readings. The difference was that the resistance was covert in D. Covert resistance in Case E was similar to the example in Case D where Service Quality Co-ordinators were not passing on the findings to the departments they represent, which was inhibiting awareness generation of quality.

5.5.5: Key Insights

An analysis of patterns in Table 5.4 illustrates that engaging in a quality management initiative may result in new forms of sociotechnology and participation in the form of teamwork. This has resulted in people becoming more familiar with the concept of quality and contributed to changing the culture in the organisation. However, this selection of case studies highlights the presence of resistance, which takes a variety of forms. Resistance is an important part of the energy that fuels change. The case study evidence shows that it needs to be managed, otherwise it may derail the quality management initiative.

5.6: Reflections on the process of Quality

The content of this pattern is based on Table 5.5. The content is explained under the labels documented below. Achieving quality in this selection of case studies has proved to be a process with inputs resulting in positive and negative outcomes. The process appeared straightforward in theory, but in practice an array of unexpected factors emerged as the organisational stakeholders got deeper into the process. As the quality management initiatives took place in the recent past, the interviewees have been able to reflect on what they learned from the process.

5.6.1: Positive Outcomes

In Case A the organisation has survived adverse economic conditions and Irish employees are now among the most satisfied within the multinational. Trade unions are now in partnership with management. In Case B, the outcome was positive in the short term when people used dialogue as opposed to industrial action for solving problems. Also, important procedures have been written down so people no longer leave the organisation with information, which is important for conducting business. Cases C and D have also put in place new structures, which have transformed the way the organisations do business, which have built the needs of the customer into the process of quality. Finally, Case E, like all the case studies, has succeeded in raising awareness of the quality function throughout the organisation.

Table 5.5: Reflections on the Process of Quality

	Positive outcomes	Negative outcomes	Unexpected	Learning
Case A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The facility is still operating. Increased employee satisfaction scores Trade unions are now partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expensive Time consuming Victim of its own success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training would transform the organisation Trade union partnerships Loss of traditional career path 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous improvement combats inertia Change is inevitable Teams bring people together
Case B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accreditation was achieved in two years Important documents were filed Non-value adding were eliminated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heavy investment, no payoff Broken promises to staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation complexity Difficulties with initial consultant Expense 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People need to see the value in change Consultants may be a barrier to change
Case C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structured approach to solving problems. Perception of excellence in quality Revenue growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Victim of its own success Time consuming and expensive Overusing IT capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful impact Expense Work intensification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People understand organisational process People understand each others needs People understand the needs of the customer
Case D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transparent business strategy Mutual relationships among stakeholders Flexible organisational structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expensive and time consuming May be reinforcing old culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time and Expense Trade union partnership Nature of resistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working as teams can build trust Teamwork builds mutual appreciation of needs
Case E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality is a priority Societal networking Continuous improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very expensive Not all stakeholders participating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature of resistance Difficulty in raising awareness Expense 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation is a slow and constant process Communication is key Societal networking is key for improvement

5.6.2: Negative Outcomes

In all cases, embarking on a quality management initiative has proved to be extremely expensive. Despite heavy investment, it has been reported that maintaining interest in the quality management initiative in Cases B, C and E has been difficult. In Case A people have lamented about the demise of the traditional career path and are concerned about the role they will play in the future. People in Case D have also reported that they have felt uneasy about not having a tangible budget to refer to. In Case B management broke promises with respect to employees with respect to job losses leaving much dissatisfaction with the initiative and in Case E management have doubt as to whether or not people are constantly working in a manner which delivers quality. Finally, there is consensus in Cases A and C that the initiatives have been victims of their own success as management have had much difficulty in taking on board everybody's opinion as employee involvement and empowerment has been achieved.

5.6.3: Unexpected

There were various unexpected phenomena with respect to the quality management initiatives across the selection of case studies. None of the interviewees believed that resistance would play such a significant role with respect to implementation and that this resistance would add so much time to the implementation process. This is particularly vivid in Case B where the various prescriptions of the initial consultant are still being streamlined, five years after he left. Conversely, it was unexpected that the initiatives would be so successful in delivering bottom line objectives in Cases A, C and D. There has also been considerable value added as Case A has been nationally and internationally recognised as a best practice organisation. Finally, Case E have been surprised that raising awareness has proved so difficult and that people would resist in such as covert manner.

5.6.4: Learning

Overall, engaging in quality management initiatives has proved to be a learning experience for all the organisations concerned. Continuous improvement in Cases A, C, D and E has proved to be an effective method for overcoming management inertia, which resulted in the organisations having to embark on a quality management initiative in the first place. The case studies highlight the need to engage people in the process of change under the auspices of any quality management initiative. Case B highlights the dangers of prescription in achieving organisational change. Case A, C, D and E highlights the value of engaging people in the process of change.

5.6.5: Key Insights

An analysis of patterns in Table 5.5 illustrates the emergence of positive and negative outcomes from the process of quality. Furthermore, an array of unexpected issues emerged as a result of the quality journey. Upon reflection the interviewees have found the process surrounding quality management initiatives to be a rich learning experience with respect to future approaches they may take when embarking on organisational change.

5.7: Conclusion

This chapter has used grounded theory methods to study the patterns, which have emerged from quality management initiatives employed by a selection of organisations. Sense making has been achieved by developing tables from the case studies in Chapter four, to capture the shape and form of the patterns. This approach has enabled the author to develop key insights from the quality process, which remain true to the setting from which they have emerged. A number of findings based on insights have emerged from the qualitative data analysis.

With respect to philosophy and meaning of quality management, this author has found that an array of different quality management initiatives exist, which are underpinned by similar types of tools and techniques to overcome difficulties which all organisations are facing. The second finding is concerned with energy and motivation and reveals that senior management and consultants have been the key drivers of the initiative. Their endeavours have been facilitated by intensive time and financial investment and an array of qualitative techniques based on communication. The third finding is concerned with the trajectory of the quality journey. The organisations had hoped to implement quality in a set timeframe. However, as the initiative progressed, a floating continuous timeframe was adopted, which meant the quality process was convoluted, resulting in something that was supposed to be a quality management initiative. The fourth finding relates to the impact on sociotechnology and participation as a result of the quality management initiative. It was found that stakeholders have become familiar with the quality concept through the tools and techniques of quality management. The tools and techniques have brought people together in teams, which have resulted in higher levels of employee involvement and participation. Though there has been resistance, culture change has been achieved in the organisations. Finally it was found, based on participant reflection that positive reflections were balanced with a number of negative outcomes. Co-existing alongside the outcomes was a number of unexpected outcomes and valuable learning experiences.

Since the data is generated from recent historical narratives in the organisation, the patterns are reflexive, enabling the author to use the key insights to return to the focus of the project, which is to understand meaning and reality with respect to quality in a selection of Irish organisations. The following Chapter will use the key insights, which have to make sense of quality against the backdrop of the literature, which is pertinent to quality with respect to meaning and reality in an Irish context.

CHAPTER SIX

Quality Discovered: Meaning and Reality

6.0: Introduction

This Chapter will return to the focus of the thesis, which is to explore meaning and reality with respect to quality in an Irish context. Chapter one introduced the concept of quality classifying it as a concept with a number of meanings depending on the context. An historical analysis of quality proves that concept has evolved and remained true to the writings of the gurus. The guru literature highlights a pattern of evolution and continuity. Chapter two illustrates the legacy of the gurus. The evolution has resulted in quality becoming more diffuse, spawning a number of quality management initiatives. An analysis of these initiatives based on the literature shows much similarity between these initiatives in a static context (see Chapter 2, Section 2.1). The array of initiatives has provided much scope for attacks from critical analysts. The critical approach to quality and associated initiatives highlights a number of complexities surrounding the concept of quality. One learns that in essence there are two schools of thought with respect to quality. The first is of a hard-rational orientation, the second of a soft-normative orientation. Though the attacks provide insights as to how one may understand potential barriers to quality there has been little attempt to understand meaning and reality with respect to these two schools of quality. This is also reflected in an Irish context because research has been geared towards positivist methodologies.

Chapter three provides the focus of the project, which is to explore meaning and reality in an Irish context using a humanist methodology. The research has adopted a case study methodology guided by the principles of grounded theory. This has enabled the author to observe quality in a real world context. This has resulted in the stand-alone case studies of Chapter four where the aim was to allow the data speak for themselves. Chapter five was an exercise to make sense of the patterns, which emerged from the case studies. These patterns have become the findings of the research.

The reflexive nature of the research methodology means the author is now in a position to return to the literature of Chapter one and two to explore the meaning and reality of quality based on the findings which emerged from an Irish organisational context. The

findings of the previous Chapter, which emerged from the patterns in the Tables 5.2 to 5.5 were related to the following:

- Philosophy and Meaning of the Quality Initiatives
- Energy and Motivation for the Quality Initiatives
- Trajectory of the Quality Journey
- Sociotechnology and Participation Issues
- Reflections of the Practitioners on the process of Quality

These findings will provide the focus for returning to the literature having analysed the case studies using a grounded theory approach. The quality concept has been unpacked in Chapters four and five. The aim is to build a meaning and reality of quality in an Irish organisational context, where it has been observed. The analysis takes the form of introducing case data in the form of a quote to capture the essence of each finding. The author has used subjective judgement to choose a quote, to capture the essence of each finding, which is representative of the scenario across the case studies in a general sense. Based on the essence of the quotes and descriptions, the author returns to the literature to capture the tension between theory and practice and to develop meaning and reality with respect to a selection of case studies grounded in an Irish context.

6.1: Philosophy and Meaning of the Quality Initiatives

The cases in this selection of studies have highlighted quality management initiatives under a range of various seductive titles. This is captured succinctly by an Associate Director with respect to Service Quality when he said; “We needed something that would express the need for best practice in quality - Service Quality hit the spot.” The message being conveyed is clearly about the quality of service and its importance to the organisation.

Though the title of the initiative is important for identification purposes, it does not indicate any meaning in a real sense. By analysing the principles underpinning the

quality management initiative, coupled with the tools and techniques, the author has found remarkable similarity between case studies with respect to the meaning of quality initiatives in this selection of case studies. Teamwork has emerged as a key principle of the various quality management initiatives in all five cases. An Associate Director in Case C captures the rationale for this by saying, "It's the only way everybody can be brought together." This is reflected in all the case studies with the emergence of a Steering Committee and various task teams in Case A; the Supervisory Team in Case B; cross functional teams in Case C; the Business Management Team and the Executive Management Team in Case D; and the Service Quality Co-ordinator Team in Case E.

The bottom line deliverables in the case studies were also found to be similar in the sense that the aim of the quality initiative was to make some kind of general improvement, which was giving grave cause for concern among all organisational stakeholders. An Engineering Technician from Case B captured the essence of what all the organisations were trying to achieve when he said, "Basically the whole thing was a drive to support and add impetus to culture change, with a view to ensuring survival and bringing in more business from abroad while hanging onto the customers we've already got." The quality management initiatives in this selection of case studies were all very much concerned with survival, culture change, revenue generation and customer satisfaction.

Based on the above analysis it is clear that quality has a very definite meaning and philosophy. The literature has suggested that various management consultants and gurus have generated hype about quality management initiatives. As a result of the hype, generated, one of these methods gets picked up and enters the general business vocabulary (see Mickelthwait and Wooldridge, 1996; Eccles and Nohria, 1992). This appears to be the situation in this context. The Managing Director in Case D illustrates this saying, "Everybody seems to be using the Balanced Scorecard nowadays to great effect. We've already had TQM, World Class Manufacturing so why not the Balanced Scorecard." The logic and rationale emitted from the case studies suggests that those who follow or believe the hype early on can achieve some sort of competitive

advantage. For example the Production Manager in Case A commented, "Business Excellence has seen us become a best practice company in Ireland and Europe. This is a great advantage over our competitors." This highlights the capability of quality management initiatives to drive organisational change. The quality initiatives in this selection of case studies reinforce the assertion of various theorists, that quality has become a generic strategy for driving change. (e.g., Peters and Waterman, 1982; Deming, 1986; Lawler, 1986; Sisson, 1994).

Furthermore when the cases are analysed alongside the literature there is an inherent paradox. Quality management initiatives are of the same family and have evolved from the writings of the gurus (e.g., Crosby, 1979; Feigenbaum, 1983; Deming, 1986; Oakland, 1989). Their titles are typical of the language instructing managers embarking on a change programme. There is an emphasis on becoming world class and achieving total quality or driving improvement through quality. However this was not what the initial ideas of the gurus were concerned with. The original quality management initiative, statistical process control (Shewart and Deming, 1939) was specifically related to understanding variation in processes. In all case studies it seems the quality management initiatives have resulted in major upheavals in the practices, procedures and strategic focus of the organisations to the extent that an increasing number of variables needed to be understood and integrated in the quality management initiative. To a greater or lesser extent quality management initiatives have been focussed on rethinking and revitalising multiple aspects of the organisation with respect to culture, people, processes, and structure. This highlights the impact quality may have on an organisation and shows that quality is not something that can be achieved by specialists alone (see Ishikawa, 1986). It is an ongoing concern of the complete organisation (as per Feigenbaum, 1971).

The titles of the quality management initiatives represent the rhetoric of the phenomenon and this has been well documented by the critical theorists (see Wilkinson and Willmott, 1995). However, when one unpacks the initiatives under the auspices of grounded theory (see Tables 5.1 – 5.5), one learns that it is the principles, tools and

techniques which represent the reality of the phenomenon. Those who have been vehement in their attacks on quality management have overlooked this. By adopting a grounded approach to conducting research one is able to observe at first hand teamwork, control charts, benchmarking etc. in action. In this selection of organisations, quality management tools and techniques have generally made a positive contribution to the organisation. A grounded approach to quality management enables researchers deliver a balanced account of phenomena as opposed to adopting an extreme position of good or bad or positive or negative as espoused by positivist research methodologies.

6.2: Energy and Motivation for the Quality Initiatives

In all the case studies senior management provided the bulk of the energy and motivation for embarking on the quality journey. The Managing Director in Case D remarked, "I have learned to learn that I needed to take the lead along with my board of directors if we were going to make the scorecard work". There is a real danger that the quality management initiative could lack credibility and identity if senior management are not involved. In Case E the Customer Services Manager said, "A lot of what we've been trying to do is get the message coming from the CEO's office. When that role takes an interest in it then people begin to make the right sounds and shapes." It is clear from the selection of case studies that all the quality management initiatives in this sample are first and foremost defined by managerial objectives. It is clear that senior management involvement is important for the purposes of leading the initiative.

This selection of case studies also shows that external forces in the form of individual consultants were providing much energy and motivation for the quality management initiative. Obsolete products, poor standards in service quality, excessive non-value adding processes, declining market share and functional bureaucracies were features across all organisations, which meant management felt insecure about the capability within their organisation to deliver change under the auspices of a quality management initiative. Hence they turned to consultants for assistance. As the Quality Co-ordinator in Case B stated, "A consultant was important because we needed somebody who knew

what was expected in terms of manuals and procedures.” It is clear that there were a number of consultants who were willing to sell their knowledge of quality management initiatives to a management who were anxious to reap the benefits of such initiatives. The evidence from the case studies suggests that organisations have become quite astute at knowing where they want to be. The “how to get there” has proved to be the remit of the consultants.

Co-existing alongside consultancy as enablers of achieving quality is a high level of money and time investment. All the cases remarked on the huge expense of implementing and sustaining a quality management initiative. The Managing Director in Case D said of the Balanced Scorecard, “You’ve got to find time and space in what’s already a very busy schedule to do all this work.” The Transformation Programme Manager in Case D captured the cost dimension saying, “Three years ago the training budget was IR£40,000 per annum. As a result of the changes, the training budget has increased to £IR500,000 per annum.” It seems that management are already investing much time in implementing and sustaining various quality management initiatives, even with the assistance of consultancy. Also it seems that one can observe a trend that quality management initiatives are expensive to implement and even more expensive to maintain. They have the capacity to put considerable strain on the resources of the organisation.

When one returns to the literature with respect to findings under the auspices of energy and motivation one learns the literature on quality management categorically states that the energy and motivation for a quality management initiative needs to come from senior management (e.g., Crosby’s Steps 1, 8 and 13, 1979; Deming’s ‘Principle 2’, 1986; Ishikawa, ‘Guide to Quality Circles’ (1986); Oakland’s Ten Points for Senior Management, 1989). Much of the literature asserts that quality management initiatives are embarked upon because of the need to remain competitive (e.g., Deming, 1986; Levin, 1992; Dervitsiotis, 1998). The search for a new source of competitive advantage was also found to be a core reason why the cases in this selection of studies embarked

on a quality management initiative. This proves the continuity of the gurus' writings with respect to modern interpretation of the quality concept.

Though the gurus of quality management were themselves consultants there is no mention of consultancy as a source of energy and motivation for quality management initiatives. This represents a blind spot in their literature. The gurus have overlooked the role of independent observer which consultants can play in implementing quality management initiatives. Indeed this role was played by all of the gurus in various organisations which inspired many of their major works. This author suspects that the gurus have been blinded by the predominantly positivist methodologies which left them with little scope for reflection on the 'how to do' part of processes. They were probably too close to the phenomenon. It was only upon his return from Japan that Deming (1986) acknowledged the importance of the softer more normative school of quality management. Indeed, for this grounded theorist the case studies have documented much interaction between the technical and human aspects of the quality phenomenon. From a technical point of view it is quite straightforward to understand quality as conformance to manufacturing requirements or fitness for customer use. However from a human point of view management need to invest much time in working with people to engage them in the process of quality achievement.

In this study, the cases illustrate the role of the consultant as fraught with a number of paradoxes with respect to roles the consultant must play. They must be confident and display a personal drive but they must also have enough humility to listen to the concerns of and objections raised by change recipients. They must have a vision, a strategy and guiding principles but they must also be pragmatic, pay attention to unfolding events, build on initiatives that turn out to be successful even if they are not part of the original plan. They must identify early adopters and project champions to create a powerful coalition and generate early success, but they must not leave too many people behind the pace of the change effort. Finally they must have patience and persistence, but also act quickly and decisively as they see fit. The case studies suggest that these roles will also need to be mimicked by senior management. After the

consultant leaves, it is senior management who will be responsible for ensuring the momentum and enthusiasm is maintained. The consultants in this selection of studies enlightened senior management. For example the Managing Director in Case A commented, "I picked up a few tricks from the way he (the consultant) behaved. He always kept things moving forward." This suggests that senior management can learn much from the general industry experience which business consultants are exposed to.

There are few examples of cases in the literature which highlight what management can expect in terms of what they need to commit in terms of financial investment and time. This selection of case studies shows that management have had to commit substantial resources in terms of financial investment and time. This has begun to be reflected in the literature (see Huq and Martin, 2000; Tonnesson, 2000). Research in quality management needs to reflect the needs and roles of practitioners. This is where humanist methodologies have a contribution to make as they allow the researcher ground his or herself in the real world context where the phenomenon has a life of its own and report the progress of practitioners. This enables the researcher to supply the practitioner with an objective mirror of their performance against, which they can improve. The researcher can take advantage of perceptions, observations and feelings as a human being to reveal the unexplored blind spots, which are missed by the positivist methodologies that might prove to be most relevant from a practitioner's point of view.

6.3: Trajectory of the Quality Journey

An analysis of this selection of case studies highlights that quality management initiatives function best when they are part of a journey rather than a destination. The Managing Director in Case D remarked on previous experiences of change initiatives saying, "Looking back on them now I realise they were steps on the journey. They were steps along the way. I don't think I'd ever look at these things as a destination." Evidence from this selection of case studies suggests that if an organisation embarks on the quality journey, then the stakeholders are committing themselves to a programme of continuous improvement with future initiatives building on the experience of their

predecessors. The majority of the stakeholders in each organisation had a preference for imposing tight time restrictions for implementation purposes. However it was learned that the pursuit of quality is a never-ending endeavour. The fixed deadlines were jettisoned as barriers.

The trajectory of the quality management initiatives in these organisations was not a linear straightforward process. As the Skills Development Specialist in a unionised setting in Case A commented, "We had to let everyone have their say. This meant bringing people forty at a time to a local hotel, listening to their concerns and trying to come up with some kind of solution for everybody concerned." Evidence from this selection of case studies suggests that the trajectory of quality management initiatives is a convoluted and sometimes cyclical process. In this selection of case studies one observes how management and consultants worked with people helping them to apply new tools and techniques for quality and helping them learn to work in the context of cross-functional teams. This resulted in the implementation process being pulled in many different directions in the various case studies. This may be made all the more if the consultant is not deemed to be facilitating the change, but being perceived as a barrier to change. The Civil Engineering Technician explained, "The consultant was very confusing. He made simple procedures seem very difficult and no matter how hard people tried he would claim that the standard was not met."

The case studies reflect a complexity, which is quite removed from much of the literature, which is characterised by simple prescriptions for management (e.g., Crosby's 14 Step Programme; Deming's 7 Deadly Sins, 14 Principles and Seven Point Action Plan; Juran's Quality Trilogy, Quality Roadmaps and Ten Steps to Quality; Oakland's 10 Points for Senior Management). All of these prescriptions are aimed at various levels of management. The gurus are emphatic in their assertion that the pursuit of quality is continuous and ongoing (see Feigenbaum, 1996). However their assertions have the capacity to mislead practitioners into believing that achieving quality is a linear and cyclical process underpinned by a plan, do, check, act cycle. This is again symptomatic of the positivist methodologies used by the gurus which have resulted in

simplistic prescriptive methodologies for implementation. Though these insights have had an impact, they lack sensitivity to the idiosyncrasies of specific organisational cultures, which mean organisations will need to invest much time before they can implement quality.

One learns from the case studies that implementing a quality management initiative challenges the old organisational assumptions, which people have spent a considerable length of time learning. This is a further blind spot of the guru literature, though the later writings of Deming (1994) and Feigenbaum (1996) began to reflect sensitivity to the human aspects of change. Management research in the wake of the guru's legacy has documented the iterative nature of achieving a quality management initiative (see Hughes Williams and Ryall, 2000; Kochan and Rubenstein, 2000; Grant, Shani and Krishnan, 1994; Gratton, 1994). It takes a considerable length of time to unlearn assumptions, which have become the generally accepted ways of conducting business in the organisation (see Argyris, 1992; Argyris and Schon, 1978).

The complex trajectory illustrated in the case studies provides insights for the reflective researcher to understand how quality management initiatives may be categorised as abstract, vague, and ambiguous as asserted by the critical theorists (see Snape et al. 1995; Wilkinson and Willmott, 1995; Preece and Wood, 1993). However this can be a dangerous dismissal as concepts or techniques become fads usually because they promote something of value in the first place (see Giroux and Landry, 1998; Eccles and Nohria, 1992). Usually they add something critical to the continually developing body of knowledge that underlies the way organisations are managed. The case studies showed that organisations may need to tinker with the tools and techniques, test them in different places in the organisation, see how they fit and then decide whether or not to use them and how to use them. This author would assert that complexity is part of the meaning and reality of a quality management initiative which needs to be managed. Unfortunately theory is limited in guiding practitioners with respect to managing complexity. However case studies do offer an opportunity for organisations to learn

from each other based on retrospective wisdom. Such a method has the potential to provide the interface between theory and practice.

6.4: Sociotechnology and Participation Issues

An analysis of the case studies highlights people issues to be important to quality management initiative implementation and maintenance. In Case E an Assistant Manager commented, "Quality is one of those problems, which if its within your control and your equipment its quite an easy thing to implement or solve, but if its in somebody else's control, then it also becomes a human behaviour factor. I would regard trying to achieve TQM as all about the human behaviour of others." The case studies have illuminated change under the auspices of quality management initiatives to be grounded in particular people, particular groups, and between particular individuals and groups. The way such stakeholders are treated is very important to the success of a quality management initiative. For example the Managing Director in Case D commented, "It's terribly important that people feel valued, trusted, and involved otherwise they will not work with you."

Evidence from the case studies, suggests that management with the aid of a consultant have achieved mutuality with respect to change. For example The Transformation Programme Manager in Case D commented, "We can now talk about things in an open, sensible and mature manner." Such situations have been key to achieving a culture change where staff have a mutual relationship with management and strategy has become more transparent. As the Facilities Manager in Case A explained, "Everybody sits down each year with a member of the Steering Team to determine what and how objectives are to be met. This is great because we know where we stand." Such developments have been important for delivering the bottom line objectives of the various quality management initiatives. People are learning there is no longer any place for functional loyalties as their needs and the needs of the organisation are more mutual than they imagined them to be. This has resulted in trade unions entering into local partnership with managers as they feel that the quality management initiatives

underpinned by a continuous improvement philosophy is the most productive way to represent their members and maintain their own presence in the organisation. For example, the Production Manager in Case A commented, "Trade union people have often said to me that if we hadn't worked together then we'd probably have all been out of jobs. I think everybody has had their eyes opened."

Resistance was a feature in all the cases. As The Skills Development Specialist in Case A commented, "Creating the vision was the easy part, getting the buy-in of people with a severe morale problem was to be the biggest challenge the facility would ever face." However teamwork has proved to be a powerful tool for involving and empowering people with respect to the quality process. Education and training has proved to be key in such a process. As the Production Manager in Case A pointed out, "When people come together we find we all have common difficulties. However, working together lets us take responsibility for and advantage of the training we're given." The case studies highlight a new form of resistance, which is covert by nature. Covert resistance has been a feature of the quality management initiatives. The Transformation Programme Manager in Case D explained, "The realisation that a senior manager was sabotaging efforts to build a new future was undoubtedly a critical moment. For a long time I couldn't work out why figures in the scorecard weren't adding up. The fact that somebody so senior could be subverting the whole thing was amazing." Covert resistance can go on for long periods with the work of many being undone by the few. This represents a blind spot in the critical theorists argument. The critical theorists argue that quality management initiatives are anti-organisation phenomena. However there is no criticism of stakeholders who subvert the course of change when the change has been unanimously agreed as being right for the organisation. This was apparent in Case D where all senior managers and trade unions had given their support to the Balanced Scorecard initiative. The actions of one individual were responsible for hampering an initiative which has proved a potent tool for increasing organisational capability. The critical literature is silent or unknowing about such organisational phenomena, which bring much frustration to organisational life (see sections 2.3.1 to 2.3.4). The practitioners in the cases illustrated in Chapter 4 have proved tenacious and skilful in

the face of such adversity having built a robust system for dealing with resistance to ensure the quality management initiatives in their organisation are not derailed for the greater good of the organisation.

The selection of case studies in Chapter 4, when coupled with much of the literature written in the wake of the gurus' legacy shows people lie at the heart of all aspects of a quality management initiative (e.g., Lichtenstein, 2000; Mak, 2000; Argyris, 1998; Coyle-Shapiro, 1995; Cruise O'Brien, 1995; Voss, 1988; Aggarwal and Aggarwal, 1985). The selection of case studies in Chapter 4 highlights the people aspects of achieving empowerment, involvement and culture change as the most demanding areas in the quest for quality. This proves that these areas are the 'unquantifiable heart of a quality management initiative and among the most difficult to manage' (see Dawson and Palmer, 1993). The guru literature on quality (see Shewart and Deming, 1939; Juran, 1964; 1974) has stressed that quality management initiatives are developed to deliver uniform and dependable work practices that are congruent with delivering products and services at a low cost with quality suited to the market. This highlights a neglect of people issues in their research, though Ishikawa, (1985), Deming, (1994), Crosby, (1979) have remarked on the importance of people issues but do not offer much guidance on how to deal with them.

The selection of case studies in Chapter 4 illustrated that management need to find new approaches to selection, training, pay and rewards, performance management systems and in many cases the core values of influencing day-to-day decisions. For example, in Case C, there is now an emphasis on matching people with specific competencies to specific role types within the organisation. In Case D people are now rewarded based on performance which is measured against objectives defined by key performance indicators in the Balanced Scorecard. These are all critical components of successful quality management initiatives. This corresponds with research claiming quality initiatives to be general strategies for change (see Dale, Cooper and Wilkinson, 1998; Brown and Eisenhart, 1997; Cruise O'Brien, 1995; Dale and Cooper, 1992). Furthermore, this links back to the philosophy and meaning of quality management

initiatives as a support mechanism for driving change through organisations. The presence of both overt and covert resistance in this selection of case studies suggests that people do not necessarily welcome the introduction of quality management initiatives.

An analysis of the case studies enables one to understand that quality may not always mean improved pay, better career prospects and enhancement of one's quality of work life (see Case B). This has been documented in the critical literature (e.g., Hill and Wilkinson, 1995; Wilkinson and Witcher, 1991; Wilkinson, 1992; Kerfoot and Knights cited in Wilkinson and Willmott, 1995). Even though the literature brings into focus an array of barriers to achieving quality, this author has found from immersing himself in the real world context that the critical tone is misguided. Quality and associated initiatives in this selection of case studies has proved to have a strong meaning and reality, capable of capturing stakeholder imagination and resulting in increased levels of participation and involvement

6.5: Reflections of the Practitioners on the process of Quality

The nature of the analysis in this research project has encouraged reflection. As the analysis is based on narratives from the recent past, the interviewees have had the opportunity to reflect on their experiences of quality. Overall there have been a number of positive outcomes. For example, in Case E, the Customer Services Manager commented, "You can see people sitting forward and see them seeing the value and participating. This shows me the initiative has been a success." Across the case studies morale and communication have been increased and overall people have become much more task focussed (see Table 5.1 column 3 and Table 5.5 columns 1 and 4). In Case A the Facilities Manager said, "The organisation has learned the value of the "can do" approach. No matter how bad a situation is there is always a solution." This has resulted in the organisations becoming more tuned into the demands of customers and in most cases the organisation growing their market share relative to their competitors. Customer needs are now at the heart of quality in most of the case studies. The quality

management initiatives have raised the profile of quality in the organisations. The Facilities Manager in Case A commented, "If a company can consistently deliver quality then customers will be satisfied. Satisfied customers translate into better financial results, an improved image and a brighter future."

Across the case studies, trust has been developed between management and employees and vice versa even in unionised environments. The Skills Development Specialist in Case A pointed out, "I never thought I'd see the day where unions and management would agree on what is right for the company." As a result of the quality management initiatives, managers at all levels are now much more proactive and progressive in helping people overcome difficulties, which they encounter from day to day." This highlights that quality management initiatives can become a way of life in the organisations where they have been harnessed appropriately. The selection of case studies shows that quality is no longer the responsibility of any one department or individual. It is everybody's responsibility.

However, there are a number of negative outcomes, which have been identified in this selection of case studies. The Head Supervisor in Case B explained, "Some supervisors in the plant were spreading rumours about the project being an exercise for the for a minority to advance themselves at the expense of others, which was making it difficult to nurture a new culture." This case study shows that a quality management initiative may provide the perfect opportunity for those who are unhappy in the workplace to disrupt efforts of improvement. Quality management initiatives have the potential to illuminate all that is negative about organisational politics. Elsewhere, quality management initiatives have sometimes been a victim of their own success. The Assistant Customer Services Manager in Case E remarked, "If a project group comes together and comes up with a good idea and it is ignored, people will probably not bother in future and may even try to sabotage efforts." Training under the auspices of quality management means people are more empowered, involved and educated in the organisation. As a result they expect to have their ideas to be taken on board. People may become offended if they perceive that their ideas are being ignored.

The cases also highlight an element of the unexpected. There is now a sense of concern among employees with respect to their career. The Skills Development Specialist in Case A explained, "Everybody is now forced to ask themselves do they have a role in the company?" Evidence from the case studies suggests that education is resulting in a new form of work organisation. This can prove to be quite stressful and demanding with the opportunities for respite becoming increasingly diminished. The Customer Services Manager in Case C explained, "It is a very demanding system because we can no longer make decisions in isolation and just watch your own back."

Overall, the reflections of the participants in this selection of case studies reinforce many of the findings found in by researchers who have examined the implications of a quality management in an Irish context using positivist methodologies. Monks, Buckley and Sinnott (1997) have found that Irish organisations are operating a dual system: new team working and involvement initiatives are functioning alongside the command and control structures of conventional management. Kromkowski and Murphy (1996) have found that the introduction of a quality management initiative released energy and tacit knowledge of the workforce. The value added of the case studies in this research project has been to show what is meant in reality by 'teamworking' and how a quality management initiative released energy and tacit knowledge of the workforce (see Table 5.4 columns 2,3 and 4). Evidence suggests that team-working is the gathering of people from across different functions in the organisation to work together in the pursuit of quality. Quality has proved to be a powerful concept for engaging people in change processes to such an extent that control and command structures have been dissolving due to partnerships being formed between management and employees in two of the case study organisations.

Furthermore the selection of case studies confirms the fact that there are both positive and negative outcomes from quality management initiatives. Research has tried to categorise literature into four categories; optimistic; exploitation; contingency; reorganisation of control (see Rees, 1995). Though these categories are useful, the case

studies illustrate that various quality management initiatives may result in outcomes which are pertinent to all four categories. Table 5.4 shows that quality initiatives may result in employee involvement and empowerment which in turn supports culture change. However this is not without varying levels of resistance at various stages of the change process. Indeed, Table 5.5 highlights the fact that regardless of whether or not the initiative is deemed to be a success, there will always be both positive and negative outcomes along with an element of surprise.

It is clear the training and education is a conduit to involvement and empowerment. This is documented in the writings of the guru's (see Ishikawa, 1986; 1985; Deming, 1986; 1994). This highlights an evolution in the gurus thinking from quality as a hard, quantitative, rational concept to a soft, qualitative normative concept with both schools of thought often interacting when observed in a real world context. There is evidence which suggests that organisations in the case studies are using the hard rational concepts of quality such as statistical process control (see Deming and Shewart, 1939), control charts and benchmarking. The case studies also suggest that organisations are using soft normative methods such as teamwork, employee empowerment and involvement.

6.6: Conclusion

This Chapter has taken the findings from five case studies to generate meaning and insight with respect to quality and associated initiatives in an Irish context. Based on an analysis of the selection of case studies this author concludes that quality has a definite meaning and reality in the each of the organisations in which it was observed. This author has found that quality is a concept with an array of initiatives surrounding it. The concept may be anything from trying to produce a product, which is fit for use, to an awareness campaign to try and encourage stakeholders to become more sensitive to the needs of customers. The initiatives are generally the package of tools and techniques which has been used to deliver quality in organisations by consultants. When one analyses the tools and techniques one learns there is much continuity with respect to the tools and techniques of the gurus. The various quality management initiatives have

added teamwork as concept to bring people together to achieve quality. Certainly the various titles assigned to quality management initiatives do portray them to be quite different providing the ammunition to critical analysts to attack them as hype and empty rhetoric. However when one observes their use in a real world context, one learns that they are using similar tools and techniques underpinned by a philosophy of continuous improvement, which have a real meaning capable of having a positive impact on the organisation.

REFLECTIONS

REFLECTIONS

Most discussions of quality improvement programs such as Total Quality Management assume a realist ontology (e.g., key performance indicators tell us how the world is operating), a rationalist epistemology grounded in objectivity (e.g., decisionmaking based on facts), and a change strategy based on transformation (e.g., TQM is a quantum change). Suppose that in the interest of theory development and practice improvement around themes of quality, these assumptions were altered and TQM were recast using the ideas that social construction tells us how the world is operating, rationality is an account rather than a tool, subjectivity is the feedstock of practice, and incremental change is the basis of renewal, these ideas being brought together loosely by an emerging theory of sensemaking. What would the result look like? (Weick, 2000:155)

This thesis has been an attempt to answer this question. However it has been concerned with quality and associated initiatives, not exclusively with 'TQM'. When I first set out on my postgraduate research journey two years ago, it was discovery which attracted me to the business. I was keen to do research that would expose me to a range of organisational settings, people and ideas with respect to a phenomenon. Quality has proved to be as useful as a subject for fulfilling these requirements and an interesting concept in its own right. Case studies and grounded theory gave me a licence to pursue an alternative methodology, which has allowed me to grow into my research and learn from those who have lived through a range of experiences in an organisational setting triggered by the introduction of a quality management initiative.

However this has proved to be very difficult to structure for the purposes of a thesis. How does one structure and make sense of other peoples experiences, feelings and insights in way which is accurate? I believe the only way to do this is to build relationships with those who are interviewed so they have the opportunity to correct you on any distortions and you as the researcher have the opportunity to constantly develop understanding. This is what I have done throughout my two years. I believe this has resulted in a mutual learning experience. I as a researcher have been able to collect data for my project and my practitioner colleagues have had the opportunity to reflect on the experiences with a view to learning from them in the future.

It was only through constant dialogue and reflection that I began to make sense of the emerging patterns of my dialogue with academic and practitioner colleagues. Firstly I

realised that practitioners use a whole range of quality management initiatives, not just 'TQM'. Also there were very real similarities between quality management initiatives. This was the outcome of conducting a focus group of managers with vast experience of a number of different quality management initiatives. 'Teamwork', 'Plan, Do, Check, Act', 'Benchmarking', 'Empowerment' and 'Continuous Improvement' were all things, which kept popping up in my conversations with practitioners. I kept a diary of these discussions and the patterns kept emerging and I notice I was beginning to put together the similarities and difference between the different initiatives. I tried to structure these patterns based on the initiatives, their focus, the organisation and the nature of the change being pursued by writing draft case studies based on discussions with people from various organisations. It was now in position to begin reading literature relevant to quality. I was amazed to find that there were so few case studies and that the writings of Shewart and Deming, (1939) and Ishikawa (1985; 1986) contained the essence of many of the quality management initiatives which my practitioner colleagues have grappled with. Most of the literature I read was concerned with generating research through surveys, and testing hypothesis, which was informative but lacking the meaning that I found so interesting from dialogue with my colleagues. My mind was made up. I was going to attempt to capture reality and meaning with my study and I was determined to have practitioners guide me in my search for literature. This resulted in the literature review compiled of Chapters one and two constantly being revisited to ensure it was relevant based on dialogue with practitioners.

I believe this approach to research reduces scope for bias as the researcher is constantly building his or her understanding of a subject based on real world evidence. I felt I was being guided by the reality of quality, which ultimately lead me back to its origins. This has made be me much more inquisitive and quick to question much of what I read, particularly with respect to the critical analysts. I am never willing to accept that something is truth until I have experienced it and my experience of quality is a robust and necessary concept for customer satisfaction, which can focus the capability of an organisation. I feel the chosen methodology may prove very useful for future research in other management disciplines such as human resource management. The subject is

widely written about. However I still ask the question what is it? I believe I would generate a very different meaning to human resource management if I were to ground myself close to it in a real world context. However this is quite difficult to do. I have been fortunate that people were interested in talking to me and granting me access to their organisation and that I had two years to do it.

I feel my main contribution has been the case studies. Already they have provided endless scope for debate among colleagues with respect to interpretation. This can only be good for gaining understanding and insight into management processes. I believe the projects weakness may be the sensemaking exercise in Chapter 5 and the attempt to generate insight and meaning in Chapter 6. This returns to the difficulty in trying to make sense of other people's experiences. However this may also be viewed as strength as different people will inevitably have different interpretations, which provides scope for debate resulting in shared meaning and shared learning. In terms of my learning, I am confident that I have a grasp of methodological issues. My experience has taught me that methodology is the one thing that brings researchers from all disciplines together. I have had many convivial conversations with colleagues from an engineering background about the differences in conducting research. What I have learned is that there is no right or wrong way of doing research. It is purely down to individual choice. My choice was guided by my desire to learn from others and my naturally reflective orientation.

Based on the case studies, it seems to me that the co-existence of hard concepts such as key performance indicators, statistical process control and benchmarking alongside softer concepts such as teamwork, brainstorming and participation is proof that the secret of a successful quality management initiative lies in the two concepts interacting. It has been most interesting to trace the development of the quality initiative from management of quality to management by quality. I believe quality will continue to evolve into the new millennium in a way, which will encourage organisations to be more respectful of the environment. Already we see the environmental standard ISO

14000, being raised to prominence, as consumers are more conscious of whether or not organisations are being responsible environmental citizens.

Perhaps the material in this project could be used as the basis for a questionnaire survey in future research to see if the findings of Chapter five are mirrored at a national level. I believe a worthwhile future research project would be one, which was purely based on case study data guided by the principles of grounded theory without consulting literature at any stage. I believe such a project could make a pure contribution to understanding quality management in terms of insight and analysis. This would be very demanding and ambitious but potentially very rewarding as the literature is beginning to become more demanding in its call for employment of alternative methodologies to get beyond the rhetoric of many concepts in management. To conclude, I wish put it on record that the practitioner guidance in my research has made me seriously doubt the arguments of the critical theorists. They are attacking quality management initiatives, dismissing them as fads and anti-organisation phenomena, yet the evidence is that quality management initiatives are helping organisations survive and adapt - much more so than their school of industrial sociology. It appears to me that they have latched onto a successful concept such as quality in an effort to raise the profile of their own discipline.

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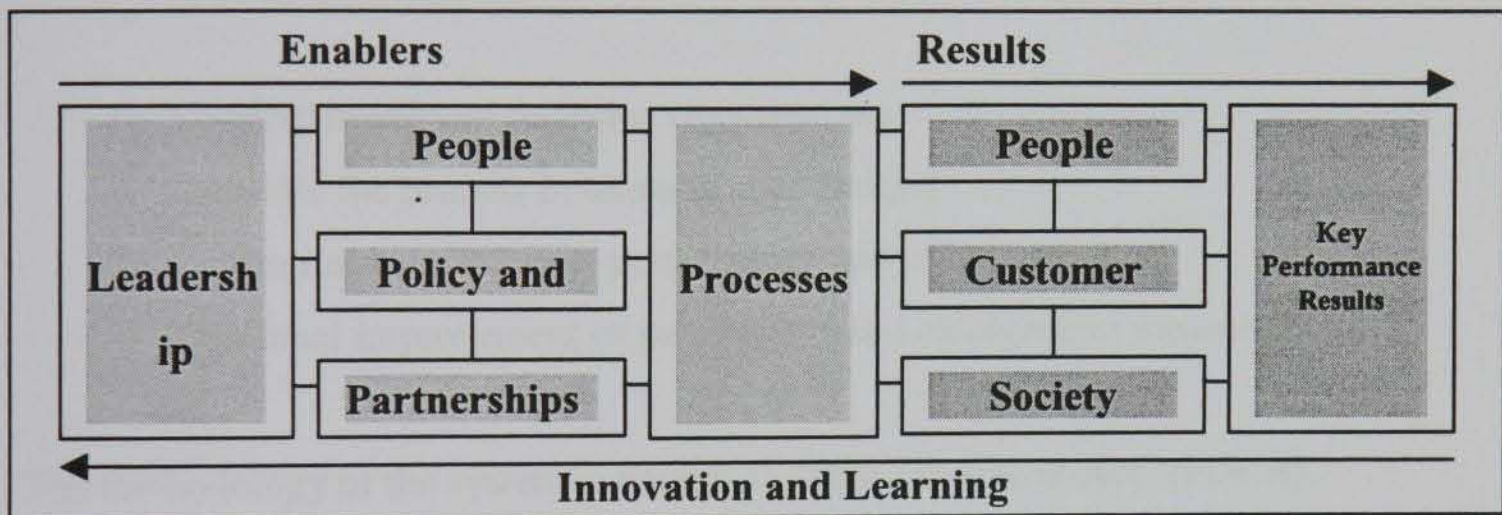
APPENDICES

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Business Excellence Model

(based on the European Foundation for Quality Management, 1999)

The European Foundation Excellence Model is a non-prescriptive framework based on nine criteria. Five of these are 'Enablers' and four are 'Results'. The 'Enabler' criteria cover what an organisation does. The results criteria cover what an organisation achieves. 'Results are caused by 'Enablers'.



Source: The EFQM Excellence Model, 1999

The Model, which recognises many approaches to achieving sustainable excellence in all aspects of performance, is based on the premise that:

Excellent results with respect to Performance, Customers, People and Society are achieved through Leadership driving Policy and Strategy, People, Partnerships and Resources, and Processes.

Appendix 2: ISO:9000

(based on ISO 9000)

International Standards Organisation (ISO) has been developing voluntary technical standards for all sectors of business and industry since 1947. The vast majority of ISO standards are highly specific to a particular product, material, or process. Both ISO 9000 is known as a generic management system standard. This means the same standards can be applied to any organisation, large or small, whatever its product.

ISO 9000 is primarily concerned with quality management. Quality management is defined as products, which conform to the customer's requirements. A typical quality management system under the auspices of the ISO 9000 will comprise of:

1. Understanding and fulfilling requirements
2. Consider the process in terms of value added
3. Obtain results of process performance and effectiveness
4. Continual improvement of processes based on objective measurement

The methodology of the system is known as "Plan-Do-Check-Act" (PDCA).

Plan: establish the objectives and processes necessary to deliver results in accordance with customer requirements and the organisation's policies.

Do: implement the process.

Check: monitor and measure processes and product against policies, objectives and requirements for the product and report the results.

Act: take actions to continually improve process improvement.

Based on satisfactory audit scores an organisation achieve "Accreditation" whereby an authoritative body gives formal recognition that the organisation is competent to carry out a specific task.

Appendix 3: SerQual

(based on Parasuraman, Zeitheml and Berry, 1988)

The following are the principles of SERQUAL:

Quality needs to be built in to the service.

Quality is difficult to measure - there is no simple product.

What does quality mean to the organisation?

The expectations and perceptions of the customer need to be met.

There are two aspects to quality, technical and functional.

Service quality may be viewed under five dimensions as follows:

Tangibles

Reliability

Responsiveness

Assurance

Empathy

Based on the above principles and dimensions the organisation can develop a satisfaction model to ensure a quality service is being delivered to its stakeholders.

Appendix 4: The Balanced Scorecard

(based Kaplan and Norton, 1996)

The balanced scorecard is a management system (not only a measurement system) that enables organisations to clarify their vision and strategy and translate them into action. It provides feedback around both the internal business processes and external outcomes in order to continuously improve strategic performance and results. When fully deployed, the balanced scorecard transforms strategic planning from an academic exercise into the nerve centre of an enterprise.

The balanced scorecard retains traditional financial measures. However financial measures tell the story of past events, an adequate story for industrial age companies for which investments in long-term capabilities and customer relationships were not critical for success. These financial measures are inadequate, however, for guiding and evaluating the journey that information age companies must make to create future value through investment in customers, suppliers, employees, processes technology, and innovation.

The balanced scorecard suggests that we view the organisation from four perspectives, and to develop metrics, collect data and analyse it relative to each of these perspectives:

The Learning and Growth Perspective

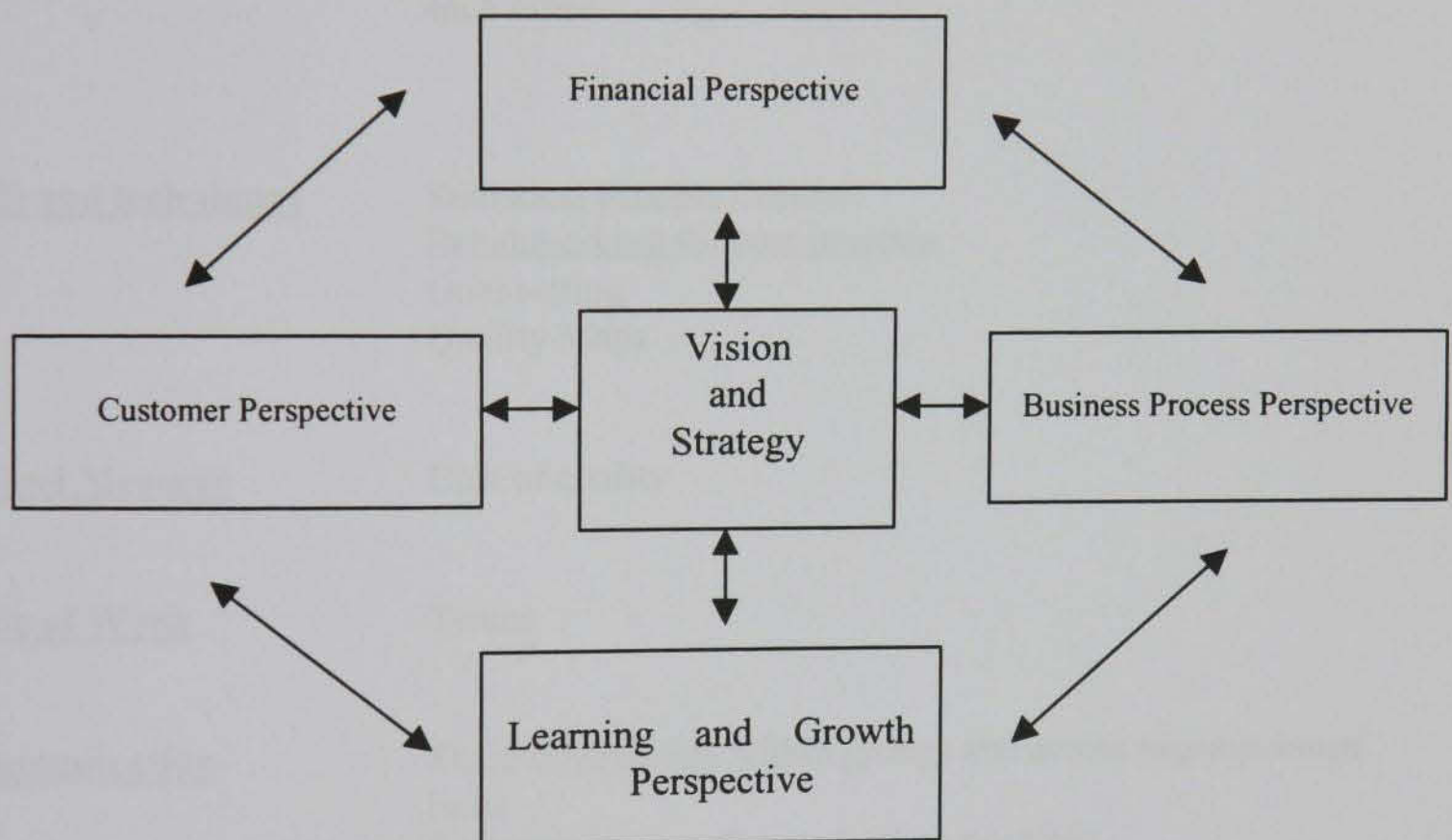
The Business Process Perspective

The Customer Perspective

The Financial Perspective

The Balanced Scorecard and Measurement-Based Management

The balanced scorecard methodology builds previous quality management ideas including customer-defined quality, continuous improvement, employee empowerment, and primarily measurement-based management and feedback. The balanced scorecard incorporates feedback around internal business process outputs, as in total quality management, but also adds a feedback loop around the outcomes of business strategies. This creates a "double-loop feedback" process in the balanced scorecard.



Source: Adapted from Kaplan and Norton, 1996 based on internal company files from Case D.

Appendix 5: Total Quality Management

(based on Oakland, 1989)

<u>Focus</u>	Customer satisfaction/ requirements Continuous improvement of process, products and services Continually strive to achieve zero-defects
<u>Philosophy</u>	Unitarist Treat people justly Respect opinions of others Treat customers and vendors with the same respect as each other
<u>Tools and techniques</u>	Statistical Process Control Benchmarking for best practice Goal setting Quality Maps
<u>Control Measure</u>	Cost of quality
<u>Mode of Work</u>	Teams
<u>Communication</u>	Share information within groups and across organisational lines Talk directly to colleagues when possible Strive for simplicity and clarity Honesty and openness in communications
<u>Responsibility</u>	Direct responsibility of management
<u>Nature of implementation</u>	Top down
<u>Scope of Change</u>	Total Organisation

Nature of Change Incremental

Change in management structure Marginal

Process Highly structured and analytical in its analysis

Required change in process (a) Horizontal integration across networks
(b) Vertical integration through through hierarchies

Agents of Change
The employee
Quality team
Top, middle and line management
Technology

Appendix 6: Semi-Structured Interview

Semi-Structured Interview: Level A

Why was it necessary to undertake a quality initiative?

What were you hoping to achieve with the initiative?

What is the vision, which people are working towards?

What do people mean when they say 'quality'?

Has there been any involvement from an external consultant? What role did he/she play?

What aspects of needed to be improved if the company was to become or maintain quality?

How have processes to date been changed?

Were quality tools were used.?

Were there training strategies were developed under the auspices of the quality initiative?

How are necessary changes implemented?

Were there pilot implementations?

Have there been any barriers to implementing changes? How were they overcome?

Have there been changes in the structure of the organisation?

What has been the outstanding outcome of the initiative? Has there been anything unexpected?

Does the quality initiative have a future role to play in the affairs of the company?

Has the initiative been success?

How is the success measured?

Semi-Structured Interview: Level B

What do you understand by the quality initiative?

How has it been implemented?

How have you been involved in the implementation?

Has the initiative assisted you in delivering a better service to clients and colleagues?
Please explain how?

How have you been trained/prepared for the various changes?

What have you learned from your experiences to date?

Do you feel the venture has been a worthwhile experience?

Would you like to offer any final comments?

