

Don't fall off the tracks after starting a quality program

Success requires more than memos, meetings

By Rick Conlow

Q. How do you continue momentum in a quality or customer service program?

A. You'll stay on track if you never forget that quality or service improvement is a process, not a program. For continuing results, all in the organization must learn that improvement comes as they change the overall approach to business.

Ask yourself what approaches you're taking:

- Short-term focus or long-term focus?
- Quick fixes or solid solutions?
- Department efforts or total team efforts?
- Taking a quick profit or building customer retention and referrals?
- Status quo thinking or creative thinking?

Building a good program does not mean that you never take the approaches mentioned first in each question. However, it does mean that you must take more of the alternative approaches listed second. And in any quality or service process, the last step is always this: Start over.

Here are some practical applications you can use to keep your program on the right track:

- Cover the basics consistently.
- Create a strategy and plan.
- Communicate.
- Survey customers.
- Train, and train again.

MANAGER'S ADVISER

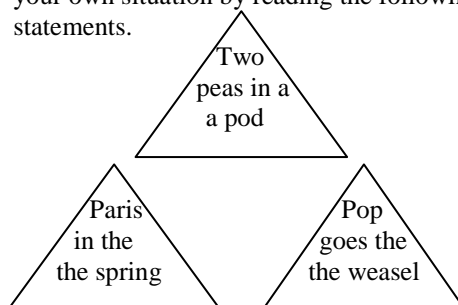
Quality and customer satisfaction do not consist of a program, a memo, an inspection, a speech, a button, a job title or a meeting. They are a process, a belief, a commitment and an everyday management approach.

OPERATING ON YOU

Q. How can managers improve time management and become more productive?

A. Six decades ago, Dr. Evan O'Neill Kane of New York's Kane Summit Hospital felt that doctors were losing too many patients in an appendectomy surgery – often because of the effects of general anesthesia. He felt that local anesthesia would be better for patients but, not surprisingly, no volunteers came forward to test his hypothesis. On Feb. 15, 1921, though, he finally found a patient. That's when he performed an appendectomy with local anesthesia – on himself. In the process, he changed accepted medical practice.

To be more productive, managers need change, too. Sometimes that change means operating on themselves. Begin analyzing your own situation by reading the following statements.



Did you read the statements as you think they should read? Or did you notice that each has an extra word?

This little exercise points out that what you are missing is most likely right in front of you. Sometimes the solutions to your time management problems are there but you just don't see them. Why? Because of entrenched habits and beliefs. When you try to improve personal time management, it seems as futile as trying to lose weight with fad diets.

There are, however, some practical ideas you can use.

Remember, real time management is self-management. You can't imagine time because it's constant but you can manage

yourself.

To manage yourself better, you must be willing to change some habits to increase productivity.

A key to self-management is to respond to all events based on your goals and priorities rather than reacting to spot urgencies.

Use a personal time planner to organize your time.

Write out your goals and priorities. Review them often.

Occasionally analyze how you spend your time.

Keep learning by attending seminars and courses to stay abreast of the latest time management techniques.

About WCW Partners

Rick Conlow, CEO/Senior Partner, and Doug Watsabaugh, COO/Senior Partner have helped companies, governmental agencies and nonprofit organizations achieve record-breaking results for more than 20 years as performance improvement experts. Their clients' achievements include double digit improvements in repeat and referral business, triple digit increases in sales, more than 50% reduction in customer complaints, 34 quality and service awards and domination in their respective markets. Rick and Doug are popular motivators and speakers, inspiring audiences with their engaging down-to-earth but down-to-business approach. They have authored more than a dozen books, including *SuperSTAR Customer Service*. This year they will publish the *SuperSTAR Leadership Model*.

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