Exploring ways of working together to deliver the goals (Grid of the QFD)

In the previous chapter, we considered how the design of the organisation could be understood and improved by breaking it down logically into business processes. We also looked at how team members should be appointed to be responsible for the operation and performance improvement of those processes.

Our next task is to understand exactly what we mean by *'performance improvement'* for each of the processes.

This is a complicated issue; the performance potential of our processes and the strategies for pursuing our objectives are highly interdependent.

Establishing the process role

How do we develop a winning strategy hand-in-hand with exploring the potential of each process for creatively contributing to it? And since the processes are interlinking, how do we define what we need of any one process while we are still defining what we need from all the others?

These are the questions that we need to answer if we are to get the very best out of our organisation, but the plethora of options, and complexity of interdependencies tend to create an impression of Pandora's box.

Fortunately, however, the grid of the QFD provides an excellent framework for exploring and addressing exactly these questions. Completing the grid of the QFD enables the management team to:

- evaluate the potential of each process to contribute to the goals of the organisation

Chapter 9

Three days later, the team were gathered once again in the main meeting room.

As was now the custom, Richard introduced the meeting and sat down, and watched Lucy smoothly introduce the process for developing the grid of the QFD. Thinking back on it, he realised how much he owed his progress to Lucy. He had introduced the concept of QFD, but she was making it work. He considered how many pitfalls he would have fallen into without her ideas, her planning and her facilitation.

This meeting was the big one, the one in which they would develop the grid of the QFD. They had planned the whole day for this session. Fifty-six cells with ten minutes discussion for each. Nine hours plus breaks, introduction and wrap-up. Lucy was running the group through the agenda. Planned finish time was 8pm that evening, but they all had been forewarned of that, so there was no surprise.

A slide appeared on the screen, projected straight from the computer. It was the column and row headings for the first cell, along with fuller descriptions for each. At the bottom was an electronic bar graph that counted up the minutes. The bar started green, went orange at six minutes, and red at ten.

"Okay then, can I have an initial show of cards for the extent to which the process of *'Customer support and order management'* affects the objective of *'Address new market areas'*," Lucy asked. "Remember, the exact definition for what is meant by each symbol on your cards is explained on the flipchart over there." She pointed to the far right corner.

Some people had clearly anticipated the question, and had thrust the card with their chosen symbol on it up into the air almost immediately. Others wanted to think things through a bit, but eventually, hesitantly, the last card went up.

Lucy summarised the picture for the group: "So, nobody feels there is no relationship, a majority feel there is a major relationship, and we have one person who feels the relationship is critical, and two who have indicated they feel it is a minor relationship. Okay cards down. Daniel can you present the argument for it being a critical relationship?"

- develop clear strategies for achieving its goals based on fully exploiting that potential
- understand the interdependencies that are essential to meeting the goals (efficiently)
- establish a 'contract' with each process for what is expected of it.

In the process of developing the grid of the QFD, the whole management team works together, one objective at a time, developing a comprehensive understanding of how each and every process influences its achievement or otherwise. In this way the interdependence of the business, and its untapped potential, is fully appreciated by the whole team.

Developing the grid of the QFD

However, maintaining this level of insight and attention to detail for each and every one of over 40[1] cells, for the whole management team, is an awesome task. Particularly since it is important to achieve it working all together in one sitting.[2] However, it is possible, providing the process used ensures:

- a clear focus on the discussion in hand
- objective and balanced discourse
- clear and agreed conclusions
- regular breaks.

The following process is designed to achieve all of the above, and has been well proven on many occasions.

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[1] Assuming a grid at least six objectives by seven processes. Very few top-level QFDs are smaller than 40 cells, but for reasons of focus and practicality you should endeavour to keep your QFD to no more than 80 cells.

[2] If the management team is split up to work through the grid, or if the work is split into two sessions with an interval of a day in-between, it becomes difficult to remain consistent in both the scoring and the arguments.

Discovery [of a solution] consists of looking at the same thing as everyone else and thinking something different.

Albert Szent-Gyorgyi
Nobel laureate in medicine and physiology

Daniel responded immediately and with a degree of derision. "Frankly, I'm surprised no-one else can see how crucial the way we treat our customers is to growing our business."

Deborah bridled at that, and responded coldly. "The question is about whether the way we treat existing customers stimulates purchases from new ones in different markets, and frankly," here Deborah mimicked Daniel's original tone, "I'm surprised you see things so simplistically."

Daniel sat bolt upright in his chair, and Lucy shot an urgent look at Richard who came in immediately. "Excuse me! I was under the impression that this was about sharing ideas and moving forward. If we bind the stances people take to their personal credibility then we will all have more at stake to lose than the argument.

"If someone explains simply that the sky is technically blue, then I can move from my original position of seeing it as grey. But if someone implies that anyone who thinks the sky is grey must be stupid, then I'm going to fight to the end to prove that person wrong. Because to accept that they are right means accepting that I'm stupid! Many of us will start with somewhat flawed or incomplete perceptions. When we have shared our knowledge we can develop, without stigma, slightly less flawed and somewhat more complete perceptions. Associating perceptions with characteristics about those who hold them, however indirectly or subconsciously, simply gets in the way of developing that common view. Let's keep things objective or we'll be here until midnight tomorrow."

Most people could see Richard's point, but Deborah and Daniel looked as though they had both been told off. "Ah well," thought Richard, "at least if they're quiet for a minute or two it will give the others a chance to get the discussion back on track."

The team finally concluded that it was a major relationship, largely on the strength of 'word of mouth', 'referrals', and the impact of satisfied customers on market image.

The second cell was more straightforward, but even so, it yielded new insights into how the current approaches for developing new business often failed to fully embrace new market areas, and tended to simply extend existing ones. As a result, the team could see exciting new possibilities in redesigning the process.

But each new insight was painful, and often hard won through determined and entrenched discussion. It was as if the old surface needed to be phys-

1. Ensure from the outset that everybody is willing to commit to the process; set ground rules for developing the grid and pin up written versions of these as a clear reminder to the group.

2. Work through the grid horizontally, taking one objective at a time, and considering, in turn, the contribution of each process to that objective.

3. Plan a set time for each cell and unobtrusively keep the group informed of progress against it. The 'animation' facility in most presentation software provides an effective means for doing this. Ensure a short period for relaxation at the completion of each row of the grid.

4. Keep the specific process and objective that are under discussion at the forefront of the group's mind. Projecting slides with the process and objective clearly described helps to achieve this. Or alternatively, have two flipcharts, one with sheets of individual objectives and the other with sheets of individual processes, each turned to the right page. It is surprisingly easy without this facility for odd members of the group to begin discussing the wrong cell, and confuse their colleagues. All such confusion drains energy and enthusiasm very quickly.

5. Debate on each cell should be carefully managed to ensure time and energy is not wasted by repeated argument, discussion hogging, irrelevancies, or resentment. This can be helped by working through the following steps for each cell.

   Use simple cards to obtain an initial straw poll of how people view the relationship (see the examples shown on the right).
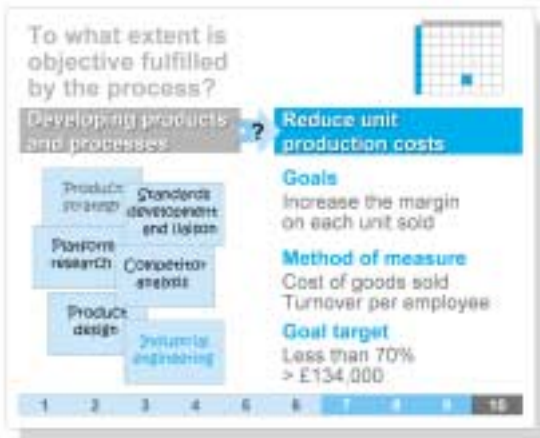
ically broken before the organisation would reveal new secrets and opportunities.

And yet, even though it was hard work, Richard could see in people's faces the new ideas taking root. The ploughing may have been taking its toll on his workers, but he knew there would be rich pickings when the process teams had time to go back over the furrows and see what had been churned up.

And so the process continued, with occasional breaks and hiccoughs, all the way to the forty-fifth cell.

Abs half closed his eyes and shook his head as Deborah concluded her opening argument, and almost before the last syllable had been uttered, he launched himself into a response.

"How can you say that? You've never really understood the damage your people do, have you?"

Lucy moved towards the middle of the room hoping that Abs would see she was ready to reinforce the ground rules that they had agreed at the outset. But Abs had his eyes fixed on Deborah, and his heart fixed on resolving all the frustration of a long festering issue. He continued determinedly. He pointed forcibly at the intersection between *'Developing products and processes'* and *'Reduce costs of poor quality'*.

"How can you say that your process has less of an impact on *'Costs of poor quality'* than mine, when 90 per cent of the wastage that I incur is down to problems that you've given me? It's stupid!" His eyes flashed angrily at the end of his sentence and his finger now pointed at Deborah. Lucy realised that she was not going to deal with this by presence alone.

"Points only please. Not personalities. We need to work through the grid logically and rationally. It's getting late and we're all tired, and we need to be even more careful that we are working to consensus." She looked from Abs to Deborah, and Deborah took this as her cue to respond. The damage had been done. Deborah took Abs' view that her point was 'stupid' as a personal affront to her. And she was all set to defend her point vigorously. After all, SHE was right!

"You incur wastage because you've never adjusted your processes properly to cope with the new products, and that is down to you. You never

Ask for the extremes of view to be explained simply, briefly and unemotionally.

Ask for other new points to be included objectively, one by one.

Avoid entrenched argument by carefully managing the sequence, asking only for new points, and keeping personalities out of it.

6. Reach a conclusion quickly and fairly.

Ensure that all of the important points have been made, and that people are content they have been listened to and understood. Correct any omissions.

Clarify that if everyone is now fully appraised of all the salient factors we can trust their conclusions to be an informed judgement, and therefore we should accept the balance of opinion of the team as a whole.

Ensure that people are willing to abide by a final vote.

Ask for a final vote, and accept the majority view.

It is vitally important to remember that it is not the final score on the QFD that is important, but the learning and insight that has arisen from the discussion. These discussions and conclusions are intensely valuable to the management team, and its subsequent work, and it is therefore important to ensure that they are preserved. If they are left to the memory of the participants, 80% of the value will be lost within a week. For this reason it is prudent to fully document the discussions and make them available to each process owner and/or process team as they work to design and control the process.

The preparation of an annual plan is in itself the end, not the resulting bound volume... To prepare and justify [a plan], people go through a lot of soul-searching analysis and juggling, and it is this mental exercise that is valuable.

Andrew S. Grove
CEO, Intel Corp.

spend the time with us to do things properly, and so you reap the harvest of your own lack of preparation…"

Abs interrupted forcibly. "And we don't have the time because we're rushing round like mad trying to fix the legacy of issues that you created for us last time!"

"Stop! Stop!" Lucy stood right in the middle of the room, her hands raised as though they could physically stem the flow of words and emotions. Abs and Deborah subsided, but both looked sullen, as though there were hundreds more things they wanted to say. Lucy looked round the room, and then let her gaze fall on Richard who took it as his cue. "I think perhaps if we took a short break. Be back here in ten minutes. No continuing of discussions. Okay?"

People nodded, slightly subdued, and filed out of the door. Richard walked over to Lucy. She had sat down on a chair in the corner, and as the last person left the room she dropped her head in her hands with a groan. "It's a nightmare!" she said. "I've never had to facilitate so hard in my life! Every damn cell seems to be a potential battle waiting to explode into its full bloody glory!"

"And every battle has become a truce of understanding and insight. Lucy, this is brilliant! Do you not see how far we have come in just one day? Have you not seen the people learning important points practically every five minutes? You can see the lights come on visibly. You can see the dawning realisations and insights in their faces. You can see issues being put to bed between the team that have festered unresolved for years. Can't you? Sure, when you focus on the protagonists, they seem to only reluctantly accept the conclusions. But each one has seen new things, and each time, we have reached a new conclusion; an agreement; a decision, where we have never had one before. The hard work that you are seeing is the result of people wrestling with themselves. But I've had the luxury of watching the others listen to the discussions, and I know that once people have had the chance to reconcile themselves to what they have agreed, they will be greatly enriched by what has come out of today!"

The words tumbled over each other, and Lucy was lifted by his enthusiasm. "Lucy, you are doing a brilliant job. Really! You may need to be a bit tougher as we get more tired, and maybe have more frequent breaks. But we really are moving forward. My team has insights and understanding now that will help us really transform this business.

At the conclusion of the discussions it is possible to calculate the relative importance of each of the processes to the overall achievement of the objectives. This is done by assigning values of nine, three and one to critical, major and significant symbols respectively,[1] multiplying each symbol by the weighting for that objective, and adding up the total for each process (see picture on page 84).

It is relatively easy to develop the QFD electronically, using either presentation or spreadsheet software.[2] However, in practice, creating a simple paper-based grid on the wall can free your projection equipment to focus the team on discussing the current cell.

Developing the grid of a QFD for your organisation can be tremendously rewarding, but it should not be undertaken lightly. Even when the discussions are well facilitated, it usually takes about eight hours to work objectively through every cell of a business QFD. Eight hours of joint awareness, new insights, shared understanding, as cell-by-cell the team explores how the business works. It could be the most profitable day your team have ever spent together.[3]

Or it could simply be eight hours of frustration, boredom and hobbyhorses. The difference will be in very large part, down to the disciplines of the discussion, and this brings us on to the second part of this chapter.

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1   Other values can be used, but these values have proven the most useful in practice.

2   A preliminary example of a spreadsheet version can be found on the associated web-site (see Appendix 7).

3   See Appendix 15

Ground rules

Agreeing ground rules at the start of a session can help to ensure the session remains productive. Suggested ground rules are:

- Be candid and honest
- Endeavour to keep to agreed times
- Everybody has an opportunity to speak on each issue
- Focus on the current task
- Only one person to speak at a time - no side conversations
- Everybody to remain involved with the discussion in hand
- Seek to understand rather than explain
- Have fun.

Heaven sakes! I've learnt so much in just six hours. Essential, vital, critical pieces of knowledge about the business."

People were starting to drift back in and it was clear Lucy was not going to get her cup of tea now. But Richard had been better for her than a break. She felt ready to do what was needed to see this through.

As everybody reassembled, she prepared herself to recap, and to reset the ground rules, but before she could do so Abs interjected: "I just want to say sorry to the group. I was out of order there!" and was rewarded with nods and the odd muttered "S'okay!" And Deborah chipping in: "Yeah, me too!"

Lucy thought it was still worth resetting her contract with the group. "Okay, let's look back at how far we've come. We are now 78.6% of our way through the QFD." People smiled at her pedantic accuracy. "We have made great progress, but we are tired, and so I'd just like to remind you of the ground rules that have helped us so much in getting this far." She was about to run through them and abruptly realised this would be the kiss of death (or rather sleep) at this point in the afternoon, so she suddenly switched. "Which of them have you found most useful?"

People were momentarily thrown by the question, but then John threw in: "It's got to be the one about keeping things objective. It is so much easier to accept a point when you haven't had your ego tied to the alternative."

"No, I reckon it's the one about seeking to understand rather than explain," said Peter. "That point has been a real eye-opener to me, and it has really unpicked some previously entrenched issues."

"Oh, I'd go for the one about fun," said Andrew and drew further smiles.

"You would!" responded Susan, "but I think they've all been important. I reckon without the ground rules, we'd still be stuck on the second cell and fighting over the same piece of ground!"

Lucy saw her chance to pick it up again. "Okay, so if we're going to finish this before midnight, let's keep our focus on using them. Now back to the cell on the impacts of the Process of *'Developing products and processes'* on the objective of *'Reduce costs of poor quality'*."

Peter interjected here: "I think we've got confused again between processes and people. The question here is: Does our current process of taking

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Establish clearly defined management processes and protocols

The meeting to develop the grid of the QFD is likely to be very intense. You will have a lot of new ground to cover with people who are uncertain of their new role, and still have unresolved issues from their old one. But the QFD meeting illustrates an important point about the role of management team members; that only a part of their role is described by the columns on the QFD. An equally important aspect of each member's role is how they work together as a management team.

The QFD meeting is not an isolated incident, and as your team struggles to get to grips with its new potential, there will be plenty of opportunity for conflict and confusion. If the meeting is unstructured and undisciplined, your team members will develop inappropriate means to assert their authority and gain influence over the proceedings, and as a result you will not get the best out of them. The most powerful and outspoken members will not always be the ones with the greatest potential to add value at any particular point.

The challenge is to establish processes and disciplines which ensure that people do not need to be outspoken to be heard, and which ensure that people can appropriately introduce and nurture their ideas and talents, even when they are not yet fully confident in them.

There are a number of tools which will help to develop those processes and disciplines. They are:

- session plans
- standard forms
- car parks
- general ground rules
- consensus reaching.

When your argument has little or no substance, abuse your opponent

Cicero
Roman Statesman

a new product idea and making all the necessary production changes to make it fly, irrespective of who does what within it, have an impact on costs of poor quality? From what's been said, one way or another, it seems to me that it has a massive impact. And unless we recognise that, we may not put in the necessary effort outside of this meeting to resolving the very important issues that were voiced earlier."

"Thank you Peter," said Lucy and then acknowledged another partly raised hand: "Andrew!" she said.

"Thank you, yes. I think Peter is right. Both the activities of *'product design'*, and of *'effectively altering production processes to deliver it efficiently'* sit within this process, and one way or another we end up with waste as a result."

At this three more hands went up. "Deborah, then Abs, then Peter again," said Lucy orchestrating the sequence.

And so the meeting continued. Richard thought the idea of having to raise your hand to speak, and then being ordered in a sequence of speakers, seemed a bit childish, but it had kept things calm and objective. The risk that an immediately relevant point might be delayed by the sequence appeared to be far outweighed by the order and fairness that it brought to the discussion. People were clearly listening for once and not simply biding their time to grab the floor before their neighbour, as so often happened in Richard's normal meetings.

The remaining cells went by easily, and by the end Richard knew that, even if the programme he had planned stopped right there, things would never be the same again. New insights had been gained, and people would inevitably do things with them.

Deborah and Abs had learned that handover of new products to production was a process, not just a stage in a project. And that it was the process that should be their focus for improvement, not each other.

Peter had been stunned by the potential impact of the finance, and in particular invoicing, process on customer loyalty, and the new opportunities stemming from that.

Susan was inspired by the leverage her new process on *'Supply line'* could bring to bear on *'Addressing new market areas'*, and no longer thought of it as 'buying', as she had when Richard first gave it to her.

Session plans

Meetings are often the most vital, the most time consuming, and the least well-planned aspects of management. While they are clearly a process, and have a desired output, the only form of process analysis and design applied to many of them is a scant, hastily written, agenda.

The 'session plan' is a mechanism to help plan effective meetings. Each meeting is broken up into a series of sessions, and each session has a defined objective, a clear process for achieving that objective, and declared inputs and outputs for the process. An example session plan for developing the QFD can be found on the associated web-site (see Appendix 7).

Although 'session plans' might at first appear to be simply a bureaucratic burden, their ability to drive people to think through what they plan to achieve with each session, and how they plan to do that, is immensely valuable. It is very common for people to initially resist using session plans, and then to become almost addicted to them.

Standard forms

Standard forms provide an excellent means for ensuring the right quality of preparation for a meeting, and for effectively communicating the outcomes of that preparation.

Used judiciously, well-designed forms (see the example on the right) can promote efficiency by guiding people through a well-considered process, and can help to ensure that the results are at an appropriate level of detail. One good form can save several iterations of misinterpretation and lost meeting time.

Andrew was clearly happy that the rest of the team had a far better understanding of the potential and importance of *'Provide and grow people'*, but he had also seen how he needed to extend his own view of training if he was to fully contribute to *'Reduce lead times'*.

John saw new potential for how IT was an integral part of the environment, and was enthusiastic about how he could have a real impact on lead times, resource utilisation, and costs of poor quality, though quicker and better informed decisions.

Richard had never seen his team so energised. He looked at the finished QFD on the wall, and realised that it was simply a representation of real change that had occurred today in his people. Only Daniel seemed to have been unaffected by it. His early attempts to control the meeting had been marginalized by the process, and so he had lapsed largely into silence, except to argue the case for his own processes. Richard thought Daniel was the one person in the room who had not learned anything. He could not recall once seeing Daniel's final vote differ from his initial one, in all 56 squares of the QFD. He had clearly not been swayed by any of the discussion.

Richard worried, not for the first time, that he should not have given Daniel the processes he had.

People were funnelling back into the room after the final break, and now it was Richard's turn to stand at the front. When everybody was seated, he thanked Lucy for taking them through the grid and then started to explain the next steps.

"So you now all have not only a process, but also a clearer understanding of its potential; a map of how it can support our objectives. And when Helen has typed them up you will have a transcript of all of the discussions that have taken place. So, what's next?"

The question was clearly rhetorical because Richard continued without breaking pace. He put up a picture on the video projector and said: "I want you all to think through the following questions for your process: What performance does it need to deliver to ensure we meet our Cylek UK goals? What performance is it delivering now? And what issues do you need to address to close the gap?"

Here he pointed at the picture on the screen. It was a sheet of paper with a number of questions and boxes printed on it.

'Car parks'

The 'car park' is a simple, but extremely effective mechanism for keeping discussions focused on their objective. It is simply a sheet of flipchart paper headed 'car park'.

When an important point is raised that is not part of the discussion it is common for a group to want to pursue the point even though it is not material to the objective of the meeting. Often they are worried that if they don't address it, it will get forgotten, and even if you do persuade them to drop the subject, it continues to occupy their thinking.

By listing such issues visibly in the 'car park' the group is free to focus on the task in hand, in full confidence that the issue will be revisited and addressed before the meeting finishes.

General ground rules

While they may at first seem a bit 'schoolmasterish', ground rules have the potential to vastly improve meeting performance. They provide a basis for the members of the team to contract between them what they deem appropriate meeting behaviour, and then to review and develop that in order to improve meeting performance over time. One senior IT group transformed its meetings from contentious battlegrounds to effective dialogue simply through progressively developing its ground rules.

Consensus reaching

Consensus reaching is a technique to reach an agreed conclusion from a range of different opinions. It is time consuming, and is therefore most appropriately focused on items that are likely to become contentious or entrenched.

Alternative ground rules

Ground rules can be even more powerful if expressed in the first person:

- We will be candid and honest at all times
- We will endeavour to keep to agreed times
- We recognise we have an opportunity to speak on each issue
- We will focus on the current task and avoid side conversations
- We will seek to understand rather than explain
- We will have fun.

"Lucy has developed a simple form to help you think though these questions, and she has undertaken to come round and help people when they need it." He looked at Lucy who responded with a simple nod. "I want the completed forms in this format within two weeks."

There was a sharp intake of breath and people shifted in their seats, and Deborah challenged: "I'm not sure that with our current demands and obligations that we can manage that, Richard." Abs chipped in: "We have to get our people on board, and some might be on holiday." Susan escalated the revolt with a more direct: "There's no way I can meet that!"

Richard held his hands up to quell things. Clearly he had been over optimistic. "Okay, okay! We'll use the meeting scheduled for a fortnight to examine progress then! But I'll need to have completed forms available for circulation one week before the following meeting in a month's time." The body language showed that people still thought this was tight, but not tight enough to protest over. "Okay. Thank you for your time," he said, "and see you tomorrow!"

Richard was euphoric. The sheer potential of the organisation; his ambition to progress; the designer instinct in him; seeing his ideas come to fruition, all combined into a sense of real excitement in him, like a kid on Christmas Eve, he simply could no longer keep still. As the last of his team left, he virtually bounced across the room. He wanted to move, he wanted to run, he wanted to shout! Lucy watched Richard's obvious displacement with a sense of great amusement. She could barely contain her laughter as he virtually pirouetted in the middle of the room, looking at all of the outputs, his face aglow. It was almost as if he didn't know what to do with himself.

He caught her looking at him, smiling indulgently, and bounded over to her. "That was so brilliant, I could kiss you!" He paused. "In fact, I will!" And he grabbed her in a great hug, and kissed her.

And then it happened.

He felt feelings of celebration change to feelings of desire. He felt a tight friendly embrace shift to simply holding, and a kiss intended for fun, for one fleeting moment was something entirely different. It lingered. Too long! He realised what he was doing. He knew it was wrong! He broke away, and broke the spell. His eyes locked on her face in a moment of uncertainty and panic. What had he done?

Lucy was looking down and away. So she had felt it too! Had she?

Consensus reaching is based on the premise that once everybody is in full possession of all the information, then a team view is likely to be more accurate than the individual view. This is clearly not always true, but within most management teams, only the most arrogant of people would claim their opinion should be taken over the opinion of a fully informed majority.

The key then, in consensus reaching, is to make sure that *all* the salient information is presented and understood by the whole team, and then to gain agreement to abide by the majority viewpoint before the vote is taken. It is also very important to separate points from personalities or ego. Consensus reaching is not perfect, but due to its openness, its conclusiveness, and its apparent fairness, it is far more effective than a free-form debate.

Meeting facilitation

The disciplines of the meeting processes and tools outlined in this chapter can make discussions significantly more efficient and effective in progressing the aims of the organisation, but only if they are used in a non-partisan way.

Groups tend to abide by the processes and tools where they believe they are being used fairly, but if they begin to see that they are being used selectively - say only when and if they support the manager's own agenda - then they are likely to disrupt and argue about the process, and make the meetings intensely inefficient by trying to adapt the tools to meet their ends as well.

Managers, particularly in the early stages of introducing change, cannot always afford to be non-partisan. During the initial meetings they may be the sole guardian of the vision in their group, and they need every opportunity to share, inspire and

Consensus reaching process

Each proposal will be presented in turn.

The proposer will make a brief argument as to why they feel proposal should be accepted.

The group will present an initial show of the 'Yes', 'No' cards to indicate their current agreement.

By invitation, the arguments for and against its acceptance will be heard in turn until the group is comfortable that all the main arguments have been heard and understood by themselves and their colleagues.

The group will confirm that it will be happy to abide by the majority viewpoint at this time.

A final show of the 'Yes', 'No' cards will be taken.

Richard turned quickly and spoke just a little too loudly. His tension showed in his words, "Let me help you pack away."

Lucy paused momentarily and came to her senses, quickly pulled back to the reality that Richard was now creating. "Yes that would be helpful". Too loudly? Too matter of fact? Yes, she had felt it too!

But felt what exactly?

Both embarrassed, they busied themselves in their tasks and did not speak. Flipcharts were folded, equipment put away, cases stacked, lights dowsed, doors shut and locked. They had run out of road. One of them had to speak.

Richard broke the silence. "I'll see you tomorrow," he said.

"Yes. Ten o'clock in your office," she said, turned and walked away.

Richard watched her go, his mind a confused mess of questions and part answers. They had originally planned another hotel meeting after the workshop just to wrap things up, but she had not mentioned it. Why? Did she feel the same thing that he had felt? Or was she simply embarrassed by what she saw as an unwelcome pass? Or had she just followed his lead, perhaps thinking he was embarrassed? Or was it because it was late?

And how did he feel? What did he want? Why had she cancelled the evening? He was clearly attracted to her, but was she to him? Had she responded? He felt she had. Was this nerves? Or self-protection? Or responsibility?

Responsibility! He thought about Laura, and about Nicholas. Yes, he would never do anything to put them at risk, they were too important to him. He had responsibilities, and he would always meet them!

On the other hand, Laura had become distant from him. She didn't take any real interest in his work. She was no longer interested in his plans and his schemes. He needed someone to share them with, and Laura just didn't seem to care any more. Did she really see him as any more than a meal ticket, a shelter provider and someone to share the chores? Sometimes he wondered.

A man needs more than that, he reasoned. A man needs someone who can appreciate the difference he is making, and who can stimulate and partner him to greater things. He needed that. He needed Lucy.

develop that vision in their people. Once this is achieved, the team can take responsibility for the urgency and impact of the project, and the manager can focus on ensuring the quality of the processes they use to get there. But until this is achieved, the manager may be very tempted to manipulate those same processes to ensure that the 'right' conclusions (in his or her view) are reached.

If this is the case, then the manager might consider using an independent facilitator (one without a fixed agenda of his or her own) to moderate the processes and tools within the group.

This need for an independent facilitator should, however, be seen as a purely temporary expediency. The reason for this is that, as people grasp direct responsibility for systematically developing the business, the manager's role must change to allow them space to do this, and to provide the necessary encouragement and facilitation. The prolonged appointment of an external facilitator is likely to confuse this transition, and impede the manager's own personal development.

In the next chapter we look in more detail at how people will grasp responsibility, and then in the following section we will explore how the manager's role must change to both support and accommodate their people's growth.

Common QFD pitfalls to avoid:

- Looking at how the objective contributes to the process - it is the processes that deliver the objectives, not the other way round; you can't pull yourself up by your boot laces.

- Seeing a process as defined by people rather than activity and output - just because your storeman completes an appraisal form doesn't automatically make 'people development' part of 'inventory management' - each person often uses, and takes part in, a number of different processes.

- Not being absolutely consistent on the meaning of the symbols - define them clearly and visibly at the start, and refer back to the definitions whenever there is confusion.

- Forgetting that impact on the objective can be positive or negative - it is as important to design out negative impacts as to design in positive ones - a critical contribution can be simply avoiding detrimental influences.

- Letting the definition of the objectives and/or the processes drift - write them down clearly, refer back to them, and update them as the discussion progresses and new assumptions are made.

He would never leave Laura, he knew that, but men have affairs all the time don't they? Laura need never find out.

But supposing she did?

Richard remembered the turmoil and acrimony a past friend of his had been through and shivered.

Well it did no harm to dream about it then. And, as he drove home, his imagination played around the fringes of a full-blown affair with Lucy, and he did not try to stop it.