

Making hard decisions

As people work to implement systematic approaches in their own area to support the achievement of the QFD (see list right), your championing and support will be key to their enthusiasm and commitment. But managing systematically does not suit everyone. The responsibilities and disciplines involved make sense and are valuable to those who take their responsibility seriously. But there are many others who:

- prefer to make their decisions freely
- do not want to look too deeply into their own approach and motives
- enjoy conflict and panic
- are fearful of being exposed by anything systematic
- enjoy picking and choosing an approach which suits them rather than the task
- have tied their self-image to their experience and intuition.

To be fair, there are elements of this in all of us, but for most of us, our desire to make a real difference, and our degree of self-honesty, is enough to keep all of these things (largely) in check.

For some, however, they consciously or subconsciously value how they appear more than what they are: they value living comfortably in a lie above achieving something worthwhile through wrestling with the truth. Any systematic approaches to management are a threat to them, and all they see is extra work, loss of freedom, a diminishment in their power and the potential to fail at it.

This, once again, is partly true of all of us. But some feel it so strongly that they fight a rearguard action. Initially this is only passive resistance, but eventually it can develop into full-scale rebellion.



Steps to local implementation

1. Develop process objectives/proposal.
2. Map the process and its sub-processes.
3. Establish performance measures.
4. Develop the local process QFD.
5. Appoint sub-process owners / assign responsibilities.
6. Establish local management process.
7. Initiate focused improvement projects.

Chapter 20

If the meeting with Peter had been taxing, the meeting with Daniel was frankly impossible.

Any attempts at drawing Daniel out, were met with stormy, reserved excuses and rationalisations. Daniel seemed determined not to let anything slip, and was very reluctant to engage in anything that might be seen as dialogue. Richard felt like he was banging his head against a brick wall, and getting nowhere. In the end, he resorted to just drawing out the basic facts.

“Daniel, exactly what progress have you made against what was agreed at the last meeting?” asked Richard.

“I don’t remember any agreement,” replied Daniel archly.

“Okay, against what was demanded at the last meeting,” clarified Richard.

“Richard, I’ve told you how busy we’ve been here.”

“Daniel, I want a straight answer. Where is your implementation plan? And what progress have you made?”

“We haven’t been able to do a plan!” Daniel replied defiantly.

“But you are aware that you were required to deliver one to my desk last Friday,” challenged Richard.

Daniel remained stonily silent, and just glared malevolently back.

“Okay,” said Richard, “we are both here together. We’ve got the time now. Let’s develop a plan.” Anger was evident in his voice as he stood up and moved to the flipchart in Daniel’s office.

He scribbled the word ‘Plan’ at the top of the page, and then looked back down at Daniel. “Have you any suggestions for what should go on this plan Daniel?”

Daniel just stared back, and curtly replied “No!”

“Okay,” said Richard, “let me suggest the activities that seem to be on most everybody else’s plan.” And he wrote up seven activities required

On the evidence of the implementations to date, you can be assured that, as you work to establish these ideas into your organisation, you will face this. How you react to it will in large part determine the success of your entire implementation.

Jack Welch faced up to this situation in parts of GE, and included his conclusions within his annual report.

He explained that GE employed four types of people. These can be explained by a simple grid, like the one on the right. In his annual report (see right) he made it clear that the values and processes of the organisation were more important than the short-term results.

Conversely, a major steel producer, who had embarked on a Total Quality (TQ) programme in four plants producing different steel products, did not see things that way. The demands on the steel plants, which were at the same location, varied widely over the year. Historically the plants regularly found themselves either overloaded or with idle labour. As part of the TQ programme it was agreed that they would move labour between them as demands fluctuated. One plant manager embraced the concept wholeheartedly, and regularly provided staff to the other plants. However, when he was short of staff, the other plant managers claimed they could not spare anybody, seeing instead the opportunity to use them on internal projects.

Still, culture change takes time, and so the single plant manager persevered. But then he saw his bonus for output performance go to his three colleagues, who had made their output with his people. He left the company shortly after.

Sometimes the type three manager under performs precisely because the type four manager is not sharing the values.

GE's four types of managers:

No Results	Type 4 Rejects values and delivers results	Type 1 Exposes values and delivers results
	Type 2 Rejects values and doesn't deliver results	Type 3 Exposes values and doesn't deliver results
Yes		

Excerpt from GE Annual Report

In our view, leaders, whether on the shop floor or at the tops of our businesses, can be characterized in at least four ways.

The first is one who delivers on commitments - financial or otherwise - and shares the values of our Company. His or her future is an easy call. Onward and upward.

The second type of leader is one who does not meet commitments and does not share our values. Not as pleasant a call, but equally easy.

The third is one who misses commitments but shares the values. He or she usually gets a second chance, preferably in a different environment.

Then there's the fourth type - the most difficult for many of us to deal with. That leader delivers on commitments, makes all the numbers, but doesn't share the values we must have.

This is the individual who typically forces performance out of people rather than inspires it: the autocrat, the big shot, the tyrant. Too often all of us have looked the other way - tolerated these "Type 4" managers because "they always deliver" - at least in the short term.

Continued on next page...

to implement things in Daniel's processes. He then drew a three month timescale along the top of the page, and looked back at Daniel.

"So when do you propose to complete this first activity, Daniel?" challenged Richard.

Daniel shrugged, looked up at the ceiling for a moment. Then said: "Let me see." He ostentatiously pretended to flick through his diary, and then glared back up at Richard and growled: "Not within that timescale!"

Richard closed his eyes and composed himself. He had known from the outset that it would come to this eventually. He had rather that it happened after the business results had started to improve, so that he could at least be a bit more sure of his own position. But now it was clear; there was only the road to the inevitable available to him, and there was nothing to be gained now by further conciliatory attempts. The only thing left for Richard, was to issue an ultimatum. He looked Daniel straight in the eyes.

"Your performance to date in implementing these changes has been unacceptable. Your progress has been negligible, and your excuses do not reflect any more difficulty than your colleagues have had to face, but they are much further ahead than you in this. I am giving you formal notice that I expect to see the first three steps listed here," he pointed to the flipchart, "all complete within the next four weeks. I expect to see a well-developed plan to that effect presented at next week's management meeting. And I will be entering a note of this conversation in your record."

Richard closed his file, and Daniel eyed him malevolently.

Then Daniel replied, in cold measured tones: "I will comply with your request. However, I reiterate my warning that these changes will adversely affect our customers, and I will submit a letter to that effect, to you, in writing."

Richard turned around and left. They had been though this spurious 'damage customer relationships' argument a number of times, and Richard could see no point in, yet again, replying to this clearly bogus claim.

He would wait for the letter and reply, point by point, in writing. He hoped that would be an end to it, but he strongly suspected it would not. Frankly, he wanted Daniel out, and he was now only concerned about

In implementing systematic approaches to management, similar effects can occur:

- resources can be withheld
- measures can be manipulated politically
- information can be used against those providing it.

And sometimes the rewards for doing them are nothing to do with the leader; they are simply inherent in the existing systems and culture.

As you begin your implementation, you will have some committed allies, some entrenched rebels, and probably a majority on a scale in the middle. If you allow the rebels to score from your allies you will lose the middle ground.

Exhortation and logic will not be enough. The inherent unfairness in the system and culture will need to be compensated for. Rebels must be dealt with in such a way that the middle ground realise that you are serious and determined.

For many managers who embark on the work outlined in this book, handling such resistance is the toughest part of the task, and one that they are typically least inclined to tackle. As a result they send out mixed messages about how serious they really are. Their severe dislike (perhaps even fear) of conflict, delays them from taking action, until such action becomes inevitable and distinctly unpleasant for all concerned.

Vacillation and delay will only exacerbate problems of this type - they really do not diminish over time! The longer you leave the floor to the insidious influence of your opponents, the more they will establish their power base, and the more drastic will be the action you have to take to tear it down.



Excerpt from GE Annual Report ... continued

And perhaps this type was more acceptable in easier times, but in an environment where we must have every good idea from every man and woman in the organization, we cannot afford management styles that suppress and intimidate. Whether we can convince and help these managers to change - recognizing how difficult that can be - or part company with them if they cannot, will be the ultimate test of our commitment to the transformation of this Company and will determine the future of the mutual trust and respect we are building.



It does not do to leave a live dragon out of your calculations, if you live near him.

J.R.R. Tolkein
English professor and popular novelist.

how long it would take, and what damage Daniel could do in the meantime.



Richard discovered exactly what damage could be done, within a week of his meeting with Daniel. The shattered glass of the crystal decanter lay all around him. The sparkling reflected light seemed to mock the dark depression in his heart. It seemed to jeer at his sense of unfairness and betrayal, and he imagined Daniel's smirking face in every piece.

The door had shut quietly, and he straightened, lifting his head slightly backwards he stared, unfocused, at the line where the wall met the ceiling, and opened his eyes wide in order to absorb back the pools of liquid forming in front of his eyes.

He breathed in deeply and held himself, and clenched his jaw, sensing himself on the precipice of collapsing into a sobbing rage. He braced himself until the moment passed, and then let the air out of his body slowly.

His shoulders slumped, and, as he closed his eyes, a single tear rolled down each cheek to the corners of his mouth. There, the saltiness seemed to both comfort him and bring him resolve, and in a single determined movement he brought both hands up to wipe the tear tracks away.

He leant forward, grasping the back of the dining room chair, and looked sideways out of the window, but his mind was focused on pictures of what had just transpired, and of the scenes that must have led to this point.

The decanter had been her wedding present to him, and while the aim had been wild, the projectile itself had been chosen with care. It was intended to represent the way she felt he had shattered her love for him. It was an act of finality, and, in keeping with slamming the door, it clearly indicated that Laura felt there was nothing else he could do or say. Their marriage was over in her mind!

But he had not done the things she had said. He was innocent. Yes, okay, he had thought about them, he had played with the ideas and images in his mind, and he had even loosely dwelt on plans as to how these things might be brought about. But HE HAD NEVER ACTUALLY PHYSICALLY DONE ANYTHING. He had, at least as far as the law was concerned, remained faithful to Laura.

It is far better to take clear, consistent and timely steps from the outset, to keep control:

- stamp on inappropriate behaviours
- recognise the need for off-line discussions
- modify and use the reward system
- use the disciplinary process.

Stamp on inappropriate behaviours

Imagine the following. John, a member of your management team, puts up an excellent transparency covering the performance measures of his area at your management meeting. The slide has been well thought out, using colour to emphasise certain points. It is the first time one of your people has done anything like this - reports are normally verbose, text based, and handed round.

John is very keen though (perhaps a little too keen, even sycophantic) and while his slide is excellent it has a little logo in the right hand corner that looks really naff.

As the slide goes up, Steve, another of your team, remarks "Couldn't you have put some fairy lights on it John? It's Christmas next month!" People laugh, and Angela chips in "He's just after brownie points for his Christmas bonus!" John smiles back a little ruefully, and continues his presentation.

Fairly normal interchange; fairly trivial; fairly harmless, so you let it go. But think for a moment. What has happened here? Who is setting the 'norms' for behaviour in your group?

Humour is an excellent device for helping things to flow, for smoothing things over and for taking the awkwardness out of situations. It can leave effective messages



Reviewing behaviour

What inappropriate behaviours exist within your management team?

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What desirable behaviours are lacking within the team?

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What factors allow this situation to continue?

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He had been hanged, without trial or jury, on the wicked, malicious mischief making of one man. Anger burned within him. He was furious at the injustice. He raged at the cynically unfair timing of it. At precisely the time he had determined to focus himself on Laura's love and support, at precisely the time he had allowed himself to become vulnerable to what it meant to him, it had been wantonly destroyed, vandalised. In his mind's eye, he could see Daniel celebrating his success, and he hated him with a blackness he had never thought possible.

He thought it strange how the anger and hate was overwhelming the sense of loss in him, he began to feel guilty that at the time his marriage was in tatters, he was more consumed with his enemy than with his wife. More consumed with hate, than with love and compassion. He forced himself to think about her, to imagine her pain and despair when Daniel Matthews spun his web of lies.

He imagined the moment when Daniel came calling, he visualised how the conversation must have gone:

"Laura, I'm so sorry to come calling on you." "Hi Daniel, come on in." "Oh you poor, poor girl," and the pitying eyes.

He could imagine Laura, thrown and confused by this turn in the conversation, and then he could imagine the poison dripping, as Daniel ripped open the wound and pretended to embalm it.

"I'm so sorry, I don't even know how to begin, but I just know if it was happening to me, I'd want someone to say it."

Richard did not know if those were the exact words. He did not know if they were said slowly with mock compassion, or in an agitated rush. But he could image the cold ripping feel of the knife in his wife's stomach. He could imagine the numbness and the energy draining from her, as Daniel told Laura about her husband's hotel trips. And he could imagine the sheer black despair as she felt the bottom ripped out of her world, as Daniel manufactured the details of the affair, the betrayal.

He heard the final words again, he saw the decanter come spinning by his head, and he saw Laura's suffused face and angry mouth as she yelled, half sobbing.

"Don't lie to me, you bastard! Don't cheapen me any more! Daniel saw you in bed, he saw the messed up covers, he said you were undressed. At least do me the final courtesy of telling me the truth ... please!"

without being disruptive. We often don't realise its power. But in leaving messages, it can have its dark side as well, and in smoothing things over it can reinforce a culture that you no longer want. And all too often, humour will be the main weapon of the cynic and the rebel, gradually eroding the values you would like to establish.

Point-scoring, in any form, has to be dealt with. And often, in dealing with it, you will be working against the current culture. You have the last word, and you need to ensure that the norms being developed in the interchanges of your team are the norms that you want.

Unfortunately, this will mean that, as you emphasise the positives to redress the balance and you pick up people on comments that are just a little too acrid, you may appear a wet blanket. You, who can be as witty as the rest; you, who enjoy a laugh with the team; you, who have your own reservations about the cheesy nature of certain aspects of the slide; you have to forgo belonging in order to create the new norm. You have to publicly stake your position and credibility with what is right, rather than what is popular; and by doing so consistently, gradually make popular what is right.

The need for off-line discussions

Some issues can be addressed within the meeting by ensuring balanced discussions, establishing your own view, and reinforcing the ground rules. But often, especially when the unwanted influences are subtle, it is best to tackle the issue outside of the meeting on a one-to-one basis.

This is particularly easy if you have established a routine of coaching your people - observations at a meeting can be fed into



Culture is a pattern of basic assumptions - invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration - that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.

Edgar H. Schein
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
in Organizational Culture and Leadership
(Jossey-Bass, 1985)



Many of those who were ahead of their time, had to wait for it in none too comfortable quarters.

Stanislaw Lec
Polish Aphorist

The last word had been almost begging. It had mirrored the look in Richard's eyes. He did not say a word, he just stared at her imploringly, praying against hope, that she would see things as they really were. His only weapon, the truth, impotent against Daniel's lies. He was too confused to say anything.

It seemed like an eternity that they had stared at each other, their faces pleading what the other person could not give, until Laura looked down in resigned despair. Convinced her husband's silence was his final cowardly insult to compound her betrayal, she had walked out of the room, a broken woman.

He imagined her pain and emptiness, and his rage and anger took hold once more, for just a few seconds, and then, almost taking him by complete surprise, his body collapsed under him, and he fell to his knees, and he wept bitterly.



He did not know how long he knelt there. He just stayed where he was. He could not think of where else to go, of what else to do. It all seemed so hopeless.

Then he heard the door open again, but he did not look up, something in him did not dare, he did not know what to think, he did not know what to hope. He heard the footsteps, ever so soft, coming round the table, and he heard them pause at the edge of the broken glass. He did not understand, he did not know what to make of it, but a faint glimmer of hope flickered dimly inside him. He clenched his eyes tight shut, and for the first time since he could remember, he prayed for real. He prayed silently, but in his heart, impassioned pleas fought each other to merge into one yearning whole. And then the footsteps continued, and he felt Nicholas's small arm lay itself across his shoulders. This small, silent act of trust and love broke his heart, and he fell to the floor sobbing uncontrollably, while his three year old son, with the wisdom of ages, simply clung to him. At that moment he knew, no matter what it cost him, he would not let go of his family, he would not give up his wife and his son! He would give up anything and everything else, but not them! And he felt himself pleading to God. Full of remorse for his past blindness and stupidity, he bitterly pleaded that God would help him to keep his family. And as he lay there, in his son's small arms, the strange calm that he had felt in the Chapel settled over him once more.

the next coaching session - but it is also possible to do it through more direct feedback.

Rebels do have to be dealt with fairly. This is not only for ethical reasons, but also for the impact on the rest of the team. If a rebel can illustrate that they have been dealt with unfairly, they can elicit enormous sympathy from their colleagues. Each issue has therefore to be fully understood to ensure that it is not a landmine.¹

Whatever you build has to be built on firm foundations. Flaws can so easily be exploited to bring the whole thing down.

Modify and use the reward system

Formal reward systems are an excellent way of tackling behavioural issues. They can be examined to see which types of behaviour they encourage, and then modified to encourage the right behaviours. It is vitally important that your rebels are not seen to benefit over your allies when the time comes for appraisals, pay rises, and bonus payments.

Use the disciplinary process

Finally, it is likely that you may need to invoke your disciplinary procedures. You would use them for financial irregularities. Not using them for operational irregularities says that we are not really serious about this. If somebody can do their job exactly as they feel like, what value is the employment contract anyway?

You do not have to fire people, but failing to show you are serious from the outset makes it far more likely that you ultimately will. When we realise there is only one

¹ Landmines are issues where the rebel has allowed himself or herself to appear at fault, but where they can later demonstrate they have behaved reasonably - please note: this is not paranoia - it does happen!



Feedback process for tackling a participant's poor meeting behaviour off-line:

- Re-emphasise what you are trying to achieve in terms of the meetings
- Re-establish his or her personal role in bringing about that achievement
- Explore how he or she fell short of that role in the last meeting
- Illustrate the implications of that on yourself and others
- Clarify the standard you expect him or her to achieve at future meetings
- Ask what help he or she needs to contribute at that standard
- Listen to expressed concerns and take them on board
- Clarify the options available to him or her, and their consequences.



Anyone who thinks there is some good in everyone hasn't interviewed enough people.

Anonymous personnel director



If you've got them by the balls, their hearts and minds will soon follow.

Charles Colson
Special Assistant to President Nixon
The Watergate Tapes, 1974

He sat up, looked into his son's bewildered, but loving eyes, and hugged him like he would never let him go.



Richard walked into the kitchen, slowly, quietly, almost reluctantly. He stood with his back to the wall. She sat hunched over the kitchen table, her back to him.

As he had put Nicholas back to bed, his resolve had deepened. He would trade everything he had, for his family back. He felt more comfortable that she was looking the other way, it made it easier to start.

"I have been stupid. I have lied. I have cheated!"

He spoke these things slowly and softly into the silence of the room. Laura stayed as she was. She did not appear to tense or release. He continued: "I was physically attracted to Lucy. I toyed with the idea of an affair. I allowed myself to get into situations where we were alone, in places where we never should have been."

He paused, and swallowed, and continued more quietly, but audibly: "I fantasised touching her, and taking her to bed." He stopped again, and stared intently at Laura's shoulders, but they remained in their same neutral position. He continued, barely above a whisper: "And at one point, I actually planned to do it, to betray you for her". He could see the shoulders tense this time, he could see her brace herself against the pain.

"But I swear, on all that I hold dear, I have never, ever, had any sexual contact with any other woman except you." Her shoulders remained tense, and he realised how Clintonesque that sounded. He felt a sense of panic rise up inside him, but he fought it back down. He could not lose it now.

"I had planned to, and I am so, so sorry for that. But before it happened something inside me changed." And he told her shoulders about that time in Church where he had become so confused over the reading, and about how his thinking had changed, and the decisions he had made. He then explained that he would give up anything and everything for her if she would keep him.

way to go, it is amazing how well we take to it. But as long as people can see that not going that way could still be a viable option, some of them will waste a lot of time, energy and self-respect in resisting it.

If you know that there is no alternative to being systematic about managing your organisation, it is kinder to make the same truth absolutely clear to everyone else.

So, does this suggest the end of empowerment, involvement and getting the best out of people? Absolutely not - quite the opposite. But what it does say is that if you hire a man to bake bread, he can deliver it round, square, with currants, or pink with purple stripes - but he had better not insist on delivering bacon instead.

And on that note, one key aspect of the system to sort out early on, is exactly what your managers are contracted to deliver. If your contracts are not right then you are going to struggle from the outset.



An organization with an indispensable man is guilty of management failure.

Harold S. Hook
Chairman, American General Corp.
in Forbes Magazine, October 19, 1987

The room had not changed from when he had walked in. But he had said all he could. The die was cast, and all he could do now was leave her to her thoughts, and hope, and perhaps pray, that they would come right.



Richard lay motionless in the darkness of their bedroom. The night stretched on endlessly, as he fretted about his future. Their future. Every time he glanced at the clock, expecting to see an hour had passed, the hands showed barely the passage of a few minutes.

It was now almost four in the morning, and once again, as he had done each half hour previously, Richard considered going downstairs to Laura, and almost immediately rejected it from his mind. She had to think this through on her own, he had to give her the time and space to do that. But he hated the uncertainty. Waiting for his future to be decided gnawed at his insides, and the worry made him want to do something. To do something more than simply lie there waiting. He was aware of his feelings wavering between panic and despair, and felt powerless to do anything about it.

He sensed movement at the door to the bedroom, and braced himself physically, determined not to make the first move. The shadows in the room seemed to darken slightly, and he was aware of Laura seating herself on the bed beside him. He listened intently for her breathing or any noise that would indicate Laura's state of mind. The moment drew interminably, and then Laura spoke, her voice normal but with a hint of resignation, as though she knew that Richard was awake and listening to her.

"Just get it sorted Richard. That's all I ask. It can't go on like this!" And with that he felt her lie down on her side of the bed. He knew she was facing away from him. He knew that was the end of the matter, for tonight at least. Her meaning was clear to him. He had to sort it out quickly, or give it up, and Laura was trusting him to do that, period. End of conversation.