

## Summary

QFD can be implemented wherever you are within an organisation, but it needs to be led by you before you attempt to influence others of the need for it.

In this chapter we have looked at:

- how you can apply QFD whether you are the MD of an organisation, one small cog within it, or the Chief Executive of a major conglomerate.

We have now explored all of the practical essentials to implementing QFD and using it to transform your management performance.

So what are you going to do next?

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## Epilogue

The people filing out through the sliding door were an odd mixture. Some were clearly on their own, they walked purposefully but with a distinct weariness, occasionally increasing their pace to pass slow moving well-laden trolleys. Others, also weary, were pushing those trolleys, and in some cases attempting to control small excited children.

Many of the people walking through the door eagerly scanned the faces of those standing the other side of the barrier, expecting to see a friend or a loved one.

But not so Lucy Derring. Her eyes quickly scanned the yellow signs overhead, located the one proclaiming Taxis, and without the faintest trace of fatigue she purposefully strode through the waiting hordes in the direction the sign had indicated.

Richard watched her sail right past him with amusement. He ducked under the barrier, and after a brief sprint fell into step behind her.

“Taxi, Ma’am,” he said in a false gruff voice directly in her left ear.

Lucy looked round startled.

“Richard!” she exclaimed. And without the faintest trace of awkwardness, she dropped her bag and embraced him in a huge hug. He felt it was perfectly safe to return it. The expression on her face, and her delight at seeing him, made the sacrifice of three hours sleep all worthwhile.

He picked up her case, and she linked his other arm. “So, this is a million miles from my last reception!” she said. “What gives?”

Richard grinned ruefully as he remembered the way he had been so rude to her at the start of her last visit, a little over nine months ago. “Oh I don’t know,” he said, “I didn’t realise how expensive you were then.”

She laughed, and said: “Shh! Not so loud! You’ll give people the wrong impression.”



He chuckled back, and then replied: “Seriously though. It really is good to see you again. Everybody has been looking forward to the next two weeks. Me included!”

She smiled at him.

“We’ve booked you into the Cavendish, but you’re dining with Laura and me tonight, if that’s okay with you.”

“That’s fine,” said Lucy.

“And if you’re a good girl,” he said mockingly, “and of course, if you’d like to, Laura and I would like you to come with us this weekend to a mediaeval festival at Berkeley Castle.”

She gripped his arm tightly and wheeled him round, her eyes wide with surprise and delight.

“Richard! Really? With knights and jousting?”

“And festive Christmas fayre!” Richard mocked gently. “We even get to stay in the castle overnight, and gorge ourselves on a mediaeval banquet. Sound okay to you?”

“Fantastic!” she said with relish. “Now don’t tell me any more, or I won’t be able to concentrate for the next five days. By the way, have you got a clear set of objectives for this exercise?”

Richard had asked Lucy over to undertake a Review and Audit of the past year’s efforts. He wanted the team to understand clearly where they had approached things well, and also where there was still clear room for improvement. He also wanted to establish this as an annual cycle of learning for his team, so they could continue to improve each year. He outlined these intentions to Lucy as they walked out of the terminal.

When he had finished, she said: “So, tell me what’s been happening in Gloucester while I’ve been away.”

“Well, we have now exceeded all our targets, without exception, so in hindsight we were probably too conservative in setting them,” he said.

“It didn’t seem so at the time!” she interjected.

“No, you’re right there,” he agreed. He paused, and then said: “And I’ll be moving on in the spring.”

“Really?” she said, surprised, and just a touch disappointed. She was concerned that this might be one of Cyrus’s little interventions. “Where are you going?” she asked.

“I’m not sure yet,” he shrugged. Lucy’s fear that this was a Cyrus intervention deepened. As she asked her next question, it was with the faintest trace of dread.

“Why? What’s brought this about?”

“Well, it’s time to hand the baton on to Deborah,” he replied. “I’ve been coaching her for the last three months now, and very soon I’ll be getting in her way. She’s plenty ready to take the business forward, and we’ve agreed with Cyrus that she will be appointed MD around April time. In fact, it is her you’ll be working with on this review, and not me.”

“Wow!” said Lucy. “Good choice! But who will take over R&D? And what about you? What will you do?”

“As for R&D, or rather *‘Developing products and processes’*,” Richard said with mild reproof, “Jack De Witt has been running it for six months now. Ever since Deborah moved over to replace Daniel. And as for the sales area, I’m proud to report that Deborah has groomed successors as efficiently there as she did with Jack. To all intents and purposes, they are now running the two processes under Deborah with very little intervention from her.”

“Yes, I remember Jack,” said Lucy thoughtfully. “She did an excellent job with him as far as I can recall. But what about you? You can’t just jack in a job without a new one to go to!”

“Oh, I don’t know,” he replied. “There’s been some real changes in me since you’ve been away. I won’t hold anybody back just to ensure I’m all right. And somehow, in my heart of hearts, I know I’m doing the right thing and that it will all turn out.

“Here’s the car!” he said, and just in front of them the amber indicators on an S Type Jaguar flashed once as it unlocked itself.

They drove out of the airport in silence. Lucy took the opportunity to reflect on what she had heard. Finally she said: “I can see that all of what you said makes perfect sense. But it seems a little bit too ideal, almost like someone applied the textbook without seasoning it first with a

modicum of good old self-protection and common sense. Forgive my bluntness.”

Richard laughed. He found her bluntness refreshing. “Don’t worry,” he said, “others have said the same, but in more round about ways.”

“So?” she challenged.

“By April, I will have ceased to add value to Cylek. By then, I won’t really be able to do anything practical for it that I haven’t taught it to do for itself. The machine is ready to fly the nest and so are its pilots. And I’ve been instrumental in making it happen. But I’ve made it happen, and all come together, because I’ve been focused on that goal. Because I have been single minded in making myself dispensable, I have taught it to be everything it can be for itself. And that is such a wonderful feeling. Do you know the song ‘The Rose’?” he asked her. Lucy nodded.

“In it, there is a line,” Richard continued: “It’s the soul afraid of dying that never learns to live! I know for myself that I wouldn’t have achieved all that I have achieved, if I was worried about me. My job has been the most fantastic experience over the last six months, and it’s been that because I never once worried about keeping it. It seems that the more we want to hold on to something, the more we diminish it.”

Lucy looked at him. She could see he was telling the truth. And it was not just his truth. She felt a new admiration for the man.

“So, April!” she asked. “Do you just become a street bum?”

“Oh, I doubt it!” he laughed. “I’ve already had three job offers, and I’ve got a story that anybody will listen to. Watch this space!”

“I wonder,” posed Lucy, slightly mischievously, “Is it that you are so employable, that makes you so free to make the decisions you have?”

“Or is it that I’m so free to make the decisions I have, that makes me so employable? You decide!”

Lucy settled back into her seat, and peaceably watched the road pass by.

## CONCLUSION

‘Managing by Design’ is a way of thinking. It is the challenge of never being ‘under the circumstances’<sup>1</sup>. It is about developing a perspective that rises above any situation and enables you to make the very best of whatever opportunities there are. Throughout the process of writing this book we earnestly hope that we have contributed to your desire and ability to do that.

- In the introductory chapters, we outlined the challenge that global perspectives, faster communication and ever increasing rates of change represent to management, and how conventional management practice is ill-equipped to deal with these.
- Through Chapters 2 to 6, we looked deeper into the implications of traditional management. We explored its ineffectiveness in ensuring the persistent clarity of objectives needed to harness the full resources of the organisation in transforming performance. We challenged the ‘professionalism’ of traditional management approaches, and we looked at how a ‘design’ perspective – and in particular a design tool called QFD – overcomes these weaknesses.
- From Chapter 7 to Chapter 10, we saw how effective use of a design approach can: reconcile and clarify ambitious objectives; configure the resources of the organisation to best meet them; and inspire commitment and creativity in pursuing them. And we looked at the practical example of using QFD to establish a platform and a process for the management team to achieve this in practice.
- In Chapters 11 to 14, we recognised the importance of leadership in creating a supportive and nurturing environment to sustain the new management approach. We looked at how the leader was the critical element in reconciling: individual behaviours with their new responsibilities; local aspirations with the needs of the organisation; and corporate expectations with a new systematic perspective.
- And in Chapters 15 to 20, we addressed the personal implications this has for leaders, and the need for them to anchor themselves within a balanced and healthy perspective, so that they are well placed to take tough decisions regarding their own approach, and those of their colleagues.
- Through Chapter 21 to Chapter 24, we examined how the corollary practices in management, such as meetings, problem-solving, and reporting, could be best adapted to reinforce and make full use of the power of the ‘Managing by Design’ perspective.

<sup>1</sup> Statements beginning “Under the circumstances...” are commonly a means for excusing mediocre performance. The alternative mindset is exemplified by a riposte attributed to Napoleon: “Circumstances? I make circumstances!”

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- And finally, in Chapter 25, we looked at how the tools could be brought together to provide a complete solution for managing a large and complex enterprise.

The goal of this book has been to do everything that we can to enable you to understand and adopt healthy systematic perspectives to management.

- We have painted a vision through the novel.
- We have explored the reasoning through the textbook.
- We have provided practical steps for you to explore and experience the approaches for yourself through QFD.
- Finally, we have equipped you with a head start through the materials available on the web-site.

All of these things are necessary to assimilating fully the ideas of 'Managing by Design'. Only a fraction of the concept can be absorbed logically; far more is learned by living with the ideas and making them your own. And we hope that now you have completed the book you will go on to do exactly that.

But, before we leave you do so, it is important that we advise you of two real issues that you will face as you continue your journey.

The first is best illustrated by the closing story in Peter Senge's book, *The Fifth Discipline*, where he tells the story of Rusty Schweickart, an astronaut, looking back down on the Earth from space. From up there your perspective of the Earth and what is important changes dramatically, and it becomes almost impossible to embrace things again as you used to see them.

When managers engage with the ideas in this book, it totally changes their perspectives on responsibility. It opens up a whole new way of seeing things. Unfortunately, the new way of seeing things is so powerful that it ceases to be an option, and takes over your whole way of thinking; a bit like Pandora's box when you aren't able to get the lid back on. Amongst those who have already embraced the ideas in this book, a common phrase is: "I can't imagine how I used to manage, I can't see that what I was doing was really management at all!"

So the first point is: when you really start on the journey there is no valid way back!

The second issue is that the practical tools and methodologies propounded in this book are themselves a system. Are you not just as vulnerable to imprisoning your thought in this system as you were in the systems it replaced? Have you merely traded one set of cell walls for another? The

real danger is that you might have done exactly that! It may be more difficult to fall asleep in your new prison, but over time, and with sufficient lethargy, you will find that it is still amazingly possible.

The tools proposed in these pages are a set of stepping-stones, a ladder to realise the idea of 'Managing by Design' practically. But they are not in themselves the idea, and if we are to learn anything from our history, we have to accept that the rungs of this ladder can all too easily become the bars of our cage.

The essence of what we have been pursuing is about taking a 'design' perspective to management; about lifting ourselves above the system and looking back down on it objectively, analytically and systematically. And this perspective is just as important to apply to our new system as it was to the old.

As you implement the tools and ideas we have outlined, you will be unlikely to do so perfectly the first time around. And even if you can, it is likely that they will suffer some corruption over time, or even be superseded by more efficient and effective mechanisms yet to be developed. We must always be mindful that we are ultimately the masters over the systems we create, and not vice versa; and that requires that we need to review even these systems objectively and analytically. We need to lift ourselves even over the systems we have used to lift ourselves.

The most common practical means for doing this is an annual cycle of review and audit. In this cycle the management team:

- reviews/audits the current state of progress and performance of the management system, usually through the means outlined in Chapter 5
- develops a workshop to raise and address any issues identified through the review, and to incorporate any new learning and ideas
- agrees further developments of the approach and sets about implementing them.

For convenience, the review and audit cycle is usually linked in with the planning cycle, and the workshop to reset the QFD for the following year. A more detailed explanation of review and audit can be found in Appendix 10.

Everything in this book has been drawn from the perspective of lifting yourself above the system to look back down and improve it. If over time all else fades this one principle must prove timeless. From this one principle all of the rest of the learning in this book can be recreated. And this is true whether we are talking about your business, your project, your role, or even your life itself.