Spotlight on… Philip B. Crosby

BY WENDY WILSON | SEP 20, 2022 | QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Today we shine the spotlight on Philip B. Crosby (1926-2001), an influential author, consultant and philosopher who contributed to management theory and quality management practices. By developing practical concepts to define and communicate quality and quality improvement practices, he became an innovative and influential force in business and manufacturing. In 1979, he wrote the best-seller 'Quality is Free' and in the 1980s his company was advising 40% of the Fortune 500 companies on quality management.

Born in Wheeling, West Virginia, Philip B. Crosby served in WWII and the Korean War. He began his quality management career in quality control in manufacturing where he worked up the corporative ladder from line inspector to quality director, and subsequently he became Corporate Vice President at ITT.

PHILIP B. CROSBY IS BEST KNOWN FOR:

- Quality is Free – His first book that made him famous

- Zero Defects – One of his four absolutes of quality
- The Four Absolutes of Quality
- The Fourteen Steps of Quality Improvement

DOING IT RIGHT FIRST TIME (DRIFT) / ZERO DEFECT(ZD)

Philip B Crosby first introduced the concept of Doing things right the first time (DRIFT)/ Zero defect (ZD) in his book Quality is Free. He believed quality is free, what costs money is defects, which are all the activities resulting from not doing things right the first time. When things are done inaccurately they have to be repeated, which results in extra costs. Likewise, when things are made incorrectly, they have to be or reworked or scrapped and produced again, costing money. It is always cheaper and efficient to do things right the first time.

THE FOURTEEN STEPS OF QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Philip B Crosby developed 14 steps for an organization to follow in building an effective quality program:

Step 1: Management Commitment

Firstly, management must be committed to process improvement and this culture should be passed on to the whole company workforce.

Clarify where management stands on quality. It is necessary to consistently produce conforming products and services at the optimum price. The device to accomplish this is the use of defect prevention techniques in the operating departments:

- Engineering
- Manufacturing
- Quality Control
- Purchasing
- Sales and others.

Step 2: Quality Improvement Team

Create a quality improvement team, with representatives from all workgroups and functions. These teams run the quality improvement program. Since every function of an operation contributes to defect levels, every function must participate in the quality improvement effort. The degree of participation is best determined by the particular situation that exists. However, everyone has the opportunity to improve.

Step 3: Quality Measurement

Before you start implementing any action plan, you need to measure and assess process quality and identify the areas that need improvement.

Communicate current and potential nonconformance problems in a manner that permits objective evaluation and corrective action. Basic quality measurement data is obtained from the inspection and test reports, which are broken down by operating areas of the plant. By comparing the rejection data with the input data, it is possible to know the rejection rates. Since most companies have such systems, it is not necessary to go into them in detail. It should be mentioned that unless this data is reported properly, it is useless. After all, their only purpose is to warn management of serious situations. They should be used to identify specific problems needing corrective action, and the quality department should report them.

Step 4: Cost of Quality Evaluation

You need to assess the cost that comes along. What is the cost of quality and how does it fall into your company's overall plan? Calculate the cost of (poor) quality: Define the ingredients of the Cost of Quality (COQ) and explain its use as a management tool.

Step 5: Quality Awareness

Here, it is important to spread the importance of quality throughout your entire workforce and embrace it within your business culture.

Provide a method of raising the personal concern felt by all personnel in the company toward the conformance of the product or service and the quality reputation of the

company. By the time a company is ready for the quality awareness step, they should have a good idea of the types and expense of the problems being faced. The quality measurement and COQ steps will have revealed them.

Step 6: Corrective Action

Once you have identified what needs to be improved, you will need to start implementing a plan so that corrective actions begin to roll out.

Provide a systematic method of permanently resolving the problems that are identified through previous action steps. Problems that are identified during the acceptance operation or by some other means must be documented and then resolved formally.

Step 7: Plan for Zero Defects Program

It is essential to eliminate defects. This step not only aims to reduce defects but to entirely eliminate them.

Monitor progress of quality improvement and establish a zero defects committee. Examine the various activities that must be conducted in preparation for formally launching the Zero Defects program – The quality improvement task team should list all the individual action steps that build up to Zero Defects day in order to make the most meaningful presentation of the concept and action plan to personnel of the company. These steps, placed on a schedule and assigned to members of the team for execution, will provide a clean energy flow into an organisation wide Zero Defects commitment.

Since it is a natural step, it is not difficult, but because of the significance of it, management must make sure it is conducted properly.

Step 8: Supervisor Training

To achieve process quality you must have supervisors which actively embrace this culture. To enable them to do this, you need to provide them with the right training.

Define the type of training supervisors need in order to actively carry out their part of the quality improvement program. The supervisor, from the board chairman down, is

the key to achieving improvement goals. The supervisor gives the individual employees their attitudes and work standards, whether in engineering, sales, computer programming, or wherever. Therefore, the supervisor must be given primary consideration when laying out the program. The departmental representatives on the task team will be able to communicate much of the planning and concepts to the supervisors, but individual classes are essential to make sure that they properly understand and can implement the program.

Step 9: Zero Defects Day

Further you need to increase awareness by holding a zero defects day in which are employees are taking part.

Create an event that will let all employees realize through personal experience, that there has been a change. Zero Defects is a revelation to all involved that they are embarking on a new way of corporate life. Working under this discipline requires personal commitments and understanding. Therefore, it is necessary that all members of the company participate in an experience that will make them aware of this change.

Step 10: Goal Setting

Setting goals for improvement should involve employees from the whole organization. By engaging everyone you are making sure that goals are made out clear to all levels of the organizational structure.

Encourage employees to create their own quality improvement goals and turn pledges and commitments into action by encouraging individuals to establish improvement goals for themselves and their groups. About a week after Zero Defects day, individual supervisors should ask their people what kind of goals they should set for themselves. Try to get two goals from each area. These goals should be specific and measurable.

Step 11: Error Cause Removal

In every quality improvement effort it is important to take a step back and identify any errors that are hindering this process. Engaging all employees in this procedure is vital.

Encourage employee communication with management about obstacles to quality (Error-Cause Removal). Give the individual employee a method of communicating to management the situations that make it difficult for the employee to fulfill the pledge to improve. One of the most difficult problems employees face is their inability to communicate problems to management. Sometimes they just put up with problems because they do not consider them important enough to bother the supervisor. Sometimes supervisors don't listen anyway. Suggestion programs are some help, but in a suggestion program the worker is required to know the problem and also propose a solution.

Error-cause removal (ECR) is set up on the basis that the worker need only recognize the problem. When the worker has stated the problem, the proper department in the plant can look into it. Studies of ECR programs show that over 90% of the items submitted are acted upon, and fully 75% can be handled at the first level of supervision. The number of ECRs that save money is extremely high, since the worker generates savings every time the job is done better or quicker.

Step 12: Recognition

Recognizing employees that excel in the quality improvement efforts and celebrating their success will not only encourage them to continue the good work, but it will also inspire others to start taking part.

People really don't work for money. They go to work for it, but once the salary has been established, their concern is appreciation. Recognize their contribution publicly and noisily, but don't demean them by applying a price tag to everything.

Step 13: Quality Council

Bring along specialists and hold quality councils on a regular basis in order to create focused and clearly defined goals.

Bring together the professional quality people for planned communication on a regular basis. It is vital for the professional quality people of an organization to meet regularly just to share their problems, feelings, and experiences, with each other. Primarily

concerned with measurement and reporting, isolated even in the midst of many fellow workers, it is easy for them to become influenced by the urgency of activity in their work areas. Consistency of attitude and purpose is the essential personal characteristic of one who evaluates another's work. This is not only because of the importance of the work itself but because those who submit work unconsciously draw a great deal of their performance standard from the professional evaluator.

Step 14: Do It Over Again

Quality improvement does not end. Crosby's model is not an ad-hoc model but rather a process of continual process. So make sure that you repeat this process over and over again.

Emphasize that the quality improvement program never ends. There is always a great sign of relief when goals are reached. If care is not taken, the entire program will end at that moment. It is necessary to construct a new quality improvement team, and to let them begin again and create their own communications

CROSBY'S FOUR ABSOLUTES OF QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Philip B Crosby is known for the concepts of "Quality is Free" and "Zero Defects", and his quality improvement process is based on his four absolutes of quality.

From his Fourteen Steps Of Quality Improvement, Crosby, believed management should take prime responsibility for quality, and workers only follow their managers' example. Crosby defined the Four Absolutes of Quality Management:

1. The First Absolute – The definition of quality is conformance to requirements (not as goodness)
2. The Second Absolute – The system of quality is prevention (not appraisal)
3. The Third Absolute – The performance standard is zero defects (not "that's close enough").
4. The Fourth Absolute – The measurement of quality is the price of nonconformance (not indexes).

CROSBY'S FIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL ORGANIZATION

According to Crosby, five characteristics of a highly successful organizations are:

1. People routinely do things right first time
2. Change is anticipated and used to advantage
3. Growth is consistent and profitable
4. New products and services appear when needed
5. Everyone is happy to work there