

Quality Assurance Program

Total Quality Management

Total Quality Management (TQM), the crux of TSM Corporation's (TSM's) quality assurance (QA) philosophy, is a program dedicated to continually improving the processes by which TSM produces quality products and services the first time, every time, and that satisfy customer's needs. In TSM's highly competitive business, continuous improvement is essential for corporate survival in the 21st century.

Emphasis on improvement exists at all levels. This emphasis manifests itself in action on the part of every employee from the president to the newest individual in the company. TSM continually seeks to improve the quality of our products as measured by the satisfaction expressed by our customers.

Commitment To Quality

Three TSM goals were established when TSM was chartered. These goals have withstood the test of time and are therefore as relevant today as they were when adopted in 1978. The goals are commitment to people, excellence in service, and profitable operations. We want our customers to regard TSM as their supplier of choice in each of our market areas. As such, TSM's QA system is an integral part of every contract, cost, and management approach. Top management at TSM is totally committed to the quality product that will achieve the corporate goals and vision. Further, management solicits the same commitment from all corporate employees. Working as a dedicated team, TSM indeed is a much sought after supplier of choice.

Program Description

The TSM TQM program has five active, interrelated traits. Achievement of continuous improvement in the quality of our products requires a constant attention to these traits.

Customer Focused. The number one objective of TSM TQM is customer satisfaction. Our constant objective is to provide the very best products possible under each and every contractual situation. In addition, TSM is always alert for means of producing better products. When improved products appear possible, TSM brings them to the attention of our customers to determine whether they desire any additional effort that might be inherent in the improvement.

Satisfying our customers requires constant attention to their needs and desires. To stay focused on those needs and desires, TSM uses every opportunity to obtain feedback on how well products are being received. The reviews TSM has built into Government contracts provide an excellent means of ensuring regular contact with and feedback from TSM's customers.

Process Oriented. TSM focuses on QA through prevention rather than quality control (QC) through detection. The means to this objective is for TSM to remain attuned to the processes by which TSM does work. We accept the fact that there will always be a better way to do the job and working to find it is an integral part of TSM's job.

The first step in improving TQM processes is to define them. Each step, from contract or task/delivery order receipt through delivery of the last element, was accurately described and documented. As processes change, we redefine them for future examination and modification as necessary. Flow charts and well-defined process steps are an excellent means of maintaining process documentation. Once the process is defined, the next step in continual improvement is judging its effectiveness in producing products of the highest possible quality.

Data Based. Judgment of processes is based upon relevant statistical data conducted by self-examination in order to improve the processes. Developing and applying statistical measurements to documents and services is significantly different than applying the same techniques to manufactured goods. Therefore, considerable care is taken to ensure that TSM accurately measures the quality of products as seen through the eyes of our customers. Variations of emphasis on different aspects of our products by different customers dictate flexibility in both developing and applying statistical criteria.

People Driven. Continuous improvement of our processes is creative work that can only be accomplished by employees who are dedicated to the concept that such improvement is not only possible, it is essential. The constant search for better ways to do our work is a part of our everyday approach to the job. Ideas are brought to the attention of supervisors and other members of TSM's quality improvement teams. Management also recognizes individuals who contribute usable ideas for quality improvement.

Organized By Teams. To capitalize on the synergy of groups, formalized quality improvement teams are formed and meet on a regular basis. Three types of teams are used: hierarchical, based upon the corporate structure; project, based upon specific contracts; and ad hoc, based upon one-time special requirements such as receipt of a new military performance specification or standard. The meetings encompass reviews of all problems TSM may have experienced in performance of the task/service or to adjust any standardized process because of deficiencies noted during product delivery or services provided. Teams are empowered to implement quality improvement changes that do not impact processes outside their area of responsibility. Changes impacting other areas of responsibility are recommended to the next highest quality improvement team level until they reach the level where approval or disapproval can be obtained. Quality improvement ideas that are not approved for implementation are returned to the originating team or individual with reasons for disapproval provided and an explanation.

Quality Control

As part of our TQM program, TSM has an articulate, well-organized QA program. The QA manager reports directly to the president of the corporation, allowing independent determinate actions to be accomplished. The intent of TSM's QA and subsequent QC procedures is to ensure that all training/services analysis requirements encompasses the optimum usefulness for the Government's intended purpose. In order to deliver consistently high-quality training/services, TSM has organized its QA procedures in such a manner so as to incorporate a careful and deliberate review by knowledgeable, authoritative, and qualified personnel. This review procedure examines the training/services provided to ascertain how accurately the analytical requirements

address the customer's needs. The QA process also incorporates a replete system of QC checks and balances for guaranteeing conformity with contractual requirements. The QC checks and balances are implemented at the issuance of a task/delivery order and carefully adhered to until final delivery of the product/service. Proper attention is given each action item within the plan to ensure that it is carried out implicitly, with timely resolution of problems. Through this stringent program of checks and balances, a high-quality, professional product/service is completed on time and within budget. Adherence to the QC guidelines benefits both the customer and TSM and helps in the development of a cooperative working relationship.

Reviews and Reports

Because of the impact of changes, the in-process review (IPR) constitutes a significant part of the QA process. IPRs are held in accordance with contractual guidelines and also may be scheduled in conjunction with customer needs or requirements. The IPR may use a formalized series of check sheets or other documentation if contractual requirements are such that documentation of that nature is appropriate for delivery verification and validation. Discrepancies or inconsistencies are recorded with follow-up procedures implemented to alleviate the problems. Monthly reports are normally the vehicle used to provide a technical point of contact an update on each task/delivery order. The submission of the report is normally a result of monitoring and adjusting TSM's approach to the QA/QC applied to deliverables. The report, besides providing a complete and detailed technical status of the task/delivery, may also include any cost or labor hours expended during the reporting period and the cumulative cost and labor hours expended to date.

Self-Assessment

An excellent QA system reduces risk, but does not eliminate it. Specific program/project managers stay abreast of performance requirements, deliverable accomplishments, and contractual changes so that corrective actions may be implemented when necessary. The managers also perform ongoing quality evaluations as part of their daily management oversight responsibilities. All managers, including task/delivery order managers are required to maintain appropriate QA standards as dictated by the customer or as may be documented as best industry standards. Each task/delivery order employee is provided training upon being assigned to the task/delivery order. They are provided with an overview of the goals, corporate commitment, and contractual requirements to ensure a sound basis for implementation of the QA process to their tasks. As appropriate, meetings with the program/project/task manager are implemented to review any corporate QA activity and recommendations. Based on these meetings, the employees are provided appropriate training on any new or modified procedures/processes required for task completion.