



SPACE BASED INTERCEPTOR TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

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WORKING GROUP LISTS AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Following the lead of the DoD/Industry study of the DoD impediments to TQM (see June newsletter), the SBI TQM Working Group, including representatives from contractors Martin-Marietta and Rockwell, met to perform a similar study. Instead of simply listing how we may be impeding the contractors, the Working Group brainstormed the topic and made a list suggesting major areas where SPO personnel can improve in getting quality products from the contractors.

The TQM Working Group concluded that the following four items are the major areas recommended for improvement within the SPO:

1. We should improve our communication with the contractors. We need to give consistent and clear directions at all levels, avoiding mixed signals or incomplete directions. One specific area needing improved conformity of directions concerns those coming from the SPO versus from the PCO.

2. We should improve our attitudes and promote teamwork with the contractors. We should think highly of the contractors and expect top quality from them. We should promote the attitude that we are all working together as a team, avoiding any possibility of having an adversarial relationship.

3. We should increase the effectiveness of our meetings. There should be an effort to make each meeting more meaningful by having a firm objective, agenda, and time limit. Some Working Groups were criticized as not being productive. Note that the TQM/WG sets one objective per meeting and achieves that objective. Perhaps that could be a model for other groups.

4. We should give better feedback to contractors on work done. We should all be conscientious in our Award Fee inputs, follow through on completing action items promised the contractors, and improve our responses on CDRL items.

This list has been given to the SBI TQM Executive Council, recommending that they promote those areas for improvement within our activities. ##

IS SBI SPO BEST IN DoD? NOT YET, BUT SOON WILL BE

Is the SBI program office (Kinetic Energy Weapons SPO) the most effective acquisition program office in DoD? Ask that question, and some people may answer, "You've got to be kidding! SBI is on its way out. They've even got a new SPO for the Brilliant Pebbles concept. Forget it!"

But they may have another thought coming. TQM is the wave of the future, and SBI is the pilot program for TQM within SDIO. The philosophy of TQM is the way business will be run within DoD, provided it is shown it works within DoD's constraints.

By applying TQM in the way we are organized and the way we do business, by making sure our contractors have good TQM programs, and by delivering top quality products, briefings, and reports to our various customers, we can show we are the most effective organization within DoD.

We can hold our heads up high, no matter what happens concerning the politics of this program. We can be an example of excellence. Perhaps other SPOs can emulate us. Perhaps excellence will then be practiced throughout DoD and other government agencies, and we can say, "We led the way. We showed them how."

This is a tremendous opportunity for all of us. Start thinking of ways you can do a better job and improve the products we deliver. Don't blame problems on your supervisor, the guys upstairs, or those in Washington. Study the TQM philosophy and continuously improve those areas where you have control. Then we will be the best SPO within DoD.

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*"It is a funny thing about life;
if you refuse to accept anything but the best,
you very often get it."*

Somerset Maugham

TRAINING VIDEO SUCCESSFUL

A video of the NBC White Paper "If Japan Can Do It... Why Can't We?" was shown to interested SPO personnel on June 27-30. The training session consisted of four 20 minute segments, each followed by a 10 minute discussion period. Capt Kevin Creegan and Chao Lee of Aerospace facilitated the sessions.

Response to the video was very positive, as indicated by the lively discussion periods. Many individuals in the SPO are interested in improving the quality of the work they do and bettering the product we deliver to our customers.

A summary of suggestions (along with some gripes), resulting from the discussion periods, was sent to the SBI TQM Executive Council for their edification.

This training program was presented at no cost to the program besides the time spent by the participants. The resulting suggestions, education, and improved attitudes of the attendees should help in enhancing our program effectiveness.

As a result of the success of this training session, we have made it available to other SPOs throughout Space Systems Division and recommended it for use as a good introduction to TQM.

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TQM isn't Mickey Mouse

PRODUCTIVITY TOOLS:

VOICE MAIL TO BE INSTALLED

How many times have you tried to call someone but there was no one on the other end to answer the phone? It just rang and rang. You needed some important information but couldn't get in touch with the person. Did he go out for a cup of coffee? Is he on leave? Sick? Dead? So you had to call again and again.

An important facet in TQM is the use of productivity enhancing tools, such as using robotics on production assembly lines. Within the engineering and management arenas, important TQM tools include CAD/CAM (computer aided design/manufacturing), PCs with productivity software, and electronic devices to answer the phone.

Surprisingly, having the phone answered properly has had a low priority in many program offices. Unanswered telephones is a major roadblock in getting work done. It is hard to believe that many professional organizations, especially those dealing in high technology haven't bothered to solve this problem by simply installing voice mail or telephone answering machines.

SBI OFFICE LEADS THE WAY

As part of being the leading edge in implementing TQM, the Kintetic Energy Weapons SPO will be the first program office within Space Systems Division to install voice mail. Capt Kirk Fleming identified the problem, applied some good TQM principles, and petitioned for the installation of voice mail in building 80. Capt Fleming will be in charge of that installation, which should be completed in September 1989.

In the meantime, some enterprising individuals within the SPO have purchased answering machines at their own expense in order to perform their jobs more effectively. Jason Kong, said he got his machine on sale for only \$38. Getting all his telephone messages has helped Mr. Kong to effectively perform his tasks in managing SBI Mission Control Interfaces.

Our contractors have had voice mail for several years now, but only recently has its use spread to all engineering levels. Soon, with the installation of voice mail in building 80, everyone in the SPO will also be able to get their phone messages. ##

TQM PRINCIPLE:

FIND OUT WHAT YOUR CUSTOMER WANTS

At the College for Used-Car Salesmen in West Covina, they not only show the type of clothes a salesman can wear to look completely obnoxious, but they also teach the principle of ignoring what the customer wants, while trying to sell him a lemon from the back lot.

TQM supports a different philosophy. A basic principle in Total Quality Management is to find out what the customer wants and then provide him with the best product possible.

Unfortunately, we often don't check on what the customer really wants. We make assumptions, we get information second hand, or we give him what we feel is important. It's like saying, "That's not what you want. THIS is what you want!"

It is important to ASK your customer, your supervisor, or others you deal with exactly what is wanted. Clarify assignments so there are no misunderstandings. Find out exactly what product is wanted.

RECENT EXAMPLES

An example of following this TQM principle is seen with Techolote Research employee Xandy Robinson, who recently started a survey of SPO personnel who receive the monthly SBI program schedule booklet Techolote has been contracted to deliver. She is making an effort to find out who really uses the schedule and ways it can be improved. This is asking the customer exactly what is wanted.

Another example, showing the importance of clarifying customer needs, happened recently during preparation for a concept review to be presented to SDIO. Due to questions of what was really wanted in the scheduled briefing, the customer representative at SDIO was called for clarification. Surprisingly, the representative had not agreed on the scheduled date and would not be available. His participation had just been assumed. This obviously changed the scheduling of the work to be done and showed the importance of that communication.

In preparation for that same review, the contractor managers sometimes double-checked on directions given by SPO project engineers by calling the Division Chief. Although they wanted to make

sure they were delivering the exact product wanted, they also employed an overkill strategy.

NOT ALWAYS EASY

It is not always easy or possible to ask the customer what he or she wants. Quite often, customer interface must take place through the chain of command. This is necessary to provide a common front, but it sometimes can result in distorted or incorrect information.

Whenever possible, the manager or engineer responsible for the task should interface directly with a customer representative to make sure the correct product is being delivered. By applying this TQM principle of clarifying customer requirements, we can enhance our ability to provide our customers the best possible products THAT THEY WANT.

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GEN CROMER COMMITTED TO TQM

Lt Gen Donald Cromer issued the following statement as the Commander's Policy in the Space Systems Division TQM Implementation Plan:

"I am committed to make Total Quality Management a way of life at Space Systems Division. It has my full support, but will take a dedicated, long-term effort by all of us. Acquisition excellence starts here, at the front door of Space Systems Division! Only you can make it happen: First by the way you do your job, and second by the way you support others in doing theirs. We must go beyond 'good enough,' as we strive for continuous improvement in how we do our jobs. Let's make SSD a quality place to live and work. Make it an example for our contractors to follow, make TQM a way of life."

Lt Gen Cromer's remarks should be taken to heart by all of us working in SSD.

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