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Article

Little-Bitty Quality Steps Anyone Can Use To Improve Quality In Any Organization

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I am sure that as the new year approaches, you will be spending more time considering your annual new year's resolutions. Well, maybe you might spend a bit of time thinking about Christmas and its meaning. Ok...it's possible that you might not think about much as you prepare to kick back and enjoy the family.

Well, if you can squeeze in a few resolutions, consider thinking quality. What can you do to improve the quality of your organization's services and products? You don't need grandiose master plans at this point, but consider some ideas about the wee things that you can do in the upcoming year.

Here's a list:

1. Find the lowest paid person in your organization and ask them what they think customers want from your organization.
2. Profusely thank the employee in #1 for the information.
3. Spend a half-day every quarter answering the phones.
4. Call a client every month and ask them questions about how they see your service.
5. Put quality issues as the first item on all meeting agendas (you do have agendas, don't you?)
6. After the quality discussion at meetings, get up and leave the meeting, and ask the other attendees to continue with the other issues.
7. Read a book by or about Crosby, Juran, or Deming.
8. Actually finish a book about or by Deming.
9. Every day, ask an employee "Why do we do it this way?"
10. Every week ask your boss "Why do we do it that way?"
11. Go to your office, shut the door, and identify something your organization does that is patently dumb, has never made sense, and has never changed.
12. Ask your employees to suggest solutions to what you identified in #11.
13. Once you have all the suggestions, ask someone to actually fix it.
14. Ask each employee to contact a customer a week to find out what they need from your organization.
15. Establish a way of making use...really making use of the information collected in #14.
16. Call a colleague who is introducing TQM in his/her workplace and arrange to have lunch.
17. Find out about the American Society For Quality Control (ASQC), and go to one of their meetings.
18. Ask employees how you can personally support them in delivering quality service. Keep your ears open and your mouth shut.

19. If you are a manager or executive, try thinking like a regular person or employee.
20. If you are a regular person or employee, try thinking like an executive.
21. Imagine what it would be like if your organization ran perfectly. Write the description down.
22. If you spend most of your time in your office, or meeting with other managers, set aside regular time to talk to employees or clients as they come in the door.
23. If you spend most of your time out of your office rushing around, then go to your office, shut the door for half an hour, and think.
24. Calculate what it costs your organization when screw-ups happen.
25. Figure out how much of your time is spent dealing with things that go wrong.
26. Spend your time focusing on things you can change, and not on things that you can't.
27. Encourage your staff to focus on things under their control.
28. Never assume that things are beyond your control until you have checked it out (alright, you probably can't turn the economy around all by yourself).
29. Commend an employee for doing his or her job. Don't wait for a dramatic accomplishment.
30. Read a book about management. Any book on management will do.
31. Write a little description of how you are improving quality in your organization, and send it to The Work-Smart Bulletin. Better yet, ask an employee if he or she is willing.
32. Find out how quality improvement teams work (and fail), and how you can help them work.

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