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## **THE ROLE OF LEADERS IN SHAPING THE QUALITY IN THE CONTEXT OF PREPARATION OF SELF-ASSESSMENT FOR THE POLISH QUALITY AWARD COMPETITION**

### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

According to the Central Statistical Office in 2013 there were 1771 thousands of non-financial companies operating in Poland [2]. These numbers of entities together with the environment in which they operate constitute specific stimulators in a bid to achieve a stable economic and competitive position. This strive for achieving high competitive and market position motivates the leaders in those entities to lead as well as take actions towards improvement, with the use of various tools and methods. There are numerous management tools. One of them is the quality management system ISO 9001 which was implemented and started functioning in Poland in more than 10.000 organizations [4]. This system enables comprehensive orderliness of the processes within the organization as well as a focus on defined objectives.

Management commitment is one of the key elements of the functioning of the system. The system, as a result of built-in mechanisms, stimulates the leaders to analyse information which is provided by the system and directs further actions by requiring direct evidence [3, 5]. Therefore, leadership is one of the most important elements in the functioning of the organization. It embraces the whole organization. Leaders define the objectives of the organization, create the vision as well as they develop strategy and allocate necessary resources in order to realize the objectives within the organization. Their attitude constitutes a factor which has the greatest influence on the internal customers at all stages of the activities including the quality management system.

The aim of this article is to present the role of the leaders in contemporary organizations during implementation and shaping of the quality management system, in setting out the organizational strategies as well as tools for monitoring the quality management system in enterprises.

### **6.2 LEADERS AND CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

„Corporate Social Responsibility is a concept representing the implementation of sustainable (lasting) development including the economic, environmental and social

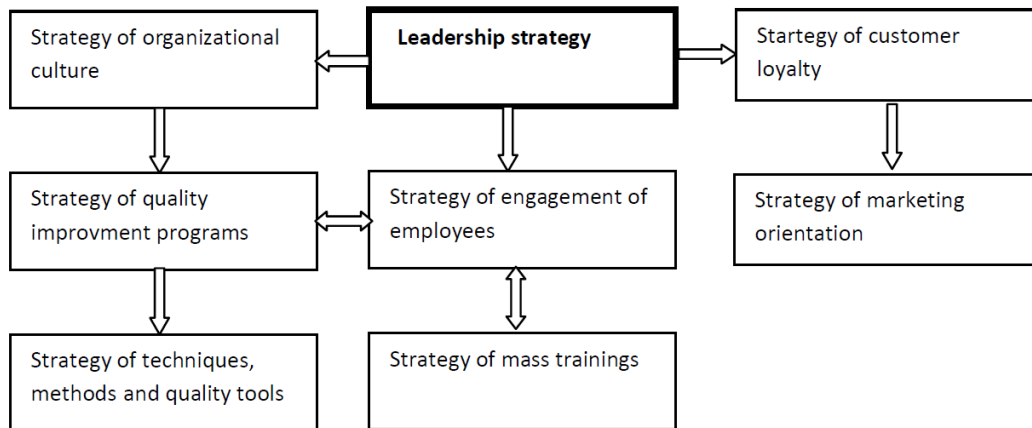
aspects" (...) [10]. The implementation of this concept has a significant impact on the management of the organization as well as building of a positive image, both in social and economic environment. Rapid changes in the environment of the entities force leaders to adopt a strong attitude, in favour of the integration of stakeholders around the objectives of the organization. Leaders play different roles in the organization. Interpersonal roles – by representing the organization, the leader is both a leader and a mentor in defining standards and the way of performing work, as well as constituting a contact person between various levels of organization. Informative role is also an important part of a leader's job – he has to be an observer and seeker of new solutions for the organization as well as a spokesperson among the stakeholders of the organization. Decision-making roles are roles which are fulfilled when making decisions resulting from the initiation and implementation of the changes, resource allocation as well as negotiations [1], [8]. Leader is also responsible for realization of declared actions. In the context of Corporate Social Responsibility the leaders' tasks are detailed as a result of their commitment to promote Corporate Social Responsibility. It is also indispensable for the leaders to fulfil their role in environmental management, ethics, observance of workers' rights as well as they are obliged to analyse the trends which have an impact on Corporate Social Responsibility. Moreover, it is a vital interest to include Corporate Social responsibility in strategic planning.

### 6.3 LEADERSHIP STRATEGY IN TQM - TOTAL QUALITY LEADERSHIP

In order to be able to operate in the market, an organization needs an adequate strategy, which would take into consideration both opportunities and threats. The adoption of the strategy is related to the necessity of a trade-off (with the use of available resources) between two states of the enterprise: stability and variability in actions. This contradiction results from the specific understanding of the issue. Importantly, the strategy of quality in one aspect (concentration of actions in order to achieve defined objectives) will be a guideline for operational activities of the company, whereas in the second one it will focus on the flexibility of the entity in an effort to meet the needs and expectations of internal and external stakeholders. Among the adopted quality strategies, one can distinguish the strategies of: leadership; engagement of employees; customer loyalty; organizational culture; quality improvement programmes; techniques, methods and tools of quality; marketing orientation; mass trainings [6]. Connections between different quality strategies are presented in Fig. 6.1. When analysing the figure below, it can be noticed that the strategy of leadership directly affects the following strategies: organizational culture, engagement of employees and customer loyalty. These strategies in turn have an impact on:

- the strategy of organizational culture on the quality improvement programmes and the strategy of techniques, methods and quality tools;
- the strategy of customer loyalty on the strategy of marketing orientation;

- mutual interaction occurs between the strategy of engagement of employees and the strategy of organizational culture as well as between the strategy of engagement of the employees and the strategy of mass trainings.



**Fig. 6.1 Relationship between quality strategies**

Source: [9], p.162

Leadership is the most important factor affecting the effective and efficient functioning of the organization. The concept of Total Quality Leadership, which means total leadership through quality, is aimed to provide the highest quality for the customer, which is a result of continuous improvement of actions, covering all aspects of the organization [6]. TQL also means the use of quantitative methods in order to maintain and improve both products and services resulting from the reported needs of the customers. Therefore, when implementing TQL it is indispensable to take into account the following elements [11]:

- adequate leadership: stimulation of the engagement of all employees achieved by choosing the right leaders;
- use of quantitative methods: the use of analyses and statistics when making decisions;
- knowledge management: all actions aimed to provide team cooperation as well as achieve mutual learning of the employees;
- continuous improvement: supervising the improvement of all processes with the use of the concept of continuous improvement;
- process orientation: it is necessary to order all processes in the organization and give them right priorities;
- meeting the needs of end users: it is necessary to direct any action on meeting directly the needs of the recipients;
- short- and long-term approach: it is necessary to ensure financial stability in the current period as well as to determine the long-term assumptions.

In pro-quality organization, it is the leader who directly shows how to use the capital, both tangible and human. His involvement in the process of identification of the objectives of the organization has a substantial influence on the environment in which

the company operates. The leader of TQL is a visionary and at the same time innovator who believes in progress and human capital. His task is to determine the limits for independence and responsibility of the workers [6].

#### **6.4 THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP ACCORDING TO THE CRITERIA OF POLISH QUALITY AWARD**

Polish Quality Award criteria are developed on the basis of the philosophy of the „The EFQM Excellence Model – the European Foundation for Quality Management”, which are aimed to promote the concept of TQM in Polish organizations – and thus focus on the achievement of European excellence. One of the criteria assessed in the Polish Quality Award is leadership. It constitutes (in addition to strategy, employees, partnership and resources, products and services) the pillar of organization’s potential. This criterion assesses the engagement of the leaders in shaping the future, by defining clear goals and striving to achieve them. According to the Polish Quality Award the best leaders [7]:

- serve as models, strengthen the culture of workers,
- define and communicate the main and most important directions of development,
- know strategic determinants of business development,
- show competence by making substantive and current decisions based on facts, using their experience and taking any consequences of undertaken actions and decisions,
- are characterized by flexibility, especially in setting new directions for the development of the organization,
- build trust of employees and stakeholders.

When analysing the aforementioned tasks which the TQM imposes on leaders, one can easily notice a broad scope of effects which leaders have on the functioning of a company. They are the driving force of the organization, through making the decisions which determine the directions of development of the organization as well as determine the total activity of the company.

#### **6.5 ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF A LEADER IN COPMANIES – RESEARCH RESULTS**

In order to analyze the role of leaders in organizations with mature quality management system, a pilot study was conducted. Questionnaire was used as a research tool. The obtained data was supplemented with face to face interviews carried out in a group of representatives from manufacturing companies. The study was conducted on one group of participants taking part in training on preparation of the proposal – self-assessment for the competition of Polish Quality Award. The participants of the training were 3 manufacturing companies and one public organization – health care. The study was conducted on a sample of all manufacturing companies with an exception of healthcare organization. The surveyed companies belonged to the group of small (10-50 employees), big (251-500 employees) and large (over 501 employees) organizations which gives an opportunity to compare practices in the surveyed entities. In this study the pro-

blems regarding the participation of leaders at various stages of creation and control of the quality management system were discussed. Selected issues connected directly with the position of leaders as well as their attitude during realization of selected tasks are described later in this paper.

Implementation of the quality management system – whether the organization has implemented the quality management system with an external consultant – just one of the organizations did not use an external advisor. When making a decision about taking an external advisor the management of the organization took into consideration the opinions of other organizations about a given advisory company, its name and prestige. The fee for the service was also of a great importance. Considering the obtained responses, as well as complementing them with interviews, it can be concluded that due to the decisions of the leaders in most organizations, external advisors together with all employees took active part in building the systems. The choice of advisors was based on well-thought out decisions, allowing determining the requirements for the system, and at the same time determining the degree of branch knowledge of advisory company. The analysis regarding the cash which could be used for the implementation of the quality management system was equally important.

The need to implement the quality management system – to what extent the need to build the quality management system resulted from internal needs and to what extent from external needs – in the study group only one company put the equality sign between the external and internal needs. Other entities pointed at the external need as a dominant one. In the conducted interviews the participants agreed that the predominant external factor, in addition to competitive advantage, is taking care about the company's image in the eyes of the customers. The quality management system is supposed to make the company credible in the eyes of the customers. Moreover, it should constitute a guarantee of diligence at all stages of realization of a given service. When analysing the obtained information it is clear that leaders pay special attention to the satisfaction of customers. The decision to implement the quality management system stemmed from thoughts on both the customer and market analysis – looking for a competitive advantage. In their activities, leaders also took into consideration an internal need which is undoubtedly the need to systematize all processes within the company, and thereby to enhance the comfort of the employees, to determine the limits of liability.

Selection of certification body – is also within the scope of the duties of the top management of the organization – entities subject to the survey proved that the management took into consideration the name and prestige when choosing a particular certification body. Achieving competitive advantage as a result of implementation of the quality management system is directly connected with obtaining a certificate. It is necessary to take into account the fact that each and every prospective customer will have some knowledge on the certification bodies because they, thanks to their established reputation, can guarantee reliable system audits as well as the accuracy of reports from the conducted audits.

Treatment of the quality management systems in the organization – as a system covering all actions of the organization realized in all organizational units. Building awareness of the employees as well as enforcing the proper functioning of the quality management system is not possible without full commitment of leaders as well as their model behaviour. All actions taken up by the leaders constitute an example for all employees and at the same time, they encourage them to adopt the correct attitude towards the assumptions of the quality management system and, therefore, are reflected in the way it is treated within the organization. In the surveyed companies the system is the management tool. This answer clearly shows high commitment of the leaders in the development and implementation of the system.

The tools used in the organization to examine the effectiveness of the quality management system – the respondents indicated the following tools which were used to examine the effectiveness of the quality management system in the organizations: internal audit, monitoring of processes, management review, measurement of customer satisfaction, self-assessment, measurement of the realization of the qualitative objectives, balanced scorecard, measurement of the employees satisfaction. It is clear, therefore, that in the surveyed companies different tools to measure the effectiveness of the quality management system are used. The commitment of leaders constitutes an essential factor in a process of measurement of the quality management system. They monitor and moderate this process. Committed leaders justify in a reasonable way the necessity for measurement, they allocate adequate resources for this purpose, they choose adequate people who would be responsible for this process as well as they try to properly prepare them for this task.

When analysing the potential of the organization, the companies pointed at leadership, strategy and policy as the most important among the pillars of this group. These are the pillars which are directly created by the top management of the organization. Apparently, among the surveyed companies with mature quality management system the leaders fully fulfil their tasks. Full commitment of the leaders allowed the companies to implement TQM, guarantee resources for realization of clearly defined objectives as well as to convince each of the entities to adopt determined strategy of the company.

## CONCLUSIONS

Each of the entities functioning on the market has both the potential as well as resources. Proper use of these two components is a guarantee of the success of the company operating in contemporary surroundings. The pace of changes can often cause a problem in keeping up with the trends or ever increasing competition – that is the reason why adapting a corporate strategy as well as motivating employees are extremely important factors in the organization. These tasks are realized by the leaders of those entities. One cannot fail to recognize social responsibility of organization. Leaders are assessed in terms of ethics, observance of workers' rights and conditions of their work, analysis of future market trends. A crucial aspect of the function of a leader is the assigned interpersonal, informative and decision-making roles which

shape his position and give him powerful position in the organization. Another important aspect of the leader is to develop an appropriate leadership strategy – it is extremely responsible function from the perspective of the organization. As indicated in this article, the leadership strategy has a direct impact on all adopted strategies. This correlation creates the responsibility of leaders for all areas of operations as well as all processes in the company. On the other hand, an application of Total Quality Leadership imposes on leaders an obligation as well as responsibilities for whole organization with a special emphasis on the awareness of their tasks. TQL includes guidelines for realization of tasks i.e. indicate the areas which require special attention. The qualities that a leader should possess are equally important. They include: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy as well as social skills. The role of leadership is also indicated in the competition of Polish Quality Award – it is one of the pillars of the potential of the organization. However, as it was proved in this paper it has a direct impact on the whole organization.

By analysing the data obtained in the survey as well as in direct interview, it should be noted that leaders are fully oriented on cooperation with organizations. They make a decision to implement the quality management system to the company, taking into consideration both internal and external needs. Leaders have a direct influence on the choice of the external advisor to implement the system as well as the certification body. The conditions for making the right choices were in each case an opinion, name and prestige of the organization, which proves to be a well-thought choice as well as it shows their responsibility for taken actions. From the obtained information it appears that the leaders of companies taking part in the Polish Quality Award competition take care of a conscious propagation of the quality management system in the companies managed by them. It results from the way in which the system is treated – as a system covering all activities in the organization, realized in all organizational units. Another advantage of the leaders in the surveyed companies is a wide use of tools for measuring the effectiveness of the system. As it results from the obtained data leaders use various tools to measure the effectiveness of the system (internal audit, monitoring of the processes, management review, measurement of customer satisfaction, self-assessment, balanced scorecard, measurement of the employees' satisfaction), measuring not only the processes connected with the customer but also those connected with the whole organization. Respondents also pointed to the importance of leadership, strategy and policy as the most important pillars distinguished in Polish Quality Award competition. It should be noted that both the strategy and adopted policy of the company are created by leaders of the organization.

In the conducted study each of the responses indicates an extremely important role of the leaders in organizations. It is often their attitude towards the organization and its problems which determines the success or failure in achieving the competitive position, economic success or success of the organization.

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## THE ROLE OF LEADERS IN SHAPING THE QUALITY IN THE CONTEXT OF PREPARATION OF SELF-ASSESSMENT FOR THE POLISH QUALITY AWARD COMPETITION

**Abstract:** *This paper tries to identify the role of the leaders in shaping the quality within an organization. It describes the area as well as the range of the influence of leaders in organizations. The relationship between leadership strategy and other strategies adopted in the companies was indicated. Moreover, an attempt was made to determine the influence of the leaders on particular stages of implementation as well as functioning of the quality management system in the enterprise. It also presents the role of leadership according to the Polish Quality Award criteria. An analysis indicating the areas of leaders' influence was conducted on the basis of a survey and interviews carried out in a group of participants of one of the trainings on the preparation of self-assessment for the Polish Quality Award competition.*

**Key words:** *leader, quality management system, Total Quality Leadership, self-assessment, the Polish Quality Award*

## ROLA LIDERÓW W KSZTAŁTOWANIU JAKOŚCI W KONTEKSCIE PRZYGOTOWYWANIA SAMOOCENY DO KONKURSU POLSKIEJ NAGRODY JAKOŚCI

**Streszczenie:** *W opracowaniu starano się przedstawić rolę jaką spełniają liderzy w kształtowaniu jakości w organizacji. Zobrazowano obszar wpływu i zasięg oddziaływania liderów w przedsiębiorstwach. Wskazano relacje zachodzące pomiędzy strategią przywództwa a pozostałymi strategiami przyjętymi w organizacjach. Podjęto próbę określenia wpływu liderów na poszczególne etapy wdrażania i funkcjonowania systemu zarządzania jakością w przedsiębiorstwie. Przedstawiono również rolę przywództwa według kryteriów Polskiej Nagrody Jakości. Analizy wskazującej obszary oddziaływania liderów, dokonano na podstawie przeprowadzonych badań ankietowych, uzupełnionych o wywiady na grupie uczestników jednego ze szkoleń z zakresu przygotowywania wniosków samooceny, do udziału w konkursie Polskiej Nagrody Jakości.*

**Słowa kluczowe:** *lider, system zarządzania jakością, Total Quality Leadership, samoocena, Polska Nagroda Jakości*

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