

## Perspectives

# Values underlying continuous improvement

*Naceur Jabnoun*

### The author

Naceur Jabnoun is Associate Professor, Department of Business Administration, University of Sharjah, UAE.

### Keywords

Kaizen, Values, Trust, Co-operation, Corporate culture

### Abstract

Increased global competition, where high quality and low cost are at premium, led to increased interest in continuous improvement. The success of continuous improvement initiatives is dependent on many factors that include leadership, structure and shared organizational values. This paper identifies two sets of values that underlie continuous improvement. The first set is composed of driving values while the second set includes the enabling values. The paper also presents a few measures for infusing these values.

### Electronic access

The research register for this journal is available at [http://www.mcbsp.com/research\\_registers](http://www.mcbsp.com/research_registers)

The current issue and full text archive of this journal is available at <http://www.emerald-library.com/ft>

## Introduction

People's behavior is a reflection of their values and priorities. Garfield (1986) considers commitment to values to be the determining factor in the pursuit of any mission. Cultural values were not given much importance before the 1980s. It was the great industrial success of Japan that stirred a worldwide awareness about the importance of culture. It has since become understood that the success of any strategy rests heavily on the existence of a supporting culture (Deal and Kennedy, 1982).

It is consequently believed that culture change or at least culture awareness is a necessary prerequisite for "excellence" and "quality" (Lewis, 1998). Powell (1995) concludes that these tacit behavioral resources, and not TQM tools and techniques, drive TQM success. The importance of culture is particularly highlighted in the dynamic journey of continuous improvement (Hyland *et al.*, 2000; Berger, 1997; Bessant and Caffyn, 1997).

Bessant *et al.* (1994) defined continuous improvement (CI) as a company-wide process of focused and continuous incremental innovation sustained over a long period of time. Being essential for meeting customers' varying needs, CI is considered an integral part of TQM (Deming, 1986; Anderson *et al.*, 1994; Ahire, 1996). The intensity of global competition has led to an even greater interest in continuously improving products, services, and processes (Garvin, 1987, 1993; Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985; Misterek *et al.*, 1990).

While the importance of values for the success of CI is widely recognized, little research has been specifically conducted in this area. CI related values are usually addressed within the context of TQM. These values include humbleness (Gupta, 1996; Gibson, 1995; Bentz, 1990; Horner, 1997), openness (Steyn, 1999; Roberts, 1992), respect for people (Seiling, 1999; Mehta, 1999), responsibility and integrity (Goetsch and Davis, 2000), empathy and responsiveness (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985; Bogue, 1997), trust (Axline, 1991; Drucker, 1974) and cooperation (Oakland, 1997).

This paper discusses the values that underlie CI in two different steps. The values that motivate CI are discussed first. These values are basically the answers to the question "why should we continuously

The author would like to thank Dr Ibrahim and Dr Khalifah for their valuable comments.

improve?” or “what values should we have to want to improve”. Since the objective of CI is customer satisfaction, it is argued that the values driving CI are basically the values that ensure commitment to customer satisfaction. Then, the values that enable the pursuit of CI were identified and discussed.

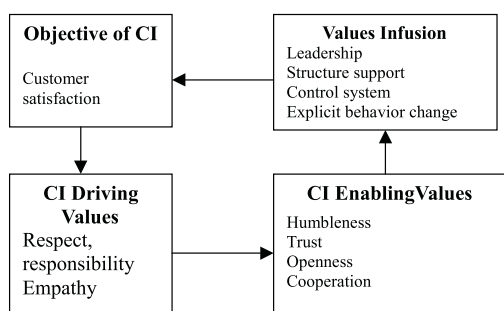
These values enable employees to achieve the objective of CI, which is customer satisfaction. A brainstorming session by the author with a group of managers enrolled in an EMBA program identified respect, responsibility and empathy as CI driving values, while humbleness, trust, openness and co-operation were identified as CI enabling values. Finally, this paper outlines a number of measures to infuse these values throughout the organisation. These measures include leadership role, structural support, a shift of focus in the control system, and an explicit behavioural change program. This paper can be summarised in the framework presented in Figure 1.

**CI driving values**

Customer satisfaction is the objective of all TQM initiatives (Dean and Bowen, 1994). Deming considers customers to be the most important part of the production line (Scherkenbach, 1986). Customers should be recognized as reasons behind the existence of the organization. They are the origin and the purpose of product development and improvement. Product or service improvements that do not meet customers’ needs and expectations will be a total waste for the organization. Customer satisfaction should therefore be the objective and drive of CI.

Since the objective of CI is customer satisfaction, the basic values that establish and reinforce commitment to customer satisfaction should be the driving values of CI.

**Figure 1** Values framework



To identify such basic values, the author held a brainstorming session with a group of managers enrolled in the EMBA program at the University of Sharjah (UAE). This group was engaged in this exercise while taking a TQM class. This group identified respect; responsibility and empathy as the main values that impel people to be committed to customer satisfaction and thereby CI. In the following, we will discuss each of these values.

**Respect**

Respect for people is one of the seven cultural dimensions developed by O’Reilly *et al.* (1991). Mehta (1999) considered respect for individuals as a foundation for total quality improvement while Barrett (1998) considered it to be one of the main pillars of new business theories. The way we deal with people is usually dependent upon the level of respect we have for them. We usually bring the best out of ourselves when we meet people we respect most. Respecting our customers means listening to their concerns, communicating with them kindly and most importantly making sure that our products or services match their expectations. Respect should not be restricted to external customers, it should rather govern relationships inside and outside the organization (Seiling, 1999). If we do not have respect for people and for their intelligence, we will never be able to respect our customers. As a result we will not be committed to improving our products and services to meet customers’ varying expectations. We also will not be able to trust our subordinates and empower them, something which impedes innovations and improvements (Anjard, 1995). If a manager perceives his subordinates as incompetent and unintelligent, he will never expect them to perform well, and he will usually not facilitate their tasks. Consequently, his life will usually be marked with self-fulfilling prophecies, for a subordinate who is not respected is not likely to be highly motivated (Pojasek, 1999).

**Responsibility**

When we respect people, we observe our responsibilities towards them. Responsibility is the obligation to perform assigned tasks. Accepting responsibility means making sure that the tasks are performed at the expected time, within the expected budget and with the expected quality (Armitage, 1993). It also means accepting the blame when any of the

expectations is not met (Brown, 1985). Blanchard and O'Connor (1997) consider responsibility as a vehicle for profitability. A high sense of responsibility leads to a high level of discipline and integrity which has been considered the hallmark of superior organizations (Peters, 1987). Highly responsible people are diligent and committed to timely performance of their assigned jobs, comply with orders and directives of superiors, and do not swerve away from doing what they are supposed to do by any distraction. They are dependable. They do what they say they would and they honor their word. Such people are capable of creating an atmosphere of trust (Daim, 1995).

Organizations are responsible for continuously improving their products and services in order to meet the expectations of their customers. The extent to which CI efforts will succeed is the outcome of how strongly organizational members feel responsible for meeting customers' expectations. The success of CI efforts might therefore come down to how well an organization can create a sense of self-instilled responsibility (Easton, 1999). Furthermore, people with self-instilled responsibility are worthy of being empowered by their superiors. They are committed and dependable team members. Their commitment to their jobs and to their customers enables them to effectively pursue CI.

### **Empathy**

The requirements for delighting customers go beyond responsibility to include responsiveness, which is a by-product of empathy. Empathy stipulates that we put ourselves in the other party's shoes. Empathetic people strive to delight their customers and feel a sense of guilt and outrage for any failure to meet expectations. Bogue (1997) stressed the role of moral outrage in meeting expectations and considered quality management to be "Hearts First". To delight customers, CI efforts should be carried out by empathetic people who will go beyond what is within their responsibility to delight their customers. These people will always walk the extra mile to further improve their products and services, and if one mile is not enough, they will be ready to walk more miles. FedEx has been able to provide consistently a distinguished service thanks largely to the sense of empathy shared by its members (Colley, 1996).

## **CI enabling values**

The CI enabling values were identified by the same EMBA group. These values are humbleness, trust, openness and cooperation. These values enable the organization to achieve the CI objective of customer satisfaction.

### **Humbleness**

Humbleness is an essential ingredient for motivating employees (Kennedy, 1998) and achieving organizational effectiveness (Rashid and Dar, 1994). Gupta (1996) considered modesty as an important factor behind the success of the consulting group McKinsey. Humbleness is the opposite of arrogance. Humble people will treat customers with respect. They will listen to their concerns, appreciate their suggestions. Most importantly they can accept that customers are always right and try to improve their products and services in order to satisfy them. On the other hand, arrogant people are likely to dismiss customer's concerns and reject their suggestions for improving products and services.

Humble people are open to advice and criticism from their subordinates and colleagues. They are not concerned about status differentiation and they respect their colleagues regardless of their positions. They also feel the need to further improve their abilities and acquire more knowledge and skills. Arrogant people are hardly accessible to their subordinates. They will dismiss or ridicule any criticism and abstain from any further learning. Humbleness is therefore conducive to CI while arrogance is conducive to stagnation and obsolescence. Gibson (1995) mentioned that when managers are rock confident in knowing both the ailment and the cure, they may be failing to question and reflect upon their core beliefs and assumptions, and as a result there will be no learning, no CI, and no innovation.

Humble, as opposed to arrogant, people will also appreciate the need for empowering their subordinates. They will also be willing to cooperate with their colleagues in empowered teams providing thereby a proper environment for continued innovations and improvement (Booth, 1994).

### **Trust**

*How can I be open if I do not trust him?*

Trust is essential for any quality performance (Bennis, 1989). Trust implies accountability,

predictability, and reliability (Bennis and Nanus, 1985). Without trust there will be no commitment and no motivation (Hatakeyama, 1985). Goetsch and Davis (2000) considered trust to be the foundation of teamwork, employee involvement and empowerment that are essential for CI (Anjard, 1995). Trust decreases transactions costs, enhances communication and improves morale. Trust is built by making promises and keeping them (Belohlav, 1990; Drucker, 1974). Open communication also enhances perception of trust (Whitener *et al.*, 1998; Butler, 1991)

### Openness

Openness is critical in bringing about a quality change (Steyn, 1999; Roberts, 1992). Zeitz *et al.* (1997) consider open communication to be the most central prerequisite for successful quality initiatives. Openness is necessary for effective employees' involvement, which, in turn, is necessary for CI (Bessant and Caffyn, 1997; Berger, 1997). Openness, through information sharing, advising, and voicing opposite opinions, ensures quality decisions and enhances CI. Openness means expressing our concerns but it equally means being receptive to the concerns of others and particularly our colleagues and customers. This receptivity means listening to our colleagues and cooperating with them in performing team tasks. It also means listening to our customers and acting upon what they say in the development, production, improvement, and delivery of our products or services. In order to create a culture of openness, advice, and innovation, we need to create a blame free environment (Augsdofner and Harding, 1995). Axline (1991) considered fear as the main obstacle facing TQM implementation, while Deming called for driving fear out (Deming, 1986). Other obstacles to openness include arrogance, lack of trust, and extra sensitivity to others' feelings. While sensitivity to others' feelings is demanded, it should not be an excuse for not communicating. Indeed caring about other people's feelings requires us to be truthful to them. What people usually ignore is the fact that they indeed communicate even when they don't communicate, only they communicate the wrong message. If we see something wrong and we do not speak about it, we send a message of approval of that wrongdoing. Therefore, not communicating the truth is basically communicating the wrong message.

### Cooperation

Internal and external cooperation is considered to be one of the main concepts underlying the Deming method (Anderson *et al.*, 1994; Deming, 1986). Barnard (1938) defined organizations as cooperative systems while Shaw (1958) maintained that internal cooperation among employees enables higher individual performance. A relation of cooperation improves communication and enhances innovation and conflict resolution (Valenzuela, 1999). Team members should cooperate with one another as well as with other teams. In the leading Malaysian advertising agencies, even though each team is supposed to excel, they were cooperating rather than competing with each other (Abdul Aziz, 1995). The spirit of co-operation should not be confined to the organization itself, rather it should extend beyond it to include the suppliers and the customers (Goetsch and Davis, 2000). In fact, external contacts are the most important stimuli to innovation (Leede and Looise, 1999). On the other hand, failing to cooperate can lead to dire consequences. Winter Sports, Inc. (WSI), a once leading ski manufacturer, had a highly modernized production facility. Because WSI had antagonistic relationships with its suppliers it missed the introduction of an improved composite material and lost 42 per cent of its sales.

Oakland (1997) stressed the importance of cooperation for CI and problem solving. He stated that in an environment of cooperation:

a greater variety of complex problems may be tackled, which are beyond the capability of any one individual, one department or even one organization, by the pooling of expertise and resources;

processes and problems are exposed to a greater diversity of knowledge, skill and experience, and are addressed more efficiently;

the approach is more satisfying to those involved and boosts morale and ownership through participation in problem solving and decision-making;

processes and problems which cross-departmental or organizational boundaries can be dealt with more easily, and the potential/actual conflicts are more likely to be identified and solved;

the recommendations are more likely to be implemented than individual suggestions as the quality of decision-making from good cooperation is high.

Most of these factors rely on the premise that people are most willing to support any effort in which they have taken part or helped to develop.

## Infusing CI values

To infuse the above values, top management should appreciate their importance to the CI process and hence to the competitiveness of the organization. This appreciation should be well communicated to all organizational members. Top managers should also be committed to the infusion of these values through being the first ones to enact them, for an organizational culture is a reflection of the personality of its leader (Schein, 1985). Leaders should engage in deliberate role modeling, teaching, and coaching in order to infuse desired values. They should also design physical space that promotes these values. A friendly design for the front office with no glass barrier, for example, improves the perception of trust and respect for customers, while having a common cafeteria for all employees irrespective of their position will reduce status differentiation, improve humbleness and enhance communication.

The organizational structure should also be conducive to CI values. A rigid functional structure is likely to impede the infusion of CI values. On the other hand, a team-based organization is likely to foster better communication, improve respect, create trust and enhance cooperation. Teams can also increase responsibility by creating positive peer pressure and collective commitment. An empirical study conducted by Booth (1994) shows that companies embracing the team concept had better communication and superior learning environment. Teams that can be formed include cross-functional teams, extended teams and cross-layer teams. Cross-layer teams include people from different levels of the organizational hierarchies to solve problems and develop new improvements. These teams reduce status differentiation and combine the conceptual skills of top managers, the human skills of middle managers and the technical skills of lower managers and technicians. North Ayrshire and Arran NHS Trust has successfully used these teams, under the name of GP link, to identify and implement new service developments and improvements (Fraser, 1995). Cross-layer teams are also common in academic organizations where status differentiation is limited.

Extended teams are teams that include customers and suppliers. In addition to combining different functional expertise, extended teams provide the different perspectives of the customers and suppliers.

These teams are particularly important for improvements. It is known that diverse contacts outside one's own group enhances innovation and ideas generation (Pels and Andrews, 1966). We can also have extended diagonal teams that are simultaneously cross-functional, extended and cross-layer. These teams cross the organization chart diagonally and extend beyond it to include different supplier and customer groups.

The focus of the control system should also be shifted from inspection to prevention (Bounds *et al.*, 1994) and from policing to empowerment. Prevention is achieved through proper process planning and employee training. Well-planned processes eliminate special causes of variations and reduce conflicts while employee training improves skills and subsequently enhances trust and cooperation.

Policing should be eliminated because it hinders communication, stifles cooperation and reflects lower levels of respect and trust. It also reinforces status differentiation and strengthen the notion that employees are not responsible, let alone empathetic, toward their customers. Empowerment should be embraced because it reinforces responsibility and ownership, and promotes respect and trust.

It is not enough to secure the commitment of top management, provide structural support, and shift the focus of the control system to achieve behavioral change. An explicit behavioral change program with specific improvement targets and a clear reward system is usually needed for such an endeavor. Kilman's (1989) five-step program can be used for this purpose. The five steps of this program include surfacing actual norms of behavior, establishing desired norms, identifying behavioral gaps, closing behavioral gaps, and sustaining the change.

The targets of the behavioral change program can be measured objectively in terms such as number of customer complaints, waiting time, number of adopted suggestions, and percentage of defects. They also can be measured subjectively using employees' surveys that measure the extent to which CI values are shared among organizational members. Velden Engineering (UK), a company that achieved remarkable improvements through developing its corporate culture, uses regular staff surveys (Irani *et al.*, 1997). These surveys are conducted by independent people (usually students from local universities).

## Conclusion

This paper answered three basic questions. The first question addresses the values that drive CI. Since the objective of CI is customer satisfaction it is argued that the values driving CI are basically the values that impel the satisfaction of customers. Three values, namely respect, responsibility, and empathy were identified and discussed. People sharing these values are likely to be committed to CI because they feel responsible towards the customers they respect and empathize with. The second question addressed by this paper is "what are the CI enabling values?". Four values namely humbleness, trust, openness, and cooperation were identified and discussed. People possessing these values recognize the need to continuously improve, and cooperate in doing so with people they trust without fearing to be blamed or ridiculed. We finally suggested a few measures to infuse both the driving and enabling values of CI. Such measures include deliberate role modeling from top management who should also design physical facilities that support CI values. It was also suggested to form cross-function, cross-layer and extended teams. These teams decrease status differentiation, eliminate functional barriers, combine different managerial and technical skills and improve humbleness. It is also needed to shift the focus of the control system from inspection to assurance and from policing to empowerment. This shift promotes trust and cooperation, and enhances humbleness, respect and responsibility. Finally the infusion of CI values requires the development of an explicit behavior change program with measured improvement targets and a clear reward system.

## References

- Abdul Aziz (1995), "Enhancing quality and productivity through excellent organizational culture: a study of the top ten advertising agencies", *Malaysian Management Review*, January, pp. 1-7.
- Ahire, S.L. (1996), "TQM age and quality: an empirical investigation", *Production and Inventory Management Journal*.
- Anderson, J.C., Rungtusanatham, M. and Schroeder, R.G. (1994), "A theory of quality management underlying the Deming management method", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 19 No. 3, pp. 472-509.
- Anjard, R. (1995), "Keys to successful TQM training and implementation", *Training for Quality*, Vol. 3 No. 1
- Armitage, K.P. (1993), "QM – a concept or common sense", *The British Journal of Administrative Management*, June/July.
- Augsdofner, P. and Harding, R. (1995), "Changing competitive forces in Europe continuous improvement in a sample of French, German and British companies", *European Business Review*, Vol. 95 No. 4.
- Axline, L.L. (1991), "TQM: a look in the mirror", *Management Review*, July.
- Barnard, C. (1938), *The Functions of an Executive*, Harvard Business Press, Cambridge, MA.
- Barrett, R. (1998), "New theories of executive excellence", *Provo*, Vol. 15 No. 12.
- Belohlav, J.A. (1990), *Championship Management: An Action Mode; for High Performance*, Productivity Press, Cambridge, MA.
- Bennis, J.A. (1989), *Why Leaders Don't Lead*, Jossey Bass, San Francisco, CA.
- Bennis, W. and Nanus, B. (1985), *Leaders: The Strategy for Taking Charge*, Harper and Row, New York, NY.
- Bentz, V.J. (1990), "Contextual issues in predicting high-level leadership performance: contextual richness as a criterion consideration in personality research with executives", in Clark, K.E. and Clark, M.B. (Eds), *Measure of Leadership*, Leadership Library of America, West Orange, NJ, pp. 131-43.
- Berger, A. (1997), "Continuous improvement and kaizan: standardization and organizational design", *Integrated Manufacturing Systems*, Vol. 8 No. 22, pp. 110-17.
- Bessant, J. and Caffyn, S. (1997), "High involvement innovation through continuous improvement", *Int. J. of Technology Management*, Vol. 14 No. 1, pp. 7-28.
- Bessant, J., Caffyn, S., Gilbert, J. and Harding, R. (1994), "Rediscovering continuous improvement", *Technovation*, Vol. 14 No. 3.
- Blanchard, K. and O'Connor, M. (1997), *Managing by Values*, Berret-Koehler Publishers, San Francisco, CA.
- Bogue, G.E. (1997), "Beyond systems: moral outrage and other servants of quality", *Vital Speeches of the Day*, New York, NY, January.
- Booth, P. (1994), "Embracing the team concept", *Canadian Business Review*, Vol. 21 No. 3.
- Bounds, G., Yorks, L., Adams, M. and Ranney, G. (1994), *Beyond Total Quality Management, toward an Emerging Paradigm*, McGraw-Hill, New York, NY.
- Brown, W.S. (1985), *13 Fatal Errors Managers Make and How You Can Avoid Them*, Berkely Books, New York, NY.
- Butler, J.K, Jr (1991), "Towards understanding and measuring conditions of trust: evolution of a condition of trust inventory", *Journal of Management*, pp. 643-63.
- Colley, J.L. (1996), *Cases in Service Operations*, Duxbury Press, Belmont, CA, p. 258.
- Daim, Z.T. (1995), "Leadership qualities that will determine your success", *Management Times*, February.
- Deal, T.E. and Kennedy, A.A. (1982), *Corporate Culture*, Adison-Wesley, Reading, MA.
- Dean, J.W. and Bowen, D.E. (1994), "Management theory and total quality: improving research and practice

- through theory development", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 9 No. 3, pp. 392-418.
- Deming, W.E. (1986), *Out of the Crisis*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.
- Drucker, P. (1974), *Management: Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices*, Harper & Row, New York, NY.
- Easton, A.L. (1999), "Improving and controlling low-volume, high dollar jobs", *The Journal for Quality and Participation*, July/August, Vol. 22 No. 4, pp. 21-4.
- Fraser, D. (1995), "Generating a culture focused on continuous improvement", *Health Manpower Management*, Vol. 21 No. 4.
- Garfield, C. (1986), *Peak Performers: The New Heroes of American Business*, William Morrow and Company, New York, NY.
- Garvin, D.A. (1987), "Competing on the eight dimensions of Quality", *Harvard Business Review*, Vol. 13, pp. 138-42.
- Garvin, G. (1993), "Building learning organization", *Harvard Business Review*.
- Gibson, P. (1995), "One renewal journey", *The Journal for Quality and Participation*, July/August, Vol. 18 No. 4, pp. 62-8.
- Goetsch, D.L. and Davis, S.B. (2000), *Introduction to Total Quality Management, Quality Management for Production, Processing and Services*, 3rd ed., Prentice-Hall International, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.
- Gupta, R. (1996), "Everything in the garden's lovely", *The Economist*, Vol. 340 No. 7976, p. 56.
- Hatakeyama, Y. (1985), *Manager Revolution! A Guide to Survival in Today's Changing Work-place*, Productivity Press, Cambridge MA.
- Horner, M. (1997), "Leadership theory: past, present, and future", *Team Performance Management*, Vol. 3 No. 4.
- Hyland, P., Mellor, R., Sloan, T. and O'Mara, E. (2000), "Learning strategies and CI: lessons from several small and medium Australian manufacturers", *Integrated Manufacturing Systems*, Vol. 11 No. 6.
- Irani, Z., Sharp, J.M. and Kagioglou, M. (1997), "Improving business performance through developing a corporate culture", *The TQM Magazine*, Vol. 9 No. 3.
- Kennedy, M.M. (1998), "The new rules of leadership and organizational politics", *Manager's Intelligence Report*, January, pp. 8-10.
- Kilman, R.H. (1989), *Managing beyond the Quick Fix*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA, pp. 49-50.
- Leede, J. and Looise, J.K. (1999), "Continuous improvement and the mini-company concept", *International Journal of Operations and Production Management*, Vol. 19 No. 11.
- Lewis, D. (1998), "How useful a concept is organizational culture", *Strategic Change*, Vol. 7, August, pp. 261-76.
- Mehta, J. (1999), "Business excellence through quality: Indian experience", *Total Quality Management*, Vol. 10 No. 4/5, July, pp. 647-52.
- Misterek, S.A., Anderson, J.C. and Dooley, K.J. (1990), "The strategic nature of process quality", *Proceedings of the National Decision Science Institute Conference*, pp. 1517-19.
- Oakland, J.S. (1997), "Interdependence and cooperation: the essentials of total quality management", *Total Quality Management*, Vol. 8 No. 2/3, June.
- O'Reilly, C.A. III, Chatman, J. and Caldwell, D.F. (1991), "People and organizational culture: a profile comparison approach to assessing person-organization fit", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 34, pp. 487-516.
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V.A. and Berry, L.L. (1985), "A conceptual model for service quality and its implications for future research", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 49, pp. 41-50.
- Pels, D.C. and Andrews, F.M. (1966), *Scientists in Organizations; Productive Climates for Research and Development*, Wiley, New York, NY.
- Peters, T. (1987), *Thriving on Chaos*, Harper & Row, New York, NY.
- Pojasek, R.B. (1999), "Quality toolbox: Poko-Yoke and zero waste", *Environmental Quality Management*, Vol. 9 No. 2.
- Powell, T.C. (1995), "Total quality management as a competitive advantage: a review and empirical study", *Strategic Management Journal*, Vol. 16 No. 1, pp. 15-28.
- Rashid, M. and Dar, J. (1994), "Current managerial styles and effective managers", *Management Services*, Vol. 38 No. 8, August.
- Roberts, R.A. (1992), "You want to improve? First you must change", *Supervision*, August, Vol. 53 No. 8, pp. 17-19.
- Scherkenbach, W.W. (1986), "The Deming route to quality and productivity: Ford's new philosophy", *Quality Progress*, Vol. 18 No. 4, pp. 40-6.
- Schein, E.H. (1985), *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, Jossey Bass, San Francisco, CA.
- Seiling, J.G. (1999), "Reaping the rewards and rewarding work", *The Journal for Quality and Participation*, March/April, Vol. 22 No. 2, pp. 16-20.
- Shaw, M.E. (1958) "Some individual factors in cooperation and competition", *Journal of Personality*, Vol. 56, pp. 155-69.
- Steyn, G.M. (1999), "Out of the crisis; transforming schools through TQM", *African Journal of Education*, Vol. 19 No. 4, pp. 357-63.
- Valenzuela, J.L. (1999), "The relationships between companies and their suppliers", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 22 No. 3 pp. 273-384.
- Whitener, E.M., Brobt, S.E., Lorsgaard, M.A. and Werner, J.M. (1998), "Managers as initiators of trust: an exchange relationship framework for understanding managerial trustworthy behavior", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 23 No. 3, pp. 513-30.
- Zeitz, G., Johannesson, R. and Richie, J.E. Jr (1997), "An employee survey measuring total quality management practices and culture", *Group and Organization Management*, Vol. 22 No. 4, December, pp. 414-44.

## Commentary

*Examines the factors which affect continuous improvement.*