

Developing an Effective Quality Control Program

If you want to be able to determine the root causes of lower quality in order to focus your attention on improvement, you have to go beyond inspecting the procedures to an “action” level or task level. You not only inspect the item but everything that impacts the item.

The first step is to determine your objective and the key areas that need to be addressed.

The second step is to layout critical processes, procedures & tasks along with equipment, tools, accessories and products involved. These can usually be found in your training manuals, equipment owners guides or by asking employees.

Next ask the following questions for each task:

- Is the task necessary
- Are the tasks, equipment, tools, accessories and products the safest & most efficient way to achieve the desired outcome
- Is there a better way to improve the outcome
- Clear definition of quality (can not be subjective)
- Based on objective how much of an impact does it have
- Variables that might effect the outcome

With the information from above determine how you are going to measure your results. The most common method is inspections. Some items to address:

- What are you inspecting
- Acceptable scores
- How to tell what items are improving
- If not improving:
 - Analyzing what variables will help spot trends causing low results
 - Make these variables part of the inspection process
- Frequency of inspections
- How results are used
- Recognition of improvement
- How often to review for necessary program changes
- Who is responsible for changes

Once you start to measure your results, periodically review the factors that could enhance or hurt the outcome in order to improve your program.

Enhancing the outcome:

Making sure all employees are properly trained on the procedures has a major impact on the quality outcome. Benchmarking performance gives insight into procedural, training, employee, etc. issues.

Staff retention also has an impact on quality outcome.

Effective quality control is an ongoing process where you are continually looking for ways to improve. If your quality control program is allowed to become static, you are guaranteed it will soon become outdated and ineffective. Some resources for information on new technologies are:

- Industry organizations
- Magazines
- Tradeshows
- Suppliers
- Industry experts
- Listserves (bulletin boards)
- Internet

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2/12/2007