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# CMA

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# We can't get there from here!

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Is GM on the road to recovery?

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Understanding profitability  
in the insurance industry

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ABC — revisiting the basics

By John A. Miller

## Training required to support total quality management

**T**raining is a critical component of total quality management. Employees empowered to solve problems and improve processes and activities need to be given the skills necessary to be successful in their efforts. The basic and fundamental training for TQM, together with the level of participation required for most companies to support their quality initiatives, is outlined in the centre box.

The material to support this level of training is widely available and can be purchased "off-the-shelf" from many firms. Unfortunately, the generic training often doesn't meet the specific needs of the company.

A more effective approach is to develop, design and implement training to the specific requirements of the company, and have this taught by company personnel. Home-grown training material, developed with the aid of the principles and philosophies of TQM, demonstrates commitment and makes it personal. Here are some points for designing training material which is company-specific.

**Examples and case studies should be based on your business.** For example, include the actual business processes of the company and performance measures identified for specific activities. Case studies should be based on actual work situations.

**An up-front assessment of specific training needs based upon job categories and existing skill levels.** If the existing skill level is high, the module might best be designed as self-study. Conversely, if the skill level and knowledge base is low, an instructor with subject matter expertise may be required.

**Design to fit existing tools, tech-**

**niques, and methods.** For example, if the company currently uses a four-step problem-solving method, the training model should not introduce something different. This reinforces what's already done, and drives it further into the organization.

**Customize to fit the company.** All materials should be designed with company logos and to look and feel as part of the big picture.

**Design the course schedule including roll-out, tracking system, and course evaluations/feedback.** The roll-out must be consistent with the pace of improvement efforts, so that the training is immediately useful to the participants.

**Design course prerequisites and specific skills necessary to make each module effective.** For example, a prerequisite for benchmarking is the ability to understand and document the process you intend to benchmark.

**Design exercises that contribute to an existing work situation.** For example, an exercise for *Activity-Based Cost Management* might involve identifying cost drivers for a specific activity. By designing exercises in this manner, a specific work product, useful to the company, is developed.

The result of designing material in this manner is a highly supportive and effective way to build on the existing skills and knowledge base. It also enables participants to apply skills in their specific work situation. While this can be more expensive than purchasing "off-the-shelf" material, in our experience, it is more cost-effective

in total to do it yourself. This provides the best return on the training investment over the long term.

### Total Quality Management

#### Training required

- Leading continuous improvement
- Overview of Total Quality Management
- Effective meetings/team building
- Effective communication
- Introduction to basic problem-solving skills
- Problem-solving process
- Effective proposals/cost benefit analysis
- Planning, organizing and managing benchmarking
- Benchmarking: A process for continuous improvement
- Advanced problem-solving tools
- Key process documentation/redesign
- Employee involvement/empowerment
- Performance measurement
- Innovation and creativity
- Activity-based cost management
- Instructor/trainer skills

#### Participation by

- Senior management.
- All employees.
- All employees involved in project teams.
- Top management, supervisors and team leaders.
- All employees involved in project teams
- All employees.
- All employees involved in project teams.
- Senior management/benchmarking team leaders.
- All benchmarking teams.
- All employees involved in second and third project teams.
- All employees involved in project teams.
- All employees.
- All employees involved in project teams.
- All employees.
- Top management, department heads and supervisors.
- All designated instructors.

**Design to fit the existing learning culture.** Some people require fast-paced, big-picture training. Others require a slower, detailed method.

**Design the material to fit management's vision of improvement.** For example, the *Overview of Total Quality Management* could be designed around one of several themes — continuous improvement, total quality, Kaizen, etc.

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