Soft Skills

or:

The Gap between the Need for Quality Management in Companies and Higher Education Programs

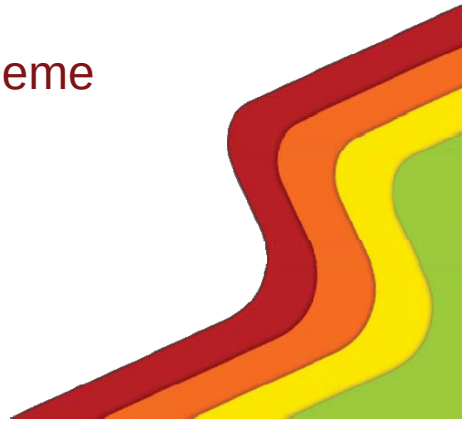
Everard van Kemenade, PhD.

The aim of this paper

- to explore to what extent soft skills are considered to be important for quality professionals;
- if so, which skills are needed;
- if this need is recognized in higher education.

Methodology

- Litterature review on the need for soft skills
- Literature review on coverage in Higher Education
- Review of accreditation standards Higher Education
- Review of one EOQ scheme



Methodology

- Litterature review on the need
  - Total Quality Management
  - Quality in Higher Education

Search engine	Journal	Selection by advanced search on "soft skills"	Personal selection on fitness for the research questions	Total
Business Source premier	Total Quality Management (2000-2003)	1	1	
Business Source premier	Total Quality Management & Business Excellence (2003-2010)	8	5	
Academic Search Premier	Quality in Higher Education (2000-2010)	1	1	7

Table 2: Origin of the articles on soft skills used in the literature review

Definition

•No clear definition of “soft skills”

Soft skills refer to *individual development* (intrapersonal) and to management of *interactions with others* inside and outside the organisation (interpersonal).

Results

Examples of *intrapersonal skills*:

- **Reflection**
- Learning to learn,
- Commitment to the organization,
- Self-criticism,
- Handling emotions (like comfort, resignation, aggression and passion),
- Coping with complexity/pressure,
- Ethical responsibility, (including trustworthiness, conscientiousness),
- Self awareness,
- Adaptability/flexibility
- Critical thinking and
- Liability.

Results

Examples of *interpersonal skills*:

- **Inspiring people**,
- Mediation,
- Coaching,
- Team learning skills/teamwork,
- Sharing visions,
- Creating a learning climate,
- Communication (including proper interpretation of language data),
- Persuasion,
- Negotiation and
- Establishing relationships.

Quality paradigms

1. control
2. continuous improvement
3. commitment
4. breakthrough

Paradigms	*Control*	*Continuous improvement*	*Commitment*	*Breakthrough*
Characteristics				
Object	Product/Process	Organisation	Relations	Values
Quality =	Fitness for use (Juran,)	Stakeholders value	Contribute to a better world (Vinkenburg,2006)	Contribute to real innovation (ECSF 2004, www.ecsf.info)
Quality management =	Note deviations from the norm	Satisfy or delight customers expectations	Optimize interaction between all stakeholders	Find new solutions that haven't been thought of.
Attitude, skills and role of the quality expert	• **Precise,** • **statistical data analysis skills** • **perfectionist**	• **Creative,** • **skills to support improvement programs and self assessment** • **promoter of customer focus**	• **Self-critical,** • **skills of a mediator and coach** • **reflective practitioner**	• **Flexible,** • **problem solving skills** • **trouble shooter**
Theoretical concepts				
Organisational Capacity (Hardjono, 1995)	Material capacity	Commercial capacity	Socialisation capacity	Intellectual capacity
Value orientation (Beck & Cowan, 1996)	Order (blue)	Success (orange)	Community (green)	Synergy (yellow)
Quadrants (Wilber, 2000)	It (outer, individual)	I (inner, individual)	We (inner, collective)	Its (outer, collective)-
The third logic (Friedson, 2001)	Management logic	Customer logic	Professional logic	-
Generations of QM (Foster & Jonker, 2007)	First generation (measure)	Second generation (judge)	Third generation (understand)	-

Table 1 : Characteristics and theoretical concepts of the four paradigm

Results

- The literature review shows that soft skills become increasingly important in quality paradigms like Total Quality Management and Commitment.

Methodology 2: HEd coverage

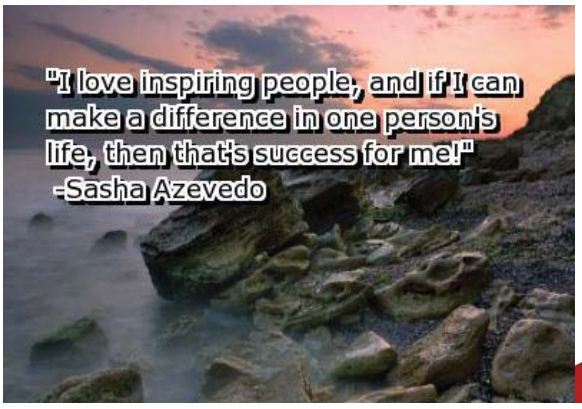
- The second part of the literature review focuses on higher education and two specific skills: reflection and inspiration.

Search engine	Journal	Selection by advanced search on "reflective"	Personal selection on fitness for the research questions
Academic Search Premier	Quality in Higher Education (2000-2010)	26	7
		Selection by advanced search on 'inspiring"	
Academic Search Premier	Quality in Higher Education (2000-2010)	7	1

Table 3: Origin of the articles on reflective and inspiring skills used in the literature review

Results

- Inspiring people is less covered in the literature studied than reflective skills.
- Soft skills are scarcely covered in Quality in Higher Education.



Results

- It is recommended that in a follow up study the attention to teaching soft skills in HEd is researched, as well as the methods how to do so.

Methodology 3: accreditation standards

Comparison skills to accreditation standards

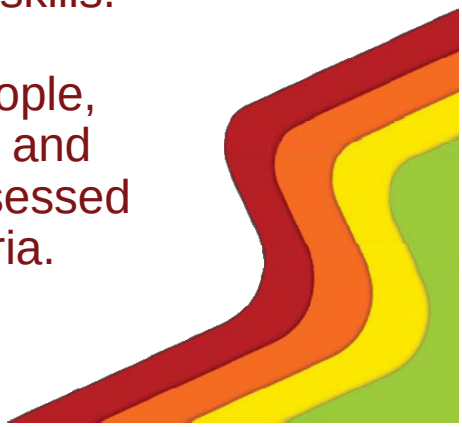
- AUN (Asian University Network)
- ABET (Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology)
- AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business)
- EQUIS (European Quality Improvement System , management education)
- Dublin descriptors (European general standards for all bachelors and masters)

Results

The AUN-criteria have the most personal soft skills mentioned.

Ten skills (half of the total amount) are not mentioned in **any** of the standards, 4 intrapersonal and 6 interpersonal skills.

Skills like adaptability, inspiring people, mediation, coaching, persuasion and negotiation can be trained and assessed and still are lacking in the criteria.



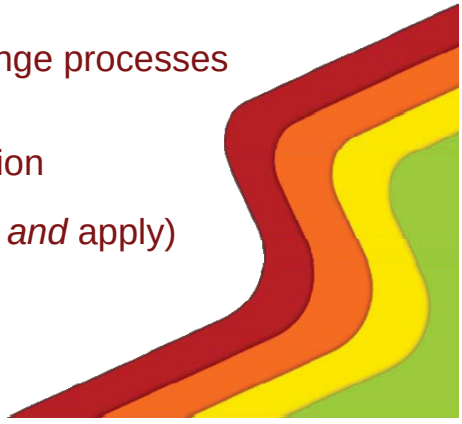
EOQ Personnel Registration Scheme ?

SENIOR QUALITY MANAGER

15th June, 2004

Communication skills in the context of change processes
Conflict management
Personality development
Information and communication

(level B, understand, be able to explain *and* apply)



Now EOQ competences

Competences like:

- learning readiness
- openness for change
- ability to communicate
- reliability
- energy

SOFT SKILLS

SELF competence SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL competence

LITERATURE

1. James R. Evans, (1996), “What Should Higher Education Be Teaching About Quality?” *Quality Progress*, pp. 83-88.
2. Larry B. Weinstein, Joseph A. Petrick and Paula M. Saunders, (1998), “What Higher Education Should Be Teaching About Quality, But Is Not,” *Quality Progress,* pp. 91-95.
3. Wilkinson, A., (1992), “The other side of quality: ‘soft’ issues and the human resource dimension, *Total Quality Management*, 3, pp. 323-329
4. Kemenade, E. van and Garré, P.,(2000), “Teach what you preach”, *Quality Progress*
5. Kemenade, E.A. van (2010), “Past is prologue. Know the history of quality management to achieve future success”, *Quality Progress*, August 2010, pp. 48-52

In 50 Words Or Less

- The lessons learned during quality management's evolution, particularly for the last 100 years, provide insight into the direction the discipline will take in the future.
- By keeping those lessons in mind, it's possible to reach what one author calls the essence of quality.

by Everard van Kemenade

Past Is Prologue

Know the history of quality management to **achieve future success**

KNOWING WHERE YOU came from helps you know where you need to go. And although it's tempting to look ahead, it's wise to look back and learn from the past. This axiom holds true for quality management, which is why the history of the discipline is worth closer examination.

Most historical overviews of quality management go back to medieval Europe and the guilds' inspection committees. Joseph M. Juran described how quality was managed under different circumstances—time span, geographical areas, products and political systems—and how it dates back to ancient history in China.[1] In the end, total quality management (TQM) is said to have evolved from quality control.

A comprehensive timeline can be found on ASQ's website—from the industrial revolution in the early 1800s that resulted in an increased emphasis on productivity and control to the early 20th century, when process analysis and statistics emerged, leading to process control's evolution into TQM.[2]

Since the turn of this century, the quality movement has matured, with some pointing to the evolution of ISO 9001 as evidence. In *The Quality Toolbox*, Nancy Teague wrote, "New quality systems have evolved beyond the foundations laid by [W. Edwards] Deming, Juran and the early Japanese practitioners of quality."[3] But what can we learn from the history of quality management, and what can it tell us about the direction in which we're heading?

To answer that question, I turned to the work of Bertrand Jouslin de Noray, who talked about the four revolutions of quality:

1. Process control in the 1920s.
2. Integral quality management in the 1970s.
3. Breakthrough in the 1990s.
4. Reaching the essence at some point in the future.[4]

Working off that model, I created a new set of paradigms—control, continuous improvement, commitment and breakthrough. Table 1 breaks them down by the definition of quality, the main focus of quality management, the gurus of the paradigm and various specifications.

Control

The first revolution started at the end of the 19th century with the emergence of mass production. The production process was divided into specialized tasks that made quality control even more important. Workers were no longer responsible for the product as a whole, but rather for their part of the job. As a result, they were encouraged to be as adept as possible at that portion. The beginning of standardization falls into this period.

In this paradigm, the material or commercial capacity is of utmost importance to the organization, whose focus is on effectiveness or efficiency. The former car-

Characteristics of the four paradigms / TABLE 1

	Paradigm			
	Control	**Continuous improvement**	**Commitment**	**Breakthrough**
Definition of quality	Compliance to requirements	Meeting or exceeding customer expectations	Fitness for purpose: The purpose of all stakeholders	Fitness for purpose: The purpose of all stakeholders; also looking at the future
Main focus	Product and processes	The organization	The organization	The organization and its future
Gurus	Frederick Taylor, Walter Shewhart	W. Edwards Deming, Masaaki Imai	Huub Vinkenburg	Shoji Shiba, Bertrand Jouslin de Noray
Revolutions in quality management	Process control	Integral quality management	–	Breakthrough
• **Generation model**	• Product and process oriented	• System oriented	• Chain oriented	• Society oriented
• **Phase**	• Orientation on effectiveness and efficiency		• Lean orientation	• Creativity
• **Capability**	• Material and commercial capability		• Socialization capability	• Intellectual capability
• **Risk**	• Bureaucracy and rigidity		• Anarchy	• Hobbyism
• **Changed**	• Process	• Standards	• Relations	• Business
• **Unchanged**	• Standards	• Business	• Business	• Values
• **Human**	• Theory X	• Theory Y	• Theory Y	• Theory Z
• **Key players**	• Middle manager	• Shop-floor workers	• All employees	• Top managers
• **Management focus**	• Discipline	• Backward	• People	• Forward

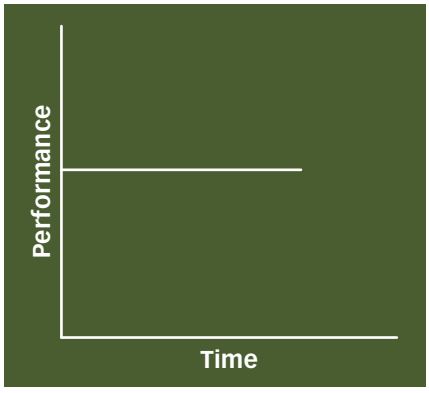
Sources

Hardjono, T.W., *Rhythmics and Organization Dynamics*, Kluwer, 1995.

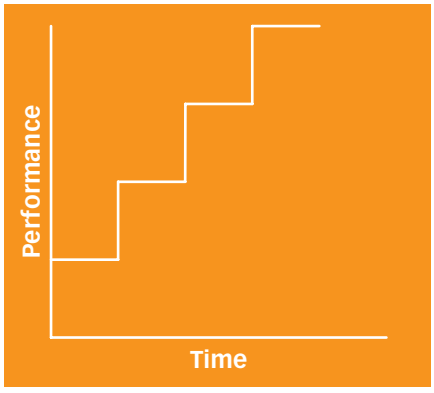
Jouslin de Noray, Bertrand, "Theory and Techniques on Breakthrough Change," 48th European Organization for Quality Congress, 2004.

Shiba, Shoji, David Walden, Elisabeth Ballery and Bertrand Jouslin de Noray, *Transformation Case Studies,* Goal/QPC, 2006.

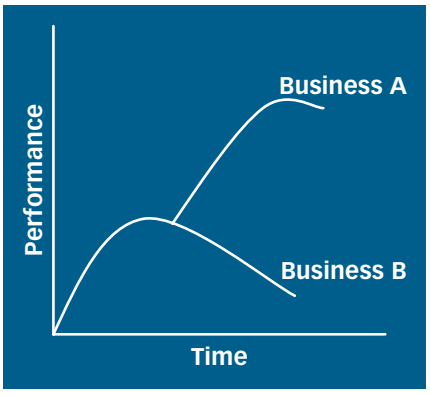
Control / FIGURE 1



Improvement / FIGURE 2



Breakthrough / FIGURE 3



Source: Shiba, Shoji, David Walden, Elisabeth Ballery and Bertrand Jouslin de Noray, *Transformation Case Studies,* Goal/QPC, 2006.

ries the risk of rigidity, while the latter can lead to the burden of bureaucracy.[5]

In *Transformation Case Studies*, Shoji Shiba called this paradigm "control" (see Figure 1) and said, "Process control is symbolically indicated by a flat line indicative of the goal of synchronizing and minimizing the variation of all the parts of an industrial process so that mass production was possible."[6] Shiba goes on to say, "People want stability and need to be led."

In quality matters, the middle manager plays the central role. The processes might change, but the standards shouldn't. The definition of quality in this paradigm is the extent to which the object fits the standards.

Continuous improvement

This revolution was all about results and success. In this paradigm, the customer plays an important role in judging the level of success an organization reaches. At this stage, Deming's plan-do-check-act cycle became crucial.

We see examples of this evolution today in the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award and the European Quality Award criteria, as well as in methods such as the balanced scorecard and Six Sigma.

Shiba called it incremental improvement (see Figure 2), which "is symbolically indicated by the staircase graph, indicative of the goal of incrementally and repeatedly improving the business's product or service offerings and the processes of providing improvement."[7]

At this stage, the shop-floor worker plays the central role in quality. The standards might change, but the business should not. The definition of quality in this paradigm is the extent to which the object fits or even exceeds the expectations of the customer.

Breakthrough

As the 1980s progressed, it became clear to some companies that incremental improvement was not enough to survive; they needed to take the initiative and look for new business.[8] As a result, innovation stepped to the forefront in the 1990s. Now, the business could change as long as the values did not (see Figure 3). The central role in the breakthrough stage is occupied by top management.

At this point, organizations gained intellectual competence and were focused on creativity.[9] Quality, then, is the extent to which the goals of all stakeholders will be fulfilled in the future.

Control vs. commitment / TABLE 2

Control paradigm	Commitment paradigm
Explain, laws, logic and cause-consequence.	Understanding, meaning, intention and empathy.
Try to manipulate and master the outer world.	Try to understand and accept the inner world.
You can make the world.	Make the world worth living.
Science, cold rationale and calculation of phenomena.	Art, warm feelings and incalculable phenomena.
Rational convincing.	Rhetorical seducing.
To measure is to know.	Whoever measures still knows nothing.
Criteria, such as alertness, effectiveness and profitability.	Criteria, such as curiosity, wisdom and concern.
Principle of the world vision is to rule.	Principle of the world vision is to love.

The organization **should evolve** from a traditional problem-solving network to a community that creates the capability to **address future problems.**

Commitment

In the breakthrough paradigm, the business changes while the values stay the same. But a crucial element may be necessary before that step is reached.

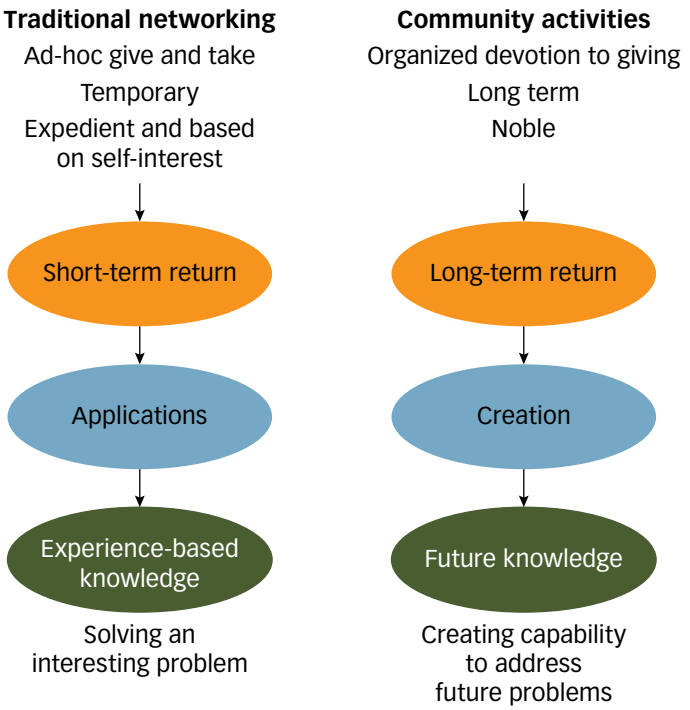
There is evidence of this in an examination of employees' willingness to contribute to an ISO 9001 certification process, which revealed a resistance to contribute.[10, 11] One of the main reasons for that reaction is a gap between the concepts involved in the certification and the employees' concepts of quality management.

Inspired by Huub Vinkenburg, I'll call this the commitment paradigm, in which a dialogue with all stakeholders should be the basis of action (see Table 2, p. 51). This paradigm fits into what's known as community-value orientation, in which a dialogue with all stakeholders is the basis of action.[12]

In *Breakthrough Management*, Shiba and David Walden said: "We see an increasing need for (1) shared learning and (2) integration with a variety of extrabusiness societal concerns as a requirement to establish breakthrough. The step from incremental improvement to breakthrough can be inhibited by arrogance (what is already being made and sold is what customers will always want). To break this barrier involves relooking at the fundamental objectives of the business and seeking new societal values beyond current business interests" (see Figure 4).[13]

For that reason, the organization should evolve from a traditional problem-solving network to a community that creates the capability to address future problems. And if we embrace the idea that commitment comes before breakthrough, this might evolve into reaching the essence of quality. QP

Traditional networking vs. community activities / FIGURE 4



REFERENCES

1. Joseph M. Juran (ed.), *A History of Managing for Quality*, ASQ Quality Press, 2005.
2. ASQ, "History of Quality—Overview," www.asq.org/learn-about-quality/history-of-quality/overview/overview.html.
3. Nancy Teague, *The Quality Toolbox*, ASQ Quality Press, 2005.
4. Bertrand Jouslin de Noray, "Theory and Techniques on Breakthrough Change," 48th Conference of the European Organization for Quality, 2004.
5. Teun W. Hardjono, "Developments in Quality Management," Education Community of Practice meeting, October 2005.
6. Shoji Shiba, *Transformation Case Studies*, Goal/QPC, 2006.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Teun W. Hardjono, *Rhythmics and Organizational Dynamics*, Kluwer, 1995.
10. Ton van der Wiele and Aaron Brown, "ISO 9000-Series Certification Over Time: What Have We Learnt?" Erasmus Research Institute of Management, 2002.
11. Ton van der Wiele, Jos van Iwaarden and Roger Williams, "Perceptions About the ISO 9000 (2000) Quality System Standard Revision and Its Value: the Dutch Experience," *International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management*, Vol. 22, No. 2, 2005, pp. 101-119.
12. Don Beck and Christopher Cowan, *Spiral Dynamics*, Blackwell Publishers, 1996.
13. Shoji Shiba and David Walden, *Breakthrough Management*, Confederation of Indian Industry, 2006.

EVERARD VAN KEMENADE is senior consultant for quality management and corporate responsibility at Fontys University of Applied Sciences in Eindhoven, the Netherlands. He earned a Ph.D. in quality management from Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University, in Rotterdam, the Netherlands.