

The Challenge of Mandated Organisational Change

Edwin Humphries, AIMM, MQSA,
MAITD

and

Ron Forbes, BSc (Hons), **Diplôme**, PhD,
AFAIM, MAITD

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Abstract:

Government and large commercial organisations, through legislation, regulation, and purchasing policy, are starting to impose upon all organisations the kind of activities fondly spoken of during the seventies as “corporate citizenship”. Most notable amongst these activities is Quality System Certification - guaranteeing product and service quality - but other requirements are the provision of safe and nondiscriminatory workplaces, environmental responsibility, meaningful employee consultation, structural reform and operational efficiency. They are a recognition of the necessity of meeting the needs of a broadly defined stakeholder group, and are frequently issues of business ethics.

For an organisation to meet all of these requirements and still achieve its own objectives efficiently becomes increasingly difficult. It can be done only by beginning from a values-based approach to strategic planning. Furthermore, avoiding duplication or even conflict between the management systems set up to meet these demands requires an approach which, while non-literal and minimalist, also recognises the opportunities for synergy between the system elements.

Finally, these requirements will inevitably change, and new ones will be imposed. This can either provide real benefits to the organisation and its workforce, or cause on-going disruption to management systems and anxiety to employees. To guarantee benefits, there is a need for individual and management development, and the creation of a corporate culture of change.

Conclusion

We began by saying that government and other large bodies have added further to the list of impositions which organisations today must meet, and that a fractured, local response can be disastrous to productivity and costs. At the same time, most of these impositions are there because society now demands them. The mandates of society, as a key stakeholder in business, are often overlooked, yet they are a part of the future we all want. If we take up the challenge to harmonise them effectively with internal planning in the overall frame work of a Mega plan, and to seek synergies between the elements of each imposition, then we can reap the reward of a workforce that plays its part in leadership and is enthusiastic about work as contributing to its own tomorrow through a corporate culture of change.