Total Quality Human Resources Management

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Introduction

Total quality human resources management (TQHRM) is "an approach to human resources management that involves many of the concepts of quality management." The primary goal of TQHRM is employee empowerment. Several differences exist between the traditional human resources approach and TQHRM. Thomas Foster developed a table that was adapted from an article by Cardy and Dobbins. The table lists the major differences between traditional HRM and TQHRM. The key points offered by Dr. Foster are listed in Table 1.

Table 1

HR versus TQHRM		
	Traditional HRM	**TQHRM**
Process Characteristics	Unilateral role	Consulting role
	Centralization	Decentralization
	Pull	Release
	Administrative	Developmental
Content Characteristics	Nomothetic	Pluralistic
	Compartmentalized	Holistic
	Worker-oriented	System-oriented
	Performance measures	Satisfaction measures
	Job-based	Person-based

Source: Adapted from S. Thomas Foster, "Managing Quality an Integrative Approach." Prentice-Hall: New Jersey, 2001. P.21

The TQHRM approach focuses on providing employee empowerment through alignment, authority, capability, and commitment. As Juran states:

> "The full potential of employee empowerment is realized in the empowered organization, when employees: align their goals with appropriate higher organization purpose; have the authority and opportunity to maximize their contribution; are capable of taking appropriate action; are committed to the organization's purpose; and have the means to achieve it."

Companies are beginning to realize that employee involvement is critical to product and service quality, and thus essential to the total quality management strategy.

How to implement TQHRM

The primary goal of TQHRM is to provide an atmosphere that promotes employee empowerment. Empowerment requires the alignment, authority, capability, and commitment of employees. In order to achieve these goals, Juran has identified several steps that must be taken to achieve each goal.

Alignment. Alignment can be realized if employees:

- Know the needs of customers and stakeholders

- Know, concur in, and be prepared to contribute effort to organization strategies, goals, objectives, and plans

Authority. In order for employees to the have the authority and opportunity to contribute to the organization, the following steps are required:

- Individual authority, responsibility, and capability are consistent

- Barriers to successful exercise of authority have been removed

- The necessary tools and support are in place

Capability. Employee capability can be developed through:

- Organizational training initiatives
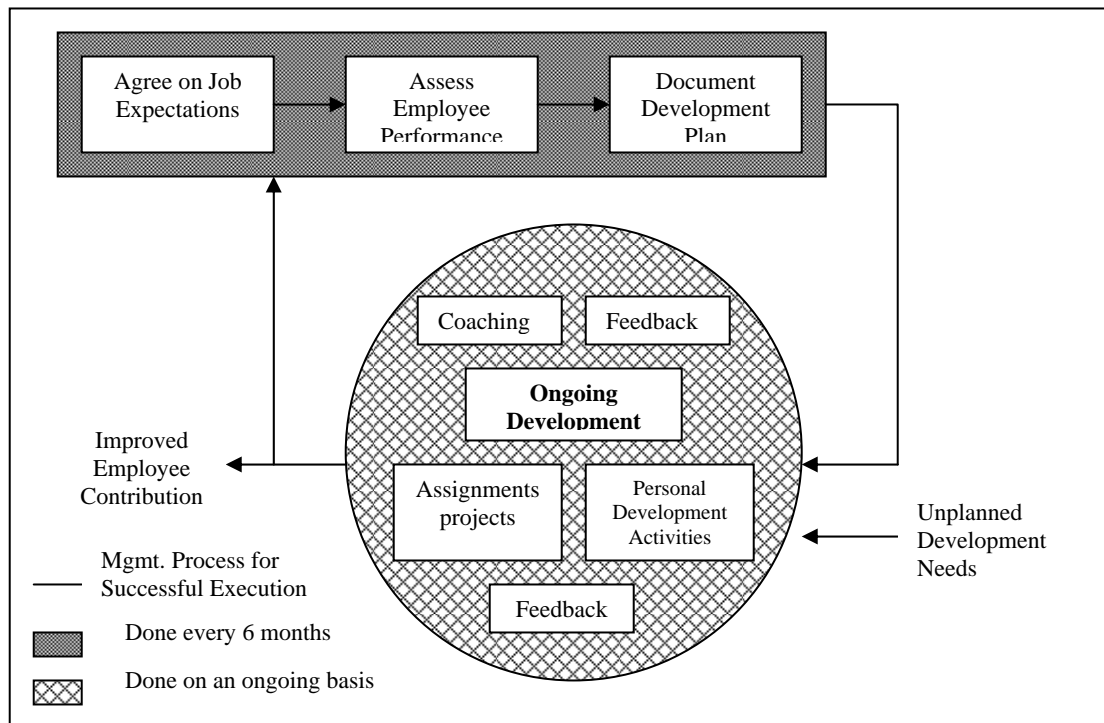
- Educational development

Commitment. An organization must earn the commitment of employees through:

- Reinforcement

- Recognition

- Rewards

TQHRM in Action

Eastman Chemical Company is an excellent example of TQHRM in action. Eastman Chemical designed an "employee development system" for employee development and coaching to replace its traditional performance appraisal system. Table 2 shows the new process.

Table 2

Agree on Job Expectations → Assess Employee Performance → Document Development Plan	

Ongoing Development
- Coaching
- Feedback
- Assignments projects
- Personal Development Activities
- Feedback

Improved Employee Contribution

Unplanned Development Needs

Mgmt. Process for Successful Execution

Done every 6 months

Done on an ongoing basis

In addition to the employee development system, Eastman Chemical was successful in implementing an empowered management system to aid in the successful management of employees in an empowered environment. Eastman Chemical identified the specific changes that needed to be made to its traditional human resources management style in order to implement TQHRM. They then set up guidelines and training programs to ensure that these changes were made.

More Information

Several resources are available on the topic of total quality human resources management. Here is a list to get you started:

1. Baldrige National Quality Program, 2002. "Criteria for Performance Excellence." <http://www.quality.nist.gov>

2. Cardy, R. and Dobbins, G.H. "Human Resources Management in a Total Quality Environment: Shifting from a Traditional to a TQHRM Approach." *Journal of Quality Management* 1, no. 1 (1996)

3. Foster, S. Thomas. Managing Quality: An Integrative Approach. Prentice-Hall, New Jersey; 2001.

4. Juran, Joseph M. "Human Resources and Quality." Exerpted from: Juran's Quality Handbook, 5e. McGraw-Hill, 1999.