Chapter 7
Making the case for managing quality more effectively

There's only one corner of the universe you can be certain of improving, and that's your own self.

Aldous Huxley (*1894–1963*), *English author*

Identifying the need

There will always be a case for managing quality more effectively simply because we can always do things differently or do different things in order to yield better results, but not everyone will be motivated to change. Many will disagree that the evidence for change is convincing or if it is convincing that it should be given a priority or if it is a priority that action needs to be taken immediately. There will be resistance to change and even when change has been acknowledged as being necessary there will be further resistance to how the change is to be made and who is to be involved. There will be lots or barriers to cross and allies to win but it all starts with one individual identifying a need for change. Whether the organization decides to manage quality more effectively will depend upon how well the case for change is made. Here we look at four scenarios to illustrate different motivators.

Alan's story

Alan was a sales executive and his job was to meet his sales targets for the period. He had done well these last few months since he had passed his target with no trouble. He felt this was due to his company's excellent product, and so it was. The new model was indeed a breakthrough in technology and surpassed anything the competition could rival. It had been in production now for over a year and was selling well.

> **Process Maturity**
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> If you have adopted the process approach you will have:
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> ● Clear & measurable business objectives
> ● Derived these objectives from Stakeholders' expectations
> ● Designed the processes to achieve these objectives
> ● Policies, values or principles that will guide the organization in achieving these objectives
> ● Connectivity between stakeholder needs, process objectives, activities, measures and the business results
> ● Determined the competences and capabilities required to achieve these objectives
> ● Conducted reviewing and be improving performance against these objectives
> ● Conducted reviews and be improving the efficiency of the processes
> ● Reviewed the relevance of the objectives against stakeholder needs
>
> If your organization has not done any of these you have identified an opportunity for improvement.

Then one day, a customer called to say his machine was faulty. It was only three months old and was therefore covered by the warranty. Alan told the customer to return it. We will repair the product in five days or replace it he told the customer (this was company policy). Alan had always put the customer first. He was not the kind of sales executive who would try to win a sale by cheating the customer. He believed in the win-win situation and would never fool a customer into believing that he was getting a bargain when he wasn't.

Five days later the customer called again to say that a replacement had not been supplied. Alan called the servicing department and was informed that there had been a backlog of repairs and it would be another two days before they could get around to that particular machine. He notified the customer who was not at all pleased as no replacement was offered as promised. Alan apologized and said he would get back shortly. He began to think about the company policy of "We will repair the product in five days or replace it". He knew of no mechanism in place that would guarantee a replacement within the five-day period. Meanwhile another of Alan's customers had a faulty machine so he started an investigation to find out whether the two machines had a common fault. He found that in both cases a fault was discovered in the same component. Further investigation established that a batch of machines had been assembled by a new employee who had misunderstood the part numbers and consequently fitted the wrong part. In fact it was the right type of component but did not have the latest modifications. In discussing the problem with the production manager, they agreed that all new employees would be given training in the company's numbering system. Alan was puzzled as to why it should be possible for employees to select the wrong component on a production line, but as he was in sales he held his tongue.

The second customer had bought the machine over 12 months prior and it had had the older part fitted – it was one of the first production machines. However, that machine was no longer covered by the warranty so Alan had to explain that there would be a repair charge. The customer was not pleased as the warranty period had only just expired, and enquired as to the nature of the fault. Alan

explained that the model had been modified (on reflection he thought he shouldn't have told the truth, but that was not his nature). The customer naturally was upset and demanded a no charge repair since the fault was not due to fair wear and tear. Alan checked with his superior and was told that a charge would have to be made since they could not have one law for one customer and another for someone else. Needless to say the customer was very dissatisfied and threatened to take his business elsewhere next time.

Alan's first customer was on the phone again. Two days elapsed and no replacement machine had been delivered. Alan again investigated the problem and found that several people in the servicing department had gone sick and the backlog was increasing.

"Why can't we use the production line technicians?" Alan asked Bill, the production manager.

"Well we could," replied Bill "but they are working flat out to meet their quota."

"Why can't we take in contractors to move the backlog?" enquired Alan.

"You'll have to take that up with Tony the servicing manager," said Bill. "I am only responsible for production; not servicing."

Alan went into the servicing department and put the problem to Tony.

"We can't move production staff into servicing," said Tony "because they won't understand the way we do things around here."

"But haven't we got written procedures or something that they can follow?"

"Hell no!" said Tony. "I haven't time to write things down and anyway it would always keep changing. You know how lean we are. The slightest change and everything is affected."

Alan began to reflect on his week so far. There had not been so many problems in a single week before. There were the faulty machines, although they had tracked down the fault and hopefully taken adequate corrective action by training all new employees. Then there was the resource problem in the servicing department. We couldn't solve that until either we had more technicians or could use contract labour. If we had documented procedures, Alan thought, new staff and contractors could quickly learn our methods so he undertook to speak to the CEO about this. The CEO told Alan that *his* job was to satisfy customers and not to worry about operations as *they* will write procedures if they believe *they* need them. He also made it clear that Alan was not to interfere in the work of other departments.

Satisfy customers – Alan thought. Well we haven't done very well this week and he started to list the incidents.

- Delivered several faulty machines.
- Didn't meet the response time promised.
- Didn't provide the replacement we were committed to.
- Made a customer pay for something that was our fault.
- Inadequate resources in the servicing department.

- Inadequate training of new employees.
- No written procedures.

Alan began to think about customer satisfaction. What satisfies the customer? He came to the conclusion that it is more than supplying product that is ordered. The products have to be reliable and if they do happen to fail then the customer expects this to be put right at our cost if it's our fault. But it's not only that, the customer also expects a prompt service and if we make promises, we should keep them.

Later the following week Alan checked the problems previously encountered to see if the agreed actions had been taken. He was pleasantly surprised to find that both the faulty machines had been repaired and dispatched. He called the first customer and was told that the machine was delivered but not in the five days promised. However, the machine worked so the customer was relatively satisfied. In the second case the customer was livid. Not only was a charge made for labour but for a new part as well. Alan said he would withdraw the invoice and passed a memo to Accounts to execute it.

A few weeks later Alan received yet another complaint from a customer with a faulty machine. Alan's chance meeting with Bill in the canteen, prompted him to ask whether the training of the new employee has been initiated. Bill was puzzled by Alan's question since as far as he could recall the training was scheduled for only one person. Alan was puzzled by Bill's response. Surely Bill had installed a training plan that would be implemented on every new employee. As it turned out, no such plan was implemented because at the time, Bill had only one new employee in the production department. However since then Bill had replaced one of his staff as a sick employee had not returned to work. When Alan looked into the problem he found that the last machine that was returned had been assembled not by a new employee but by a worker who had transferred from the servicing department. On further investigation it transpired that an operator had again misunderstood the company's part numbering system. Alan burst into Bill's office and demanded an explanation. Bill told Alan that the numbering system was inherently troublesome as it was not logical.

"Anyway I expected one of Tony's servicing staff to understand the numbering system," replied Bill to Alan's outburst.

Alan asked why a new system had not been developed and was told to his dismay that there were more important things for the development engineers to do. "But its loosing customers," said Alan.

"Well you had better go and tell the chief designer because every time I mention it I am criticised for employing idiots," said Bill.

A month later the CEO announced that the repair group in the servicing department was transferring into production in order to overcome the resource problems and provide greater flexibility. On hearing the news, Alan went to see Bill and asked him what he intended to do about training the new staff. Bill told Alan

that he hadn't got the time and anyway, as he had said previously, "These people know the job!"

"I wouldn't have agreed to the transfer if I thought I had to train them," said Bill. Alan could see he was not going to get a commitment from Bill so left his office.

Alan believed that no one seemed to be interested in preventing errors and came to the conclusion that each person was only interested in his/her own department's performance. He began to think about how the company could ensure these failures didn't recur and started doing some research on the Internet. He came across some stuff on "systems thinking" and immediately saw it as the way of the future. What was really needed was for some joined-up-thinking. If everyone saw him or herself as part of a system that existed to enable the organization to satisfy its customers and other stakeholders, and derived their goals from the organizational goals, none of this would have happened – but how is he going to convince the others that this is what is needed?

Brenda's story

Brenda had just waved goodbye to the ISO 9000 auditors following another surveillance visit. It had all gone well. A few minor nonconformities; nothing to worry her boss about and a couple of improvement actions. While there had been some difficulty in showing the relationship between quality objectives and the results being achieved, Brenda had convinced the auditor that all the graphs, charts and action plans demonstrated that they had a process for continually improving the effectiveness of the quality management system. However, she did not like ducking and diving to avoid giving a direct answer to the auditor's questions and perhaps this had shown up in her behaviour and resulted in the request for "improvement action".

The company has always had a commitment to quality and was one of the first to register to ISO 9001 way back in 1987, but this had often appeared more intent than reality. Brenda had inherited the management system, developed by her two predecessors although she had managed the transition to ISO 9001:2000 with the help of the certification body. They recommended an audit against the new requirements before they had started; a sort of gap analysis, which would identify the changes they needed to make. Apart from turning the top-level procedures into flowcharts and adding a few additional "processes" it was not as difficult as Brenda had been led to believe from the literature she had downloaded from the Internet. However, she had become increasingly disturbed by what was going on. It was as though they were paying lip service to the standard. There was evidence of compliance but it was often like pulling teeth to get the managers to reveal it. If the auditor had only challenged the managers to show how the results were being achieved, the house of cards would have collapsed. It's not as though procedures are not followed – they are, but from what Brenda

had read, processes are different – they are the enablers of results and she was quite confident that the procedures in no way described how the processes are supposed to be managed and the results were to be achieved. They only described how to perform discrete tasks and the results were often achieved by hard work, overtime and firefighting.

After work one night, Brenda went to a lecture on business excellence hosted by the local Chamber of Commerce. The speaker was a CEO of a company that had recently won a Business Excellence Award. He spoke of the benefits that such an award brings in terms of staff motivation and increased marketability but although it had taken quite a long time and a lot of effort to change the culture and improve performance he remarked upon how satisfying it was to work in a company that did what it said it did. In their submission they made statements showing how they met the award criteria. Subsequently, along came the assessors to verify the statements and in all cases they were congratulated on the accuracy of their submission. One of the things they had done was to define the processes that produce the business results. They were able to demonstrate to the assessors the clear linkage between the enablers and the results using a web-based file structure with a dynamic user interface. Brenda thought she might be onto something here as this concept was at the heart of the Excellence Model so she managed to corner the speaker to talk with him when his talk ended.

"Yeah! that's right," said the speaker, "Its easy to navigate through the information although you have to be pretty disciplined and stop changing things on the fly, but that's no hardship, all our review processes include system updates. It's a real breeze. Just click on an objective and up pops the latest performance data. I have a monitor on my desk that is switched on all day and I can see what is going on. It's like having a dashboard in front of you as you drive towards your goals."

"I am really impressed, "said Brenda." I am looking into ways in which I can get our organization system focused and I wondered if it would be possible for me to pay you a visit to learn more about the way you have done this."

John Penfold was a busy executive with little time to spare but welcomed Brenda's request and suggested he contact his Business Systems Manager who had masterminded the web-based solution.

"Unfortunately I will be out of town," said John. "But I will inform my Business Systems Manager and she will show you around. Her name is Claire Hughes. She's on the ball and knows how it all works."

Brenda arrived at the plant the following morning and met Claire. Enthusiastic to show off the new system, Claire showed Brenda to her office where she sat down at her PC, clicked on an icon on her desktop and brought up the home page of what she called the Business Management System. Brenda was impressed.

"Is this it," said Brenda. "I didn't realize it was literally like a car dashboard."

"That's the way John Penfold wanted it, "replied Claire." We have virtually a paperless system. In fact things change so often, it would be out of date before you had collected your stuff from the printer so we wanted something that was

as real time as we could get it. We got some help from a local consultant who provided some templates but it is largely all our own work," said Claire. "Let me show you around our business management system."

Claire proceeded to navigate through what looked like a web site, page after page, showing Brenda first the Mission statement, then a diagram identifying the processes and how they fit together. She then passed her mouse over one of the shapes and immediately a flowchart was displayed. "This is what our Resource Management Process looks like Brenda. If you want to know anything about this process you just click on one of these boxes." On the screen along side the flowchart were links to Objectives, Measures, Activities, Resources, Results, Reviews and Improvement plans. Claire clicked on the Results button and up popped a page showing the key objectives and along side charts showing corresponding performance trends.

"This is fantastic," said Brenda. "You mean to say that instead of scouring manuals looking for a policy, procedure or report, all you need to do is click on links and follow a path to where you will find what you are looking for."

"Well, more or less," said Claire. "But we still have lots of files on other servers and stopping people saving their files to their PC instead of the main server is becoming a real problem. It's a whole new ball game but we have got people looking at using one system. Also the main benefit is that we can not only look at the results we are achieving but can also view the process that is delivering the results. Managers can no longer hide behind the mystery of the process. If the results are poor, we look at the process and debate what we should change. We make the change, prove it works then sit back and in no time performance will get back on track."

"I like this," said Brenda. "This is just the kind of system we need. It looks more dynamic than those manuals of procedures we have."

"Oh, we still have procedures," said Claire. "They are of course all electronic files now and take up less space but instead of collecting dust on a shelf, they sit on a server which is just a mouse click away."

"How much did all this cost?" asks Brenda.

"I don't know off hand, but I could put you in touch with the consultant we used," said Claire. "Apart from the front end this is not a bespoke product. We used tools that we already had. The applications that generate the reports, drawings and procedures are just the same as we used before."

"I would like to investigate this further," said Brenda. "I need to prepare a case for our senior management so I will probably be back in touch when I have spoken to the consultant you used."

"Thanks OK, glad to be of help," said Claire. "If you would like to bring over your management team to show them what I have shown you, just let me know."

Brenda now had a vision of what she wanted the management system to look like but how was she going to convince her peers that this was a realistic and worthwhile path to take?

Catherine's story

Finding out customer's needs and expectations was Catherine's primary responsibility. She was the commercial manager of an electronics company and knew that in this fast moving business, if she did not keep her ear to the ground her company would go under. At a recent meeting with one of the key accounts Roger, the Purchasing Manager, pulled Catherine to one side and whispered into her ear.

"Catherine, I want to give you some advanced warning about a change in our procurement policy. It's not finalised yet, but we are coming under increasing competition from South East Asia. They can beat us on price because of the low labour costs and their quality is also second to none because they pay great attention to process capability. Our R & D is where we have the competitive edge but we need real confidence that our suppliers can deliver to our requirements."

"But we always do meet your requirements, Roger" said Catherine forcefully.

"Yes I know," said Roger. "But I am not talking about the standard products you supply. I am referring to some really new stuff, right at the forefront of technology. We have taken on some wiz kids from Silicon Valley and they are pushing us in a different direction, so the specifications we will be inviting you to tender against might well stretch your capability."

"We have a very innovative team in our design department," said Catherine with pride in her voice. Her father was the Chief Designer so she knew only too well the capability of his team.

"It's not just design capability we are after but production capability," said Roger. "We will be asking your organization to meet ISO 9001 – you know, the international quality system standard. But I want you to understand, we are not imposing ISO 9001 simply as a way of reducing our vendor control. We believe that by demonstrating compliance with ISO 9001 you will be giving us an assurance of product and service quality."

"OK I think I know where you are coming from," said Catherine. "But from what I have heard about ISO 9001 I am not so sure you will get anymore confidence than you get now."

Roger was sensing a little resistance from Catherine and quite understandably since her company had been a good supplier for over 15 years. "I agree," said Roger. "There are those that have implemented this standard and not improved quality, but the standard was revised in 2000 and it is more results focused," said Roger. "I think you will find the new approach is more in tune with what your senior management would consider good business practice. There is much less focus on paperwork and more on the processes to deliver customer satisfaction."

"Right, I'll get our Quality Manager to take a look at it," replied Catherine.

"If your Quality Manager is on the ball Catherine, he will already know what it's about," said Roger dryly. "Anyway, I though I'd give you the benefit of an

early warning. You will find the new requirement in tenders going out in the second quarter of next year. Now lets look at the current delivery schedules."

When Catherine got back to the office, she made a point of calling in on Bill, the Quality Manager and asking him about this new version of ISO 9000. "What's it all about Bill," said Catherine. "Is it going to cost a lot to get certified?"

"Well, it all depends," said Bill. "Depends on what," said Catherine. "It depends on whether or not Tolland will make third party ISO 9001 certification mandatory or whether we can present their vendor control people with sufficient evidence that they accept we have a system that has the capability of delivering product that meets their requirements, because that what it's all about – capability."

"Yes, Roger mentioned capability," said Catherine. "But he also talked about wanting an assurance of product and service quality."

"ISO 9001 is all about demonstrating to either customers or third parties that we have the capability to meet the requirements of customer and other stakeholders," said Bill. "In essence it means giving an assurance of product and service quality. Quality and meeting requirements is the same thing."

"So I guess I need to get back to Roger to confirm whether they will require certification," said Catherine.

"That's right," said Bill "then come back to me and we can sit down and plan an appropriate strategy."

Catherine later contacted Roger who confirmed that Tolland was intending to require ISO 9001 certification because they didn't want to have multiple requirements. He also said that they were going to use their vendor control people to do product specific audits rather than general audits. Relying on third party certification for an assurance of compliance with common requirements would enable them to make better use of their resources, although Roger admitted it would have little impact on overall costs.

When Catherine met with Bill a while later, she was able to confirm that they needed to get ISO 9001 certification. However, Bill had said that it was important their senior management understood Tolland's rationale otherwise they might perceive it simply as a badge on the wall.

Catherine now understood what was needed but convincing the senior management that they needed to demonstrate they had the capability to meet customer requirements by satisfying ISO 9001 was going to be difficult.

Daren's story

Daren was Quality Manager in an organization providing traffic management services to local authorities and he had received three letters from different authorities concerning ISO 9001 certification.

"What does this mean?" said Daren to his contact in the council.

"We sent these letters out to all suppliers of primary services requiring them to get ISO 9001 certification by next December otherwise they will no longer be

invited to tender for council contracts," said Bob, a Purchasing Manager with a local authority.

"But has our performance record over the years given you any reason to doubt our commitment to quality," Daren asked Bob in a questioning tone.

"Not at all," replied Bob. "We want to create a level playing field and it is in no way a reflection of your past performance. I expect you should have no trouble getting ISO 9001."

"You do realise that it will increase our costs. We will incur additional costs for certification and continual surveillance audits which we will have to recover somehow so it is likely that you will be paying more for the same services in future," said Daren, rather irritated by Bob's apparent disregard for the cost of it all.

"No it won't," said Bob. "We will only select suppliers that have ISO 9001 certification in future and as I say it will create a level playing field. It will save us a lot of time and push the responsibility for verifying compliance with our requirements onto our suppliers where it ought to be. So on balance we don't believe costs will increase, and in any case it will improve your profile and get you more contracts."

"So we have no option," said Daren.

"Not if you want to remain on our list of preferred suppliers," replied Bob.

Daren was left in no doubt as to what the council wanted. However, whether they knew what they were asking for, he wasn't as certain. He thought he ought to check with Sales and picked up the phone to call Peter, the Sales Manager.

"Peter, I have three letters from local authorities stating that we need to get ISO 9001 certification by next December otherwise we will be removed from the tender list. I have just been talking with our local authority's Purchasing Manager and he confirms that all local authorities have adopted the same policy. Have you heard anything, what are your contacts saying?"

"Oh, I did hear something but I don't think there is anything to worry about. As far as I understand it, you just have to write some procedures and some guy comes in and checks they meet the standard, that's all."

"Well, I think its far more than that, Peter. If we want to do the job properly, we will have to put in a lot of effort," replied Daren.

"You are making a mountain out of a mole hill," said Peter. "Look, no one in the council has complained. They all seem pretty happy with the quality of the stuff we provide – after all it's not rocket science is it."

"But it's only awarded to organizations that have a system that delivers products and services that satisfy customer requirements," replied Daren.

"Exactly," retorted Peter. "We do satisfy our customers and therefore it should be a doddle."

"Yes, but we don't do all those things required by the standard do we?" suggested Daren.

"Look, I know companies that are far worse than we are and they have the certificate so stop worrying and get on with it. I'll give you some stuff you can use and I'm sure Dave in Operations will have some forms and notes you can turn into the fancy documents to satisfy the auditors."

Daren decided it wasn't worth arguing with Peter. He obviously had made up his own mind on the subject and that was that. He decided to examine the standard to try and understand what the implications would be and having looked at ISO 9001 to get an idea of what they would be assessed against, then at ISO 9000 to get a clear understanding of the fundamental concepts and principles he came to the conclusion that there was no way that certification would be won simply by producing a few procedures. Perhaps Peter was thinking about the 1994 version which was dominated by requirements for documented procedures. This latest version appeared to be more about a system of processes that achieved customer focused objectives that was also subject to continual improvement and this would require far more work than simply writing a few procedures.

So it seemed Daren had to convince his boss that he needed some resources to help him get the company through ISO 9001 certification. But getting certification is one thing – keeping it might well be another. He would therefore surely need some additional staff to maintain certification.

Summary

Four different stories; each from a person who had identified a problem and discovered a way of resolving it.

In Alan's story the organization operated as a number of discrete functions each doing its own thing and having little regard for the other but collectively having a detrimental impact on customers. The company did not have ISO 9001 certification nor was there a customer requirement for certification to our knowledge but there appeared to be no system in place that would ensure work went to plan and people kept their promises. Alan identified the problem as a lack of systems thinking and although he was a Sales Executive, he was motivated to cause change as it was his customers that were complaining and he felt responsible.

In Brenda's story the organization had a system that passed the scrutiny of the external auditors but it wasn't very effective because there was no connectivity between the formally documented procedures and the results. Results were achieved but through unpredictable processes. Having been shown a process-based system that had been designed with this connectivity in mind, Brenda was motivated to cause change as it would bring about a degree of certainty that had so far alluded her management.

In Catherine's story, her company did not have a formal management system but was delivering customer satisfaction, at least with the current range of products, and saw no need to change. However, the market was changing and their

customers were seeking confidence that they had the capability to meet more challenging requirements and required they gained ISO 9001 certification. Catherine was motivated to cause change because it was a question of survival in their chosen market.

In Daren's story, the customer was about to impose a requirement for ISO 9001 certification not because they lacked confidence in the quality of the service provided but because of a change in procurement policy. Daren was motivated to make changes to keep his job.

These four stories show how needs are often identified. It is usually one person in the right place at the right time that is observant enough or passionate enough to be motivated by the circumstances in which they find themselves. Sometimes, the motivation comes from a single incident and in other cases it develops over many incidents until there is a compelling desire to take action as in Alan's story. The stories also reveal another common trait that the motivation arises after meeting others that have made improvements. This gives the originator of change someone to bounce ideas off, someone with whom to confirm beliefs and also an outsider to show the direction in which others are going.

> **Decisions – decisions**
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> "I see it all perfectly; there are two possible situations – one can either do this or that. My honest opinion and my friendly advice is this: do it or do not do it – you will regret both".
> *Soren Kierkegaard (1813–1855), Danish philosopher*

But identifying the need for change is only the first step. Changes are not made in a vacuum. In all the above cases, it was not the originator of the change who needed to change, but the system of processes whether formal or informal that enabled the organization to achieve its objectives. That system included the managers and the staff so everyone in the organization might become affected by the change and many of these same people might need to be convinced of the need to change and be persuaded to carry through the changes.

When trying to convince anyone of the need for change, it is important to define the reason or objective for change and this is our next step.

Defining the objective

In all four cases a need for change had been identified. In Alan's case, there was a need to improve product and service quality. In Brenda's case there was a need to improve the way the business processes were being managed. In both Catherine's case and Daren's case there was a need to get ISO 9001 certification, but are these the objectives? We do know it's not the whole story.

Alan's company needed to improve product and service quality but the reason why product and service quality was poor was that there was no effective system place to make it happen. So if the objective is stated simply as "To improve product and service quality" one might get many different solutions none of which

actually address the root cause. Therefore we make the objective include the reason for change by stating it thus: "To establish a system that enables the organization to satisfy its customers with the quality of products and services it provides." We have not said what this system is but we have defined what it needs to achieve and how we will measure that achievement i.e. by measuring customer satisfaction.

Brenda's company needed to improve the way the business processes were being managed but the reason why the processes appeared that they were not being managed effectively was because the documented procedures didn't describe the means by which the results were being achieved. The link between enablers and results could not be demonstrated with the present procedure-based system. So one might expect many different responses if the managers were told to manage their processes more effectively. Including the reason for change and the measure of success in the objective it can be stated thus: "To establish a process-based management system that enables the organization to demonstrate it is managing its processes effectively by providing a clear line of sight between results and enablers."

Catherine's company needed to get ISO 9001 certification, which meant establishing a formal management system in place of the present informal system. But the reason for getting ISO 9001 certification was not simply for marketing purposes but a means of demonstrating they had the capability of meeting continually changing requirements to their customers' satisfaction. Therefore the objective, reason and measure might be: "To establish a system that will provide customers with confidence that the organization has the capability to meet their requirements and satisfy the requirements for ISO 9001 certification."

Daren's company also need to get ISO 9001 certification but for entirely different reasons to Catherine's company. Here it was simply a matter of getting on to an approved suppliers list and the passport was ISO 9001 certification. Provided they maintained ISO 9001 they would continue to be invited to tender for local authority contracts. Therefore the objective, reason and measure might be: "To establish a system that enables the organization to achieve and retain ISO 9001 certification."

In all cases, the objectives included the words "To establish a system . . . " This is because, as we learnt in Chapter 3, systems exist to achieve objectives, so if objectives need to be achieved and there is no system in place, one has to be established.

Proving the need

Before senior management is approached with a reason to change, proof of the need is required. A singer always sounds more appealing if there is a well-orchestrated accompaniment. Up to this point only one person has identified the need. Alan in his role as sales executive has experience of dissatisfied customers and thus is convinced of the need for change. Brenda has herself witnessed an

entirely new way of describing business processes that will overcome the disconnect between results and enablers. Catherine has been given advanced warning about impending changes so unless she convinces her peers quickly, this competitive advantage will be lost. Daren has no option. The organization will have to get ISO 9001 certification but getting it and keeping it are two different things in his view so he needs to convince his boss to provide additional resources not only to get certification but also to retain it.

Before managers will take action, they need answers to specific questions. It will not be enough simply to go before management and tell them that they need to change or ask them for resources. They will want to know the what, why, when, where and how of the change and the consequences of doing nothing including justification for any claims made.

If we put these questions into a matrix together with typical answers for each of our four cases it might look like Table 7.1.

Table 7.1 only contains a summary of the information that is likely to be needed to convince management they need to act. There may well be much more information that one could and should provide but remember, senior management doesn't like to be bombarded with information. They assimilate information if it is conveyed in small amounts with the salient facts being prominent.

Establishing feasibility

The objective for change is defined, the reason for change is clear and proof has been gathered but is the change feasible?

- Is the timing right for this change?
- Do we have the capability to make this change?
- What are the barriers or obstacles to change?
- What are the drivers for change?

These are some of the questions you need to address and collect data that will demonstrate that change is feasible before approaching the senior management.

Timing

In all four cases above, timing is fairly critical as revenue will be lost unless the objectives are achieved. However, there might be some leeway. It could be the best of times or the worst of times but unlike in Dickens' *The Tale of Two Cities*, it is doubtful that revolution will follow.

The best of times might be represented by customer pressure that may just be what is needed to drive the organization out of the doldrums. A common enemy is sometimes a motivating force that will focus everyone on improving performance. The impetus for change might also arise from within the particular industry sector, bad press, litigation, government regulation, a new initiative etc. that

Table 7.1 Proving the need

Questions to which management will expect answers	Alan's story	Brenda's story	Catherine's story	Daren's story
What is the issue?	Our customers complain about the quality of the products and services we provide	The link between enablers and results cannot be demonstrated with the present procedure-based system	We can't demonstrate to our customers' satisfaction that we have the capability of meeting their requirements	We need to get ISO 9001 certification
Where is the evidence for this?	This report I have prepared on our performance following several customer complaints	This report I have prepared prompted by the results of the last external audit	This report I have prepared on a meeting with Tolland Computers	These letters from our customers
Why is this an issue?	No effective system in place to ensure product and service quality	The current procedures don't describe how the processes are managed and the results are being achieved, therefore we are not managing our processes effectively	We have not pursued ISO 9001 registration	Local authorities have changed their procurement policy and all are requiring suppliers of primary services to be ISO 9001 registered
What is this costing us?	Current performance shows an upward trend in customer complaints and a downward trend in orders	Current performance shows an increasing inspection and failure cost on the production line over the last 6 months	Currently nothing, but by the second quarter of next year we will cease to get contracts from Tolland Computers unless we are ISO 9001 registered.	Currently nothing to our knowledge
What should we do about it?	Establish a system that enables the organization to satisfy its customers with the quality of products and services it provides	Establish a process-based management system that enables the organization to demonstrate it is managing its processes effectively by providing a clear line of sight between results and enablers	Establish a system that will provide customers with confidence that the organization has the capability to meet their requirements and satisfy the requirements for ISO 9001 certification	Establish a system that enables the organization to achieve and retain ISO 9001 certification

Table 7.1   (*Continued*)

Questions to which management will expect answers	Alan's story	Brenda's story	Catherine's story	Daren's story
What will the impact of this be?	We will have to fundamentally change the way we manage the organization	We will have to identify our processes and manage them more effectively	We will have to document our processes and demonstrate their capability	We will have to define objectives that are customer focused and employ processes for meeting these objectives that are subject to continual improvement
How much will it cost?	Approx 5% of turnover	Approx 1% of turnover	Approx 2% of turnover plus an annual certification cost of about £5 K	Approx 1% of turnover plus an annual certification cost of about £2K
Where are the resources going to come from?	The investment will be recovered inside 3 years from the resultant increase in turnover	The investment will be recovered inside 2 years from the resultant decrease in failure costs	The investment will be recovered inside 2 years from the profit made on contracts from Tolland Computers	Out of profits
When do we need to act?	As soon as possible	As soon as possible	It will take us a good 18 months so the sooner we start the better	Immediately
What are the alternatives and their relative costs?	Diagnose and fix individual problems and hope others don't arise elsewhere. Much cheaper but not a long term solution	Do nothing, fudge the audit and wait until customers find a more competitive source of supply	There is no alternative if we wish to retain Tolland as a customer. They are a key customer, but this could be the start of a trend in our market sector	There is no alternative as all local authorities will require ISO 9001 certification
What are the consequences of doing nothing?	Customers will eventually take their business elsewhere resulting in a further decline in revenue	Failure costs will continue to vary and reduce profitability therefore profit targets in the years ahead will not be met	We won't receive any invitations to tender from Tolland after the second quarter next year	The present business will fold up

is receiving increased attention. There might have been some changes in senior management and a project like this could give a particular manager a means to show true leadership.

The worst of times might be represented by financial pressures. Perhaps all available funds are being applied to restructuring, breaking into new markets or new product development so there will be insufficient funds to spare for any additional projects. These types of project tend to be long term. They do not deliver immediate results except where all that is needed is an ISO 9001 certificate as in Daren's case. In fact a company in this situation is likely to grab the chance to get ISO 9001 with the minimum of expenditure as it will be wrongly perceived as no more that a paperwork exercise. Getting ISO 9001 certification under these circumstances makes it very difficult to associate ISO 9001 with improved quality.

If you look into the future, say 1–6 months, there might be a window of opportunity. A project consuming resources might be coming to a close and this quality improvement project might be welcomed as the next challenge. Or, a new CEO might be in place and it might be better handled by him or her rather than the retiring CEO.

On the micro scale there will also be timing issues as to when to approach the senior management. It might be prudent to avoid approaching them after a particular acrimonious board meeting, or just before the summer holidays or annual festivals. Approaching the CEO after he or she has been berated by a series of irate customers might be a good time because it will appear that you had already detected the deterioration in performance and conceived a cunning plan to get the company back on track. However, if the CEO thinks you are responsible for upsetting these customers (whether he or she is correct or not is irrelevant), it might be the worst of times and keeping a low profile might be a better strategy!

Capability

None of the four cases we are studying would require a rocket scientist but they will require people with skills in the management of projects, change and processes. In Catherine's and Daren's case there is a need for someone with an in depth understanding of the ISO 9000 series of standards and in Brenda's case probably Intranet design skills might also be needed. Current goals might not be being achieved because of a lack of capability or capacity either in the equipment and facilities or in the people employed. Some investigations will therefore be needed to qualify any gap in capability and identify the options available for closing this gap. One option is to recruit new people possessing the requisite competences but this will take several months. Another is to train existing staff but this might not be feasible if the jobs these people currently do cannot be assigned to others. A third option is to engage consultants but this can be expensive. However, unlike recruitment, it is a cost that is non-recurring. Often the

solution is to do all three but not all at once. Engage a consultant to kick-start the project, train the people and then transfer the skills by which time you will know if you need additional staff or different staff.

Barriers

The barriers are the factors that might delay, impede, retard or stop the project such as:

- Refusal to accept the need for change.
- Contentment with the status quo or a belief that current performance is acceptable.
- Agreement to the need but objection to solution.
- Disagreement as to the priorities for change.
- An absentee CEO or MD – comes in two days per week so is ignorant about the local pressures.
- Shortage of funds.
- Having a monopoly in the market.
- Instability (frequent changes in leadership, structure and location).
- Too many distractions (meetings, exhibitions and unplanned events).
- Too ambitious goals (the scope may be too big, the targets too tight).
- Being the first to pursue this objective.
- A culture in which there is a fear of failure, an environment of secrecy or an absence of praise for achievements.
- A belief that we don't have the capability so should not do it.

There is no doubt that if the goal is too ambitious, a project may fail. Even if the ultimate goal is to bring everything and everyone into a dynamic system that delivers never ending stakeholder satisfaction you might be more successful if you set less ambitious targets and work towards your ultimate goal gradually. It is said that the best way to eat an Elephant is one bite at a time!

Drivers

The drivers are the factors that might create success such as:

- Having a strong or visionary leader.
- Having an enthusiastic and competent goal driven project champion.
- Having a receptive management team.
- A culture in which change is the norm.
- A target driven culture.
- A competitive market.
- Having people willing to pick up a challenge and run with it.
- Having other organizations in the same sector that have achieved this objective.

- External pressures that may threaten the business if nothing is done.
- Having the support of the board and/or the parent company.
- Leaders who are dissatisfied with the status quo.
- A culture where achievements are recognized whatever the outcome.
- A culture in which people are honest, open and free to speak their mind.

There will always be inhibitors who are opposed to change, those who fear the unknown, the conservatives who hold back until they have confidence that it is the right thing to do and the innovators who will charge fearlessly ahead in spite of the warnings and prefer any change rather than continue what they are doing now.[1]

The best approach if it can be used, is to make an ally of an innovator, make some progress that will impress the conservatives and leave the inhibitors out in the cold so that they too will come on board eventually rather than face the future alone.

Securing the commitment

If you find yourself in a similar position to Alan, Brenda, Catherine or Daren you will need to prepare your case well. Even if your manager is not the one that will make the decision, he or she may champion your cause, but more than likely will ask you to prepare the case for presentation to senior management. You might be the one making the presentation or supporting your manager, either way you need to do your homework and recognize that there is a road to commitment (Table 7.2) along which many of the people from whom you need support will follow. Your task is to move them along this road but the difficulty you will face is that you won't be sure which stage each of them is at until long after you have moved past that stage. Some people will appear to understand but don't and others will tell you they have taken action but they haven't.

> **Commitment**
>
> Some men are born committed to action: they do not have a choice, they have been thrown on a path, at the end of that path, an act awaits them, their act ...
> *Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980), French novelist & philosopher*

There are several ways in which you might progress from Stage 0 to Stage 2 just as there are several ways in which people learn.

Determining your audience

When you have to make a presentation to a group of people with the objective of getting a commitment to action you need to take account of the different ways in which people take in information, understand the message and draw conclusions. These are what we call learning styles of which there are four.

Table 7.2 The road to commitment[2]

Stage	Level	Meaning
0	Zero	I don't know anything about it.
1	Awareness	I know what it is and why I should do it.
2	Understanding	I know what I have to do and what I need to do it.
3	Investment	I have the resources to do it and I know how to deploy them.
4	Intent	This is what I am going to do and how I am going to do it.
5	Action	I have completed the first few actions and it has been successful.
6	Commitment	I am now doing everything I said I would do.

Feelers, thinkers, watchers and doers. Once they have reached their conclusions, if appropriate they will proceed to make a decision and once again people make decisions in different ways and these are what we call decision styles of which there are a further four: decisive, flexible, hierarchical and integrative. Effective presentations will be those that accommodate all of the styles.

The learning process is a four-stage process.[3] It starts with a concrete experience followed by reflective observation that leads to the formulation of abstract concepts and generalizations. These can be developed into hypotheses to be tested in the future, which leads to new experiences. People continuously pass through this process, test concepts, and new experiences and modify them as a result of observation and analysis of the outcomes. Some people are more comfortable with different stages of the learning process. Some are *feelers*, who learn better by experiencing situations. They are unlikely to accept a hypothesis unless they have actual experience of a situation. They prefer examples not theory. Others are *thinkers,* who are more comfortable with abstract conceptualizations relying on logic, theory and abstract analysis. They crave facts and often want to be left alone to work things out for themselves. They are less inclined to be influenced by examples and will often find the exception that makes the example inappropriate. Then there are *doers* who learn better by experimentation. They want to get their hands dirty and get on with it. They don't need to have worked it out before rolling up their sleeves. They learn best in groups and don't relish instruction or theory. Lastly there are the *watchers* who take a reflective, somewhat detached view. They come to their conclusions from careful observation and analysis. They don't need to get involved and can learn from audio-visual aids.

If there is one thing that senior management will not be interested in, it is the detail of ISO 9001 or lots of statistical data. So it is not a case of getting senior management to understand the requirements or the statistical theory. More importantly, it is a case of getting senior management to understand the need

for action and getting their commitment to take the action on the basis of providing not only additional resources but also committing their time to steering the project and doing the things only they have authority to do. The last thing you want is for senior management to provide the funds and let you get on with it, issuing monthly reports that they scan but don't understand. If it gets to this stage, then you have failed to grab their attention. If we look at the bottom line in Table 7.1, we will see that in every case the business is adversely affected if the project is not a success. Therefore permitting senior management to take a back seat is not an option.

Alan, Brenda, Catherine and Daren might only be the messengers. They might not be the generals or captains and therefore someone else has to pick up the batons and lead the project.

Designing the presentations

Depending on the size of the management team and its availability one or more presentations may be needed. There are a number of aspects to be agreed:

Problem definition

Problem definition is the definition of the issues requiring resolution, their cause and their impact on the business. The presentation needs to address the questions given in Table 7.1. If there is no consensus on these matters, it is pointless proceeding to the next stage. At this stage a project sponsor needs to be identified – someone who will own the problem and be responsible for its resolution.

Feasibility

Feasibility looks at the options for resolving the issues, their credibility, budgetary cost and their impact on performance. Include drivers and barriers for each so that management may assess feasibility. Only put forward viable options. It is pointless proposing a solution that would not be taken seriously by the management.

Project definition

Project definition is the definition of the chosen option and its impact on current policies, practices and processes. The purpose here is to create awareness, understanding and commitment to the solution. There has to be clarity in management's expectations. There is no point getting agreement if management don't fully understand what is expected of them before, during and after the new system has been established.
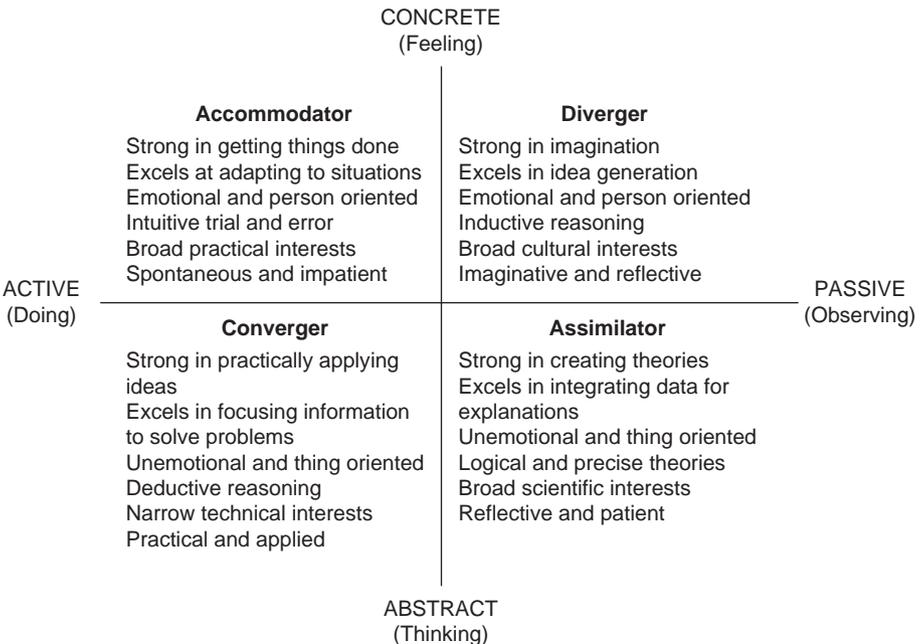
Project planning

Project planning defines the project objectives, timescales, resources and responsibilities. Outline the project management strategy and identify the major tasks

and work packages. Identify the key roles and responsibilities, the project team and Steering Committee. Outline the planning, communication and system design processes and present the bar chart indicating the key milestones and when the major task will commence and finish. If possible at this stage provide an effort profile and identify any external resources needed.

Presentation content

There is often a temptation to fill a presentation with lots of content i.e. dozens of slides showing text and graphics. There will obviously be some facts that need to be transmitted and slide presentations are good for this providing the slide it lightly populated. Too dense and it won't be read from the back of the room. Too brief and the message may not be received and understood. Remember you are trying to communicate so use verbal and non-verbal, visual and non-visual techniques to good effect. Slides are simply an aid to communicating the message, they give the message more lasting impact but should never be a substitute for verbal delivery. The diagrams in this book can be adapted for use in presentations but be careful of using material you don't fully understand which is why it is often better to create your own slides. Animation can be used to good effect as it enables you to feed the audience at the pace you are talking and is better at getting over new concepts.

CONCRETE
(Feeling)

Accommodator
Strong in getting things done
Excels at adapting to situations
Emotional and person oriented
Intuitive trial and error
Broad practical interests
Spontaneous and impatient

Diverger
Strong in imagination
Excels in idea generation
Emotional and person oriented
Inductive reasoning
Broad cultural interests
Imaginative and reflective

ACTIVE
(Doing)

PASSIVE
(Observing)

Converger
Strong in practically applying ideas
Excels in focusing information to solve problems
Unemotional and thing oriented
Deductive reasoning
Narrow technical interests
Practical and applied

Assimilator
Strong in creating theories
Excels in integrating data for explanations
Unemotional and thing oriented
Logical and precise theories
Broad scientific interests
Reflective and patient

ABSTRACT
(Thinking)

Figure 7.1   Learning Styles

To some extent you are attempting to educate the management team because they have not experienced the issues that have brought you to this point. You need to accommodate all learning styles. (See Figure 7.1)

- Accommodators – learn from concrete experience and active experimentation.
- Convergers learn through abstract conceptualization and active experimentation.
- Divergers learn through concrete experience and reflective observation.
- Assimilators learn through abstract conceptualization and reflective observation.

Therefore your presentation needs a mixture of:

1. *Tell sessions* where you transfer information. These suit the Assimilators. So if it is facts that you need to get across, simply use a "tell session". The text needs to be broken with graphics and animation will grab the attention of the Convergers providing it is not over done. However, facts might emerge after a Discovery session so for the Assimilators among your group you need to recap and conclude on the findings of any group work in case they were asleep! Accommodators and Convergers might well fall asleep during tell sessions if they are too long so keep them short and interwoven with discussion and pull sessions.
2. *Pull sessions* where you ask questions and pull answers from the audience. These suit the Divergers but to appease the Assimilators who might not answer any questions, write the question on a slide and the answers on a flipchart or overhead foil. Accommodators are usually happy with pull sessions because they are spontaneous and the Convergers follow up with responses from their experience or which they have deduced from previous dialogue.
3. *Discovery sessions* where two or more people discuss a topic, question or observation and draw out opinions, beliefs and comments. These suit the Accommodators and Convergers who will lead the discussion. The Assimilators will probably take a back seat, thinking and reflecting upon what is going on in the group. The Divergers may provide suggestions, ideas and participate but not lead the discussion. These sessions are very important and a presentation that does not have them may fail to achieve the level of commitment expected. This is because most managers like to get involved and don't like being talked at.

The content will differ depending on what you are trying to achieve but in general it might include some or all of the following:

1. **Introduction.** A brief session identifying the project sponsor, defining the objectives of the presentation and the reasons why these objectives need to be addressed at this time.
2. **Background**. A session on the background should explain the circumstances that have led to the discovery of the problem or opportunity. At the end of this

session the audience should be nodding in agreement that there is a problem to be solved or an opportunity to be grasped. This can be accomplished by a *tell session* but might be more effective if run as a *discovery session* – the agreement you get will be more emphatic with this approach.

3. **Causes and effect/impact.** A session devoted to determining the cause and effect of the problem on the business is needed before proposing solutions. This can be accomplished by a *pull session* or form part of the previous session on Background.

4. **Project objectives.** A session devoted to deriving an objective or series of objectives from the foregoing is needed so there is a clear link between the project and the problem/opportunity. Remember this is what the project aims to achieve and when it intends to be completed. Also define the success criteria – what will/won't be happening in the organization after project completion. These must be measurable. This can be accomplished by a discovery session but a pull session may work just as well.

5. **Feasibility**. This session will address the timing, drivers, barriers and capabilities associated with the objectives. This will require a study of what else is going on that may impede progress should the project go ahead and from a historical perspective, what success the organization has had with similar change initiatives. Research is needed here but once again a *discovery session* followed by a *pull session* might reveal some interesting facts.

   If it is anticipated that sessions 1–5 are enough for management to absorb in one sitting, this may be a convenient point at which to break and resume after a suitable project strategy has been developed. Before breaking at this point, it is necessary to have reached agreement on the project objectives and measures of success for without such an agreement any strategy that is subsequently developed might be futile.

   There is simply no point in pursuing a change initiative knowing that there are significant barriers in the way. If this is the case, you need to establish the best way forward because the original problem remains and loss of revenue might continue. If it is timing then you can plan ahead, if it is capability, you might be able to introduce additional training as part of the programme. If the barriers are cultural or ideological you may have to shelve the project while you work on the individuals concerned. Although there will always be a number of inhibitors in any organization you can't proceed if they are in the majority. Just because other organizations have successfully made the change does not mean your organization is either ready for change or needs to change.

6. **Project strategy**. A session devoted to the overall approach taken to achieve the agreed objectives as measured. You may of course discuss alternatives but if you do you need to say why you are rejecting others. This can be accomplished by a *tell session* but keep testing understanding so that there is no confusion as to what is meant. Use case studies from other organizations or published literature to reinforce the strategy. Define any new terms you use by

way of examples. Translate any definitions you use from external standards into a language understood by those present.

7. **Benefits.** A session devoted to explaining the benefits to be derived from adopting this strategy. Again quote from other organizations where possible to give credibility to the strategy but beware of the NIH syndrome. The Not Invented Here (NIH) syndrome is prevalent in many organizations particularly those at the forefront of technology in their sector and can be a barrier to change. Managers of such organizations tend to reject innovations they have not discovered or invented and they also tend to dismiss examples from other industry sectors as having no relevance to their organization. If your organization is one of these, presenting your solution as unique (even if not entirely true) may give you an advantage. This will be a *tell session* but you can augment it with a *pull session*.

8. **Programme of work.** A session covering the work to be carried out to achieve the project objectives. Parcel the work into stages or phases – each with a defined objective. Define the major tasks and responsibilities. Make a point of identifying the contributions required from the management. If you don't do it at this stage, you might get a rough ride later on. This session might be better presented as a handout as the detail could be too much for a slide but a summary is necessary to capture attention.

9. **Project organization.** A session covering the key appointments and project management structure. Nominations for Project Manager and the composition of the Steering Group and Project Team need to be defined. This will likely be a *tell session* resulting from some prior consultation with the project sponsor.

10. **Costs and timescales**. A session addressing the costs and timescales together with any assumptions. Timescales could be presented as a bar chart and the costs presented against the Stages or major tasks and totaled. If you need external help, separate the costs to clearly show what you expect from the external consultants. A summary slide plus a handout might be the better solution here. Don't take this too lightly as many a project has been abandoned once the managers have realized what the costs will be. There is of course the drip feed approach. By withholding the full costs, you get agreement to proceed one stage at a time. Stage 1 being fully costed with only ball-park estimates for the other stages. After stage 3 you reveal further costs which might be accepted on the basis of, *"We have gone too far to stop now"*. Cross reference the session on benefits in a way that clearly shows the payback from the investment.

11. **Action plan**. This session needs to identify the actions immediately following the presentation together with completion dates and responsibilities.

Giving the presentation

Fail to plan and your plan will fail, therefore pay great attention to detail and divide each event into a Before, During and After.

Before the event

- Ensure the invitation to attend goes to the people whose commitment is essential for project success.
- Ensure they are made aware of why they have been invited and been given sufficient background information for them to judge how important it is that their contribution is needed.

> **The traffic light method**
>
> Go down the list of attendees and mark the inhibitors red, the innovators green and the conservatives yellow.
>
> Ensure the innovators and conservatives outnumber the inhibitors.

- Ascertain which of the attendees are likely to be innovators, conservatives or inhibitors and ensure there is a bias towards the positive. You can do this either using personal knowledge or from consultation with an insider. Too many inhibitors will spell disaster and may result in the presentation coming to a halt within 30 minutes. If there are no inhibitors among senior management you are very lucky, but try to get at least one of the senior managers wholly on your side – someone to whom you can address a question in the knowledge that you will receive an answer supporting your case. If you have to get commitment from an audience about which you know nothing, postpone the presentation until you clearly understand who you are dealing with – to do otherwise will result in a disaster unless you are an exceptionally skilled communicator.
- Ensure the date and time for the presentation is suitable and not one where it is likely that managers will be diverted to other duties.
- Avoid Friday afternoons and Monday mornings. Arrange an external venue if possible.
- Try to predict the needs and expectations of the attendees and ensure your plans will satisfy them as well as possible.
- Develop an Event Plan that identifies the timing and objectives of each section, the slides, handouts and/or group work sessions.
- Test the presentation, projectors, floppy disks, pen drives, software etc.
- Don't go in for fancy wizardry – remember KISS (keep it simple and straightforward).
- Have a back-up plan in the event of computer failure, bad weather, building works or other emergencies.
- Always arrive early and arrange the room to give you the best chance of success. Try to avoid boardroom tables and opt for a more relaxed layout where you can approach the attendees.

During the event

- Start on time even if the CEO or MD has not arrived unless you have been forewarned of a delay.
- Make a note of who is present.

- Open with an "icebreaker", something to break the tension, and initiate a rapport but avoid anything that is not relevant to the presentation and anything that is controversial – you don't want to set them against you before you start. Perhaps a pertinent news story, a current incident in the factory that most people present know about, or perhaps a story about the successes of a competitor or partner.

> **Opinions**
>
> New opinions are always suspected, and usually opposed, without any other reason but because they are not already common.
> *John Locke (1632–1704), British philosopher*

- Introduce yourself and your colleague if you are not alone. If you are an external consultant and have not met the group previously you may want to ask those present to introduce themselves.
- Before presenting the objectives of the day it is often useful to illicit the views of those present as to what they hope to get out of the event. This does not mean you need to return to this at the end and prove you have or have not met their expectations, but it gives you the opportunity to clarify any ambiguity before you start.
- Stick to the plan and don't be persuaded to cut it short. Remember you have designed it for this audience and determined what they need to know before giving a commitment. Attendees who leave early will not take with them the key messages and consequently will not have a full appreciation of what is involved. If managers must leave early, tell them that you will contact them to arrange a date when they can complete the presentation.
- Use a language the managers will understand as they can be turned off by jargon. Also don't go into detail unless asked to do so as it rarely resolves issues of principle.
- Test understanding several times. Go back to parts where a fundamental point was made and repeat it.
- Elicit questions. Provoke responses – be controversial if necessary to get a discussion underway for it is with discussion that others might change their perceptions.

> **Understanding**
>
> "I know you believe you understand what you think I said. But I am not sure you realise that what you heard is not what I meant."
> *Alan Greenspan (1926- American economist*

- At break times when asked how you think it is going, be noncommittal. Remember the objective will not be met half way through – if it could the presentation would be half as long. People learn at different rates so the most you can admit is that it is going to plan.
- Be prepared for managers to challenge your observations and conclusions. Do your homework – be sure of your facts. Don't make things up on the spot. A good ploy before accepting a challenge is to ask what others think. If it looks like you might be mistaken accept the point and follow it up later rather than draw attention to the conflict by continuing to justify your position.

- Another approach to challenges is to try to understand where the other person is coming from – the facts that bring them to the position they are taking. You are dealing with perceptions often created through experiences or the influence of others having strongly held views, e.g. a person's dislike of ISO 9000 might have arisen from being exposed to a very dogmatic auditor or an arrogant consultant, or they might have read a powerful article on the subject. They don't share the views of the auditor, consultant or author and infer that the views are consistent with ISO 9000 when in reality a close reading of ISO 9000 would lead one to a different conclusion. Politely exploring the origin of their perceptions may get to the root cause of their beliefs which you can then deal with objectively.
- Remember, when you get yourself in a hole, stop digging. You won't win any allies for embarrassing a manager in front of his/her peers even if you are right.
- When a person asks a question be careful not to go on the defensive – it is simply a question not a challenge. Answer the question truthfully without being negative.
- Make a note of the innovators, conservatives and inhibitors – are they the same as you predicted beforehand? Also make a note of those who give the impression of changing their perception as these can often be your strongest allies.
- Don't close without getting agreement to the next stage.

After the event

- Try to get immediate feedback and note where it comes from relative to it being negative or positive.
- Follow-up on those who departed the event early and obtain their agreement or disagreement to the objectives, strategy programme and action plan.
- Progress actions promptly because the project will not be taken seriously if there is a long delay before it commences.
- Establish the communication mechanisms for getting funding approved, work planned, executed and reviewed.
- Establish benchmarks (if not done already) for measuring achievement. Remember such projects are intended to bring about change and improved performance. It is wise therefore, to record the performance before work commences so that improvement can be measured after the planned work is reported as having been completed.
- Don't change the goal posts without agreement of both the Steering Group and Project team.
- Keep testing understanding and reinforcing the key messages from the presentation at every opportunity because the slightest

> **Leadership**
>
> For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?
> *St. Paul, in 1 Corinthians, 14:8*

difference in belief can jeopardize success. It is vital that everyone has a common understanding of the goal and the strategy for achieving it.
- Keep control. Don't allow others to take over unless you relinquish control to them. Having two leaders will give others the opportunity of driving a wedge between you and the other person.

Summary

In this Chapter we have examined four different situations where a need had been identified for changing the way quality was being managed. We concluded that in each case there was a root cause that was deeper than initially identified. We showed how to express the objectives for change in terms of the objective, the reason for change and the measure of success and demonstrated that in each case a system needed to be established to resolve the issues from which the need for change arose.

We then set about proving the need by anticipating what top management would look for and examined the factors that need to be considered in determining the feasibility of change. Having gathered the information needed to commence the journey towards a better way of managing quality, the next stage is to gain the commitment of management and here we examined the factors to be considered in determining our audience and designing a successful presentation. We identified different learning styles that need to be taken into account so that our presentation has multiple ways of getting across the key messages. We learnt that commitment rarely comes about by telling and that most people need to experience or witness situations for themselves before they feel comfortable with what is being said.

We covered several elements of the presentation, and emphasized the importance of problem definition and objectives because without a clear understanding of what the project is intended to accomplish, support and commitment will be patchy and detrimental to project success. We explained that there is more to a successful presentation than delivery. Care needs to be taken before, during and after the event and guidance is given to help presenters through this process.

Securing the commitment of management to change the way quality is managed is never a pushover. It does require careful planning and execution and it is important to recognize that you are selling ideas to people who may not see the opportunities or the problems as you see them. They will have their own problems and of course their own objectives so anything that gets in the way of enabling them to achieve these objectives they will side step. Your task, should you choose to accept it, is to use persuasion, influence, reason, logic, peer pressure and anything else providing it's legal to enable them to realize that their interests will be served best by undertaking a commitment to improve the way quality is managed in your organization.