
Preface

The rise of the quality profession as a specialty within business coincided with the increased complexity of business enterprises. In simpler times, when goods and services were provided by individual artisans, elaborate quality systems were unnecessary. An individual producer could simply compare customer requirements to his or her work and estimate its value.

The rise of complex and large enterprises produced the need for the development of objective and equitable quality procedures for the determination of value so the owners could assure the efficiency of their operations. Traditional quality management concerned itself with developing procedures to determine product conformance or nonconformance (inspection).

Unfortunately, in too many cases, the study of (inspection) procedures became an end in itself. Businesses lost sight of the objectives of the procedures. “Acceptable” techniques were applied whether they were appropriate or not. This in turn led to criticism of quality management as a discipline that provided a great deal of largely irrelevant data to management.

Fortunately, the discipline is changing. Quality professionals are becoming much more concerned with providing information that will help management meet the firm’s goals. In this book, I hope to continue the movement toward consideration of the objectives of quality management and value reporting.

In quality management, fairness and objectivity play an almost equal role with relevance in the determination of the appropriate quality procedures. The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) specifies activities that must be followed as generally accepted quality principles and practices (GAQP) known as ISO 9000. In some cases, the opinions of groups with regard to these practices are backed only by the accepted stature of the promulgating organizations, whereas in others, the imposed requirements carry the weight of law behind them. In nearly every case, the intent of the suggested (or required) practice is to promote fairness in quality and the reporting of quality performance information to a diverse management audience.

A quality management system (QMS) is a *performance-reporting system* and is defined as a formal system of accumulating and reporting data useful for the achievement of management's objectives. Whether we are concerned with a not-for-profit institution or any other organization, there are general characteristics that the performance-reporting system must possess. In the following chapters, we will explore the implementation and application of a quality management system.