

A word from the experts

Kicking off the year in quality style

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“It is not enough to do your best; you must know what to do, and then do your best”. This quote, from the famous quality guru, W. Edwards Deming, can be interpreted on many different levels. If you think about it as a platform to jump start a brand-new year it emphasizes some fundamental basics for sustaining quality within your organization.

You must know what to do. All key processes within an operation should have procedures or work instructions to help employees have a reference point for doing their key tasks. They should regularly be reviewed to ensure they reflect current practice. Many organizations see this as a low priority, but the New Year is a perfect time to do a review and make updates as necessary.

The next point around knowing what you do is to ensure a strong and sustainable training program. Decide if there are any key processes that might benefit from a refresher training early in the year. A strong and robust training program is key for new employees.

The next step is to communicate to employees what they need to know. This is the setting of your annual quality objectives and KPIs (key performance indicators) which should be communicated and tracked on a basis established by the Quality Leadership Team. Typically, this is monthly or quarterly. It is a requirement in any formal quality management system to audit and this is a great way to validate and measure how well the process is working.

The Management Review is also a requirement of any formal quality management system and this pulls together all the key elements which are required to be presented to Leadership with an opportunity for feedback and the creation of action plans to address any identified deficiencies. It is always a good idea for Leadership to communicate the quality strategy early in the year to recalibrate the importance of incorporating quality in everything each employee does.

The benefits of having a strong quality culture can be measured in repeat business (customer allegiance), strong revenue and profit margins, employee retention and stellar audit results. The biggest impact that quality has is from always doing the right thing by knowing what you need to do – providing employees with a strong sense of connection to our customers and personal satisfaction. Happy New Year!

If you would like more information on our audit program please feel free to contact me at: kelly.huckabone@thermofisher.com.