

# Managing Employees in Macedonian Companies

Elizabeta Mitreva<sup>1</sup>, Nako Taskov<sup>1</sup>, Zdravko Krivokapić<sup>2</sup>, Jelena Jovanovic<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University "Goce Delcev" - Stip, Macedonia

<sup>2</sup>Faculty of Mechanical Engineering Podgorica, University of Montenegro, Montenegro

**Abstract** –The company's competitive advantage on the market is in direct correlation with the resources and the capacities, especially with the business potential of the employees which consists of their knowledge, skills, inventiveness and other elements that are necessary for handling the changes and producing measurable results. The introduction of a quality system is a teamwork and in those environments where the rules are not being followed, it is possible to immediately assess it as unacceptable. One of the largest changes sought by the new TQM strategy (Total Quality Management) in relation to the Macedonian companies is the change of the mentality and disposal of the old habits.

This paper provides an analysis for gathering data regarding the management of the employees i.e. the processes of planning and developing the staff as a business resource in accordance to the criteria for achieving European Quality Award in the Macedonian companies.

The results from the research should give usable directions that need to be adopted by the Macedonian companies in order to develop the products/services, and also the business processes and the business culture.

The solution was found in developing management system through a new TQM (Total Quality Management) strategy, developing the staff and the teamwork and advancing the processes even before buying new technology.

**Keywords** – quality system, evaluation of the business results, metrology, model.

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**Corresponding author:** Elizabeta Mitreva,  
University "Goce Delcev" - Stip, Macedonia  
**Email:** [elizabeta.mitreva@ugd.edu.mk](mailto:elizabeta.mitreva@ugd.edu.mk)

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## 1. Introduction

In the last twenty years, Macedonian environment has been filled with major socio-politic, economic and cultural changes as part of the transitional process toward a democratic constitution and market working [1]. These changes in the environment have been followed by changes in all segments, but especially in the business sector. The new quality concept seeks a constant change of the people, their attitude, their style of work etc. It is a constant strive toward something new [2].

In order to respond to the changes, it is necessary for the Macedonian companies to internally change and hence to enable effective functioning of the new conditions. This means developing a new system of values that will support the change of the current types of behaviour, act and development of new paradigms in accordance to the new market's conditions [3].

## 2. Literature review

The process of building a good quality system requires an engagement of all the employees, time and knowledge, collaboration among the employees and ability for teamwork [4]. The new management system based on the TQM (Total Quality Management) requires less time and money, and it can have same or bigger effect than the large investments in equipment.

The introduction of teamwork in the process of establishing TQM systems in the companies is related to the emphasized team study. It is expected from the managers to ease the work and to teach, and to help create a climate in which the individuals and the teams will reach its optimum. Teamwork can be an important factor that is able to encourage the change of the organizational culture.

The educational process is a long-term process and it refers to all of the employees in their segment of work. It is necessary that at least 70 per cent of the employees learn the way toward quality, in order to achieve the goal. The first phase is gaining knowledge, which is followed by change of the attitude and the behaviour of an individual and the

change of the team behaviour that results with change in the behaviour of the organization itself i.e. the organization that learns [5].

The application of new TQM strategy means projecting a well-documented quality system that encompasses all business processes of the company and represents an essential basis for the successful application of the statistic process control (SPC) and for an efficient teamwork [6].

These elements cannot be established in case of a bad quality system. In this way, it is guaranteed that the views of the top management are being conducted and it creates a climate and an informational base that is suitable for the development of the teamwork. This will enable the prevention of possible complains on time, and it will also eliminate the problems with disposing the possible causes. The usual resistance and fear from change can be quickly surpassed and a strong desire is implied for changing the current condition with a new approach toward the quality, and with a complete devotion to all interested parts [7][8].

The development of the teamwork requires patience and long-term nurturing of the processes for obtaining long-term results. In practice often prevails the desire and the attitude of the top management for quick results, then the teamwork is suffocated and it all leads to a dissatisfaction of the team members who have consciously and responsibly accepted the task [9][10][11].

According to Mitreva [3] the possibility for a more creative working, giving professional contribution, respecting the personal opinions and views, the sense of involvement in the conduct process, the mutual feeling of succeeding etc., are all elements of the business culture and the team work. The inclusion of these elements in the complete work of the company will contribute to the development of the mutual confidence and respect, devotion, openness, patience and loyalty to each other, as well as loyalty to the management and the company.

The company that accepts the new TQM (Total Quality Management) strategy and is aware of the need for an advancement of the business processes has a management that encourages the generation of new ideas through certain activities, takes actions for codification or transfer of the ideas from the minds of the employees in a certain explicit model and their implementation. The process of generating new ideas is a result of the innovativeness and creativeness of the employees, and it can be caused only by certain activities of the management.

The way to perfection of the companies is through implementing the improvements and the innovations of the business processes and creating an innovative climate by the management, and all of this is done with the aim to encourage an individual to think creatively and to think of original solutions [12][13][14][15].

The main creator of an innovative climate is the top management that needs to be enthusiastic for innovations and to be innovative itself. The management needs to think outside the firm business schemes and to be open to new ideas, to be ready to accept the risk and to obtain the necessary resources for realization, to listen, encourage and support the employees, to trust them and to be tolerant to possible failures and errors [4].

### 3. Subject of research and analysis

The subject of interest in this paper is the analysis on the Macedonian companies in relation to the management of the employees, or the way in which the managers plan and develop the staff as a business resource in accordance to the criteria for obtaining a European Quality Award [16][17][18].

The list of researched companies, based on the defined aims of the empirical research consists of 3109 Macedonian companies and it was done with the help of the Economic Chamber of RM. In the process of choosing the sample, a special attention was paid so that the analyzed companies are both those that have a quality system and those that do not have one, and to determine the differences among them.

The research was done through a questionnaire and with a detailed study on the companies by the research team. Although the research was planned as an ambitious possibility to analyze the Macedonian companies (around 3109 from the created list), only 363 companies or 11,6 per cent from the created base participated in the realization process, but this is a common number for this type of research [19][20].

The structure of the questioned companies-participants in the research according to the economic branch to which they belong (National classification of jobs Res.2 –“Official Gazette of RM”, no.147/08) and changes and addition of the National classification of jobs applied since 01 January 2013) is given in Figure 1.

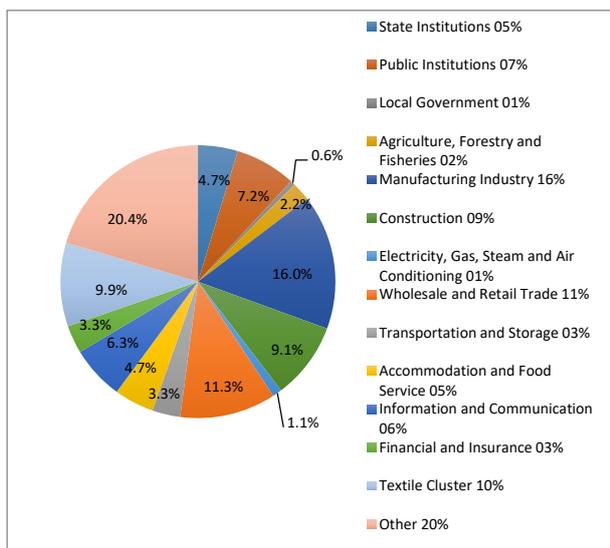


Fig. 1. Participation of the companies in the research through percentages, divided according to their economic branches

The questionnaire research included representatives of the quality system from all of those companies that have projected and implemented quality systems, and those who haven't included first or second level managers.

### 3.1. Planning and developing the staff as a business resource in the Macedonian companies – managing the employees

The quality can be achieved only if the company has educated and skilled human resources that are able to take care of the quality, and a capable management ready for a continuous development. The management of the employees is a basic segment of the TQM (Total Quality Management) strategy.

We have asked a few questions in order to determine the profile of the workers in the Macedonian companies and their participation in the business processes as authorized for conducting the organizational functions and the acknowledgement of their results as well.

**One of the criteria for obtaining EQA is how the company conducts the planning and the development of the staff as a business resource.**

The question if the educational structure suits the needs of the company and whether there is a shortage of work force and in which profile, produced the following data:

*The researched companies are satisfied with the hired work force because 95% of them have responded that the educational structure of the employees suits their needs.* The quality of the hired work potential in the Macedonian companies is a result of the educational system with its tradition and quality, but it is also a result of the gained work experience in the companies.

*It can be seen from the questionnaires that 3 per cent of the companies are faced with a work force deficiency.* In Macedonia, the construction companies and those in the production of construction material are susceptible to the deficiency of construction engineers and qualified workers due to the massive emigration abroad, but also due to the decreased interest for the professions in construction. The work force deficiency is also present in the publishing and reproduction industry of recorded media where they need graphic workers, and in the textile industry. The causes for the lack of interest in these professions is the low income.

According to the World Bank statistics, 447,000 people emigrated from the country as of 2010, so Macedonia is ranked in the group with the most immigrants. The country is ranked 23rd in the group of 25 countries with most immigrants. With 21.9 percent immigrants of the total population, the country is in the company of West Bank and Gaza, Granada, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe.

The loss of certain types of occupations in the form of brain drain is particularly expressed in Macedonia. According to the latest report of the World Bank, from the country there is a high level of brain drain and virtually anyone who has a chance to go abroad does so. In near future, this condition will create bigger problems in the business sector in relation to obtaining human resources for the realization of the business processes. There still is not official data in our country for the number of emigrated citizens in the last twenty years.

#### **The question of what type of staff is deficient in the company produced the following data:**

- 24,2 per cent of the respondents have stated that they need staff with graduate degrees;
- 38,8 per cent have pointed out *the need for qualified workers*;
- 2,5 per cent of them, *the need for staff with professional degrees*;
- 4,7 per cent of them, for MA or PhD degrees;
- 29,8 per cent of them, for staff with high academic education.

#### **The question about the inclusion of the employees in the hierarchy of the company produced the following data:**

- In most Macedonian companies, 82,5 per cent of the workers participate in the immediate production;
- 14 per cent in the administration;
- 3,5 per cent in the management.

The researches show the low inclusion of the employees in the management with 3,5 per cent. The presence of employees in the company's management in our country cannot be defined as good. The results show that beside the long-term education of the immediate workers with the aim of increasing their level of qualification, it is necessary to strengthen the top and the medium management especially with trainings related to answering the requests of EU and courses in the field of the TQM philosophy.

It is important to strengthen the staff in the non-production sector of the Macedonian companies, especially because of the companies' desire and necessity to be present on the European market, where the professionalism, the engagement and the readiness of this sector is essential. The non-production sector consists of the employees in marketing, distribution, quality management, design, financial planning etc. This means that the hired staff has to be with higher education, solid knowledge in the Information technology and in foreign languages, and to understand the nature of both the home and the international market. This highly educated work force is present in our areas.

Only small number of people in the Macedonian companies do marketing activities and have direct contacts with the buyers. The process of forming a marketing team in each company is essential for that company's survival on the market, because it will enable the transformation of the marketing information into measurable indicators and standards. In this way, the development of those indicators and standards will enable to measure and follow the quality, to have an acceptable level of quality in all sectors, to eliminate the defects and the waste. All of this will decrease the need for a special control of each workplace and it will also decrease the costs planned for that purpose.

***One of the criteria for obtaining an EQA is the way the company cares for its employees.***

The question if the system for awarding or sanctioning the employees in the organization is well known and clear, produced the following data:

The results have shown that *high percentage (19,6 per cent) of the researched companies are aware and well introduced to the award system, but it isn't being applied*, which means that the criteria for development are not fully conducted (such as promotion, bonuses, sanctions).

*The factors that influence the earnings were known in 39,1 per cent of the researched companies, and these standards are based on the companies' business policy, the professional skills and the work results.*

In 19,3 per cent of the researched companies, *the award system is partly known and clear*, while in 22

per cent of them, *this system is a secret to the employees.*

In order to manage the employees well, it is necessary to establish an effective dialogue with them and to have employees that are loyal to the company.

*Based on the results from the research, it was noted that: 94,5 per cent of the researched companies have stated that there are employees loyal to the company, while 5,5 per cent of the companies have stated that there aren't loyal employees.* The research included the non-formal data (from direct contacts with employees) that shows that there is partial loyalty of the employees to the company due to the lack of effort by the managers to build clear and honorable relations with the employees and to have clear relation to the work. This shows that in these kinds of companies the management and their survival is under question.

In those companies that strive toward perfection and are aware of the need for developing the business processes, the management encourages new ideas, takes codification actions or transfers the ideas of the employees into an explicit form and implements them.

The data about the way in which the employees are included in the business processes, how they are authorized for conducting the organizational functions and how are their results being acknowledged, are presented below.

***The question if the employees are encouraged to develop the business processes by the managers gave the following data:***

- 39,7 per cent of the respondents believe that in their company *the employees give suggestions for improvement and the ideas are implemented with or without an SOP correction (Standard Operative Procedures) or without an adequate procedure;*
- 31,7 per cent of the respondents have stated that *there isn't a rule – sometimes they are included and sometimes they aren't, which leads us to the conclusion that the problems in the realization of the business processes are rarely talked about;*
- Only 16,8 per cent of the respondents believe that *this topic is not talked about at all, i.e. the ideas stay in the mind of the employees due to the fact that they are unwilling or afraid to state the problems in front of the others.* In these companies there is also a problem in sharing the knowledge in the company itself;
- In 11,8 per cent of the researched companies, *the employees are included in solving the problems only when it is related to less*

*important decisions*, and that shows that in the analyzed organizations, there is a large number of unused ideas.

The causes need to be sought in the organizational culture, because if there is not trust among the employees there is not a share of the knowledge.

***The question of how much are the employees encouraged from the managers to develop the business processes produced the following data:***

- 76,9 per cent of the respondents believe that in their company, *the employees give suggestions for resolving the problems which leads us to the fact that the managers create a business climate;*
- In 9,4 per cent of the cases, *the employees show dissatisfaction from the bad work organization;*
- 8,5 per cent of the respondents think that *the employees do not discuss the problems, because they are unwilling or afraid to present them in front of the others. They are afraid of the consequences;*
- 5,2 per cent of the respondents have stated that *the problems in the realization of the business processes are not talked about, because they are not interested in resolving those problems.*

The participation of the employees in all of the functions of the organization is very important, and a special attention should be paid to the creative energy that the Macedonian citizens import into their work in case of a mobilization.

The problem that Macedonia, and the other transitional countries face, is the ability to find and identify those parts of their own tradition, history and culture that can be used in establishing the management. The difference between the Japanese and the Indian economy is explained by the fact that the Japanese managers can plant the imported management concepts in their culture soil and can successfully develop them.

One of the largest changes sought by the new TQM strategy (Total Quality Management) in relation to the Macedonian companies ***is the change of mentality and the disposal of the old habits and the transitional syndrome.*** This means that the positive characteristics of our mentality should be developed and a contemporary mental model should be embraced.

#### **4. The Need for Methodology in Establishing the Management Teams in the Process for Projection and Implementation of the TQM System in the Macedonian Companies**

In Macedonia, the number of leaders and managers that are modern and ready for teamwork is very low. In this paper, we suggest a methodology for establishing the management teams in the process for projection and implementation of the TQM (Total Quality Management) system with all the advantages and disadvantages, as well as its application in Macedonian practice.

The management in the Macedonian companies needs to form management teams that will accept the changes and include the company as fast as possible in the flow of the market, where the quality of the work as a whole is the main precondition for obtaining the customers and all of the interested parties. The rules for a teamwork about respecting people, characters, experiences and knowledge will lead to a relaxed atmosphere, constructive conflict, creative tension and enthusiasm and it will enable the new approach toward quality to be primary and built in each segment of the functioning process. In this way, it will create a possibility to introduce many new approaches that did not exist previously.

All of this can be realized by adopting the new TQM (Total Quality Management) philosophy and by applying the methodology suggested in this paper about the establishment of the management teams in the projection and the implementation of the TQM. The suggested methodology for establishing of the management teams in the projection and the implementation of the TQM (Total Quality Management) system includes the following:

1. *Committee for quality;*
2. *Processed teams for quality;*
3. *Teams for quality conduct (terrain teams);*
4. *Workshops about quality;*
5. *Inclusion of all the employees.*

***The committee for quality*** is in charge of all the aspects of the TQM strategy in the company/institution. The projection and the implementation of the TQM system depends a lot on the work of this committee. The committee is formed by the company's or the institution's president with a separately made decision. According to a rule, the managers from all of the organizational units are included into the committee's team.

The constitution of the committee for quality is done for the following aims:

- To show the meaning and the importance of quality in the working process;
- To enable a permanent relationship between the executives and the management;
- To meet at least once a month to note the effects from the implementation.

The obligations of the committee are the following:

- To obtain strategic direction;
- To adopt the plans for the implementation of the TQM strategy in every department;
- To establish and assess the process teams (the owners of the process);
- To assess and revise the plans for quality improvement.

The committee of quality is led by a representative from the authorities in charge of quality. The committee has a secretary that is obliged to record the minutes from the meetings, to prepare the meetings of the committee and to coordinate the committee's work between two meetings.

The tasks of the committee are given in the following steps:

- **Step 1:** the committee organizes the dynamics of the plan for making the documents of the quality system;
- **Step 2:** the committee adopts the plan mentioned in step 1 and controls its realization;
- **Step 3:** the committee adopts the documents for the quality system from the plan mentioned in step 1;
- **Step 4:** the committee organizes the plan for training the employees about the implementation of the adopted documents for the quality system;
- **Step 5:** the committee adopts the plan from step 4 and controls its realization;
- **Step 6:** the committee controls the check-up process of the knowledge in the field in relation to the documents of internal standardization;
- **Step 7:** the committee coordinates and follows all of the activities of the organization which are related to the control and the check-up of the internal standardization;
- **Step 8:** the committee controls the application of the corrective and the preventive measures that are in direct relation to the activities mentioned in step 7;

- **Step 9:** the committee organizes the procedure for certifying the introduced quality system by an authorized organization;
- **Step 10:** the committee influences the projection of the system and the motivation of the employees for a complete implementation of the quality system;
- **Step 11:** the committee coordinates all the activities and conducts all the tasks that are related to the complete projection and implementation of the quality system;
- **Step 12:** in case of hiring external experts, the committee is obliged to conduct the inclusion of the experts in the processes of projection and implementation of the quality system by a mutual teamwork, defining of the plans and activities and following the realization of the assigned activities.

Barriers, crisis and risks might appear in the work of the committee. The most common barriers that undermine the functioning of the quality system are the following: unrealized needs, bad decisions, unclear definition of roles, interpersonal conflicts, bad leadership, insufficient feedback or information, non-adequate award system, insufficient trust among members of the team and lack of readiness for a change. The essential barrier is in the psychological moment, which can be related to lack of collaboration and motivation, non-adequate financial support, disinterest for a continuous learning and development and the non-adequate training program. These barriers are present in every field, and it is necessary to have coordination through the meetings in which the employees are personally present to enable the creation of group norms, the empowerment of the feeling of membership and loyalty, and the development of the team communication.

#### *Process teams for quality*

These teams consist of the employees that are part of the business process and have the task to project the standard operative procedures (SOP). Through the SOP are defined the rights and the obligations of all employees.

*The characteristics of these teams are the following:*

- The presence of the authorities in the team is obligatory;
- A top down approach is provided for the inclusion of all employees;
- A meeting is held at least once a month before the sessions of the service for quality.

### ***Conduct (terrain) teams for quality***

*The characteristics of these teams are the following:*

- Projects for quality improvement are being chosen;
- The framework of the project are being determined;
- Members of the team and the leader are being chosen;
- The development of the project for quality is being assessed.

*In the quality workshops:*

- Are chosen people with knowledge and skills;
- Are chosen employees that are immediately faced with the problem that needs to be resolved;
- Meetings are held regularly under the conduct of a supervisor, in order to identify, analyze and resolve the problems connected to quality.

*The inclusion of all employees means:*

- Inclusion of a large number of employees;
- An increase of the motivation for an improvement of the business processes;
- An increase in the awareness of the necessity for improving the quality;
- An improvement of the communication.

The process of building this kind of organizational structure with a complete inclusion of the human potential needs to provide the employees with an inclusion and a possibility to state their ideas, to communicate with others that have different views for the suggested solutions. The success from the application of this methodology will depend on the top management, which **has to provide a fast and competent assessment, as well as selection and application of the solutions into practice.**

### **5. Conclusion**

The strategic management of the companies needs to include its own human resources together with its good will and persistence and by forming teams with all profiles and integrating their knowledge to achieve a complete conduct of quality in all business processes at lowest work costs. In this way, the complaints can be prevented on time and the problems will be eliminated by removing the possible causes. The usual resistance and fear from changes are surpassed very fast and a strong desire for changing the current condition by a new approach toward quality in education is being entailed.

The process of authorization and encouragement for the inclusion of the employees in finding new solutions to improve the educational process **has to consist of the acknowledgement for being initiative and creative in resolving the problems and for the suggested and realized improvements and innovations.** The top management has to create a motivation system for acknowledgements and awards, in order to develop the authorization process and the process of employees' inclusion.

In this paper we suggest the methodology in establishing the management teams in the process for projection and implementation of the TQM system in the Macedonian companies. The methodology is part of the universal and integral methodology for projecting and implementing the TQM system in the companies [3].

This methodology was used in some Macedonian companies [21][22]. Approaches for an evaluation of the stability of the processes, the number or the percentages of the defects, the stability of the machines, to discover the causes for defects and variations etc. The effects from the application of this methodology have led to: a realization of the defined quality, protection of the buyers/ users from defective products, and with that an increase of the competence of the companies on the market, profitability, improving the quality, decrease of the defects and the costs in the work, an increase of the satisfaction and the participation of the employees in the decision making. This points to the fact of a universal application of this methodology in practice independently of belonging to any economic branch.

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