Our expertise has been developed over more than six decades of real-world experience, and our methods are universal and have been applied in nearly every industry and culture around the world. Our mission is to prepare a new generation of business leaders who will build greater prosperity for our society through the application of the operational excellence methods and values of Dr. Joseph M. Juran in the context of new technologies, advanced applications, and expanding lessons learned. We want to be seen as trusted advisers, enabling global leaders to achieve measurable, breakthrough results.
The Operational Power of Value Engagement Teams

Over the last several decades, numerous studies have shown the criticality of engaged employees on the success of a business. So much so that an entire industry of business and H.R. consultants has developed around the tenet that engaged employees provide a competitive market advantage. Yet, despite all the work in this area, employees globally are “checking out” in record numbers. In fact, the 2014 Towers Watson Global Workforce Study concluded that 60% of all employees globally are not highly engaged.

Many companies have focused on engaging employees by driving quality improvement initiatives down to the front-line, so that all employees became “quality experts,” evolving quality improvement from a focus on sporadic events to continuous improvement activities. These efforts have taken the form of Lean events, Six Sigma projects, Root Cause Corrective Action teams, and more.

Yet, by and large, employees are still not highly engaged.

In fact, the Towers Watson study found that only four in 10 employees globally are highly engaged workers. Twenty-four percent were disengaged, and the remaining 36% were either unsupported or detached. How did this happen? More important, how do companies overcome these dismal statistics.

The answer, we believe, is to move from traditional quality improvement, Lean, and Six Sigma teams to the deployment of Value Engagement Teams. A Value Engagement Team implements and sustains solutions that move beyond the traditional departmental quality team by aligning its work with the company’s short- and long-term business goals and objectives.

Historically, departmental-based teams – whether they were employee involvement teams, employee engagement teams, self-directed work teams, self-control teams, or departmental work groups – have had a great deal of autonomy in selecting the projects to work on.

More often than not, these teams pick projects that are important to the department, rather than what are important to the organization. This, in turn, creates an organizational schism that can easily undermine effectiveness and efficiency not only within the department, but also across the company.

Value Engagement Teams, on the other hand, are functional teams focused on the sustainment of improved and standardized work processes that have been developed by higher-level, multi-functional improvement teams, rather than selected at the department level. As such, Value Engagement Teams support higher-level quality improvement projects and, by design, maintain alignment with corporate strategy. In other words, Value Engagement Teams are engaged in the strategic direction of the business by providing value as defined by the company.
As such, Value Engagement Teams can create the level of employee engagement required for companies to maintain a competitive edge in today’s global market. These teams enable employees at the functional or departmental level to integrate their improvement activities with the larger corporate strategy to create value – whether value is defined as external value to the customer or internal value to other functions or departments.

**How Structure Gets in the Way**

In a typical organization, there are a set of functions that report to mid-level leaders who report to executives. If there is a problem in one function, the cause is typically found somewhere within the company.

To correct the defect, the organization usually assembles a multi-functional team of people who have a vested interest in the outcome. This team is led by someone with advanced training in performance improvement and is championed by a leader. While these teams might be outstanding in identifying root causes, they also often have difficulty in getting team members involved in embracing and launching solutions that will eradicate the problem being addressed.

This is where the Value Engagement Team comes in and why these teams are strategically important, as one role of the Value Engagement Team is to help multi-functional teams implement solutions locally. The easiest and simplest way to do this is to have all members of the multi-functional team form Value Engagement Teams in their departments for the purpose of implementing and sustaining the identified improvement solution.

Consequently, these Value Engagement Teams implement solutions that are aligned with – and address – corporate strategy, rather than merely focusing on issues at the local level that may not have an impact outside the team’s own department.

It ensures that all Value Engagement Teams on working on things that are truly important.

**The Question of What is Important?**

A department whose performance improvement projects aren’t aligned with corporate strategy may have the greatest of intentions, but actually might be undermining the company’s ability to achieve its goals and objectives. Lacking this much-needed collaboration, the department may focus on the wrong things, selecting improvement projects that could easily sub-optimize other business processes.

Even worse, the department may err in its definition of “value.” For example, a company may elect a market strategy that focuses on responding to customer needs. If the company’s call center defines value as two-minute call cycle times, but the corporate strategy defines value as making sure the customer gets the right answer no matter how long it takes, the call center will actually be working against – and undermining – the bigger corporate strategy.

However, because the Value Engagement Team is working locally on behalf of the larger, multi-functional improvement team, the previous scenario is prevented from happening. If the larger team has defined value, and that definition is effectively translated to the Value Engagement Team as part of a solution implementation, then the local team –
or functional team – can now measure its performance against criteria that is in alignment with corporate goals and objectives.

Hence, the Value Engagement Team will never have to wonder what is important and whether the work of the team is meaningful to the organization as a whole. Value Engagement Teams that are armed with this knowledge results in more engaged employees who work in a heightened state of self-control. This, in turn, produces better and more sustainable results.

The Element of Self-Control

Early studies conducted by Dr. Joseph Juran showed that the most motivated, engaged, and successful employees have three elements of self-control built into their jobs:

1. They know exactly what is expected (standards and critical-to-quality requirements)
2. They know how they are doing compared to the standards (timely feedback)
3. They have the ability to change and sustain the process (capable process, tools, authority)

The reason Value Engagement Teams are so effective is that they are designed with the above criteria in mind. Because the Value Engagement Team’s improvement project is directed from a global, multi-functional team – with value clearly defined, standards and critical-to-quality requirements are clear. There is no guessing about what is important.

Critical-to-quality requirements – by their very nature – are metric based, which allow the Value Engagement Team to compare its results against the standards that have been put forth, providing much-needed timely feedback. Finally, because the Value Engagement Team has been empowered to change the process to meet or exceed the critical-to-quality requirements, the team is operating within a prescribed authority.

Requirements for Starting Value Engagement Teams

There is no standard prescription of what a Value Engagement Team may need, as it is wholly dependent on the maturity of the organization’s quality improvement program. Most important, though, Value Engagement Teams require a fundamental knowledge of the goals, objectives, and strategies of the organization. Second, Value Engagement Teams need to know what process changes they are being asked to implement and how those changes align to the bigger corporate strategy. These two things are the core requirements of any Value Engagement Team.

Beyond understanding the overall organizational strategy and how their Value Engagement Team aligns with higher-order initiatives, it may be beneficial to provide members of the team with the following:

- Training on overcoming resistance to change
- Team skills, such as working together and collaboration
- Basic quality improvement methods, such as Six Sigma DMAIC, Quality by Design, or root cause analysis
- Value-based tools, such as value-stream mapping and cost-of-poor-quality analysis
- Lean tools, such as 6S and mistake-proofing
- Training on how to read graphs and charts

Dr. Joseph Juran identified three elements that produce highly motivated, engaged, and successful employees. These three elements are the foundation of Value Engagement Teams.
The Goal of Engaging Employees

Engaging employees, in and of itself, is not the goal. The true goal is to engage employees in something of value – something the organization deems of value – such as satisfying customers, improving productivity, or creating greater efficiencies. Engaging employees in this way is what Value Engagement Teams are designed to do.

Imagine having this type of engaged work force, complete with Value Engagement Teams whose work are aligned with corporate goals and objectives. Then, when faced with a major market shift that forces your executive team to restate its marketplace targets – which requires rapid and immediate changes to various processes across the organization – your Value Engagement Teams can help you react more quickly, maintain an advantage over the competition, or quickly catch up to your competitors, if that is what you need to do.

On the other hand, if functional areas and departments don’t know what’s critical to the business, they’ll simply guess – and most of the time, they’ll guess wrong. Furthermore, if they don’t know what’s critical, then they’re also not measuring what matters. Should that occur, it is a sure bet that departments are not sustaining their gains – nor are they achieving measurable breakthrough results.

However, it doesn’t have to be that way. It certainly won’t be if you harness the power of Value Engagement Teams.

Juran Global Assessments

Organization Health Check: With over 1,000 assessments completed, we can jump start your journey to becoming a world-class organization. The Organization Health Check provides a quick qualitative review or “fitness test” against industry best practices.

COPQ Assessment: The cost of poor quality is the difference between the costs of a perfectly performing process and versus the actual costs. The Juran COPQ assessment results in the quantification of the potential dollars that are lost due to ineffective and inefficient processes. This includes understanding the customer needs through the design, development, production, transportation, installation, and servicing of those goods to meet customer needs.

Employee Engagement: We focus on the practices, shared mindset, and ethos of your organization to identify the willingness and ability of employees to contribute to the success of the company and the extent to which employees put discretionary effort into their work in the form of extra time, brainpower, and energy.

Quality Management System (ISO): A Quality Management System allows you to maintain stable internal processes. It enables quick adaptation to new customer demands, all the while delivering superior products and services in an ever-changing market.

To learn more about our assessments, or to take the Organization Health Check, please visit our website at http://juran.com, or contact us at:

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