

ONE-PAGE INFORMATION - KAIZEN No.22

Published by Shuichi (Sydney) Yoshida, Gemba Tech Research Institute, Tokyo, Japan

■ Why Doesn't Kaizen Continue at Your Company?

R.H. Waterman, co-author of the best-selling book in 1980's "In search of Excellence" argued that many managers (of USA) are short-sighted, always looking for easy "magic's" to improve their management performance in vain. Recently, I read his another book "What American Does Right" (published in 1994) once again and I was impressed by the fact that "he is actually talking about Kaizen" in this book. Kaizen is not a magic !! According to him there are three important elements in successful management strategies. They are

1) continuous technological improvement, 2) complete customer satisfaction and 3) cost reductions.

In order to implement the 3 points of elements, the conventional top-down pyramid system must give way to autonomous problem-solving teams by delegating power. From my 40 years of experience in Kaizen, I talk turkey that Kaizen is destined to fail when power is not properly delegated to the team and when management is apathetic and indifferent about the team and Kaizen. Some managers do not support Kaizen because they feel afraid of losing power or only because they are simply reluctant to accept new ideas. I strongly suggest you to read this book in which many good American companies are taken up as good examples to explain how autonomous teams are deployed across the companies such as P & G, Fedex, Motorola and Livi Strauss. For example, when Motorola took up Six Sigma Program to cope with Japanese electronic companies in 1980's they decided to use Kaizen such as problem-solving by team and training.

■ Hospitals Are Taking-up Kaizen to Satisfy Customers Named Patients

Today many Japanese hospitals are implementing Kaizen to provide good medical services to patients. As an example, the monthly magazine "QC Circle" No. 503 published June 2003 carries an interesting story about Nerima Hospital in Tokyo. Please remember this is No.503rd publication!! Mr. Iida, implemented MQI program in 1991 when he became president. MQI is the TQM program to satisfy patients by involving doctors, nurses, helpers, and all other staff members so that they work together as team to eliminate human errors and to provide to better medical services including meals and communication. Mr. Iida emphasizes that in order to satisfy customers, employees must be satisfied first. He also points out that MQ1 program has two unique points.

First : MQ1 is not "out of the regular job", but it is the most important part of the job.

Second : Each year, one corporate focus point is selected to give all employees one direction : Time Information, Critical Path, Standardization, Safety etc.

They are using QC Seven Tools, Six Sigma, QFD and FMEA.

On the other hand, NHK, National Broadcasting Network, released on June 7, 2003 across the country a very sensitive 60-minute documentary film reporting vividly how human errors are happening in a university hospital in Tokyo and eliminated by an investigation team. The special team is set-up to make all employees to work together to wipe off the disgrace that the hospital has suffered due to repeated human-oriented errors.