

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA  
COMMONWEALTH EXECUTIVE MASTER OF BUSINESS/PUBLIC  
ADMINISTRATION  
FINAL EXAMINATION – APRIL 2011  
MCP 1654 : QUALITY ASSURANCE MANAGEMENT**



**DURATION : THREE (03) HOURS**

**Date : 08<sup>th</sup> May 2011**

**Time : 9.30 a.m. – 12.30 p.m.**

**Answer any Four (04) questions.**

**The Parable of the Green Lawn**

A new housing development has lots of packed earth and weeds, but no grass. Two neighbors make a wager on who will be the first to have a lush lawn. Mr. Fast N. Furious knows that a lawn will not grow without grass seed, so he immediately buys the most expensive seed he can find because everyone knows that quality improves with price. Besides, he'll recover the cost of the seed through his wager. Next, he stands knee-deep in his weeds and tosses the seed around his yard. Confident that he has a head start on his neighbor, who is not making much visible progress, he begins his next project.

Ms. Slo N. Steady, having grown up in the country, proceeds to clear the lot till the soil, and even alter the slope of the terrain to provide better drainage. She checks the soil's pH, applies weed killer and fertilizer, and then distributes the grass seed evenly with a spreader. She applies a much cover and waters the lawn appropriately. She finishes several days after her neighbor, who asks if she would like to concede defeat. After all, he does have some blades of grass poking up already.

Mr. Furious is encouraged by the few clumps of grass that sprout. While these small, green islands are better developed than Ms. Steady's fledgling lawn, bare spots and weeds surround them. If he maintains these footholds, he reasons, they should spread to the rest of the yard. He notices that his neighbor's lawn is more uniform and is really starting to grow. He attributes this progress to the Steady children, who water the lawn each evening. Not wanting to appear to be imitating his neighbor, Mr. Furious instructs his children to water his lawn at noon.

The noon watering proves to be detrimental, so he decides to fertilize the remaining patches of grass. Since he wants to make up for the losses the noon watering caused, he applies the fertilizer at twice the recommended application rate. Most of the patches of grass that escape being burned by the fertilizer, however, are eventually choked out by the weeds.

After winning the wager with Mr. Furious, Ms. Steady lounges on the deck enjoying her new grill, which she paid for with the money from the wager. Her lawn requires minimal

maintenance, so she is free to attend to the landscaping. The combination of the lawn and landscaping also results in an award from a neighborhood committee that determines that her lawn is a true showplace. Mr. Furious still labors on his lawn. He blames the poor performance on his children's inability to properly water the lawn, non-conforming grass seed, insufficient sunlight, and poor soil. He claims that his neighbor has an unfair advantage and her success is based on conditions unique to her plot of land. He views the loss as grossly unfair; after all, he spends more time and money on his lawn than Ms. Steady does.

He continues to complain about how expensive the see is and now much time he spends moving the sprinkler around to the few remaining clumps of grass that continue to grow. But Mr. Furious thinks that things will be better for him next year, because he plans to install an automatic sprinkler system and make a double-or-nothing wager with Ms. Steady.

### Discussion Questions

1.
  - a. Do you think that quality concepts can be applied to streamline the process linked to the above situation? Give reasons for your answer.
  - b. Specifically, translate the problems described in the case into business language. What are the implementation barriers to achieving total quality?
2. Explain what you have understood from the teachings of Juran? Do you think that his teaching is still valid and applicable to develop a sound Quality Assurance System within the industry? If so why? If not why?
3. Total Quality Management (TQM) is a concept used to develop a sound system within an organization. Please identify the barriers that you consider in implementing this concept within an organization and explain why you consider them as barriers.
4. The only benefit that ISO 9001 Quality Management System gives to an organization is a documented system. Do you agree with this statement? Justify your answer with examples (You may consider examples from a local company)
5. XYZ Company manufactures socket outlets for the local market and enjoys a 30% market share. However, the market became very competitive as lot of similar imported products have flooded the market. This was brought to the notice of the Managing Director of the company and he requested the Quality Assurance Manager to implement a Quality improvement programme as that could lead to reduction of costs associated with poor quality. He also knew that if those costs can be reduced the company can sell the products at the existing price and maintain the market share. Do you agree with this? If so, please justify your answer considering the economic side of quality.

6. Customer satisfaction is applicable to any organization and nowadays in the quality language. The principle related to this is identified as "Customer Focus". What do you understand by this principle and how can it be practically applied to an organization?
7. Quality Improvement should be based on the process improvement of any organization. Do you consider this statement acceptable? If so why? If not why?

- **Right Reserved** -