PREPARING WORKERS FOR A RAPIDLY CHANGING WORK ENVIRONMENT

PRACTICE OBJECTIVE

The objective of this practice is to define a strategy for preparing workers for accepting change. The tactics for preparing workers for change are scattered throughout QAI's solutions manuals. The objective of this practice is focused on the strategic level for preparation, which will enable individuals to accept the changes that are necessary in today's economic environment.

PRACTICE TUTORIAL

This practice requires an understanding of people's decision-making process (see "Making A Decision," as additional insight into understanding this practice). People's decision-making process is a combination of the conscious mind plus the subconscious mind. The mind uses information from both mindsets in order to arrive at a decision. It is much easier to supply the conscious information (i.e., input to the decision-making process) than it is to fill the subconscious with the type of information needed to make the desired decision. Filling the subconscious with the type of information needed to support corporate objectives is a long-term process of continuous training and education.

PRACTICE WORKBENCH

The workbench shown in Figure 1 focuses on a worker's analytical process used in deciding whether or not to "buy in" to the proposed change. The concept is that the worker's subconscious mind must contain the information needed to put the needed change in the proper perspective. The workbench shows this subconscious mind being supplemented by the need to change and the facts about the changed situation. The output should be accepting the change.

INPUT PRODUCTS

There are three inputs to this practice. The first two relate to the conscious mind, which are:

°   Need to change

°   Facts about the work situation necessitating change

The major, and third, input is one which must reside in the worker's subconscious mind. This is an ongoing process and is shown in the workbench as an internal workbench resource to the DO procedures.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

The major component of the DO procedures is the information which is a resource to the worker's subconscious mind. This includes such things as:

°   Vision statement

°   Organizational principles and values

°   Mission/objectives to be accomplished

°   Methods for doing work/work processes

°   Reward systems

°   Management commitment and support for objectives and work processes

°   Worker skillsets

Figure 1. Worker's Workbench for Accepting Change

Copyright © 2000 • Quality Assurance Institute® • Orlando, Florida
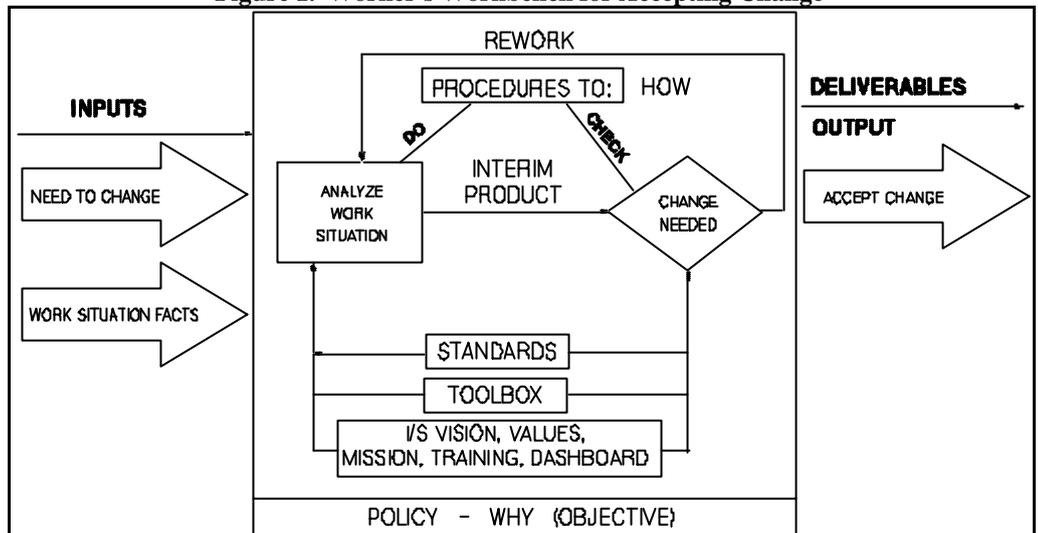
The objective of this subconscious information is to enable the worker when receiving the inputs to this workbench to place them in the bigger picture of where the organization is heading and how it plans to get there. Thus, the worker is prepared to analyze this change from both the organizational perspective and the individual perspective. Without that organizational perspective, the worker's decision is based primarily on what the worker sees as beneficial to his/her personal objectives without full consideration of the organizational objectives.

CHECK PROCEDURES

To determine whether this strategy is properly performed through this practice, the following statements should be responded to positively:

1) Have the documents needed to support the organization's strategic and tactical directions been prepared (e.g., vision, values, principles)?

2) Have the workers been given these documents?

3) Have the workers been given training sessions to hear and understand these strategic and tactical directions?

4) Do the workers support the strategic and tactical directions?

5) Have the workers been educated in the need to change?

6) Have the workers been educated in how they will benefit from change?

7) Have the workers been given the facts relating to the change?

8) Have the workers been given adequate time to digest and assess the impact of the change?

9) Has management attempted to identify worker concerns regarding change?

10) Has management provided the workers additional information about those concerns?

DELIVERABLES

The desired deliverable from this practice will be the worker's acceptance of the need to change.

USAGE TIPS

This practice was designed to present a strategic approach for preparing workers to accept a rapidly changing work environment. This practice is one which must be continually followed. Organizations have used a variety of approaches in preparing workers for change, which include such things as:

° Vision and value cards given to every worker for continuous reference

° Discussing the vision, value statements, and so forth in each decision-making staff meeting/situation

° Relating actions to visions, values, and principles

° Providing workers tools that incorporate organizational strategic and tactical objectives