



***Training goes beyond skills . . . it changes your culture!***

***Richard Heller, CQE***  
***QCTS Instructor***

*"We need education in the obvious more than investigation of the obscure"*

Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes

Training isn't about time off from the job. And it isn't about eliminating mistakes. There are two aspects of training that each company must understand: Training increases the skill set of the employees, and training improves the attitude of the workforce.

You may respond with, "I can buy the increased skill set idea, but attitude?" Yes, attitude. There has been a long-term concept that management can't change the attitude of the workforce. That's simply not true. Like it or not, management creates the workforce attitude. Whether appreciated or not, management is at the heart of your organization's attitude. Treat me with respect, and I'll respect you. Treat me with disdain and I'll resent you. Organizations that don't regularly monitor employee attitude and use those inputs towards improving employee attitude are inviting deterioration. It's something to consider.

So, how does training improve overall attitude? For one thing, training communicates to the workforce that everyone is important. For another, it helps foster the idea that the employee is responsible for improvements. And, thirdly, it helps employees see that it's their teamwork that makes the company succeed.

What are some examples of this? Engineers' eyes open when they learn the subtlety of how risk impacts their best plans for new products and processes. Office workers see how understanding the systems they work in helps them create better ways of doing their jobs. One new quality manager was so impressed with learning about the seven forms of waste during a Lean Manufacturing course that he declared, "Now I know what to look for! Until now, I felt buffeted by every mistake, every piece of scrap, and every reject in the plant! This helps me organize my priorities and categorize my efforts!"



These are how training changes attitudes. Yes, training created improved skill sets, but training also provided the employees with the self-confidence to improve their jobs.

I like to ask my classes, "What would happen if their plant closed? What will the owners do?" For most publicly traded companies, the stockholders would just move their investments elsewhere. "But, what would happen to the employees?" The typical answer is that they would be out of work. They would be unemployed.

The point is that employees have a lot more invested in the organization than the stockholders. Employees have their mortgage or rent invested, they have their car payments, their vacations and lifestyles, their kids' education, birthday presents, and even their Thanksgiving dinners.

Stockholders are looking for a return on their investment, and to them, that's important. However, it is in the employees' best interest for the company to not only succeed, but to thrive. Yes, this requires employees to work with each other, but it also requires the employees to take ownership of what they do because it's in everyone's best interest. And that requires a trained workforce.

