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PREVIEW

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**Training needs assessment practices and perceived success of
total quality management**

Maddox, James Francis, Ph.D.

The University of Nebraska - Lincoln, 1994

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PREVIEW

TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT PRACTICES
AND PERCEIVED SUCCESS OF TOTAL QUALITY
MANAGEMENT

by
James F. Maddox

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of
The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Major: Interdepartmental Area of Community and Human Resources

Under the Supervision of Professor Alan T. Seagren

Lincoln, Nebraska

April, 1994

DISSERTATION TITLE

Training Needs Assessment Practices and Perceived Success of Total Quality Management

BY

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TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT PRACTICES AND PERCEIVED SUCCESS OF TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT

James F. Maddox, Ph.D.

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 1994

Advisor: Alan T. Seagren

The purpose of the study was to compare training needs assessment practices with perceived levels of success for selected organizations in the U.S. that have implemented TQM. The independent variable, training needs assessment practices, was defined as the methods, techniques, characteristics, and processes organizations utilized to determine training content. The dependent variable, perceived levels of TQM success for organizations involved in a TQM type strategy, was defined as the extent to which human resource directors considered their TQM efforts a success.

The population for the study was organizations represented by the business week 1000, which consisted of the 1000 most valuable U.S. corporations, based upon their current market value. A mailed survey was sent to a random sample of 700 organizations from the population.

Results from the regression analysis as well as from the Spearman correlations supported the notion that training was a critical component of TQM success. With regard to the various persons or groups who potentially provide needs assessment input, all but two were significantly correlated with TQM success. Of the various

factors or data used to determine training needs, 16 out of the 28 listed were significantly correlated with TQM success. The sub-variable of people, was found to be a predictor of TQM success and accounted for 20% of the variance of TQM success.

The mediating variables of gender, age, position, and organizational department were not significant. The mediating variables of organizational size and type of business were not significant, however, the mediating variable, length of time the organization has had a TQM strategy, was a significant predictor of TQM success.

The results indicated that particular needs assessment practices were significantly related to TQM success and were found to be predictors of TQM success. A conclusion can be drawn that by concentrating on certain needs assessment practices, the level of TQM success can be enhanced.

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Stick a fork in it, its done! The completion of this dissertation represents the culmination of my formal education, which somewhat appropriately began nearly 28 years ago on August 31, 1966 at Adolph Meyer Elementary School in New Orleans, Louisiana. I'm sure my Mom remembers because I do; I cried as I saw her face through the door window. Mom, you probably would have cried too if you had known then that I would spend the next 28 years being a perpetual student. The journey traveled north to Myles Standish Elementary in Quincy, Massachusetts and then south to Sewells Point Elementary in Norfolk, Virginia. From there, my family moved again, where I then attended Russell Babb Elementary in Harrah, Oklahoma. Four short years after moving to Harrah, my Dad passed away at the very young age of 43. Dad, while you were not here to share in my growing up, you were a constant influence and I want to thank you. In many ways, I miss you more today than in 1974. I also want to thank my Mom. Mom, you did one terrific job raising me and being the best teacher I ever had. You were not only the best mom, but a devoted sports fan as well (even if you did come just to see me sit on the bench!).

My next educational stop was Harrah Jr. High, then to Harrah Middle School, and on to Harrah High School. In my high school there were several teachers who touched my life and greatly contributed to my desire to go on to college. I'd like to thank Mrs. Ruth Shaw for her confidence in me, even when I did not have confidence in myself; and

thanks to Mrs. Mary BeeBee for her quiet and calming effect on an otherwise hyper teenager.

I continued my pursuit of knowledge at St. Gregory's College in Oklahoma. Fr. Ian Riding came into my life and touched my life both intellectually and spiritually and has continued to be a mentor, spiritual advisor, and true friend. I still remember your words of wisdom my first year of college when you told me, "Don't let your classes get in the way of your college education." I've realized how true those words were and still are.

I transferred to Boston College where I stayed one week. The experience taught me that while success is not final, neither is failure fatal. I believe that from our failures we often learn the most, no matter how painful.

They say that God does not close a door without opening a window, and I experienced that upon my successful transfer to Benedictine College in Kansas. Thanks goes to my friends Todd Drouhard and Dave Armstrong for the camaraderie. But most significantly it was at Benedictine that I met my wife, Carol. Carol, I can't even begin to thank you for your love and support and encouragement.

I began my graduate work at the University of Nebraska at Omaha and began new friendships. Thanks goes to John Curtis for his support and friendship.

To all of these friends, thanks, and I hope the words from the "Big Chill" were not true, that yes we have been friends for a long time, and no, we weren't just friends for a short time, a long time ago.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Context of the Problem

The environment in which organizations operate has and continues to change dramatically. Corporations have been hit by the harsh reality of domestic and foreign competition, declining market shares, pressures to increase productivity while cutting costs, eroding consumer confidence, and increased customer dissatisfaction (Schein & Berman, 1988).

To deal with the changing environment, corporations have increasingly turned to quality improvement strategies to address the challenges they face. In support of this growing trend, Hendricks and Triplett (1989) reported that 85% of respondents from such areas as electronics, automobile manufacturing, and other related industries had attempted some type of quality improvement effort. In a more recent study, Rossett and Krumdieck (1992) cite work done by Stinnett and Hanson who estimated that approximately 80% of all U.S. for-profit organizations are currently involved in quality initiatives.

A specific, organization-wide strategy that has increasingly been used to address the issue of quality is the concept of Total Quality Management (TQM) (Hendricks & Triplett, 1989). TQM is a philosophy that encompasses the entire organization and involves all employees. TQM focuses on customers' needs and expectations and