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Deliberate Methods Change (DMC) system used by Hillshire Farm

Question a)

Based on the facts presented in this case, perform an assessment of the company in the following areas:

- customer focus
- quality leadership
- continuous improvement
- fact-based management
- employee participation

Answer:

Customer Focus: The company appears to have a strong customer focus, as evidenced by its commitment to providing high-quality products and services that meet the needs of its customers as they defined product specifications and inspected the product from customer's point of view.

Quality Leadership: It is unclear from the information provided whether the company has a formal quality management system in place, but it seems likely that they place a high priority on quality leadership given their commitment to continuous improvement. Customer complaints

were used on basis to define quality and company was eager to know what customer found unacceptable.

Continuous Improvement: The company clearly values continuous improvement, as evidenced by their implementation of a new software system and their willingness to invest in employee training and development. Along with this, there was a total change in corporate culture to become more open, flexible and responsive.

Fact-Based Management: It is unclear from the information provided whether the company uses data and analytics to inform their decision-making, but it seems likely given their commitment to continuous improvement. They used SPC tool also which helped in identifying the improvements in defects and yields.

Employee Participation: The company appears to value employee participation and involvement, as evidenced by their willingness to invest in employee training and development, and their implementation of a suggestion box to gather employee feedback.

Question b)

List strengths and areas for improvement that you would suggest in each of these categories. Would you state that Hillshire Farm /Kahn's has fully adopted TQ? Why or why not? What steps would you recommend that the company take next?

Answer:

Based on the information provided in the case, here are my suggestions for strengths and areas of improvement in each category:

Customer focus:

Strengths: The company has a good reputation for producing high-quality products and has established brand recognition.

Areas for improvement: The company could improve its customer focus by conducting market research to better understand customer needs and preferences, and by investing in customer service training for its employees.

Quality leadership:

Strengths: The company has a well-established quality management system, including the use of quality metrics and a commitment to continuous improvement.

Areas for improvement: The company could improve its quality leadership by providing more training and resources to employees to help them identify and address quality issues.

Continuous improvement:

Strengths: The company has implemented several continuous improvement initiatives, such as its Total Quality program and its use of cross-functional teams to solve problems.

Areas for improvement: The company could improve its continuous improvement efforts by expanding its use of data analysis to identify opportunities for improvement and by promoting a culture of innovation and experimentation.

Fact-based management:

Strengths: The company uses data and metrics to make decisions and has established performance targets for key areas.

Areas for improvement: The company could improve its fact-based management by establishing more rigorous data collection and analysis processes and by promoting a culture of data-driven decision-making throughout the organization.

Employee participation:

Strengths: The company encourages employee participation in problem-solving and decision-making through the use of cross-functional teams.

Areas for improvement: The company could improve its employee participation efforts by providing more opportunities for training and development, and by promoting a culture of empowerment and engagement.

Overall, I would say that Hillshire Farm/Kahn's has made significant progress towards adopting Total Quality, but there is still room for improvement in all areas. To continue to move forward, I would recommend that the company take the following steps:

1. Conduct a comprehensive assessment of its current Total Quality program to identify areas of strength and areas for improvement.
2. Develop a plan to address any identified weaknesses, including providing additional training and resources to employees as needed.
3. Expand its use of data analysis to identify opportunities for improvement and track progress towards performance targets.
4. Promote a culture of innovation and experimentation to encourage continuous improvement and drive innovation.
5. Provide additional opportunities for employee development and engagement to promote a culture of empowerment and participation.