

Stakeholder Management for Quality Managers



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Five things we can learn about stakeholder engagement from the Quality Manager.

One of the biggest responsibilities and often the biggest cause of frustration for the quality manager is stakeholder management.

The quality manager will usually work across all aspects of the business because the quality principles of risk, document control, communication, internal audit, reporting, and improvement sit across everything that happens in the organisation.

I often find a good quality manager is really knowledgeable and can tell you a lot

about each department because they build really strong relationships with each team.

So what's the secret of getting stakeholders to engage?

There are five things that good quality managers do that we can all learn from:

Build relationships

This is more than just knowing someone's job title. It's about understanding who they are, what they enjoy or dislike about work, how they prefer to work, what's important to them outside of work?

Building relationships is about being curious and interested in people. When it's done well you increase engagement with people across teams.

Be helpful

Sometimes we can become focused on working on tasks that benefit only us. We have a project to finish or a deadline to meet.

When we need others to provide their input or do their piece of the work it's tempting to quickly flick over an email telling them what they need to do. But telling isn't always the best way to get engagement and buy-in.

People have their own conflicting priorities, their own problems to work on and if you are simply adding to their workload you may not get the eager response you hoped for.

Being helpful means not only looking at stakeholders as doing for you but what can you do for them?

Be enthusiastic

Sometimes quality can feel like an extra job to do, sometimes it feels like audits just uncover problems, and sometimes people just aren't excited to see you in case you have brought them some work to do.

When you work in quality you get used to people not being excited about your work. If you can be enthusiastic about what you do and talk about the benefits of the work you do, then your enthusiasm will hopefully spread. Getting people excited about meeting standards is no easy task so if quality managers can do it, so can you.

Be useful not a nuisance

We have already talked about being helpful so what's the difference between being helpful and useful?

Being useful is about shifting your focus, consider what value can you add to the person, team or the whole organisation.

When you are at the coal face it can be tempting to feel like you are the only one doing anything and whilst this may be true at times, this kind of thinking is not helpful.

Instead of worrying about what everyone else is or isn't doing, think about how you can be useful in getting people involved, and maybe helping people by solving their problems.

Make an impact

Continuous improvement can be a slow process and sometimes lacking in the wow factor. People may not see any immediate impact and quality reporting becomes really important.

What data do you collect to show the impact your work has?

If you are collecting information only about negative measures, such as the number of incidents, the number of complaints (common quality data) it's not going to make people feel good.

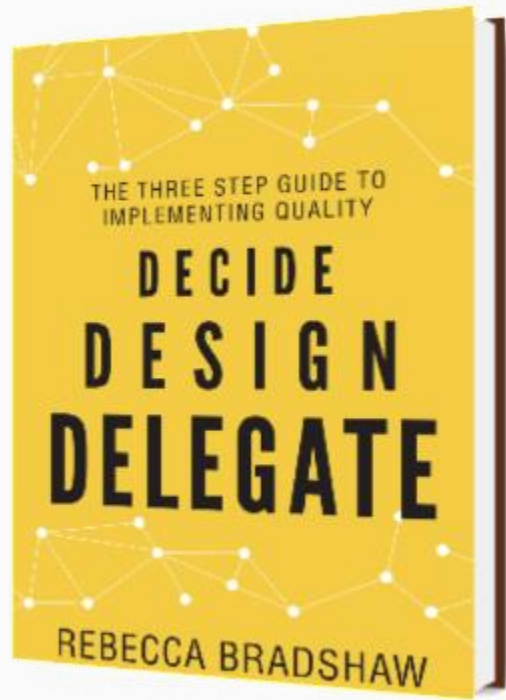
Can you report data that shows trends across time that show your impact?

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If you would like to talk to me personally you can email me at bek@rebeccabradshaw.com.au or call me on 0403857054

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