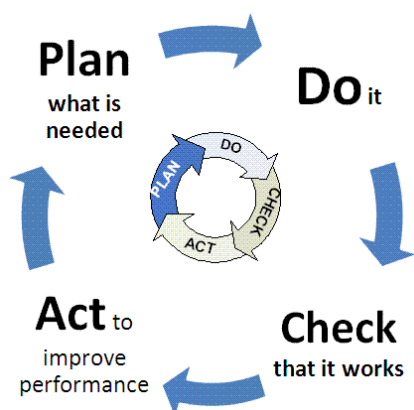


Quality Guru Series 2. W Edwards Deming

In the first of our Quality Guru Series we told you about Taiichi Ohno, who began with a journey to America. This time we talk about W Edwards Deming, an American who journeyed to Japan and whose approach to quality within business there made a major and lasting impact, even after his death. So much so that Japan's most prestigious quality award, the Deming Prize, was established in honour of him in December 1950 and the awards ceremony is broadcast every year on Japanese national television.

Originally a professional statistician, his early experience in this field led him to conclude that quality can be improved only if top management is part of the solution and participates appropriately and actively in the quality program. He placed great importance and responsibility on management, at both the individual and company level. Believing management to be responsible for 94% of quality problems, he developed a fourteen point plan - a complete philosophy of management, that can be applied to small or large organisations in the public, private or service sectors. This sets out what managers need to do to ensure excellence and stay in business and involves constancy of purpose towards improvement of product and service, the elimination of mistakes and waste and the need for statistical evidence that quality is built in.

From August 1950, Deming lectured on his statistical and management methods to the leading industrial companies in Japan. His influence was so strong that by December 1950, the Deming Prize had been established. He saw that the top management of the Japanese companies was ready to use his ideas and expressed his confidence that they would come to dominate world markets.



Deming also encouraged a systematic approach to problem solving and promoted the widely known Plan, Do, Check, Act (PDCA) cycle, also known as the Deming cycle, although it was actually developed by a colleague of his, Dr Shewhart.

In 1993, just before he died from cancer, he founded the Dr. W. Edwards Deming Institute, which aims "to foster understanding of The Deming System of Profound Knowledge™ to advance commerce, prosperity and peace."