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Collaboration among the University of Macedonia and Equivalent
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*Total Quality Management: Contemporary Trends and
Prospects in Greece and Bulgaria
Technical Guide*

Elaborated by the University of Macedonia
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TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT – CONTEMPORARY TRENDS AND PROSPECTS IN GREECE AND BULGARIA – TECHNICAL GUIDE

SUMMARY

To support and develop a process of continuous improvement, an organization needs to adopt and apply total quality management (TQM) theory.

The present technical guide is comprised of the main definitions and principles of quality and total quality management. It presents a historical review of quality and analyzes the main theories of gurus of quality, namely Deming, Juran and Grosby. Then it presents ISO 9000 standards as part of TQM methodologies.

The guide continues by giving a detailed analysis of benchmarking, a useful quality tool which enterprises use in measuring their performance against that of best-in-class enterprises. Benchmarking is an opportunity for an organization and its individuals to learn from the experience of others. Consequently, the guide presents statistical quality control (SPC) which, when supported by the positive commitment of all employees in an organization within a framework of Total Quality Management, has proved to be a major contribution in the pursuit of excellence. Quality function deployment and other quality tools and techniques are also presented.

After the detailed review of quality theory, the guide deals with TQM contemporary trends and prospects in Greece and Bulgaria such as quality status in the Greek business world in the early '90s, the current situation regarding adoption of quality management practices by Greek companies, implementation of ISO 9000 standards and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) system, difficulties which enterprises deal with through implementing a quality system and benefits gained by implementing a quality system. These trends were explored by a survey, conducted in selected companies in both countries.

The guide ends with the main conclusions drawn by the survey, which stress the importance and need of TQM implementation in Bulgarian and Greek companies.

The results reveal that Greek companies perceive quality as "customer satisfaction", while Bulgarian companies perceive quality as "conformance to specifications". Although Greek companies do not have sufficient information, Greek products comply with E.U. legislation and National/ International/ Sectorial Standards. Bulgarian companies are focused more on internal and customer specifications. The increase in bureaucracy, the adaptation of employees and the difficulty in finding qualified staff are the main difficulties that Greek companies face in the implementation of Quality Management Systems. For Bulgarian companies the main difficulties are the adaptation of employees and suppliers. The most important benefits for Greek companies in implementing Quality Management Systems are the improvements of communication, internal organization, product quality and competitiveness. Bulgarian companies appreciate the improvement of product quality, the cost reduction and productivity increase as the most important benefits. Both markets are facing difficulties in covering quality demands due to fluctuation of raw materials, high production and control cost. Two more difficulties faced by Bulgarian companies are lack of information and low level of technology.

In both countries Environmental Management Systems are not being applied yet and Total Quality Management is not a first priority due to the fact that Greek and Bulgarian companies do not perceive the advantage of continual improvement.

If both countries really want to move in the direction of total quality management then the main requirements are the implementation of integrated Management Systems (quality, environment, health and safety, HACCP), the application of Quality Management Systems in the whole production chain, from the supplier to the retailer, investments on staff training, new qualified staff and mechanical equipment and the institution of National Quality Awards.