The Proquality National Programme – The Main Approach to Improvements in Competitiveness on the Global Market, To Reducing the Gaps and To Insuring a Lasting

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The Japanese miracle is not a miracle. The outstanding evolution of the Japanese economy after the Second World War owes to both the cult for labour present in the Japanese society and to the influx of knowledge on quality passed on by the two American scientists, Deming and Juran in the 1950s. The postwar economic recovery programme of Japan focussed mainly on the high quality of products.

Based on the realities of the Romanian economy, we thought it mandatory for a person preoccupied and dedicated to the field of quality to conceive a project for promoting the cult of quality in the Romanian society, aimed at improving the individual, organisational and national performance in this respect, for the ultimate increase in general welfare.

Key words: quality, The National Proquality Programme, mission, objectives, strategic model, specific projects and activities

From our point of view, The National Proquality Programme (PNP) should be managed by the Romanian Government, by the Ministry of Economy and Finance to be more exact, involving all interest groups: associations and NGOs that are concerned with quality (e.g.: ASRO – The Romanian Standards Association; ARC – The Romanian Association for Quality; FRPC – The Romanian Foundation for Quality Promotion; FRPC Juran – The “Joseph M. Juran” Romanian Quality Award Foundation, SRAC – The Romanian Society for Quality Assurance; RENAR – The Romanian Accreditation Association), the business environment represented by the Employer’s Association, the top management and the quality managers, the academic environment, the local public administration institutions and other state institutions, the mass-media and the consumers. The programme could be transferred to the responsibility of an NGO, but we encourage the first alternative, due to the decision-making powers, the available resources and the authority typical of a government.

The Proquality National Programme Mission:

• The improvement of the Romanian economy’s competitiveness by promoting the quality-specific managerial philosophy and practices, all aimed at the final result, EXCELLENCE;
• The improvement of the quality of life for the citizens by promoting the cult of quality and the quality products on the market.

The Proquality National Programme Objectives:

a) The top management awareness of the importance of quality as strategic business element in the context of business globalisation;

b) The training of all-level personnel in the organisation in the spirit of quality (the cult of quality and use of quality management-specific methods and instruments);

c) The promotion and the support for the implementation of quality standards. International standards play a key role on international markets;

d) The support for the efforts of certification (of products or systems) made by organisations in accordance with national and international standards;

e) The harmonisation of the Romanian legislation with the EU law;
f) The facilitation of access to domestic and foreign information in the field of quality;
g) The facilitation of co-operation between the academic and business environments in quality-related projects;
h) The adaption of the efforts towards preparing the workforce on high-school and graduate levels for the workforce market needs by including certain quality-specific fields of study in the curricula;
i) The development of the quality-specific institutional infrastructure;
j) The facilitation of foreign assistance through the co-operation with international organisations in the field;
k) The promotion of the J. M. Juran Romanian quality award;
l) The promotion of “quality brands” for the products manufactured or sold on the Romanian market;
m) The education of consumers in the spirit of quality.

The Proquality National Programme Strategic Model:

- **Interest groups**
  - Managers
  - Employees
  - Organisations in the field of quality
  - Educational community
  - Consumers

- **Needs to be fulfilled**
  - Awareness and motivation
  - Training
  - Education and information
  - Experience sharing
  - Feedback on performance
  - Performance analysis and assessment
  - Quality improvement
  - Competitiveness improvement
  - Excellence

- **Methods and instruments used**
  - Studies and research
  - Symposia and seminars
  - Publications
  - Library
  - Training
  - National promotional campaigns
  - National education and information campaigns
  - Financial aid

*Fig. 7 - The Proquality National Programme Strategic Model*

The ProQuality National Programme - Specific Projects and Activities

All projects and activities initiated within the Proquality National Programme are aimed at achieving the objectives laid above and at fulfilling the mission for which it was created. They can be grouped in:

1. Infrastructure projects;

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93 Adaptation after the FUNDECE strategic model – The Argentinian Business Foundation for Quality and Excellence
2. Training projects;
3. Educational and information projects;
4. Quality promotion projects;
5. Financial aid projects;
6. Projects for rewarding outstanding performance in the field of quality.

1. **Infrastructure projects** are aimed at creating an infrastructure, a system through which the central-level initiatives should flow and the local-level ideas should easily reach the central level and the creative potential of certain target groups should be made available. The most important infrastructure projects are:

   a) The county-level development of a PNP cell, within the Prefect’s Office or the Chamber of Commerce. They will have the role of implementing initiatives on the local level, central-level projects and will insure the necessary feedback. The PNP cell network will insure the uniform distribution of information in the field of quality on the national level, to avoid neglecting the countryside. Thus, an impulse for improving the competitiveness of the entire economy will be generated and not only that of the capital city, an aspect which should not be ignored socially;

   b) The creation of quality circles94 within high-school and university educational establishments, made up of teaching staff and pupils and students, respectively. The PNP cell in every county will assist these circles. Their purpose will be: the improvement of the quality of the teaching process; stimulating the “educator – educated” partnerships; the distribution of quality-related information, promoting the principle “Do something right from the beginning and every time”. Thus, the aim is to introduce and promote quality as a lifestyle for the new generations, vital for the economic and social future of the country.

2. The training projects will have two target groups: the top management and the other quality managers within the organisation. Regarding the first group, the objectives are:

   - The awareness of the importance of quality as a strategic business element in the context of business globalisation;
   - Highlighting the top management responsibilities in implementing a quality management system: communicating the importance of quality within the organisation, defining the policies and objectives in the field of quality, insuring the necessary resources for their achievement, using the creative potential of employees by practicing an active management and implementing the system of suggestions, periodic assessment of organisation capabilities in offering quality and initiation of appropriate preventive and corrective actions;
   - Highlighting the importance of the quality management system certification within the organisation, according to standards from the ISO 9000 family, this representing a premise: that of improving the quality of the obtained products; of foreign partnership;
   - Presenting the SR EN ISO 9001:2001 quality standard and its main scopes;
   - Presenting the TQM-specific modern management methods and techniques that allow the achievement of EXCELLENCE.

3. The training programmes for quality managers within the organisation aim at:

   - Presenting the SR EN ISO 9001:2001 quality standard and its main scopes;
   - Achieving the internal quality auditor certificate;
   - Presenting the most used instruments in quality management.

3. **Educational and information projects** shall be given a central place within the PNP, based on the premise that quality is mostly a matter of culture, of values (personal, organisational and national). The most important educational and information projects refer to:

   a) Publishing a bulletin with national and international information on quality. It will also include a virtual copy;

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94 We add that the notion of “quality circle” is not given the classical meaning in the field-specific literature.
b) Creating a library with field-specific literature. An important place within it will be represented by a collection of “case studies” from managerial practice. Thus, Romanian managers will be encouraged to share their experiences. The library will gather quality-specific publications from Romania and abroad;

c) Publishing DVDs with quality-specific themes;

d) The project “Appreciate quality”. It aims at informing and educating consumers in the spirit of quality, highlighting the benefits of purchasing quality products, the rights consumers have and the possibility of filing complaints in case of dissatisfaction;

e) The project “The month of quality” shall have a strong educational and information purpose. The month of November will be declared the month of quality on a national level, organising various activities dedicated to this theme;

f) Organising a round table where all the actors from the field of quality will be invited, for the purpose of facilitating the exchange of information and experience;

h) The introduction of quality-specific fields of study in the curriculum, so that every high-school or university graduate should study at least the basic aspects of the quality theme. An important role in this respect will be played by the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth, who will have to understand the importance of such a project;

i) Organising seminars with the participation of international specialists who share their experience from developed countries, presenting the models to follow;

4. **Quality promotion projects** are aimed at raising the awareness of the Romanian citizens, both as employees and consumers, regarding the importance of quality and their motivation towards achieving it. The main promotional projects will consist of:

- Presenting and promoting the Proquality National Programme in all environments of the Romanian society. Its importance and the need of involvement from the part of the entire society will be underlined. The most important promotional instruments used will be: e-marketing and public relations;
- Broadcasting cleverly made TV and radio ads in order to sensitise the society in the matter of quality viewed in its entire complexity;
- The annual selection of a number of companies within which PNP representatives will promote quality by holding seminars in front of the employees;
- Promoting of a quality brand for the products sold on the Romanian market, labelled “Q”, to allow consumers to easily identify quality products. The management of a quality brand implies rigour and transparency.

5. **Financial aid projects** refer to:

- Granting scholarships on graduate and postgraduate levels for those persons willing to refine their knowledge in the field and showing outstanding interest and skills;
- Granting financial aid to organisations willing to achieve a certification according to the standards from the ISO 9000 family or other international standards. In our opinion, priority should be given to organisations who export at least part of their production.

6. **Projects for rewarding performance in the field of quality** regard the persons and organisations with outstanding performance in the field. In this respect, the “Joseph M. Juran” Romanian Quality Award will be managed. It will consist of two sections: companies and personalities, respectively.

The chances of success for the Proquality National Programme are influenced decisively by the following factors:
• The degree of involvement of the government;
• The programme-level leadership;
• The quantitative and qualitative resources;
• The degree of receptivity of the Romanian society towards such an initiative;
• The programme-specific organisational structure. The model we propose is presented in annex four.

We estimate that the first effects of the implementation of the Proquality National Programme will appear after at least three years. We consider the PNP to be of vital importance to the Romanian society and economy. They need a new type of leadership, a new system of values that centres around quality and performance, regardless of the level of analysis (individual, organisational, national). The Proquality National Programme represents a premise to speak about the “Romanian miracle” in the not so distant future.

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