# CQI Council Meeting
July 2024

Quality management strategy for culture and capability

Introduction

Bringing together elected CQI members and external stakeholders, the CQI Council discussed critical priorities from positioning quality management as a strategic tool to developing a quality management culture and capability. The following summary provides more detailed insights into the key topics discussed at the July meeting.

Quality as a strategic tool

The CQI contends that good quality management can create strategic value for organisations, sectors, and whole economies. The collective CQI Council took the view that quality management can help as follows:
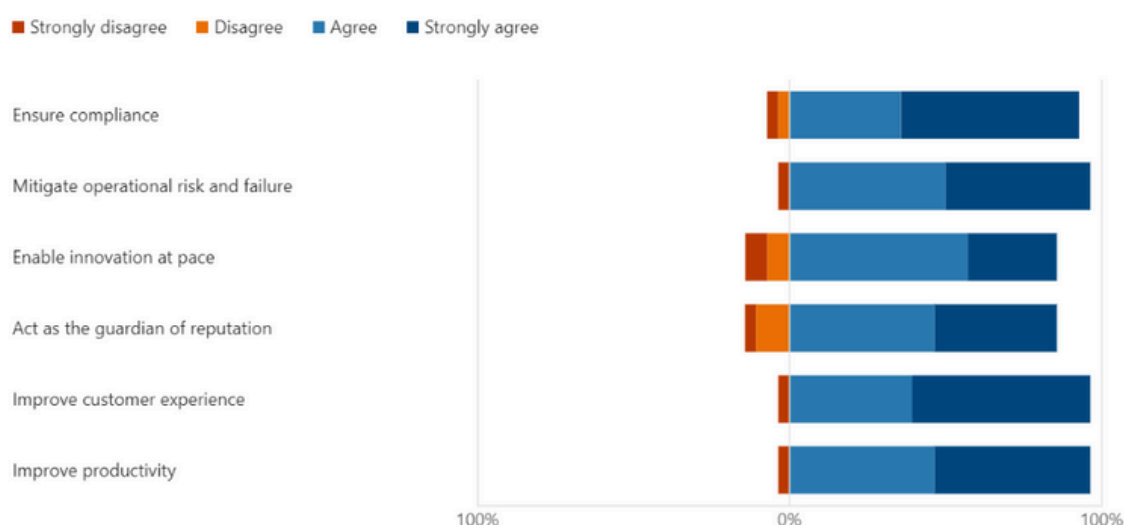
Adding value through quality management

The big question is how to move quality management to a position where it is viewed and valued as a strategic tool focused on improving what organisations produce – and how they produce it. The Council identified existing barriers to achieving this.

A complacent UK

Too many organisations appear to accept poor quality outcomes for their customers and stakeholders and can be accepting of significant waste and inefficiency in their systems of work.

The big innovation, skills, and technology bet

There appears to be the hope that wholesale skills development, the adoption of new technologies, and investment in research and development will tackle the opportunities to improve productivity and competitiveness at pace. Quality management is not seen as a crucial part of this mix.

The positioning and value of quality management

Quality management is seen as a necessary evil required to respond to regulatory and contract compliance. The strategic value and return on investment in quality management – being enjoyed in pockets of the economy – is simply not understood.

Skills on both sides

A concern that too few quality professionals are properly trained and qualified combined with a concern that operators, managers, and leaders lack education in quality principles and methods.

Strategic investment

The Council felt that investment in several initiatives by the CQI and the wider quality ecosystem are required to address these barriers.

Targeted messaging

We need to talk about quality management as a solution to current strategic challenges and opportunities: competitiveness, productivity, digital trust, and sustainability.

A quality toolkit

We need a simple toolkit for leaders and policy makers that demonstrates how quality management methods and tools drive success in response to competitiveness, productivity, digital trust, and sustainability.

New mindset

The quality and improvement profession needs to make a radical shift from complaining about lack of interest, to positioning itself as a strategic support service.

Short-termism

There is a tendency to take a short-term view of performance combined with a view that quality and business improvement initiatives are tactical at best, and too long-term and expensive at worst.

Evidence

We need a library of case studies which brings the quality toolkit value to life for managers, leaders, and policymakers.

Advocacy

The quality ecosystem needs to support and influence those policymakers and organisations tackling relevant issues including competitiveness, productivity, digital trust, and sustainability.

Developing quality culture and capability

The Council took the view that organisational wide quality culture and capability are central to planning, delivering, and improving outcomes for customers and stakeholders.
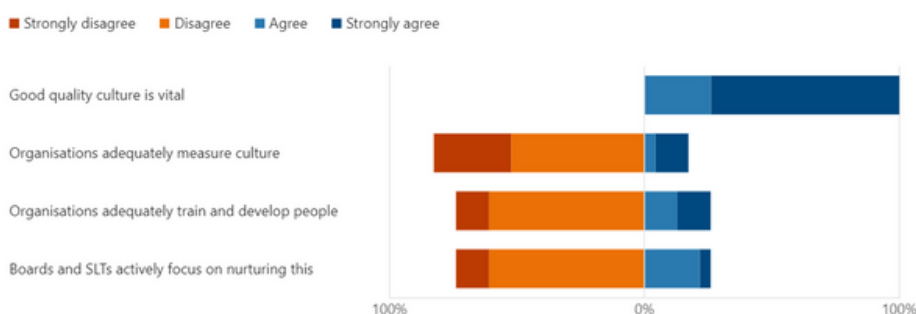
Of course, quality cultures vary depending on sector and leadership. Good quality cultures are often the rare consequence of a senior leader who champions the management of quality. Otherwise, developing quality culture and capability can prove challenging and driven by elements within an organisation.

It was noted that quality is a component of any organisational culture and that there are many competing components, such as health and safety, sustainability, social value, ethical behaviour, as well as multiple frameworks and codes of conduct. Additionally, the pace of digitalisation means that the human-machine interface will require values and culture to be embedded in digital transformation.

Barriers to developing a good quality culture

The Council identified the following barriers to developing good quality cultures in organisations and sectors.

Quality vocabulary

Commonly used words, such as non-conformity and audit, are often not conducive to creating strategic value and culture.

Defining quality culture

Noting the good work going on in other places, the quality community needs a shared definition of components of good and poor quality cultures.

'Sheep dipping' for capability

Organisations can fall into the trap of sheep dip training and one-off capability development programmes which are doomed to failure when separated from strategy and cultural objectives.

The add-on

Thinking about measuring and improving quality is often seen as an add-on to roles at all levels and not an important part of every role.

Recommendations for developing quality culture and capability

The Council suggested the following initiatives that the CQI and the wider ecosystem can take to develop quality culture and capability within the economy.

The quality brand

We need to focus this on strategic value.

Quality culture

We need to develop a toolkit and a code of conduct for organisations.

Communication and lobbying

We need to educate and inform leaders and policy makers and seek out leadership ambassadors.

The quality profession

We need to offer CPD in speaking the language of the business.

Education

We need to see quality concepts integrated into the education curriculum — from school (problem solving tools) to degrees (quality components) and provide a quality module for on-boarding new staff into organisations.

Collaboration

We need consistent messaging across the wider quality ecosystem and collaboration with management and leadership in professional bodies, higher education providers, and mutually beneficial initiatives and events.

About the CQI

The CQI is the global professional body for experts in improving product, project, and service quality.

For more than 100 years, we've been championing organisational excellence by setting professional standards for quality management in the UK and globally. We define and lead the quality profession, setting standards for its capability and scope through The Profession Map.

We encompass the whole quality community, including quality management professionals and management systems auditors.

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