

THE FERSTAHL CASE

You are quality manager for FERSTAHL, a commercial foundry. The company makes castings to customer order. The product is mostly sand castings. FERSTAHL has the usual departmental setup for production: pattern shop, core room, molding, and cleaning. You are responsible for materials control, process surveillance, final inspection, and the test laboratory.

Recently, the sales manager returned from a field trip. He reported the loss of two customers, one an important account, due to poor quality--porous and hard castings. When this was discussed in the general manager's office, both you and the plant manager had some explaining to do.

One of the questions which came up was that of the quality attitude of the work force and supervisors. This produced divergent views among the managers:

- a. The plant manager: The workers couldn't care less. We have had to be strict on issuing warnings and applying penalties.
- b. The personnel manager: I get a lot of feedback that we don't maintain our tools, processes, and instruments. The workers say they have quit telling their supervisors about these problems because nothing is done about them.
- c. The purchasing agent: Someone came in here last month trying to sell a poster service for stimulating people to do a better quality job. The salesperson claimed that the companies have gotten wonderful results by using the service.
- d. The marketing manager: These fellows should be made to realize that, if we can't sell the product, they won't have jobs. Why don't we show them the customers' rejects or the customers' letters saying we have lost the account, along with telling them how many people will be out of a job because of poor quality?
- e. The controller: You pay less money when people produce less. Why not pay less money when their quality is poor? If incentives work for quantity, they should work for quality.
- f. The engineering manager: We need to error proof the process so that human error doesn't enter into it. If we had the appropriation, we could provide automatic controls for many steps that are now up to human judgment and mistake.

The general manager turned to you: "We don't seem to be getting anywhere. You're supposed to be the expert on quality. All you've said is that the problem is much deeper than we realize and that there is no quick solution. I would go for a slow solution if it sounded convincing. Suppose you work up a proposal a month from now."

Problem: What do you plan to do?