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# THE GREAT INNOVATORS

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## DEMING AND JURAN: THE KINGS OF QUALITY

### **The Japanese consider Juran's insights even more important than Deming's**

*As part of its anniversary celebration, BusinessWeek is presenting a series of weekly profiles for the greatest innovators of the past 75 years. Some made their mark in science or technology; others in management, finance, marketing, or government. In late September, 2004, BusinessWeek will publish a special commemorative issue on Innovation.*

In May, scores of quality-management luminaries from as far off as Japan and Sweden converged on Stamford, Conn., to pay tribute to a living legend: Joseph M. Juran, the patriarch of quality. The event was billed as “100 years of Juran.” He won't turn 100 until the day before Christmas, “but they decided it would be safer not to wait,” says Juran wryly.

This year also marks the 50th anniversary of Juran's historic first trip to Japan at the invitation of the Japanese Union of Scientists & Engineers (JUSE). His several visits helped Japanese industry implement “total quality” and shake off its postwar reputation as a maker of cheap, shoddy products. All told, Juran carried his total-quality message to 34 countries on 178 trips abroad, logging more than 5 million air miles by his official retirement in 1994.

In addition to consulting and lecturing, Juran is a prolific writer. Of his 12 books, the best-seller was originally called *Quality Control Handbook*. Its publication in 1951 prompted JUSE's invitation. The nearly 2,000-page tome, retitled *Juran's Quality Handbook* and in its fifth printing, remains the bible of the quality movement worldwide.

Juran and W. Edwards Deming (1900–93), the two most influential thinkers behind the total-quality movement, both launched their careers a few years apart at Western Electric, which used statistical quality-control techniques pioneered at Bell Labs to build reliable telephones. And both gained acclaim while on loan to the government during World War II. The irony is, Japanese execs heeded the lessons of total quality ahead of American managers.

In 1950, JUSE hosted the first of several tours by Deming. His lectures on applying statistical quality control to manufacturing processes—instead of just inspecting

products after the fact—were a revelation to the Japanese, and they embraced the concept with religious fervor. JUSE established the prestigious Deming Prize a year later. The U.S. didn't get around to creating its counterpart, the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, until 1987—a decade after Japan began grabbing huge chunks of market share with its well-built cars, TVs, and computer chips.

In 1969, JUSE asked Juran to lend his name to Japan's top quality award, a sort of super-Deming Prize for companies that maintain the highest quality for five years running. JUSE deemed Juran's vision of top-to-bottom quality management even more important than Deming's manufacturing insights. Juran demurred—a decision he now regrets. So what could have been the Juran Medal is instead called the Japan Quality Control Medal. There is a Joseph M. Juran Medal, though. It's awarded by the American Society for Quality. Juran personally presented the first one in 2001 to Robert W. Galvin, then head of Motorola Inc.'s (*MOT*) executive committee.

By Otis Port