



# Taking Your Quality Group from Vulnerable to Invaluable

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# Background and Goal

- My interest in quality and customer experience management started me on the quest to learn how to make quality groups successful
- Goal: To share the secrets of success
  - Where to start if we want to avoid being vulnerable?
  - How can we can become Invaluable?





# How Successful Are We?

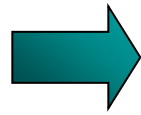
<b>Grade</b>	<b>Other Groups Rate You</b>	<b>Your Group Rates You</b>
A to A-		
B+ to B-		
C+ to C-		
Lower		

# What Others Said

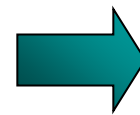
<b>Grade</b>	<b>Customer Ratings</b>	<b>Self Ratings</b>
A to A-	<b>30%</b>	14%
B+ to B-	30	<b>52</b>
C+ to C-	30	31
Lower	<b>10</b>	3

# What Makes Some Groups Good and Others Great?

**Good**



**Better**



**Great**

**A. Build Strong Structures**

**B. Influence Business Decisions**

**C. Provide Good Work**



# Great Groups Do All Three Things

**Good**  **Provide Good Work**

**Better**  **Influence Business Decisions**

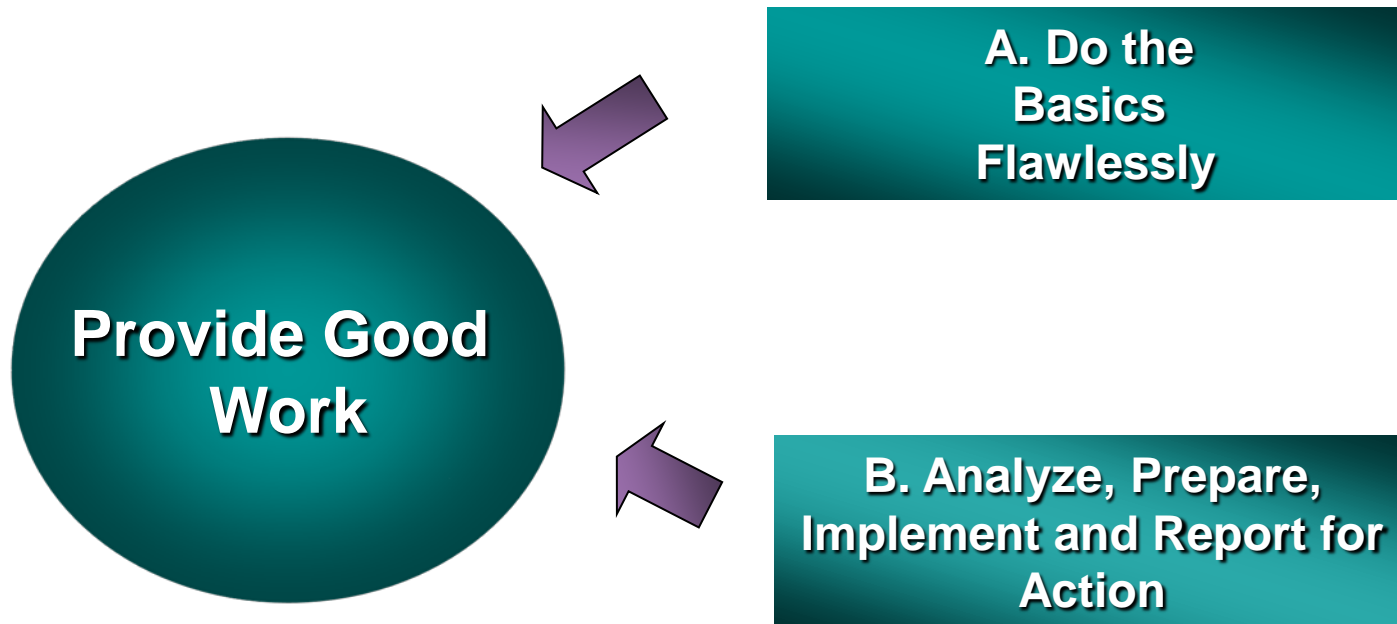
**Great**  **Build Strong Structures**



# About Sherry

- The story is about one quality group but I hope it gives you some useful ideas
- After Sherry was hired to improve the department, she began by studying past research and talking to her “customers” to learn
  - What was important to them
  - What they thought her group did well and
  - What they thought needed improvement

# Good Groups Provide Good Work





# Good Work Is Essential

Flawless basics are assumed and essential

- They matter most if we fail to deliver
- Dissatisfier if not flawless



# A. Do the Basics Flawlessly

1. Define objectives VERY clearly
  - Use team or project charters
  - Specify outcomes, goals, resources, champions, milestones
2. Use appropriate methodology
  - Customers care less than quality groups
  - Probably because it's seldom a problem
3. Meet or exceed specifications
  - Time and budget
  - Error-free
  - Communicate about changes to plan



# B. Analyze, Report and Present to Persuade

## 1. Analyze

- Always use data

## 2. Report

- Short and sweet - to the point
- Explains the “why” of the results and recommendations
- Good use of graphics and structure

## 3. Present and Persuade

- Present to suit the customers’ styles
- Offer recommendations – try them out in advance





# How Did Sherry Do?

- Based on your experience, what else could she have done?
  - Have you been in similar situations?
  - What have you done?

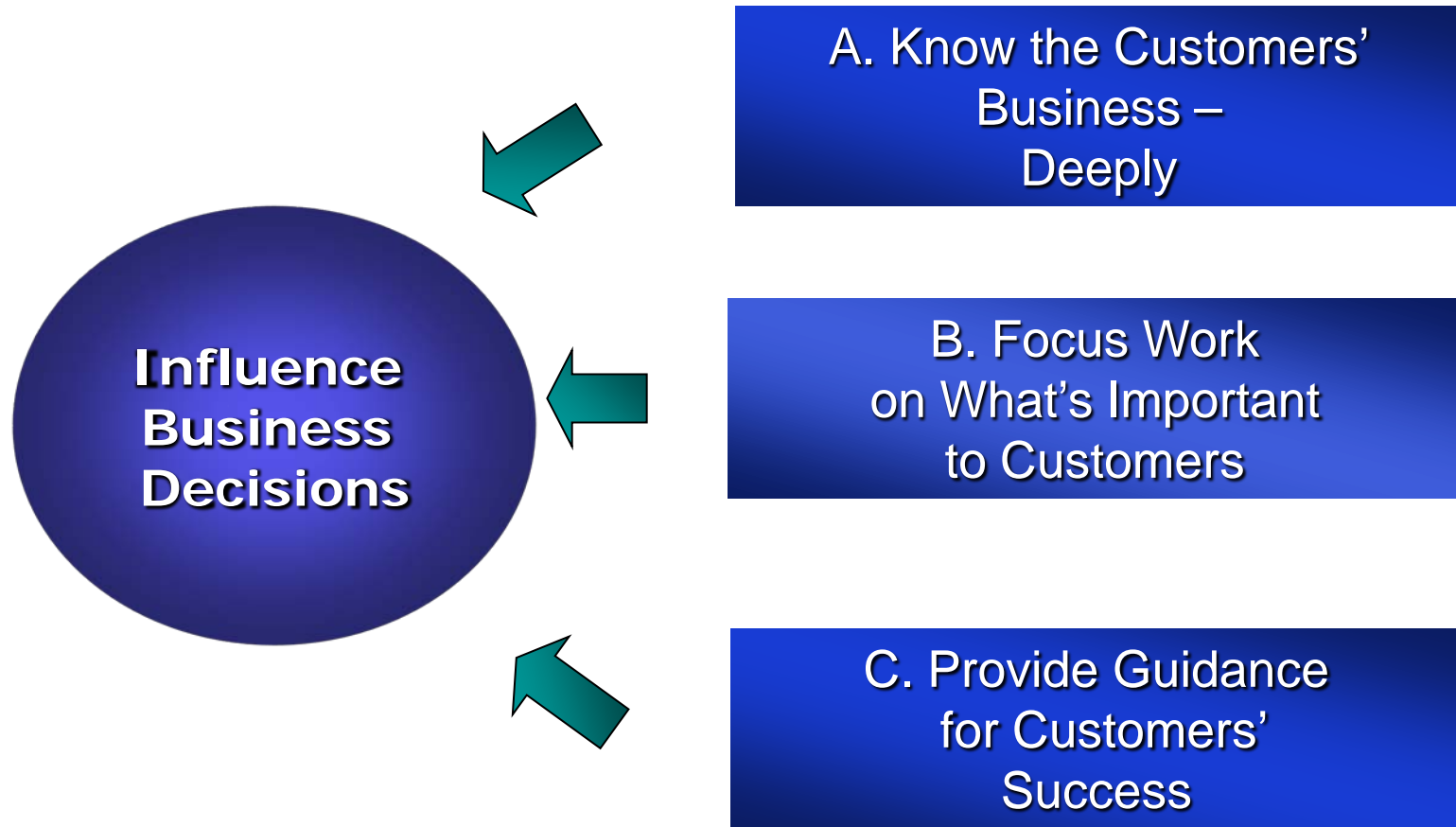


# What Next for Sherry?

- At the end of the first year, a customer satisfaction survey showed high marks
- Demand for services was up
- She felt ready to move to the next important customer need: An Influential Partner
- What would you do?



# Better Groups Influence Business Decisions



# Earning the Right to Aid Decisions Delights Customers

The ability to share knowledge, focus projects on what's important, and guide customers to successful outcomes is a bonus

- It can be a “delight” factor
- Customers view groups that do this as trusted partners



# A. Know the Customers to Build Relationships

1. Spend time getting to know customers
  - a. Different customers have different needs
2. Align your goals and style to customers'
  - a. Identify and avoid conflicting goals (they can exist!)
  - b. Easiest when customers have clear goals or strategies
3. Obtain and act on feedback





## A. Know the Customers' Business

1. Study the company, competition and industry
  - Learn the whole business and industry to maximize value
  - Longevity and cross-training help
2. Integrate and share knowledge about the business
  - Integrate data from all sources
  - Share knowledge with customers, suppliers and department

## B. Focus Work on What's Important to Customers

1. Define customers' business goals and needs
  - Determine how customers define success
  - Customers like quality staff who know them well enough to help them determine goals
2. Useful tools are ...
  - Consultative questioning and "project" forms
  - Annual brainstorming about customer challenges
3. Proactively recommend work to customers
  - Customers – especially senior customers – value this more than quality groups think
  - Consider conducting some projects on "spec"





## C. Provide Guidance for Customers' Success

1. Offer insights on the customers' business issues
  - Customers want quality to offer “deep and creative insights” on how lean, ISO, Baldrige will increase their success
2. Provide valued recommendations – often with the customers' input
  - Involving customers up front wins early support
  - Focus on the upside of change rather than problems – especially if recommendations are unexpected
3. Participate with customers on action teams and committees





# What Comes Next for Sherry?

- At the end of the second year, she got an A!
- Her new challenge? Too much demand!
- Sherry wanted to make the case for more resources.
- What would you do?

# Great Groups Build Strong Structures



A. Hire,  
Develop and Retain the  
Best People



B. Budget  
Spending  
Strategically, for ROI



C. Advocate for the  
Group to  
Secure Resources

# The Great Groups All Have Strong Structures

This is almost invisible to customers but vital to great quality groups

Strong quality groups are a win-win for customers and quality groups



# A. Hire, Develop and Retain the Best People

1. Hire good people
2. Build department consulting skills
  - Understand customers' business, goals
  - Comfortable making recommendations
  - Able to speak and write well for different types of customers
  - Learn from skilled suppliers, each other, conferences
3. Keep the work interesting, challenging
  - Balance team and individual work
  - Offer a career progression – non-managerial promotions
  - Recognize and reward people
4. Avoid burnout
  - Get lean





## B. Budget Spending Strategically, for ROI

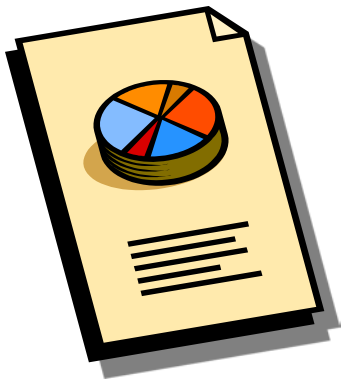
1. Focus on most important projects
  - High visibility or financial value
  - Tie directly to strategy
2. Estimate value or ROI.
  - Use ROI accepted measures
  - Make friends with Accounting and Finance
3. Use group discretionary budgets for strategically important projects
4. Align annual plan with corporate plan



# C. Advocate for the Group to Secure Resources

## 1. Market Quality's Insights and Contributions

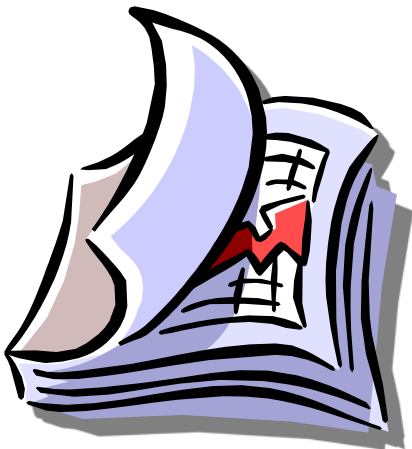
- To all executives, not just immediate customers
- Newsletters, meetings, presentations
- On-line database – stressing decisions, action





## C. Advocate for the Group to Secure Resources

2. Demonstrate Quality's Value and Need for Resources
  - Annual report with ...
    - Past successes, ROI and \$ contributions
    - Future plans and resource needs
    - Testimonials
  - Have data on capacity constraints, effects



# C. Advocate for the Group to Secure Resources

## 3. Be Strategic about Reporting Structure and Allies

- Great work is possible regardless of...
  - Who pays for the project
  - Size of budget or staff
  - Whether group is corporate or embedded in business line
- But great bosses or allies help!





# Great Groups Do All Three Things

**Good**  **Provide Good Work**

**Better**  **Influence Business Decisions**

**Great**  **Build Strong Structures**

# I Believe Great Quality Groups

- Maintain work quality
- Focus on adding new skills
  - Consulting – to add value for customer
  - Financial – to measure ROI, value
  - Strategy – to align with customers
  - Marketing – to advocate for the group
  - HR – to hire, train, retain best people
  - Research – to understand customer needs
- Think “T” instead of “I”



# What Do You Believe?

- What about Sherry's experience appealed to you?
- Where would you begin?
- How could you make your group invaluable?



# Want to Learn More?



To learn more about how to manage customer experiences and see more cases, go to [www.Schmalensee.com](http://www.Schmalensee.com)

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