

## **WHAT IS QUALITY – AND HOW DO YOU ACHIEVE IT?**

**By Robert J. Tamasy**

Years ago the Ford Motor Company had an often-used advertising slogan, “Quality is Job One.” Concise and catchy, this motto persuaded some car buyers to purchase cars and trucks made by Ford, presuming the manufacturer had a strong commitment to producing quality vehicles.

The only question is, what does “quality” mean? I suspect if you were to ask 10 different people, they would provide you with as many as 10 different opinions. Recently, in working on a book project with a manufacturing company, I was talking with the director of quality. I asked him that question and liked his response: “Doing the right thing every time.”

He elaborated: “This means always doing what you are supposed to do, doing things correctly – consistently. And not messing up. In our industry, not messing up is very important.”

Quality, of course, can mean many other things. You would expect greater workmanship from a Rolex watch than from a Timex – but regardless of which brand you have, you would still want it to tell you the correct time. A Mercedes sedan might offer greater “quality” than an economy sedan, but you would expect both to transport you safely from point A to point B. We become upset if that does not happen.

So getting back to the earlier definition, “doing the right thing every time” says a lot. Would you feel confident undergoing major surgery if the surgeon had a reputation for patients surviving 50 percent of the time? How about flying in a passenger jet piloted by someone who successfully landed 75 percent of his flights? Would you want to buy a high-definition TV that turned on only 60 percent of the time? We insist on quality – which means the product or service should do the right thing every time.

How does that translate to how we perform in the workplace? Can our employers and customers reasonably expect us to do the right thing every time? Excellence, consistency and dependability are hallmarks of quality businesses – and business and professional people – that achieve high levels of success. And as stewards of our God-given talents and resources, we must understand God has every right to expect quality from us:

**Things must be done right.** For people that profess to follow Jesus Christ, there is no room for inferior work. After all, God set the standard, as we see in the creation account: “*God saw all that he had made, and it was very good*” (Genesis 1:31).

**Things must be done completely.** Sometimes in our haste to finish a project we might take the attitude, “It is good enough.” That was not the example Jesus set. He came to lead, teach, serve as a model for living, and finally to give His own life to atone for mankind’s sins. He fulfilled His assignment: “*...Jesus said, ‘It is finished.’ With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit*” (John 19:30).

**Things must be done for the right reasons.** Are our motives right – are we seeking to please the right “customer”? “*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men.... It is the Lord Christ you are serving*” (Colossians 3:23-24).

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### **Reflection/Discussion Questions**

1. How would you define "quality" in the business and professional world?
2. Do you agree with the definition that quality is "doing the right thing every time"? Why or why not?
3. What is your view of how God looks at our work, or how we conduct our everyday lives? Do you think He has a right to demand quality from us – or does it even matter? Explain your answer.
4. If you agree that "quality" is important for both the professional and spiritual dimensions of our lives, how would you say you measure up? On a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being the highest, how do you think God would rate you? Why?

If you would like to look at or discuss other portions of the Bible that relate to this topic, consider the following brief sampling of passages:

Proverbs 10:4, 12:24, 18:9, 22:29, 24:27, 27:18; Matthew 6:19-24,33; Colossians 3:17