

BOB KRONE's QUALITY ESSAYS*

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"Quality Policymaking"

Why is there so much attention to leadership? The short answer is that leadership makes policy and policy determines quality and success. The United States has just completed one of its most dramatic periods of concentration on public policy as the year 2011 begins. There is a concern by Policy Scientists that the ratio of macro benefits to costs for Americans over the past four decades is declining. The trend of that ratio globally also appears to be declining.

An emphasis on leadership is essential for businesses, government agencies, schools, hospitals, foundations, the military, multi-national entities or non-profit organizations to successfully implement quality programs. Resources are required. Leadership controls resources and policy. The number one category of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award is Leadership. And leadership creates the policymaking system and its process.

In spite of this critical leadership-to-quality link there is still no formal focus on Quality Policymaking within the American Society for Quality (ASQ). And the ASQ has been the world's leading professional organization focusing on quality improvement for sixty years. Products and Services remain the two major ASQ subjects..

It is not that policy issues have been ignored by quality professionals – quite the contrary. Deming's 14 Points, the writings of Juran, Crosby, Feigenbaum, Taguchi, and most other quality professionals consider the policy implications of their quality improvement recommendations. Organizational culture cannot be changed without the work of decision makers. The message of this essay is that it is time now, in the year 2011, for ASQ to formally create a Quality Policymaking research, writing and consulting entity.

Why do it? The gap between needed quality of policymaking and existing quality has been increasing for centuries. 20th Century advances in science and

technology accelerated that gap. In spite of important exceptions – mostly in business and the military - reality testing of evidence will show that Yehezkel Dror's "*Second Dror Law*," published in 1971, remains valid. Dror is the scholar widely regarded as the world's foremost pioneer of modern public policy studies. His works in the 1960s founded the Policy Sciences academic discipline. His "*Second Dror Law*" reads:

"While human capacities to shape their environment, society, and human beings are rapidly increasing, policymaking capabilities to use those capacities remain the same."

The first decade of our 21st Millennium has begun with so many policymaking failures that I need not try to itemize them here. Policy choices will impact ever larger numbers of people as corporations continue to grow to be mega-groups, as national systems intertwine increasingly with regional and global systems, as global problems like terrorism continue, as populations grow, pollution increases, economies fail and finite resources are consumed. As complexity increases more policy decisions will be irreversible once implemented. We cannot reverse the historical legacies of huge costs of poor quality, of wasteful competition and catastrophic conflict throughout the 20th Century and already now in the 21st, and of public and private systems failures resulting from poor policymaking. "*Pushing quality up the organization*," is an idea now spreading by necessity.

Both the Quality Sciences and the Policy Sciences began formally in the 1950s and have developed with too little interaction. It's time to accelerate the merger.

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