

Skills requirements of the modern Quality Assurance Manager

- Ian Peace and I have been working in the meat industry for 34 years
- A large number of the Abattoirs I have worked at are no longer operational.
- I commenced my career with the DPI which then took on a name change to Livestock and Meat Authority of Queensland for a short time then to Queensland Livestock and Meat Authority to the now Safe:food cost born by industry

QA is always about continuous improvement

- Back some 19 years ago, complying was relatively simple
- Most QA manager in that era have come from a regulatory or been heavily influenced by the regulators

Why has it changed?

- The major functional change has been from Departmental control with on line Departmental Inspectors
- The major challenge we are facing, is how to take control of our own destiny so that we have a positive future with growth in the industry

- QA teams are an essential part of this process
- QA managers need to build a Team that can deliver the desired outcome
- Most QA managers are hands on do it now type people but in the environment we are now it is necessary to take a more Team developmental approach
- understand the changes in legislation or customer requirements
- Ability to interpret it so changes can be complied with

What is expected?

- Food safety is not something that is in doubt but is a given
- The consumers awareness is more focused how they can use the product
- Products considered secondary cuts are now a desired protein for a meal e.g. beef cheeks
- Another strong influence on consumer expectations is the news/social media
- We need to always be prepared to respond to these situations promptly

- QA managers need to be current, up to date and aware of what questions customers are likely to ask
- The consumer needs to have the information at hand that satisfies and answers their questions and takes away any doubt or misled idea which they may then spread (hearsay and innuendo) which can be detrimental to our industry
- There is a shift in focus to the contamination that cannot be seen
- The other area that is gaining significant traction on the back of companies being seen to not being above board either here or abroad is social accountability
- QA managers need to be aware of the customer very important requirement for brand protection and how we can ensure this is achieved as well as ensuring our own brand is protected


The future

- QA managers we have to impart our knowledge on the up and coming Team Members
- Use the knowledge the Team Member already has to compliment their development.
- Maintaining an environment that is transparent to the customer and all stake holders is essential in today business world
- At present we have increasing legislative and customer requirements to meet

- Along with this comes the increased emphasis on the audit function
- Market access is a vital component of a QA managers role and seizing the opportunities as they arise is critical

Need for consolidation

- We now work in an environment that should allow us to have more control over our own destiny and we need to grasp this and run with it
- The Department is not only shrinking in size, but also in knowledge of the meat industry
- The need for consolidation of the legislation and standards is here

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- As an industry we need to be focused compliance
 - We need to show the regulator and the customer that we are in control and that the need to reduce costs can be assisted in part by reducing the amount of oversight
 - Audits should not be a method of find deviations from systems but finding compliance which will show them to be unnecessary
 - Let's face it we are in a heavily regulated industry and as a result heavily audit and any audit reduction has to be a good for the industry.

Recap on major roles of the modern QA manager

1. Maintaining the QA manual or Approved Arrangement
2. Net working with other companies to build strong relationships so where issues arise the best outcome for both parties can be achieved
3. Interpreting legislation and customer requirements so they can be turned into or added into procedures that can be understood by the Team
4. Making sure that information is gathered and presented for analysis at Management review

5. Reviewing KPI's and carrying out root cause analysis where necessary for continuous improvement
6. Training both for succession planning as well as Team development in ensure the best outcomes
7. Maintaining Market access and where possible increasing market access
8. Verifying compliance both through the QA team and by observation

9. Maintaining certifications that have already been obtained and analysing the usefulness of some of those certifications to ensure they are still meeting the needs of the company
10. Ensuring that systems are in place to meet customer expectations eg loose item control
11. The most important of all is to be on the look out for opportunities to improve the company and its bottom line

The QA manager needs to have a Team that understand the requirements of the customer and legislative and the best way to achieve this is to keep them informed of current developments and trends.

The QA manager's role is to interpret requirements and then adapt them to the individual plant requirements and ensure the Team has the knowledge to act in a manner that meets requirements without placing unnecessary restrictions on production.

Thank You