



Quality circle

A quality circle is a discussion group which meets on a regular basis to identify quality problems, investigate solutions and make recommendations as to the most suitable solution. The members of quality circles are employees and may include individuals with specific skills or expertise, such as engineers, quality inspectors or salespersons. Quality circles were first created in the 1950s in the Toyota motor company. In the 1980s this Japanese form of **employee participation** and consultation was adopted on a large scale in both Europe and the US. Quality circles aim to use untapped knowledge from employees, as well as providing them with the opportunity to show their knowledge and talents in terms of their problem-solving skills.

Quality of work life (QWL)

Quality of work life has become a key aspect of human resources, largely as a result of increasing legislation on the humanization of the workplace. In Europe, Article 13 of the Working Time Directive specifically states:

Member States shall take the measures necessary to ensure that an employer who intends to organise work according to a certain pattern takes account of the general principle of adapting work to the worker, with a view, in particular, to alleviating monotonous work and work at a pre-determined work-rate, depending on the type of activity, and of safety and health requirements, especially as regards breaks during work time.

See also Working Time Regulations 1998 (UK); Working Time Regulations 1999; and Working Time (Amendment) Regulations 2002.

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See organizational culture.