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IN THEIR OWN VOICES / *Executives whose companies use the expression in promoting their business explain why to freelance reporter Edward Trapunski*

Quality is the magic word for corporate slogans

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WHAT'S in a word?

When the word is "quality," there are as many definitions as there are corporate slogans that feature it.

A number of executives whose companies use the expression in promoting their business – and who embrace total quality management – enlarge on the concept.

JIM O'CONNOR

President and chief executive officer, Ford Motor Co. of Canada Ltd., Oakville, Ont.

Slogan: Where quality is Job 1.

"Quality is Job 1 is more than a slogan. It's one of our guiding principles as far as operating the company. Quality is trying to establish complete confidence in our products, something that you as the consumer can always rely upon, something that always meets or exceeds your expectations, and something that you tell your friends about. We are trying to achieve customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction will hopefully lead to owner loyalty.

"There are statistical definitions when you benchmark quality and you think of things gone wrong with the vehicle. But you also try to achieve quality with things gone right. Parts of the touch zone, things that people see and touch and feel every day, that they can say are things gone right with my car. So it's a combination of trying to reduce things gone wrong and increase things gone right.

"We've recently developed some operating standards both in sales and in service for our dealerships. We are even having the dealers measure us, which is a new trend. We always used to have the consumers measure our dealers; now we're having ourselves measured.

"All these things support total quality management. You have to spend a ton of time on training. Training is probably one of the most important keys. We'll average about 324 hours of training. We listen to our employees because the people closest to the problem are closest to the solution. That's total quality management by my definition. Just because the boss puts a plaque up on the wall doesn't make it total quality management. You have to walk the talk."

PETER BERESFORD

Vice-president and national director of marketing, McDonald's Restaurants of Canada Ltd., Toronto.

Slogan: Quality, service, cleanliness and value.

"When you look at quality in our business you have to look at all aspects. Quality refers to highest quality raw ingredients that we use to prepare our products. It's part of an extensive training program and operation system that ensures that we consistently deliver high-quality products as finished products to our customers.

"It deals with the selection process that we use to choose our franchisees. It talks about selecting the best employees. It talks about the quality of our suppliers. So to me, the term quality permeates every aspect of our business.....

"You have to establish yourselves as a customer-driven company in the minds of your customers. You have to meet certain levels of expectation. They know what to expect. They expect high-quality food in pleasant surroundings and we have created that level of expectation.

"The second point is the quality of the service, again a level of expectation. If you saw in a restaurant a young child who might have just purchased an ice cream cone and it dropped on the floor, our customers would expect McDonald's to replace that ice cream cone and make that young child smile. The level of expectation is the quality of service.

"We have introduced our own total quality management program that we call McDonald's Quality Management. It is basically a business management philosophy driven by a single-minded focus that's 100 per cent customer satisfaction."

MARK LUKOWSKI

Vice-president and general manager of Motorola Cellular Canada, a division of Motorola Canada Ltd., Toronto.

Slogan: Quality means the world to us.

"Our definition of quality is to have the most reliable products for the end user, that work every time and work right every time. It really comes down to the commitment we have internally to make sure that we meet those high-quality standards.

"There are many corporate initiatives. One of them is the Six Sigma initiative that we implemented within the Motorola Corp. to make sure that we have no more than three errors per million opportunities in the products and services that we provide. We measure ourselves on a continuing basis to see how well we achieve that quality rating.

"What do we do to actually get there? Is there one magic thing that we do? The way that we work at achieving this is doing many things right and trying to do everything we do right. It means that when we build the product we have all the components that meet the standards. It means that when we do all the testing we test the product in every type of situation.

"If we are processing an order, it means that we take all the order information correctly up front so that we minimize any errors in shipping or invoicing after. It means trying to do everything correctly the first time, but more importantly continually benchmarking yourself as you move along."

TOM WATSON

Vice-president and general manager, Xerox Consulting Group, a division of Xerox Canada Inc., Toronto.

Slogan: Leadership through quality.

"It is the central business strategy for the company. The meaning is to meet customer requirements as a strategy to achieve business results. It is a continuous improvement system.

"Perhaps if we talk about it on a work-team level or a work-group level as opposed to macro, it involves informing the people doing the work of all the requirements related to those activities. It's defining the boundaries for their activities, encouraging them to define their customers' requirements.

"What it should mean is that the performance of the end product, if not perfect, is as close to faultless as technology will allow. Most, if not all, of the imperfection that people can build in is avoided.

"Our business strategy is a total quality management strategy. All the extra words are just intended to emphasize the holistic nature of quality in the sense we are talking about it."

The article EM9346 reprinted above is used in Figure 11.16 of the STAT 221 Course Materials.