

Tribute to Quality Gurus

by Sunil Thawani

The D day had come. It was 10th April 2000 in Manama, Bahrain. I was full of excitement and was looking to this day for the past few weeks. Mr. M. M. Joshi and myself were there to present a paper in First Gulf International Quality Conference “ Quality Beyond 2000 – Challenges and Opportunities “ . Excitement was not for presenting our case study, but to listen to world renowned Quality gurus – Mr. Philip Crosby, CEO, Philip Crosby Associates Inc. (PCA), USA, Mr. Charles Ausbury, President, American Society for Quality (ASQ), Dr. Hans Bajaria, President, Multiface Inc., USA and many others.

Academicians, practicing Quality Managers, Consultants, Assessors and many other eminent personalities had travelled from Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, USA, UK, Kuwait etc. to learn from the Quality Gurus. Listening to them was a pure delight. The depth of their knowledge, understanding and freely sharing of their experience was quite an enlightening and rare experience. After the sessions, I had brief opportunity to meet and interact with Mr. Phil Crosby. With Dr. Hans I was lucky to spend an evening together. Every moment spent with them was full of learning. For a professional like me, to get to meet “ Quality Gurus “ is a dream come true. But I never realised that within a year, both of them will be no more amongst us. They taught thousands of Managers worldwide. Paying tribute to such great people, who have spent most of their life to Quality field, is not easy.

Mr. Philip Crosby

Mr. Philip Crosby was a business philosopher with more than 40 years of hands on management experience. He is said to have initiated the Quality movement in USA. He introduced theories like “ The price of non conformance is a measure of poor quality”, “ prevention is a means to eliminate quality problems “, “ leadership is a requirement to make progress “ , team work is the principle for work and customer requirements define the standard of quality performance “.

He is credited with enforcing the message “ Do the right things right the first time “ and “ introducing the importance of striving for Zero defects”.

His first book, published in 1979 was “ Quality is Free “. It was translated in 15 languages and has sold more than 2.5 million copies. Over the next 22 years he wrote about a dozen books and numerous articles. His last book “ Quality and Me : Lessons of an Evolving Life “ was published in 1999.

Crosby was born on 18th June 1926 in US and after working in several companies assumed responsibilities as Corporate Vice President of Quality at International Telephone and Telegraph company (ITT) – the multinational telecom giant.

In 1979, he was recognized for his contributions in the field of Quality and was elected President of American Society for Quality (ASQ). The same year he founded Philip Crosby Associates Inc. (PCA), an education and training firm which grew to employ more than 300 employees around the world and US \$ 100 million in revenue. Through his work at PCA he taught the importance of preventive culture and techniques to more than 100000 top managers including to worlds leading multinational conglomerates like General Motors, Motorola, Xerox, Chrysler, Hewlett Packard etc.

His revolutionary work, contribution and achievements earned him several recognitions like “ Distinguished Service Medal from the Army in recognition of creation of Zero Defects concept “ in 1964, “ W. M. McFeely Award “ from YMCA International .

Crosby was diagnosed and treated for oesophageal cancer earlier this year and appeared on his way to recovery. But his conditioned worsened, and he died in a hospital on 18th August' 2001. Wayne L. Kost, President and CEO of PCA sums it best “ His passing leaves a void in all our lives. Fortunately his methodologies and philosophies are well documented in enormous library of books, tapes, manuals etc. We at PCA are committed to continuing the spread of his “ gospel of quality “ to succeeding generations of business executives “

Dr. Hans Bajaria

It is very difficult to write about a friend, advisor, well-wisher and more so whom you respect. It was sudden and sad news.

Dr. Bajaria, was Hans to his family, friends and colleagues. Hans was an icon of quality profession. He led an exemplary life and career. He was a very vibrant and warm person with great integrity. He loved quality. He had an attitude of service to help in every dimension. All his talks were logical, easy to understand and filled with fun and wit. He co-authored a book, Statistical Problem Solving (SPS), along with Richard P. Copp. Hans passed away on August 29, 2001. He was 58 (1943 - 2001).

Hans operated a consulting practice, Multiface, Inc., in quality and reliability engineering and management since 1978. He travelled across the world on his assignments. Through his “ column “ - Points and Counter Points – he challenged world renowned Quality experts on hot topics like Six Sigma, ISO : 9000, Pareto Analysis etc. – a testimony to his depth of knowledge and understanding of the subject. You can still find it on his web site www.multiface.com He was previously an Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering at Lawrence Technological University in Michigan after holding engineering positions with major manufacturing companies.

He was a regular speaker at international Quality conferences and professional organisations like ASQ, Society of Engineers, Society of Mechanical Engineers.

He was a fellow of ASQ and the recipient of the Edwards Medal in 1999, the Grant Medal in 1993, Engineer of the Year by Rockwell International in 1976.

Hans always left a lasting impression on anyone who heard him speak or merely came in contact with him. ASQ members in UAE, were fortunate to meet and hear him on 10th January 2001, in Dubai on “ Knowledge Creation and Knowledge Management – Inseparable Twins “

Besides their families, Quality community will miss them greatly for they were men who touched and influenced many lives, including mine. They will be remembered, in years to come, for their contributions to the field of Quality and management.

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Sources : www.asq.org, www.multiface.com, www.philipcrosby.com