New research looks at how nine leading companies cope with the conflicts and synergy of multiple change efforts.

Managing Concurrent Change Initiatives: Integrating Quality and Work/Family Strategies

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Managing even one large-scale change initiative can be all-consuming. Ensuring top-down consistency, bottom-up commitment, middle-level follow-through, and input at all levels strains any organization's resources. In most companies, however, people throughout the organization are expected to play their part in *not one,* but *several* change efforts simultaneously.

The results are predictable: Resources are shifted from one program to another and then another. Corporate training mandates cascade down from separate functions—each stamped top priority. Managers and employees pick and choose among parts of each initiative—embracing some features and rejecting others, particularly those that seem confusing or threatening. The result is a mix of daily practices that bears little relation to each change effort's original goals.

While many managers are likely to have experienced the complexity and frustration associated with implementing multiple change initiatives, few know how to address

these dynamics. To identify the key issues involved, we chose to take a first-hand look at how nine leading companies are dealing with two of the most important initiatives gaining currency in today's workplace: continuous quality improvement and work/family initiatives.

To trace the links between quality and work/family strategies, we identified organizations with established reputations for excellence and innovation in the quality or work/family arenas in a broad mix of industries. In each firm, we contacted one or more managers responsible for each area—for a total of 34 interviews. (The boxes, pages 32 and 33, present more information about the organizations studied and our research methods.)

WHY THIS RESEARCH?

Work/family managers are beginning to use TQM language, while the TQM literature has begun to feature debates on the "human" im-

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plications of quality initiatives. This spurred our interest in the interconnections between the two. Moreover, both initiatives represent attempts to fundamentally transform a company's culture to better match competitive realities in product and labor markets. And in many firms, these two initiatives raise overlapping issues. For example, managers of corporate work/family programs (e.g., child care centers, alternative work schedules, dependent care, pretax spending accounts) may visit other companies for "benchmarking"—a standard practice in most quality programs. At the same time, senior quality officers may find themselves concerned with the stresses that employees experience in their personal lives as the organization marches toward continuous quality improvement.

These seemingly routine situations illustrate a complex mix of issues. How do the tools of continuous quality improvement help or hinder efforts to attend to work/family concerns? Is continuous quality improvement achieved at the expense of people's personal well-being, or is it the key to reclaiming balance in their lives? Should continuous quality improvement and work/family matters be fully coordinated, loosely integrated, or managed as completely separate initiatives?

In short, how *does* a company effectively manage concurrent change initiatives?

This article examines the level of integration between work/family and quality initiatives in the nine organizations we studied, beginning with a discussion of the stated values and principles for each initiative. We then turn to the reality of quality and work/family initiatives and assess the connections (or lack thereof) between them. We conclude by offering lessons for managers and scholars interested in the issue of multiple concurrent change initiatives.

Before going further, however, we should clarify our terminology. We define "quality initiatives" as organizational change strategies that involve a systems approach for building quality directly into products and services through a process of continuous improvement. These initiatives go by various names: "total quality management" (TQM), "continu-

ous quality improvement" (CQI), and "leadership through quality" (LTQ). "Work/Family" refers to organizational change strategies that involve a mix of policies and programs aimed at facilitating the integration of work and family roles. These include work/family and work/life programs and other initiatives aimed at integrating work and nonwork demands.

RHETORIC AND REALITY—BASIC ASSUMPTIONS AND VALUES

Like most change initiatives, quality and work/family efforts gain visibility through the creation of special positions and/or departments that come to symbolize their organizational significance. In the case of quality initiatives, a manager or even a vice president typically will be in charge. The very fact that quality initiatives are often driven by line management increases their potential for integration into daily operations. In contrast, responsibility for managing work/family initiatives usually falls into the domain of lower ranking human resource managers. Because a staff function becomes the driving force, some people in the organization may consider work/family initiatives as less central to regular operations. Improvements in quality may appear to add more value to the bottom line than efforts to resolve work/family conflicts.

Ideally, quality and work/family strategies could be highly complementary. After all, most quality initiatives are dedicated to addressing the root causes of problems—not the symptoms. And, for many critical workplace problems—such as absenteeism, motivation, and teamwork—work/family issues are among the root causes. Thus, a work/family strategy represents a system-level or "common cause" solution to a set of problems that are too often treated on a piecemeal or "special cause" basis. In principle, attending to the work/family needs of a company's "internal customers" (i.e., employees) should clearly aid continuous quality improvement in products, processes, and services.

Despite the potential for overlap between

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quality and work/family strategies, integration usually does not happen. In practice, the people responsible for each do not often talk to one another. Each brings a distinctive world view to the organization, and these views are in some ways interrelated and in some ways conflicting. Exhibit 1 highlights key relationships between quality and work/family matters. The balancing of work and family issues is a challenge that lends itself well to the sort of data analysis supported under the quality umbrella. If employees are key "internal customers," then it would make sense to understand them as "whole persons" whose work performance is a function of both work and nonwork demands. While quality experts argue that an organization is a complex system, work/family experts contend that people—a primary element of the system—are at various life-cycle stages and these stages have different implications for participation in the system.

Yet too often there is little integration between quality and work/family strategies, and the separate initiatives fall short of their potential due to narrow programmatic orientations. Starting with writings of W. Edwards Deming, the quality movement has created a growing body of literature on the limitations of narrowly conceived quality efforts. Similarly, Joan Kofodimos, the author of *Beyond Family Friendly Programs* (published by the Center for Creative Leadership), observes that while many companies call themselves "family-friendly," their work/family programs are often underutilized. Career-oriented managers may even challenge their value.

Not only do quality and work/family initiatives fall short, but the pressure for continuous quality improvement may become a key source of work/family conflict. Critics of continuous improvement approaches to manufacturing, for example, characterize it as "management by stress" and point to the many negative implications for employee safety and health. These are directly contrary to the "whole employee" perspective advocated by work/family managers. The conflicts among the initiatives are further heightened when inventory buffers are removed and ev-

	Quality	**Work/Family**
Overall Aim	Optimize the system as a whole through continuous quality improvement	Effectively balance work and family through programs and policies
Perspectives on Employees	Employees are key "internal customers" who are "closest to the source" of many problems	Employees are "whole persons" facing both work and family pressures
Primary Orientation	Systems perspective	Life cycle perspective
Selected Insights	Variance is predictable Improve a process by bringing it under statistical control and tracing root causes of variance Recognize the distinction between "special" (one time) and "common" (system) causes of variance Continuous improvement in work processes will produce systems designed to provide quality products and services—rather than pushing for quality in existing systems A system must be managed—left to themselves, the parts will not optimize the system as a whole	Employees bring a diverse mix of family issues to the workplace, involving themselves and their children, spouses, or parents Improve employee effectiveness by effectively addressing and solving work/family problems "Employee'" needs will vary over their lifetime Policies based on traditional assumptions about families may be ineffective and inequitable Properly addressing family issues can make business sense in terms of employee attraction, retention, and daily effectiveness
Selected Disconnects	Pressure for continuous improvement is a source of work/family conflict Employees are only internal customers within their functional roles—not as "whole" people	Work/family issues are seen as special cause, not common cause, problems Work/family programs are merely added on to the existing system as additional employee benefits—rather than changing the culture and the daily work practices

eryone is required to begin and end work at specified times. This cancels any opportunity to offer flextime or other forms of flexibility in operations. As Fran Rogers, president of Work/Family Directions, observes:

> Companies are willing to delegate responsibility for redesigning products to employees, but not control over flexibility and other things that would help them to balance their work and family lives more.

In summary, there is a complicated mix of possible positive and negative links between quality and work/family initiatives. By exploring the values and assumptions underlying the two change initiatives, managers can better understand the potential for synergy and conflict. First, however, it is important to classify the initiatives based on their stages of organizational development.

STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

In our efforts to manage concurrent change initiatives, we should be aware that each change effort may be at a different stage of

EXHIBIT 2
CLASSIFICATION OF QUALITY AND WORK/FAMILY INITIATIVES

		Work/Family Stages of Development		
		I	II	III
Quality Stages of Development	I	University of Michigan	Merck U.S. West	
	II	GM Powertrain	Dow Steelcase	
	III	Xerox	Motorola	Corning

Key:

Stage I: Selected, discrete programs—not fully integrated into organizational culture and systems

Stage II: Widespread, coordinated mix of programs (often with formal internal champions)—but not fully integrated into organizational culture and systems

Stage III: Widespread, coordinated mix of programs—fully integrated into organizational culture and systems

maturity or integration into the culture. Both may be relatively new, both relatively advanced, or at various stages in between. While this point may seem obvious, systematic comparisons of concurrent change efforts are relatively rare, and this results in ineffective resource allocation, overburdened support systems, and mixed messages. Understanding the stages helps to clarify the challenges for managers wishing to interrelate the initiatives.

We used a three-stage development index to classify the quality and work/family initiatives at each of the nine firms in our study (see Exhibit 2).

For classifying the work/family efforts, we used the Family Friendly Index developed by the Families and Work Institute. Organizations at Level I on this index have selected programs under way. At Level II, the organization has a wide range of programs and initiatives. Finally, at Level III, the programs and

initiatives have been sufficiently institutionalized so that deeper cultural changes are taking place.

For the quality initiatives, we developed a parallel index that traces comparable movement from initial program activities (Level I) through to deep culture change (Level III). Level I might involve the use of selected total quality tools (such as statistical process control, just-in-time inventory, and quality circles). At Level II, the organization might have a broad range of quality programs, many of which are being linked with one another. Level III organizations exhibit a culture and set of regular business activities centered on quality principles.

While the classification of individual work units within any of these organizations may vary, we focused on what might be thought of as the average level of development in each firm. Also, although we have a bias in favor of full integration of work/life

and quality strategies into organizations, we are mindful of the difficult trade-offs between these efforts. The classification scheme is used merely as a tool to aid analysis and not as a benchmark indicator. Since we studied only "leading companies," Level I activities still reflect a notable proactive organizational effort to address these issues.

Clusters of Organizational Profiles

Looking at the data presented in Exhibit 2, we see that the quality initiatives are evenly distributed across the three stages (with three in each). On the other hand, most of the work/family efforts are at Level II (five cases), with just one at Level III and three at Level I. Viewing the quality and work/family classifications together, we can group the organizations into several clusters.

While three organizations (Xerox, Motorola, and Corning) are classified at Level III for quality initiatives, they have differing profiles for the levels of work/family activities (I, II, and III, respectively). In this first cluster, we can trace the interaction between highly advanced quality efforts and work/family initiatives at very different stages.

The second cluster (Dow and Steelcase) involves two cases where the quality and work/family efforts are both at Level II. The third cluster (Merck and U.S. West) involves two additional cases where the work/family efforts are at Level II and the quality efforts are at Level I. We also have one case (General Motors Powertrain Division) where the quality efforts are at Level II and the work/family efforts are at Level I. Finally, there is one case (University of Michigan) where both quality and work/family initiatives are at Level I.

TRACING THE LINKAGES

Most organizations state that "employees are our most valuable resource" and that "quality is the key to maintaining a competitive advantage." Ironically, most organizations do not put these two statements together in any overt linking of quality programs to work/family ini-

tiatives. Yet we found evidence of growing linkages of two main types. The first is when one initiative borrows language or tools from the other. Typically, work/family efforts borrowed quality language or tools. The second is when the philosophy and values of either quality or work/family initiatives had an influence on the other.

Linkages Around Language and Tools

In all of the firms studied, there was some evidence of quality language and tools being used by work/family managers, if only to describe employees as "internal customers." Yet we found relatively little evidence of quality managers using work/family language and tools or being conscious of the needs of the "whole employee."

Applying Quality Principles to Work/Family Matters. The transfer of language and tools from quality to work/family efforts was most visible in two cases where both initiatives were classified at Level II (Dow and Steelcase). At Dow, the work/family initiative uses Pareto bar charts and "opportunity mapping" to show the impact of work/family programs and to aid strategic planning. In evaluating local child care provider qualifications, for example, Dow uses a specially developed quality instrument paralleling the supplier certification tools commonly used in quality efforts. Overall, a total quality orientation is reflected in the way that data is applied to generate knowledge that can advance the work/family effort.

At Steelcase, the concepts of empowerment (part of the quality initiative) were extended to work/family issues. As one manager commented:

> If employees are truly empowered to not only pinpoint and voice work problems, but also develop and implement solutions, they will have more ownership and thus will be more loyal and committed to their jobs, departments, and to the company overall.

The work/family efforts at Steelcase emphasize giving employees tools to make edu-

cated decisions, solve problems, and implement solutions around child and elder care. These tools enable them to better balance work and personal lives. As one manager bluntly noted, employees who feel more control over their lives are less likely to point fingers at the company when they have personal problems. This approach to empowerment reflects an individualistic work ethic that is dominant in western Michigan.

A Lack of Linkages. We did not find the same use of quality language and tools in the two organizations (Merck and U.S. West) where the work/family efforts were well integrated (Level II) but the quality efforts were more limited in scope (Level I). Work/family managers primarily used a work/family language and often voiced frustration regarding their efforts to implement work/family policies. For example, one Merck manager commented that:

> Managers and supervisors are expected to put in 20 hours a day and are looked down upon if they use [flexible work schedules]...Some divisions refuse to use it because they don't believe in it.

At the University of Michigan, where both quality and work/family efforts were at Level I, we found that the quality language was a point of contention. Professors, for example, resisted thinking of students as "customers," based on the view that students did not necessarily know what their academic and developmental needs were. Similarly, administrators resisted the idea of thinking of faculty as customers. When quality efforts are less advanced, the language and tools of quality tend not to be used or are a point of contention.

Contrasting Linkages Among Advanced Quality Initiatives. By contrast, consider Corning and Xerox, companies where quality efforts were highly integrated into business operations. At Corning (the only firm classified at Level III at both dimensions), the language and tools of quality flow into work/family efforts, an integration comparable to Dow and Steelcase. For example, in

backfilling jobs for employees on family leave, the supervisor is seen as the "internal customer" who must be kept happy. But the linkage between quality and work/family strategies goes even further. The use of a systems perspective by work/family managers led them to abandon the phrase "work/family." These matters are now grouped under the umbrella of "work/life" issues. This reflects an expanded focus on the entire organizational culture and a recognition that all employees—including single employees—have concerns involving the balancing of work and personal demands.

Moreover, all business meetings take a scheduled break at 5:00 so that employees with personal responsibilities (e.g., child care, doctor's appointment) can excuse themselves without disrupting the meetings. (As Lotte Bailyn points out in *Breaking the Mold* (1993), however, this practice is only a partial solution to work/family dilemmas, in that it still excludes these people from further discussion.)

On the other hand, Xerox (Level III quality, Level I family) had made an explicit decision to *not* integrate work/family issues into regular operations or the organization's culture. Xerox placed great emphasis on employee satisfaction and motivation, but viewed work/family concerns as a private matter. Out of respect for the individual, these issues were purposely not to be addressed through formal mandates. One quality manager at Xerox commented:

> Xerox is consciously aware of each others' differences, while honoring the privacy of individuals. The company's philosophy has always been to remain separate from religion, politics, ethnic perspectives...and [management] has chosen to show their support for working parents by not getting directly involved in work/family issues as well.

While there was little use of quality terms to address work/family issues in this setting, we found an interesting reverse use of language. Here, the language of family was channeled for business purposes. For example,

EXHIBIT 3
COMPARING QUALITY AND WORK/FAMILY PHILOSOPHIES AND VALUES

		Work/Family Philosophies and Values		
		Separation	**Mixed**	**Integration**
Quality Philosophies and Values	**Utilitarian**	U.S. West		
	Mixed		Dow Merck Steelcase University of Michigan	
	Transformational	Xerox	GM Powertrain	Corning Motorola

Key:
Work/Family Philosophies and Values:

Separation:	Family issues should be kept separate from work issues (sometimes rooted in respect for individual privacy)
Coordination:	The goal is to minimize work/family conflicts through proactive programs and policies
Integration:	A fundamental change in organizational culture is anticipated—family issues are an organizational priority

Quality Philosophies and Values:

Utilitarian:	Quality tools and techniques can be applied to address specific quality issues
Mixed:	Some tools and techniques can be applied to address specific quality issues, but some culture change is also required
Transformational:	A fundamental change in organizational culture is anticipated—quality is an organizational priority

teams of workers on the shop floor are referred to as "family work groups" and many schedule group picnics and other activities. The focus on employee commitment was often couched in terms of being "one big family."

This is not a case of work/family language being imported into quality. Rather, it is an application of the family metaphor in ways that could ultimately further exclude family issues from workplace dialogue. Language and tools are not neutral. The concepts of "family" or "quality" or "customers" can take on vastly different meanings in the context of work/family and quality initiatives. Sometimes key words can be used in ways that fuel cynicism and ultimately undercut both initiatives.

Linkages in Philosophy and Values

Quality and work/family initiatives are begun and sustained for various reasons, and these are reflected in their espoused philosophies and values. We found striking differences in the values and philosophies driving the firms' quality and work/family efforts.

A Range of Philosophies and Values. At one extreme, the driving philosophy and values of quality initiatives can be classified as *"utilitarian."* These values are highly functional, results oriented, and relatively short term in focus. At the other extreme, the quality initiatives are *"transformational,"* embodying long-term efforts to shift core cultural values and assumptions. Between these two extremes are *"mixed"* cases where the dominant philosophy is unclear or includes elements of each. These organizations, for example, might be giving increasing priority to quality. But many elements of the short-term, bottom-line orientation persist, despite a recognized need for deeper cultural change.

There is a similar range in philosophies and values driving work/family initiatives. At one extreme, some employers take a hands-off approach regarding day-to-day involvement in work/family matters. This approach is classified as *"separation."* At the other extreme, labeled *"integration,"* we find firms that have woven work/family issues deeply into the organization's culture. Again, between these two extremes are *"mixed"* cases where the dominant philosophy is unclear or includes elements of each.

The three categories of quality and work/family philosophies and values are presented together in Exhibit 3. While we believe the classifications accurately reflect the data we collected, our intent is to stimulate "out of the box thinking," rather than to generate a definitive categorization of the organizations. Indeed, the initiatives have evolved in a variety of ways in these organizations since our data collection.

Alternative Approaches to Quality. Exhibit 3 shows that some firms did not take a transformational approach to quality. For example, at Merck, one manager with quality

responsibilities emphasized financial returns:

> To be successful, [quality initiatives] need to be directly tied to the bottom-line business results—return on investment.

In contrast, the transformational approach was evident at GM Powertrain, where there has been a decade-long culture change effort based on the quality systems principles advocated by Dr. Deming. A manager at GM Powertrain stated that

> TQM is a systems approach. Creating an environment conducive to [systems] is critical. Systems thinking means questioning things now that used to be taken for granted—such as the assumption that pay motivates people. We must dig deeper now and challenge assumptions versus taking them for face value.

The ambiguity over philosophy and values in mixed cases is evident by a University of Michigan manager's blending of transformational *and* utilitarian elements in these remarks:

> We are not calling it a program *per se.* We are calling it an approach [based on] the theory that a program connotes something that is static.... We can use quality as a vehicle by which to move toward our vision. There are certain things about quality that we can realize in the short term, but it's the question, "What is the University of Michigan going to be in the future?," that is really exciting.

Alternative Approaches to Work/Family. Some firms emphasized a separation between work and family. For example a work/family manager at U.S. West states:

> We believe very strongly in the separation of church and state—between work and family. Our salaries are higher than the national average and our benefits far exceed the national average. We are not going to start subsidiz-

ing child care. That's not our target. We believe in strengthening the community—it's an important key to how we do business.

Reflecting this philosophy, U.S. West has contributed over $7 million during a two-year period to fund community-based early child care initiatives in the 14 states where the company does business. This view is similar to the philosophy at Xerox, a firm that also believes in separation between work and family matters. Xerox sees family matters as private issues comparable to religion or ethnicity.

By contrast, a Corning work/family manager made remarks reflecting an integrative approach:

> [You must believe] that people are worth developing and that you manage by prevention. Think about the fact that you've got this valuable commodity—this human being—who works for the company. You want to continuously develop this. Hopefully you... will gain a long-term employee who is flexible, creative, and gives a lot to the organization.... There are very few managers who are really good at managing the human resource and looking at the long-term picture of career development, work/family issues, and dealing with diversity. When these become integrated things—instead of add-ons—that's when I think we have gotten close to arriving.

Similarly, a Motorola manager stated:

> To have high quality, you need to be sensitive to the personal needs that employees have. There shouldn't be a division between personal needs and what is going on at work.

On work/family issues, most of the firms were "mixed," falling somewhere between the above two extremes. A Steelcase manager commented:

> Many [work/family] programs are "grass roots"—employees bring up needs and management responds in

one way or another.... We don't want the employee to become too dependent on the company. So when developing programs and policies, we need to maintain the employee's dignity.... Our main goal is to empower employees to be better consumers [of our programs and policies].

Connecting Quality and Work/Family Philosophies and Values. Understanding the range in philosophies and values driving both quality and work/family initiatives enables analysis of philosophical links between initiatives. Across the firms we studied, the main links involved the application of quality philosophy and values to work/family initiatives.

When both initiatives were at coinciding stages of development at either Level I or II, the similarities became more prominent. Sometimes, the links involved participation and empowerment values that are integral to quality. For example, a Steelcase manager drew a connection between empowerment and efforts to make employees better consumers of work/family programs:

> Sometimes employees become too dependent on the company. The whole quality philosophy is to help employees regain responsibility.

Similarly, a manager at the University of Michigan related participative values to work/family efforts:

> It's the respect for people and the empowerment part. It's the part of full participation, drawing upon everyone's expertise, talents, and ideas.

Another linkage was evident when companies applied business and quality values to work/family issues. As one manager from Dow stated:

> A corporation's success depends on a quality, innovative, and dedicated workforce. If you don't get the "people thing" right, you won't get the "customer thing" right.

Background and Selected Initiatives in the Organizations Studied

Company	Selected Quality Efforts	Selected Work/Family Efforts
Corning (Ceramics and glass) 30,700 employees world wide, 12,000 U.S.	Began 1983; world wide Quality Institute established 1984; link to team-based work systems; quality integral to corporate statement of values; 1988 Baldrige finalist.	Began 1975; creation of work/family department in 1989; Infant, toddler, preschool child care centers and after-school programs integrated with community; training and resources for providers; national resource and referral system.
Dow (Chemicals and plastics) 31,000 employees U.S.	Began 1983; focus on customer/supplier partnerships; link to team-based work systems.	Began 1984; personal leave for up to two years; 24-hour near-site center and after-school program; dual career assistance program; national referral system; creation of work/family office in 1989.
General Motors, Powertrain Division (Automotive components) 80,000 employees U.S.	Began 1985; preceded by union-management QWL effort; extensive application of Deming principles to product development and HRM practices; link to platform design teams; focus on overall culture change.	Began 1984; selected job sharing and family leave policy.
Merck (Chemicals) 18,000 employees U.S.	Pride in Quality 1960s; 1990 total quality initiatives; 1994 total organizational reengineering.	Began 1984; "Family Matters" EAP workshops; 1990 sick care program; 1992 child care center; supervisory training on work/family issues (tied to performance); 1993 bridge family issues to broader corporate diversity program
Motorola (Electronics) 100,000 employees world wide, 58,000 U.S.	Began mid 1970s; ten-fold increase in quality in early 1980s; Application of SPC in 1985; Cross-functional teams and supplier partnerships; 1988 Baldrige winner; Motorola Institute established 1990.	Began late 1970s; flex-work; national resource and referral system; holiday and summer family programs.
Steelcase (Office furniture) 19,000 employees world wide, 14,000 U.S.	Began 1990; preceded separate initiatives, including "charge ahead" awards for continuous improvement in the mid 1980s; focus on customer-driven work teams in 1991.	Began 1977; in-house counseling department in 1979; child care referral, including family child care network 1980-1986; job share and flextime 1992; work at home and take home meals.
University of Michigan (Higher education) 21,002 employees (Ann Arbor campus)	Began 1991; Quality council and design teams; numerous initiatives began in 1992 under M-Quality banner.	Began in 1920s; university preschool programs; near site child care center support; summer camp for employee children; family housing child development center opened 1991; tenure clock extension policy.
U.S. West (Telecommunications) 64,000 employees U.S.	Began 1982; preceded by union-management QWL efforts; TQM endorsed by board chair 1990; cross-functional integration focus 1993.	Began in 1984; flextime; telecommuting and work at home; funding for community-based child care initiatives.
Xerox (Business products and systems, office electronics) 100,000 employees world wide	Began early 1980s; preceded by union-management QWL effort; Leadership Through Quality (LTQ) cascaded world wide beginning 1984; Baldrige winner 1989.	Began in late 1980s; among 100 best companies in Working Mother in 1990; manager of life cycle programs created 1991; child care financial subsidy program with sliding scale in 1992; flex benefits in 1993.

Research Methodology

Site selection. The sites were selected based on their relative and presumed stages of development with work/family and quality initiatives. We wanted organizations that were leaders in at least one of the two domains. Gathering data from organizations that were at different stages of development allowed for a more broad-based and enriched study. Observation of the full spectrum (or maturity curve) allowed for the unveiling of important trends and patterns in organizational learning. We also recognize that the organizations studied may have advanced to new stages of development since our interviews (spring of 1993) or that the initiatives may have deteriorated.

How the study was conducted. In an attempt to obtain multiple perspectives on each organization, the study sought participants from various departments and areas, including some front line employees. The number of participants per firm varied from one to eight, based upon availability. The interviewers spoke with approximately 22 individuals associated with the quality initiatives, and 12 that had expertise in their firm's work/family initiatives. The former, however, often played a dual role in terms of spearheading both the quality and work/family initiatives within the organization. The purpose of the study and its subsequent approach has involved "grounded theory" due to its hypothesis-generating versus hypothesis-testing nature. (Note that Kathleen M. Eisenhardt urged that approximately six to nine cases represented an ideal number for building theory in her article, "Building Theory from Case Study Research," *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 114, pp. 532-555.)

How the interview questionnaire was developed. The interview guide was developed using the basic concepts and content areas relevant to the issues stemming from qulaity and work/family in organizational behavior. The interview questions covered the following seven categories:

1. Work/family initiatives
2. Quality initiatives
3. Organizational culture/climate
4. Hierarchy or structure of the organization
5. Managers and supervisors
6. Teams
7. Employee involvement and empowerment

How the interviews were conducted. The length of each interview varied, lasting from 45 minutes to two and one-half hours. Although the questionnaire was the same for all participants, the interviewer concentrated on certain sections of the interview guide depending on the individual's job/position with the company. This approach facilitated gathering pertinent data from each expert.

It is important to note key limitations of these methods: the classifications may not be accurate across the organizations and trends over time may not be fully captured. As such, the ideas presented should be treated as hypotheses or propositions to be tested with further research or self-assessment in organizations.

There was less discussion of linkage at Xerox, where the quality effort was highly integrated (Level III) but the work/family efforts were classified as Level I. This is understandable, in light of the company's decision to separate work/family efforts from regular operations.

Where neither work/family nor quality efforts are at Level III, we find many statements about the compatibility of the values and philosophy of each. Where there is a large gap between the integration of quality efforts and work/family efforts, little attention is paid to issues of compatibility. What about cases such as Corning, where both work/family and quality efforts are highly integrated into operations?

Interestingly, at Corning we did not find the same optimistic statements about the integration of the two initiatives. Nor, however, did we find unmitigated pessimism. Instead, we found realistic reports of great struggle and difficulty regarding integration of the initiatives. A Corning manager remarked:

People have the expectation that once you get the quality principle go-

ing...everyone will be happy at work. But no—it's a lot more stress getting everything there in time and under the wire—attending to the customer's needs. The stress level goes up, and work/family needs to lead the way on making sure that the pressure cooker way work is done doesn't take over people's lives.

Similarly, another manager commented:

The short-term focus in terms of goals and profitability puts a lot of pressure on individuals. Sometimes it's hard to sort everything out when facing the short-term, bottom-line realities.

Philosophy and Values as a Guide for Integrating Initiatives. Analysis of philosophy and values provides key insights into the difficulties of and potential for integrating concurrent workplace change initiatives. The philosophy and values associated with a change initiative can serve both as a driver of, or as a barrier to, integration. The analysis of values in Exhibit 3 provides upwards limits on movement across the developmental stages in Exhibit 2.

The integrative philosophy and values at Motorola are likely to drive it from a Level II to a Level III stage for work/family issues. In contrast, the values supporting separation at Xerox will likely be a constraining force, keeping work/family at a Level I stage. Similarly, the philosophy and assumptions around work/family integration and total quality transformation at the University of Michigan and GM Powertrain suggest that substantial movement or development is possible.

The location of a firm in the Exhibit 3 matrix forms the outer limit of what movement is likely for that firm. If the values and philosophies are narrowly conceived, further investment and effort to increase development toward culture change will be frustrated. For managers, this means that the study of philosophy and values is critical to the management of concurrent change initiatives.

DECISION-MAKING AND ACTION: LANGUAGE AND TOOLS

Leaders wishing to increase synergy between several change initiatives are advised to consider these recommendations regarding their use of language and tools. Scholars interested in these issues could conduct further hypothesis-testing research around each of these findings.

1. *Assess existing language and tools.* When launching a new initiative, leaders should determine to what extent the adoption of language and tools of existing dominant change initiatives is desirable. Organizations adopting the language and tools of quality, the dominant initiative in this study, generally fostered the development of newer work/family initiatives by communicating them in a way that was congruent with ongoing culture change.

2. *Coordinate language and tools of concurrent initiatives.* When concurrent change initiatives are both well established, leaders need to determine whether borrowing language and tools from each is likely to foster joint development. Adopting language and tools from initiatives that are at similar stages can extend and even transform each initiative. By using some of the quality tools (e.g., process mapping, quality function deployment), work/family efforts in some of the firms examined became less programmatic and achieved a dynamic learning focus. Similarly, by viewing quality issues through the work/family lens, leaders can begin to address the root causes (not symptoms) of motivation and effectiveness.

3. *Sequencing new initiatives.* When a company does not have any single dominant change initiative, leaders should consider whether new initiatives should be launched simultaneously or sequentially. If introduced simultaneously, each initiative must use complementary language and tools, or employees are likely to be confused as to how the change efforts relate and which has priority. Yet all too often little or no collaboration between change efforts is attempted, due to unhealthy competitive dynamics. If introduced sequen-

tially, leaders must be aware that the first initiative is likely to cast a shadow over subsequent initiatives.

4. *Dismantling older initiatives.* When launching a new initiative, senior leaders need to question whether older dominant initiatives should be sustained, particularly if their language and tools are likely to compromise the effectiveness of programs in their infancy. This involves hard choices and tangible costs associated with either sustaining or dismantling an existing initiative.

As the classical economist Joseph Schumpeter once argued, companies sometimes need to engage in "creative destruction." This involves revolutionary destruction from within in order to enable adaptation to new environmental demands. For example, the language and tools of quality (such as a relentless focus on eliminating waste) can create problems for work/family efforts and may need to be reframed around continuous learning. The language and tools of dominant workplace initiatives represent a double-edged sword that sometimes aids and sometimes hurts the development of a new change effort.

DECISION-MAKING AND ACTION: PHILOSOPHY AND VALUES

In a similar manner, choices in the area of philosophy and values will likely impact synergy. Leaders are advised to consider these recommendations.

1. *Temper enthusiasm.* Leaders in organizations where two or more change initiatives are in early stages of development should strive to temper enthusiasm and rhetoric about commonalties and synergies to protect against unrealistic expectations and inconsistencies in practice. There are likely to be points of both tension and commonalty between any two initiatives. Yet leaders generally do not become fully aware of contradictory pressures until each initiative has more fully evolved.

2. *Anticipate tensions.* Leaders in firms where several change initiatives are well established in the culture should anticipate tensions across initiatives and seek data to better understand and address these critical areas of contradiction. Although a well-developed set of work/family and quality initiatives may appear, at face value, to have overlapping objectives, it is likely that over time leaders will need to confront a variety of decision-making situations where they will need to enhance aspects of one program at the expense of the other.

3. *Use forums for integration and coordination.* To facilitate integration and coordination, organizations with multiple change initiatives need to establish ongoing forums among key leaders and individuals at all levels who are associated with the concurrent change initiatives. Since the effective synthesis of multiple change initiatives can only be achieved after addressing contradictory pressures, ongoing forums will enable members to examine and learn from issues as they emerge.

4. *Conduct continuing assessment of values and philosophy.* Organizations would do well to conduct periodic reviews of the values and philosophy underlying each initiative—as espoused and as practiced—with appropriate stakeholder involvement. This will facilitate greater alignment of multiple initiatives, since the core philosophy of each will ultimately restrain or drive an organization's ability to develop tangible options to promote synergy.

CONCLUSION

The effective management of concurrent change initiatives requires examining the basic values and assumptions associated with each initiative. In our examination of quality and work/family change efforts, we found that the organizations that were less advanced in achieving synergy between the initiatives were, ironically, the most optimistic about the points of commonalty. In contrast, organizations that were most advanced in this integration were also the most realistic in their understanding of the complexities associated with the dynamics of concurrent

change. Points of conflict are as important as points of overlap.

While total quality management and work/family initiatives have much to offer one another, they often suffer from gaps between rhetoric and reality. Moreover, the reality for quality and work/family efforts may even pit them against each another. Leaders need to seek greater understanding of the way one initiative's philosophies and values impact on the other. The way a new program or initiative is defined reflects core values and assumptions that impact on the fate of not only the given program, but on other concurrent initiatives. It is one thing to espouse a rhetoric that affirms "people are your most valuable resource" or "quality is our top priority." It is another thing to take on the more significant challenge of making both statements a part of reality in your organization.

We close with a metaphor used by one of the people we interviewed, a manager with responsibilities that spanned TQM and work/family issues. She urged that we think of the workplace as a flower garden. Many different seeds are planted and cultivated. Different levels of attention are required and different results emerge. In many organizations, TQM and work/family initiatives represent important, though largely separate, patches in the garden.

As our interviews show, lessons emerge from leading gardeners in each of these two patches. Where there has been cross-fertilization and joint cultivation, we caught a glimpse of a single garden characterized by exciting new colors, hues, and textures, but occasionally marked by complicated and troublesome competition between the species.

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