

Quality Management 4.0: Skills and Competencies to Master the Challenge

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The past decades have been shaped by continuous and ever faster changes in the environment of companies and organizations in general. Globalization, digitalization, industry 4.0, socioeconomic changes, and increased attention on corporate social responsibility – just to name a few – fuel the fundamental change of the world of work and of the environments in which products, services, and solutions are developed and delivered.

Being a cornerstone of sustainable business success, quality management is challenged to find adequate answers considering current and future developments – and quality managers will have to redefine their roles and develop their skills appropriately. Even though this is widely accepted, the questions remain: Which are the concrete challenges that quality management is facing, and which skills will empower quality people to successfully manage future demands?

This paper presents results of a structured and comprehensive approach to answer these questions. Main change drivers have been analyzed based on a set of sources, including seminal publications on quality management, findings of 12 most influential management books, recent and upcoming revisions of management standards, current changes in business environments, and major future trends as reported by leading research institutes. These findings have been aggregated and mapped to the scope and role of quality management and quality managers, finally describing in detail current and near-future requirements to management systems as well as to competencies of quality managers.

The practical implications are discussed on the example of a multinational high-tech company. This organization being a subsidiary of a large corporation, the corporate as well as the SME perspective are covered in detail, also exploring how far the results match business experience. Concluding, viable approaches for the future development of quality managers' skills and competencies are presented for further discussion.