

Management for Professionals

Rita Berger
C.-Andreas Dalluege
Hans-Werner Franz *Editors*

Organisational Excellence and Resilience

Stress Management as a Component of
a Sustainable Corporate Development
Strategy

 Springer

Management for Professionals

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Editors

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of a Sustainable Corporate
Development Strategy

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Editors

Rita Berger 
Faculty of Education
University of Barcelona
Barcelona, Spain

C.-Andreas Dalluege
IBK (Germany)
Wiesbaden, Germany

Hans-Werner Franz 
European School of Social Innovation
Dortmund, Germany

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Foreword

Work-related stress is one of the biggest costs to both European business and European health. The European Union Agency for Safety and Health at Work estimates that it accounts for 1 per cent of work-related illness and has an annual cost to business within the EU of €617 billion. EU policy, supported by legislation both across the EU and within Member States, specifies that employers owe a duty of care to the mental health of their employees.

The phenomenon of psychological stressors caused by work was first identified as a problem in 1918, when the British Government established the Industrial Fatigue Board. This Board was charged with examining how hours and ways of working affected workers' fatigue, general health, and negative impacts on work-related productivity. Ever since then social scientists, doctors, employers, and from the 1960s occupational psychologists have sought to understand, address, and mitigate what has become popularly known as work-related stress. Note: I use the term "mitigate" and not "eliminate" since the nature of work-related stress is a constantly evolving experience reflective of the changing dynamics of work and the work related over time.

Though the manifestations of work-related stress in terms of psychological, physical, and productivity impacts largely remain the same, its growth as a significant health problem does seem to be expanding across both Europe and the wider world. This, it may be argued, is reflective of the increasing pace of technological change leading to a less secure employment environment referenced to job demands and performance expectations. Throw into this mix the new uncertainties and ways of working that COVID-19 has initiated in terms of how one separates home life from work life and one may confidently predict that its growth as a significant work experience is likely to continue.

The ever-changing challenge of the working environment and its relationship to the constant of work-related stress symptoms suggests that employers need to adopt a systematic framework, referenced to principles of practice that are flexible enough to remain relevant to the needs of employees and businesses over time and not bound by any one specific business environment. This book, based on significant pan-European business and employee research project—IMPRESS—provides such a framework and, in effect, a manual of practice, which can be used by both

employer and employee to effectively manage and mitigate stress within the working environment.

The IMPRESS approach takes as its first principle the practice of “Excellence,” which is the quality of being extremely good and reputable, and operationalizes this through utilizing the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Excellence Model to build and provide a systematic and adaptable set of guidelines, assessment tools, and training modules that can be adapted by any employer to support their workers’ mental health in the workplace and, importantly, provide a measurable and demonstrable commitment to the mitigation of work-related stress as required under EU health and safety legislation.

Dean of the School of Health Science
Waterford Institute of Technology
Waterford, Ireland

John S. G. Wells

Downloads and Links for Tools and Trainings Described in the Book

IMPRESS Project Results Overview

<http://www.excellence-in-stress-management.eu/results/>

IMPRESS E-Learning

<https://impresstraining.eu/>

Free IMPRESS Individual Stress Factor Assessment

[https://www.ibk-freeware.eu/StressEval/\(S\(t0ouabc5c1en3ylznksdxvdx\)\)/Welcome.aspx](https://www.ibk-freeware.eu/StressEval/(S(t0ouabc5c1en3ylznksdxvdx))/Welcome.aspx)

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Editors and Contributors

About the Editors

Rita Berger Dr. phil, Work and Organizational Psychology Professor at the University of Barcelona, Faculty of Psychology, Department of Social and Quantitative Psychology. Head of more than 10 European research projects. Author of numerous scientific publications on topics such as cross-cultural leadership, teams, and well-being in international impact journals. Teaching at bachelor's, master's, and PhD level on industrial, organizational, and personnel psychology.

Contact: ritaberger@ub.edu

C.-Andreas Dalluege is Founder and Managing Partner of IBK Group; Chairman of EuroBEN—European Business Excellence Network e.V.; National Council Member of the Irish Work Study Institute; since 2003 Assessor for the European Excellence Award (now EFQM Global Award); Certified Advisor & Trainer of EFQM; and Operating Partner and Trainer of Initiative Ludwig-Erhard-Preis (ILEP). Since 2010, Dalluege is giving yearly classes on business excellence related topics at various colleges and universities (Aschaffenburg, Barcelona, Karlsruhe, and Pristina).

Contact: cad@ibk.eu

Hans-Werner Franz Dr. phil in Social Sciences (Sociology, Political Sciences, Hispanicities), translator, interpreter, journalist. Consultant for quality organizations and social innovation. Till 2012 senior researcher and consultant at Sozialforschungsstelle Dortmund (sfs), social research unit of the Dortmund University of Technology; Permanent Advisor to ESSi (European School of Social Innovation); EFQM Excellence Assessor.

Core expertise with numerous publications: Development of systems and organizations of vocational training and education (Europe, national, regional, in-company); Human Resources Development. Organization development (enterprises and work), cooperative work systems, (EFQM-based) total quality management, social crisis management, social innovation.

Contact: hanswerner.franz@gmail.com

Contributors

Wilhelm Appold Dipl.-Ing., Senior Project Manager at International Industrial Consult IIC GmbH since 08/2015. From 1982 to 2016, employed at BMW AG in different organizations as Industrial Engineering Expert, Project Leader and Manager.

Visiting Professor at the School of Engineering at Durham University, UK (01/2009–12/2012). Chairman of the Supervisory Board of the International Industrial Consult AG (07/2007 to 07/2015). Member of the Supervisory Board of the REFA International Consult AG 2001–2007 and Chairman (05/2006–06/2007). Member of the REFA Technical Committee for Automobile Industry since 1990 and responsible Training and Consulting Manager.

Liene Berga Professional Master's degree in Health Management and Professional Qualification "Business Establishment Executive," EQF level 7, Riga Stradins University, Riga (Latvia). 2015–2017: Professional Master's Degree in Occupational Health and Safety, qualification of occupational health and safety specialist, EQF level 7, University of Latvia, Riga (Latvia). 2011–2015: Professional Bachelor's Degree in Health Care, Public Health Specialist, EQF level 6, Riga Stradins University, Riga (Latvia).

2019–present: Head of Occupational Health and Safety Division, Riga East University Hospital, Riga (Latvia). Tasks: Organize the continuous development and management of health and safety measures in the company, to protect employees. 2016–2019: Senior occupational health and safety specialist, Riga East University Hospital, Riga (Latvia). 2016–2016: Occupational health and safety specialist, Riga East University Hospital, Riga (Latvia).

Evija Berzina-Andracnikova 2018: Professional Master's degree in Health Management and Professional Qualification "Business Establishment Executive" EQF level 7, Riga Stradins University, Riga (Latvia). 2017: Master's Degree of Health Sciences in Health Care, Nursing, EQF level 7, University of Latvia, Riga (Latvia). 2015 Professional Bachelor's Degree in Health Care, Professional Qualification of Nursing, EQF level 6, Riga Stradins University, Riga (Latvia).

Head of Quality Management, Riga East University Hospital, Riga (Latvia). Tasks: Organize the continuous development and management of patient safety and quality standards. Hospital quality departments perform or support regulatory readiness, team facilitation, and submission of data for mandatory reporting; insuring sufficient resources in the quality department to support those functions is an important task for hospital leaders.

2008–2019: Chief Nurse of Anesthesiology Clinic, Riga East University Hospital, Riga (Latvia); 1993–2008: Nurse anesthetist, Riga East University Hospital, Riga (Latvia)

Jana Chynoradská is founder of HARMONY Academy and LEARN & LEAD and a PhD in English literature; she upgraded her business studies at the Entrepreneurial University at IPA Slovakia in 2019. Jana is the natural authority and driving force behind all Harmony innovations. As a result, she initiates many local and international projects aimed at developing cross-cultural and international networking within ELT, education, communication, and leadership.

Jan Philipp Czakert is an M.Sc. in Business Psychology, PhD student, and lecturer at the Universitat de Barcelona, Faculty of Psychology, Department of Social and Quantitative Psychology; teaching assistant in the CEMS Master in International Management at ESADE Business School, Ramon Llull University, in the area of global strategy, global leadership, and regenerative leadership; and author of scientific publications on leadership, employee well-being, and stress management.

Contact: philippczakert@ub.edu

Barbara Deppisch Dr., lawyer with special expertise in tax law; General Manager of tax and accounting consultants Deppisch & Tylla Steuerberatungsgesellschaft mbH. Specialist in consulting SME clients in all aspects of tax and property law. Cooperation with national and international associations like Sybo AG and BECO Berater Kooperation.

Jokin Garatea is Director of the International Department at GAIA and city council member for culture in Gernika-lumo city hall. Jokin Garatea has a Law Degree from Deusto University, Spain. He is an expert in International Commerce at the University of the Basque Country and a Graduate in European Economy from Instituto Hispano-Alemán, Germany. Additionally, Mr. Garatea is assessor and adviser of EFQM model implementation in Asia and Europe, implementer of business processes and best practices in companies, and assessor member of the Basque quality Club. His project experience includes responsibility for international projects for GAIA, and secretary coordinator of projects carried out for the European Commission, BID, and the World Bank. Jokin has experience in the living lab methodology as member of the ENoLL network.

Inga Lapīņa, Dr. oec, is Professor and Vice Dean for Academic Affairs at the Faculty of Engineering Economics and Management (FEEM) of Riga Technical University (RTU) and Head of Department of Quality Technologies. More than 20 years' experience in higher education, research, and project management. Passionate about delivering quality education that meets real-life business needs and fostering creativity, entrepreneurial spirit, and innovative thinking among students.

Gundega Lībeka 2003–2005: Master's degree in Social Sciences Management, EQF level 6, University of Latvia, Riga (Latvia). 1999–2003: Bachelor's Degree in Organizational management, EQF level 5, Riga Higher School of Pedagogics and

School Management, Riga (Latvia). 1983–1985: Specialist of physician's assistant technician, Riga second Medical School, Riga (Latvia).

2019–present: Head of Monitoring and Planning of Medical Devices, Riga East University Hospital, Riga (Latvia). Tasks: Planning, organization, and control of the division. Planning, concluding, and controlling the performance of contracts necessary for the provision of divisions work. Division budget planning within the company budget. 2015–2019: Performing the duties of medical technology director, Riga East University Hospital, Riga (Latvia). 2015–2019: Head of the Monitoring Unit for Medical Devices, Riga East University Hospital, Riga (Latvia). 2012–2015: Deputy Head of the Monitoring Unit for Medical Devices, Riga East University Hospital, Riga (Latvia).

Jānis Mazais, Dr. sc. ing., is Professor and Lead Researcher at the Institute of Quality Engineering (IQE), Faculty of Engineering Economics and Management (FEEM) at Riga Technical University (RTU). He has been working in EU research projects since 2009. From 2010 to 2015, he served as an ASQ Country Counselor for Latvia. J. Mazais has participated in EFQM Assessor training courses and EFQM International Assessment Team.

Aija Medne is currently Head of the Quality Management and Sustainability Unit and scientific assistant at Riga Technical University. Bachelor's degree in Quality Management, Master's degree in Total Quality Management, doctoral student, and a member of EFQM Excellence Model RTU implementation group.

Monika Miklánková has been working in the field of education for 19 years. Her development route started as a German-language teacher and following vice-director position in elementary school. At this moment, Monika is active in the field of adult and organizational education as a language lecturer, leader, and project manager in Harmony Academy, Trnava. In her pedagogical practice, her aim is to respect each student's individuality, her/his needs, and personality. She is a motivated teacher and a supporter of the teachers' team, which is continuously developing and open for new challenges.

Donal Nolan is an experienced Senior Engineering and Business Manager with over 30 years' experience working in a diverse number of industries. Donal has worked at a technical and senior management level in several different cultures and has gained extensive global experience with time spent working in Ireland, the UK, France, Germany, Netherlands, the USA, China, and Japan. Donal has significant experience managing and working with cross-cultural teams.

Donal has spent over 20 years working in the business sector in senior roles ranging from change management, lean management, and business development. In recent years, Donal has worked mostly in the NGO sector, as Director of Development with the Institute of Industrial Engineers (National Representative Body) and currently as Strategic Projects Executive with Waterford Chamber of Commerce (WCC).

Vanda Novokšonova is Board Member of Biedrība Eurofortis and Managing Partner of Eurofortis IT, certified EFQM Trainer, and Assessor of European EFQM Awards, Latvian Quality Awards for Medical sector, and International Innovation Awards. Vanda is also the Board Member of Latvian Society for Quality with responsibility for international relations and EFQM-related activities. Vanda has 12 years' expertise in EU project field and 10 years of experience with implementation of organizational excellence.

Katharina F. Pfaffinger, Dr., is a scientific staff member and lecturer of Economic and Organizational Psychology at the Ludwig Maximilians Universität München, Munich. In her dissertation thesis, she examined changing forms of stress as an outcome of a digitalized work.

Julia A. M. Reif, Dr., is a postdoctoral scientific staff member and lecturer of Economic and Organizational Psychology at the Ludwig Maximilians Universität München. Her research interests include the initiation of negotiation, team processes, stress management, and organizational acculturation. She speaks at international psychological conferences and congresses and publishes her research in leading academic journals. She works as a scientific consultant with businesses and organizations in the fields of organizational diagnostics, organizational development, and organizational culture development.

Zane Rostoka is Head of RTU Personnel Unit, lecturer and expert in the field of personnel problems research, and researcher at RTU Quality Improvement, Research and Training Centre.

Hans-Dieter Schinner, Dr. rer. Pol., is General Manager and owner of International Industrial Consult. IIC implements projects in industrial engineering, organization and capacity development, specializing in organizational needs assessments, capacity development strategies, reorganization of companies, change management, universities and TVET institutions in developing curricula, providing for degree courses, and providing practical oriented further education training programs, accreditation of university study programs, SME and private sector development, and monitoring and evaluation. There has been cooperation with universities, e.g., as a professor of industrial engineering in Namibia and as a project partner in consortia, e.g., learning factories, for many years.

Erika Spieß, Prof Dr., is a retired professor at the Chair of Economic and Organizational Psychology at the Ludwig Maximilians Universität in Munich. She researches and publishes on the topics of cooperation in organizations, intercultural action in business-related contexts and health in organizations, as well as consumer psychology.

Andrea Stucken After studying as a computer scientist at Siemens Training Centre, Andrea Stucken worked in various positions at the company. In 1996, she joined

the IBK Group and is currently working as the responsible coordinator for all software development and support tasks at IBK Management Solutions GmbH. Stucken is a trained EFQM assessor and has represented IBK in numerous European research projects on quality management since the late 90s.

Contact: stucken@ibk.eu

Edurne Villalba is Occupational Risk Prevention Technician at Mutualia. Villalba has a degree in Industrial Engineering from the University of the Basque Country. She has wide experience of 25 years in the field of occupational risks prevention. After working as an advisor for the companies associated with Mutualia, since 2004 she is active as a member of Mutualia's Prevention Service created with the aim of preventing risks related to work of Mutualia's workforce in safety, industrial hygiene, ergonomics, and psycho-sociology.

Part I

Theoretical Basis



The Concept of a Comprehensive Management Approach

Hans-Werner Franz 

1 The Concept: Excellence as a Management and Leadership Culture

Managers and leaders in many organisations have very often arrived in their position because they have been successful in a more technical role. Depending on their qualification or experience, they have learned to organise technical and technological processes, maybe also related work or commercial processes. Many among them have never learned systematically how to organise people, cooperating in such processes. This process needs to be understood, considered, and respect operatives when it comes to rearranging and reorganising how people work together in a dynamic evolving environment: This is a primary requirements of a competent management team.

All organisations regardless of size or type must tackle rapidly changing conditions in their economic, technological, political, social, natural, or legal environment. Their markets change or are relocated to other regions, countries, or continents. Their customers and client's needs and requirements change in multiple ways and forms. The technologies they use undergo fundamental changes due to the intensified digitalisation of communication and co-operation processes within their organisation or at the interfaces with their providers or customers. Often completely new services and concepts are required and must be developed. New materials or technological devices modify or even revolutionise the complete value creation chain. Often changes are influenced with or by changing societal or legal requirements, for example, regarding the sustainability of using natural resources or the sustainability of the conditions and processes in which they are used, or the ethical and moral requirements concerning the legality and legitimacy of the overall decision-making and actions, i.e. the integrity of the organisation.

H.-W. Franz (✉)

European School of Social Innovation, Dortmund, Germany

All these changes and transformations in an agitated and turbulent world call for progressive direction and leadership processes as they touch complex structures of interest that need to be rearranged or newly negotiated. Many managers become static without the experience of change, this makes it hard to tackle, plan, and lead complex processes of re-configuration, as the best way to learn is through experience. Depending on the size and the type of hierarchy and division of labour in such enterprises, the same is true for large administrations and association or non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Managers often hold several functions and have little or no time for participating in relevant trainings. Frequently companies or administrations do not want or are not able to cover the considerable costs of appropriate trainings. Consequently, they may run into much higher transaction costs for the mistakes and shortcomings when it comes to pay for the social relationships destroyed or the social and emotional barriers raised by frustrations caused through unfortunate decisions and actions.

What we need is the capacity of managing sustainable organisation development. What we want to present in this book is an integrated learning and practice approach of leadership, organisation development and learning, providing sustainable responses to the complex requirements in the quality of management. In doing so, we tap into existing organisations striving to develop under different conditions and structures and with the people whose ways of co-operation will need to be altered. We certainly do not talk about “re-inventing organisations” or even people (Laloux, 2014/2015), although very much of what would be necessary to do is required and to be learned in what we suggest, first of all allowing for and asking for self-organisation processes.

We point out that in the perception of the people affected by and participating in such processes, it is never the simple functioning of individual proceedings and performances that is at stake. Instead, at all times, it is the quality of the whole organisation and its overall inward and outward performance that is challenging those who bear responsibility. We are not talking about the management of quality but about the quality of management.

In this book we present a comprehensive management approach coalescing the fundamentals of Excellence—as they are incorporated by the Excellence model of EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management) or by CAF (Common Assessment Framework), its congenial model for public administrations. Compared to the basics of occupational psychology and in particular with the aspects of stress avoidance recommending stress management as a methodical component. In a framework of continual learning and (self) improvement of the whole organisation, the Excellence model asks for regular self-assessment. It aims for the organisation to understand and reshape itself as a co-operation body capable of effectively learning. Individuals and groups of individuals in the organisation are allowed and encouraged to learn to enable the entire organisation to overcome known and unknown challenges in a constantly and rapidly changing social, technological, and economic environment.

2 A Fundamental Management Decision: Quality Management or Management Quality?

If you want or need to introduce a comprehensive management system in your organisation, you will have to answer the two following questions of

- What is quality, and what is to be understood by quality in your organisation, also
- Whether quality is merely assured by documentation and certification or is it practiced effectively and efficiently?

In short, the question is: Shall quality determine the interaction of people in your organisation, i.e. their working together, their collaboration for the benefit of all relevant stakeholders? Or are you merely aiming at the documented quality-related reproducibility of proceedings in manufacturing and/or distributing a certain product or service for your customers? If your YES applies for the first question, you should strike the path towards introducing the comprehensive Excellence model. If the second question is confirmed, a certification according to ISO 9000 will be “sufficient”—which by the way is simple to start this way but also not so simple to be done.

The decision on “What do we need?” and “What is good for us?” itself demands a quality judgement about the type of excellence and hence the type of quality system you are going for. It is a decision that does not come easy to many responsible decision makers. Quite often, first encounters with the ISO standard series 9001 ff. have or had a sobering effect in many an organisation. These standards cannot hide—even after the fundamental structural revision of 2000—that they were originally stipulated in a context of large industries and that their main purpose was quality assurance. In the language of the standard, *quality assurance* merely means that the customer is assured by diligent documentation that a quality management system is in place and that it is in tune with the standard. Nothing is said about the actual quality of products and services.

Few who gather experience with these ISO standards may ask whether this really is the essence of dealing with quality in their organisation. Of course, the ISO standards can be interpreted and implemented in a way that differs from what is currently practised, i.e., ISO as an accumulation of red tape data and documents. Contrary to this practice, excellence, comprehensive organisational quality, asks for objectives and for strategies of implementing them. It wants you to know whether the available resources are in accordance with these objectives and strategies. Whether the people are competent doing what they are expected to do. Whether the processes, products, or services are what your advertisement promises. It also asks do you recognise these points in your organisation’s measurable economic performance and in the perceptions of your organisation by the public.

In order to facilitate the distinctions between the different types of quality systems, it may be helpful to have brief look at the history of the quality idea.

Excursion into a Short History of the Quality Idea

Craft Occupations, Craft and Commercial Guilds

Towards the end of the Middle Ages, in pre-industrial manufacturing, such as in crafts, quality assurance was enacted partly for identifying individual products or master schools. For example, in construction a process of social monopolisation of craft qualification or professions. The institution of mastery fulfilled this purpose in the craft workshops and establishments. In order to become a master numerous conditions had to be met. One was that a certain number of training stations with different masters had to be absolved, hence trainees became journeymen travelling through Europe from master to master in order to build up their craftsmanship. Craft guilds and commercial guilds pursued this purpose of ensuring quality by ensuring qualification. At the same time this proved to become a central mechanism for securing and distributing orders and commissions and with this power and influence brought about the end of the feudal society. This system with the craft profession as its central institution has not only survived in Central Europe (the German speaking countries) and Scandinavia, it was developed and expanded over time and also transferred and adapted to the conditions of working in large industries. The same can only partly be reported for the British and even to a lesser degree for the USA.

From a present viewpoint (cf. Franz, 2010), we can perceive Frederick Winslow Taylor and his “systematic management” (1972) as a first precursor of the industrial quality orientation. In his environment, we find experts like Shewhart and Gantt who became known as the fathers of *statistical process control*. In the 1950s, Shewhart’s disciple Deming worked with great success in Japan as one of the fathers of the Japanese quality offensive that grew to become an existential challenge for quite a few European and US-American industries.

Taylor’s “systematic management” rests upon the principle that not arbitrariness and resistance but knowledge, the knowledge of the planning department, should determine the organisation of manufacturing, that this knowledge should be based on data collected with scientific methods. Nowadays we say it should be evidence-based and that (breaking-in) learning should become an integrated function of the organisation. For installing the empire of knowledge, which for the engineer Taylor primarily was technological and labouring knowledge, he believed it necessary to separate planning from execution. For learning the step by step training of the workers, he had chosen what he called the functional masters who’s first and foremost role was to act as teachers for the workers (Hebeisen, 1999, 37). For Taylor, the breaking down of work into its smallest action units was an analytical task aimed to develop these individual components new work, achieving the consumption of the lowest possible quantity of energy. Breakdown analysis and precise observation or measurement of work processes were necessary methods for achieving the lowest degree of energy consumption. Specialisation was not an objective but a method for being able to employ low-skilled workers in a way that could enhance profits as well as wages.

It was not Taylor’s objective to establish the rule of knowledge as knowledge for domination, i.e. in order to keep the workers uneducated and dependent. Quite a few

interpretations with an ideological background have preferred to understand it. Rather the other way round makes ends meet. Taylor had to tackle the problem working with large numbers of unskilled workers who came with no or little expertise and who had acquired what they knew about their work by the traditional methods. They did not possess a comprehensive view of the industrial production process as a whole nor could they develop a vested interest in its overall profitability or competitiveness of the organisation. The existing time wage system functioned in a way that working slowly ensured more work. Taylor, on the contrary, by introducing his work and wage system promised a fairer and higher wages for all workers—indeed without working till complete exhaustion—and, at the same time, higher profitability production rates for the company. His motto was: “High wages along with low production costs” (as reports his temporary partner Wallich, n.d.). Wherever he introduced this system he also achieved this double effect as Taylor himself has substantiated repeatedly (cf. Taylor ,Principles’ 1972, 94 ff).

Tested Quality

Quality management as a separate system only evolved during the prolonged growth period after WW II because of relatively saturated markets. Initially, the need for an organised quality management system was triggered by the US-American preparation for entering reluctantly the anti-Hitler alliance during the Second World War. Till then it was completely sufficient for the existing US producers of weapons and ammunitions to harmonise their products directly or even not at all. Suddenly so much armament had to be manufactured at short notice that orders had to be distributed among several large manufacturers and production needed to be standardised. In the manifest safety interest of the arms users, the product’s fitness for use had to be tested. “The armed forces initially inspected virtually every unit of product. Then to simplify and speed up this process without comprising safety, the military began to use sampling techniques for inspection, aided by the publication of military-specification standards and training courses in Walter Shewhart’s statistical process control techniques” (Quality Oasis, n.d.). At the beginning, there was quality assurance, i.e., the manufacturer assuring the customers that a systematic form of product testing was in place. It was restricted to testing the already produced goods in order to make sure they functioned according to their use purpose, testing for safety. The testing responsibility was in the hands of whole testing departments inspecting the products and the producers. Correspondingly the costs of inspection were high, also due to high failure and rejection rates and frequently very expensive reworking efforts.

Rather anecdotally, the importance of such reworking may be traceable if one knows that at the end of the 1980s, when the data for the social science international bestseller on “the Second Revolution in the Automobile Industry” (Womack et al., 1992) were collected, Daimler-Benz still had to spend just as much capital in the reworking of its cars by highly skilled workers as Toyota needed for the whole manufacturing process of its cars, already at that point in time.