

QUALITY MANAGEMENT. A LONGITUDINAL APPROACH (I)

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Abstract: *Quality management activities in five large Australian organisations have been monitored over a decade and present the basis for an insight into the factors which impact on the sustainability and direction of quality management over the longer term. Using a longitudinal research approach, the quality management strategies and activities in these organisations have been examined through periodic interviews with quality managers along with examination of relevant company documents. Findings identify a number of factors which impact on the continuity of quality management over the longer term. These include: the tenure of the CEO and the executive board; the quality foundations which have been created through quality initiatives in the past; the driving force behind the quality management journey; the management system and the extent to which quality is integrated into the system. Other factors include the role of audits and assessments, the role of quality frameworks, customer orientation and information systems.*

Even dramatic downsizing within an organisation does not necessarily curtail the attention given to quality management issues, although in all cases it forces it to create stronger linkages between the business plan and quality management activities.

Keywords: *Case studies, TQM, Sustainable development.*