

At the Root of the New Philosophy

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In my article *Before the Deming's 14 Points for Management*, I reported a lecture that Deming delivered in October 1978 during the International Conference on Quality Control organized in Tokyo by the Japanese Union of Scientists and Engineers.

Under the title *Quick Review of Some New Principles of Administration*, Deming stated 25 principles that he resumed five years later in his 14 Points for Management. In introduction, he said that Japan did apply these principles, while America neither understood nor applied them. He strongly stressed the importance of statistical methods, as he did in 1950 when he gave lectures to Japanese managers. He said : « It will be obvious that recognition of problems in quality, uniformity, and economy, and evaluation of attempts to solve them, require statistical methods and statistical thinking ». Then, Principle n°1 : « It is demoralizing and costly to call to the attention of a production-worker a defective item that he has made, when he is in a state of statistical control with respect to the cause of that defect ». This principle is the main idea of the Red Bead Experiment !

Today, when the reader of *Out of the Crisis* reaches the second of the 14 Points : *Adopt the new philosophy*, he may wonder what the new philosophy is. He may understand that it is a new management philosophy which led Japanese companies to be more competitive, to avoid delays, mistakes and defects. But he does not find any description of it. Put quality at the top of the organization's goals ? Yes indeed, it is a good start, but it is not enough.

Another component of the new philosophy is cooperation within the organization and between organizations. Several of the 14 points aim to foster cooperation and to remove the obstacles to cooperation from management practices.

Nevertheless, the main component of the new philosophy obviously is statistical thinking. It is worth knowing that the lecture that Deming gave in October 1978 was entirely devoted to statistical methods. Moreover, *Out of the Crisis* contains many examples involving statistical methods. Moreover, *The New Economics* includes a chapter which is entirely devoted to control charts. But many people have an instinctive mistrust of statistics. It is the reason why today we often hesitate to emphasize statistical methods in our presentations of the Deming's management philosophy.

But statistical thinking and statistical methods really are at the root of the new philosophy that Deming recommended to adopt in his 14 points for Management.

NB. Philosophical system : system for conduct of life (The Concise Oxford Dictionary)

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