United States General Accounting Office

GAO

Quality Improvement Plan: An Update

March 1993

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT
The Quality Challenge

GAO

United States
General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

/4884

Comptroller General
of the United States

March 1993

All GAO Employees

GAO's effort to continually improve our operations takes an important step forward with the publication of the attached plan. It represents the best thinking to date of many GAO customers and employees. Specifically, we surveyed some of our most important customers and our staff to get their views on key issues. We flowcharted some of our key processes, and we examined the data we use to measure performance. The findings suggest that we have both strengths and weaknesses.

We should celebrate our strengths. We know we are viewed as a capable and valued source of credible information by most of our customers. There is a high level of awareness of our work throughout government, academia, and the business community. Our work is used by decision-makers to save millions of taxpayer dollars and to make changes that improve government programs and policies. None of this would be possible without an outstanding, committed staff.

But just because an organization is on top does not mean it will stay there. We must avoid becoming complacent about GAO's reputation and should fearlessly acknowledge what we clearly need to improve. We are entering a period in which we will be challenged to do more with less—working with a smaller staff and a tighter budget. Only by making our processes work for us, rather than against us, will we be able to maintain and enhance our standard of excellence.

If we are to be the leading organization engaged in audit, evaluation, and public policy analysis—and our vision statement says we want to be—then we have to bring a new dedication to continually improving ourselves. The GAO Quality Council has committed itself to a systematic and sustained effort that uses the best data and decision-making we can muster to bring about this transformation.

Toward that end, we have established the following four improvement priorities to guide GAO over the next 3 years—improving relations with Congress, better supporting each other in meeting customer needs, improving the quality of our work and processes, and improving the value of GAO to taxpayers.

As we move to this next phase of TQM implementation, we hope that some major differences from past approaches and practices become evident. Our priorities are few in number and are based on analyses of our
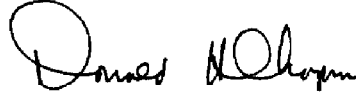
customers' needs, staff concerns, and key job management processes. We will use GAO-wide indicators to measure progress toward meeting our priorities. Finally, although the GAO Quality Council chose the priorities and will choose the improvement targets, unit managers and their staffs will decide how we will meet these targets.

We all have a stake in this effort, and everyone in GAO needs to be involved. GAO executives need to adopt a new approach to leadership based on the four quality principles that we have adopted—respect for people, customer satisfaction, continuous improvement, and management by fact. Managers must be dedicated to creating an environment in which everyone is using their talents to the fullest and all contributions are valued. GAO staff must make a commitment to use their knowledge and talents to improve our operations and help each other. In this way, we can make GAO a better place to work and increase our value to taxpayers.
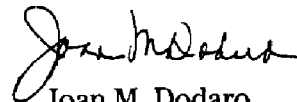
GAO Quality Council

Charles A. Bowsher, Chair

Donald H. Chapin

Frank C. Conahan

Richard L. Fogel

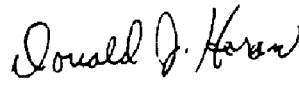Mary R. Hamilton

Donald J. Horan

John H. Luke

J. Dexter Peach

Lawrence H. Thompson

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Eleanor Chelimsky

Joan M. Dodaro

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James F. Hinchman

James L. Howard

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Abbreviations

QMG   Quality Management Group
QMI   Quality Management Initiative
TQM   Total quality management
TEF   Trade, Energy, and Finance

Introduction

Total Quality Management (TQM) is a leadership philosophy that makes quality the primary goal of an organization. It means striving to satisfy customers by involving everyone in an effort to continually improve products and services, the processes used to produce them, and the interpersonal relationships that are at the heart of those processes.

An organization's leaders play a key role in implementing quality management by first adopting the new philosophy themselves and then by creating an environment in which continuous improvement is a way of life. This begins with setting a clear and constant vision of where the organization is going, communicating that vision to everyone in the organization, and teaching people what their role is in accomplishing that vision.

To move the organization toward the vision, management communicates specific goals that are derived from customers' requirements. Further, management recognizes that the people actually doing a job know better than anyone else how to improve the products and processes and encourages everyone to use their talents and skills to achieve the improvement goals.

At the November 1991 managers' meeting, we introduced our plan for implementing TQM at GAO. [1] The plan was prepared after an 18-month effort to (1) better understand the TQM philosophy, (2) evaluate its appropriateness for GAO, and (3) prepare for implementation. Highlights of the decision and preparation processes included meeting with quality management experts, such as Dr. Deming and Dr. Juran; visiting successful TQM organizations; authorizing two TQM pilots within GAO; forming a GAO Quality Council; and selecting a vendor to provide TQM training. (See app. I for a chronology of quality management in GAO.)

The Quality Improvement Plan marked the beginning of the first GAO-wide continuous improvement cycle—that is, a never-ending cycle of planning what is to be accomplished or changed, doing or implementing the actions or changes, checking the results against the plan, acting upon the results, and starting the process again. The plan identified our quality goals and strategies for calendar years 1992 and 1993. We began immediately to implement the strategies through work groups headed by Quality Council members, GAO-wide teams, the GGD/Regional Office Pilot, and the efforts of most of the other units. The Quality Management Group (QMG) facilitated and coordinated the implementation.

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[1]Quality Improvement Plan: Early Implementation (GAO/QMG-92-1, Nov. 1991).

The GAO Quality Council began checking the results of our early efforts through a series of briefings from August to November 1992. It evaluated the results, set improvement priorities for the next 3 years, and appointed four coordinating executives to help oversee the priorities. The coordinating executives, assisted by groups of GAO managers and staff, have developed a plan for the next GAO-wide continuous improvement cycle. In the near future, they will be identifying indicators to measure progress and setting targets for improvements. The specifics for meeting the targets—the "how to"—will be determined by unit heads with the involvement of all GAO staff.

Figure 1 shows some of the major milestones of early TQM implementation at GAO in the context of the continuous improvement cycle.

Figure 1: Quality Improvement at GAO—Early Implementation (November 1991 - January 1993)

Plan
November 1991

- Vision
- Mission
- Initial goals/strategies

Do
December 1991—

- Build skill base/structures
- Survey customers
- Analyze key processes
- Analyze measures

PLAN

DO

TQM at GAO

ACT

CHECK

Act
November 1992—January 1993

- Set new priorities
- Appoint Coordinating Executives
- Begin planning for next phase

Check
August 1992—November 1992

Evaluate results from:
- Congressional Committee Staff Survey
- Job Management Task Team
- Performance Measurement Task Team
- Rewards, Recognition & Compensation and Communication Work Groups
- Other implementation activities

Overview of the Updated Plan

This document briefly summarizes our early efforts to implement TQM and presents our plan for the next phase of continuous improvement at GAO. First, it reviews the major goals set out in the November 1991 Quality Improvement Plan, discusses our efforts to achieve them, and presents some of the principal results relative to each.

Next, it discusses how these results were translated into the following four broad GAO priorities for the next 3 years:

(1) improve relations with Congress, (2) better support each other in meeting customer needs, (3) improve the quality of our work and processes, and (4) improve GAO's value to taxpayers.

Finally, it presents our plan for achieving the priorities, including the expected outcomes, the order in which the outcomes will be achieved, and a strategy for involving everyone.

What We Planned to Do—Early Implementation Goals

The November 1991 Quality Improvement Plan set the context of our quality efforts by presenting GAO's vision, mission, and guiding principles. In addition, it set out three major goals for the following 2-year period:

- determine our customers' needs so that we could begin to define product and process quality in GAO;
- analyze those GAO-wide processes essential to meeting our customers' needs, and identify the ones causing us the most pain; and
- expand implementation of quality management beyond the pilots to as many units as possible.

The plan also set seven long-term quality goals for

(1) educating and training ourselves in quality principles and methods,

(2) improving communications throughout GAO,

(3) recognizing and rewarding staff in ways consistent with quality management principles,

(4) building quality concepts into the planning process,

(5) using employee suggestions for continuous improvement,

(6) measuring quality progress, and

(7) improving our operations through benchmarking.

What We Did

In the first 15 months of the 2-year period covered by the initial Quality Improvement Plan, we have already accomplished much of what we initially set out to do. During the first year, we set up structures to support our TQM implementation model and adopted four quality management principles to guide our efforts—customer satisfaction, respect for people, continuous improvement, and management by fact. The model and underlying principles appear in figure 2.

Figure 2: GAO TQM Implementation Model and Underlying Principles
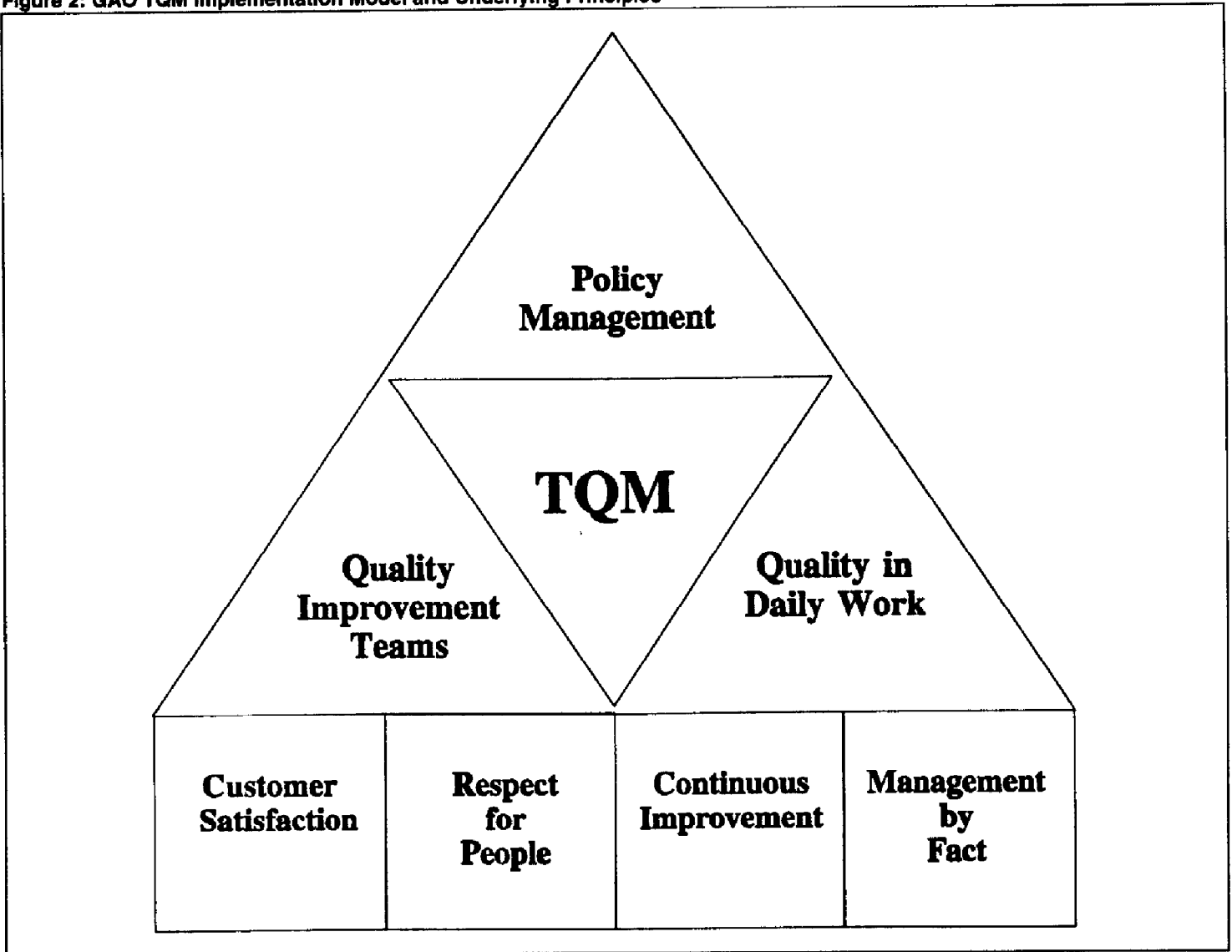
As figure 2 shows, the model has three parts—policy management, quality improvement teams, and quality in daily work. Policy management allows for breakthrough improvements by aligning the organization's resources behind a few key priorities. Quality improvement teams help achieve the gains, and the tools and techniques of quality in daily work help everyone monitor and maintain the gains.

GAO began implementation with quality improvement teams. These teams, using a structured problem-solving process and tools, enable us to study our processes and remove long-standing obstacles to efficient operations. To start these teams in GAO, we first had to

- establish and train quality councils in the units to charter and support the teams,
- train mid-level managers so they could understand and support the teams, and
- train team leaders and facilitators to lead the teams and train the team members.

Beginning with teams helped us build necessary structures and skills, gave us a common language, and produced some early improvements.

We also began to understand and practice the principles of quality management that we adopted. For example, the congressional survey was a first step in comprehending our customers' needs and expectations and how we might meet them to increase customer satisfaction. The Performance Measurement and Job Management task teams helped us see how management by fact applies to GAO and how this principle is essential to continuous improvement. The results of the focus groups conducted by the Rewards, Recognition, and Compensation Work Group and the panel of experts convened by the Communications Work Group underlined the crucial importance of respect for people. However, these four interrelated principles are of little value until we put them into disciplined and consistent practice in the way we do our work and in the way we relate to each other.

Checking the Results of Early Quality Efforts

In late summer of 1992, the Council began to receive valuable feedback from three GAO-wide teams—the Congressional Committee Staff Survey Team, the Job Management Task Team, and the Performance Measurement Task Team. Each team was sponsored by a member of the GAO Quality Council and included managers and staff from throughout GAO. The results of this feedback—along with input from the Rewards, Recognition, and Compensation Work Group, the Communications Work Group, and others—provided the basis for beginning the next phase of quality management at GAO. (See app. II for the make-up of these teams and work groups.)

Results From Congressional Committee Staff Survey Team

The Congressional Committee Staff Survey Team briefed the GAO Quality Council on August 21, 1992. The nonrepresentative sample of 93 congressional staffers disclosed that GAO is seen by many as a competent and valued source of credible information. Some had excellent experiences with GAO and recognized the value of GAO as an institution. However, GAO's performance was seen by many as inconsistent. And the results further suggested that there were a number of congressional requirements that were not being met fully. These included the need for GAO to

- do a mix of work that addresses issues important to Congress and consistent with the immediate and long-term legislative agenda;
- do work responsive to Congress' priorities rather than "setting our own agenda";
- communicate frequently with members and key staff, keep them aware of the scope and progress of ongoing work, and maintain good internal communication and coordination;
- produce objective products based on unbiased analysis that add value to the legislative process and have internal processes aligned with and responsive to congressional needs; and
- maintain a staff with sound program knowledge and technical expertise to support the work Congress wants done, staff jobs adequately, and manage a fair and effective detailee program.

Results From Job Management Task Team

The Job Management Task Team (1) used 10 case studies to analyze (flowchart) our entire job management process from the time a request is received at GAO until the final product is delivered, (2) analyzed job data on time and quality, and (3) surveyed over 400 GAO managers and staff on their greatest concerns about the job management process. According to our internal standards, our processes produce high quality products, but at a cost of a high level of staff frustration over redundant review, rework, and administrative burden. The results of this effort, which were presented to the GAO Quality Council on September 24, 1992, suggested that our overall efficiency and responsiveness to our customers could be improved by

- establishing goals and clarifying the desired outcomes for the overall process and the numerous subprocesses (e.g., what do we expect at the end of the job staffing process, job design process, etc.?);
- reducing the amount of rework;

- analyzing and reducing the variance among divisions in the time to complete the different job phases;
- reviewing and improving the way we staff jobs; and
- ensuring that our internal data systems are conducive to management by fact and continuous improvement.

In terms of priorities, the team believed that reducing rework by improving the quality of our drafts and improving the job staffing process offered the greatest potential for increasing the satisfaction of both our external and internal customers.

Results From Performance Measurement Task Team

The Performance Measurement Task Team briefed the Quality Council on November 2, 1992. The team assessed GAO's performance measurement system by comparing it to generally accepted performance measurement principles, talking with GAO managers, and reviewing existing internal studies of our measures. The results reinforced portions of the messages presented in earlier briefings. To become useful tools for managing for continuous improvement, our measures should be changed. They need to be

- anchored to broader organizational goals rather than focused on assignment management,
- focused on outcomes rather than on outputs,
- oriented toward customers rather than focused internally, and
- reduced in number from the 500 currently in use to give the organization a clearer sense of what is important.

The team concluded that GAO's performance measurement system should conform with generally accepted measurement principles and recommended that GAO

- set priorities and develop appropriate measures to track their achievement,
- develop an operational definition and measures for product quality, and
- eliminate those measures that do not contribute to improving GAO management.

Results of Rewards, Recognition, and Compensation Focus Groups

The Rewards, Recognition, and Compensation Work Group was charged with determining if our rewards, recognition, and compensation programs were (1) consistent with TQM philosophy and principles and (2) appropriately targeted to the needs and desires of GAO employees. As part of its effort, the work group conducted 20 focus groups (12 in headquarters and 8 in the regional offices) involving 150 participants.

The results, although not necessarily representative of GAO as a whole, went beyond pay and compensation issues to suggest that there are questions about the extent to which staff trust management and concerns about the way GAO values and treats its employees. Further, GAO staff participating in the focus groups said that they believed that teamwork was neither encouraged nor valued. These results, along with those from recent employee attitude surveys, suggest that GAO must address these problems before breakthrough improvements in other areas are possible.

GAO Quality Council Acts on Results

Immediately after the last briefing in November 1992, the GAO Quality Council began analyzing and evaluating the issues identified by the three task teams and the work groups. With this process, the Quality Council began to move GAO to the next phase of TQM implementation, policy management (see fig. 2, p. 11). Policy management involves setting a few key priorities based on feedback from customers and an analysis of the organization's operations. Policy management then focuses the organization's resources on the priorities it sets to achieve breakthrough improvements.

To establish the key priorities that should be addressed during the next 3 years, the Quality Council summarized the results from the various briefings into 24 issues. After discussing and clarifying the issues in meetings of the entire council, the individual council members ranked the issues based on their importance to the external customer, importance to GAO staff, and consistency with the GAO mission.

The Quality Council met and discussed the individual rankings and agreed on four priorities, each with a number of expected outcomes. The priorities and outcomes selected were generally in response to consistent themes heard from the various teams. For example, the survey of congressional committee staff identified a concern about too many understaffed jobs. Likewise, the Job Management Task Team reported that job staffing was the second most frequently cited concern of GAO staff interviewed by the team. The Measurement Team reported that the

incentives inherent in our current measures drive managers to increase the number of jobs and thus may contribute to the job staffing problem. Accordingly, the Quality Council established "properly staffed jobs . . ." as an expected outcome within the priority of improving the quality of work and processes.

Table 1 shows the GAO priorities and expected outcomes for the next 3 years.

Table 1: GAO Priorities and Expected Outcomes (February 1993 - February 1996)

Priority	Outcomes
Improve relations with Congress	Effective communication throughout course of individual jobs, resulting in few surprises or misunderstandings by requesters and other interested members.
	A detailee program that satisfies congressional and GAO needs.
	Congressional support for a mix of work that addresses issues of both immediate congressional concern and long-term congressional and public interest.
	Confidence in and respect for the independence, objectivity, accuracy, and credibility of GAO work.
	Timely GAO inputs to legislative decision-making as viewed by congressional members and key staff.
Better support each other in meeting customer needs	A work environment within each unit in which clear, open, honest, and respectful communication occurs in a timely manner.
	Better teamwork and cooperation within each unit.
	Rewards, recognition, and compensation programs commensurate with goals and missions.
	Better teamwork among units.
	Improved internal communications GAO-wide.
	Increased trust within GAO.
	Staff with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to match the requirements of the work.
Improve quality of work and processes	Reduced rework.
	Creative use of technology.
	Improved issue date predictability.
	Clearly understood quality definitions for all GAO products.
	Improved timeliness.
	Benchmarking.
	Technology effectively deployed.
	Properly staffed jobs in terms of numbers of staff and expertise.
Improve value of GAO to taxpayers	Positive impact on government programs and policies.
	Increased organizational efficiencies and economies.
	Broad-based support.
	Appropriate job at right price.

The priorities and outcomes shown in table 1 came directly from the results of the GAO-wide teams, work groups, and other early TQM implementation efforts.

After establishing the priorities and expected outcomes, the Quality Council appointed coordinating executives for each priority area—Dexter Peach (improve relations with Congress), Joan Dodaro (better support each other in meeting customer needs), Larry Thompson (improve quality of work and processes), and Jim Howard (improve value of GAO to taxpayers). The Comptroller General named Assistant Comptroller General Dick Fogel to lead this effort. Groups were established in December 1992 to assist the coordinating executives in developing a strategy for achieving each outcome within the four priority areas.

All of the efforts discussed above concern our processes but are devoted to the larger task of improving product and workplace quality overall at GAO. Briefly stated, our assumption is that the four priorities should separately and synergistically move us toward increased and continuously improving quality. Each priority taken individually relates directly to problems about which we now have evidence and know we must overcome. Taken together, the energy generated by the four interrelated efforts should set up a dynamic that will affect the overall quality of what we do.

The Plan for the Next 3 Years

Because many of the outcomes are interrelated, the coordinating executives must work together under Assistant Comptroller General Fogel's leadership to develop and effectively implement an integrated plan. Realizing that we cannot do everything at once, the Quality Council chose five outcomes to be pursued first. During fiscal year 1994, GAO units will be expected to contribute to achieving these outcomes. The coordinating groups are developing or refining strategies for the other outcomes.

Outcomes to Be Deployed GAO-wide

During fiscal year 1994, GAO units will be expected to help

- improve communications with Congress throughout the course of our individual jobs (improve relations with Congress);
- create a work environment within each unit in which clear, open, honest, and respectful communication occurs in a timely manner (better support each other in meeting customer needs);

- improve teamwork and cooperation within units (better support each other in meeting customer needs);
- reduce rework (improve quality of work and processes); and
- identify ways to use technology creatively (improve quality of work and processes).

The overall strategy for achieving each of the five outcomes involves (1) selecting an indicator (measure) and a target to assess GAO's performance in achieving the outcome, (2) developing a plan by negotiating with units to determine how and how much they can contribute to meeting the target, and (3) implementing the plan and tracking progress toward meeting the targets. We refer to this as "deploying" GAO-wide outcomes, and this process has already started.

Between February and June 1993, the four coordinating groups will analyze existing data and collect new data to help them define the indicators and targets for the five outcomes. They will then recommend the key indicators and targets for improvement to the Quality Council.

Next, around June 1993, the Quality Council will announce the indicators and long-term targets for each outcome as well as the targets for fiscal year 1994. The Quality Council will then ask each unit head to determine what contribution, if any, his or her unit can make toward achieving the first-year targets. While all units—divisions, regions, and staff offices—are expected to contribute to meeting the targets for the outcomes, we recognize that participation will vary across units and that some units might not contribute to all outcomes.

The unit heads and their management teams will be expected to involve all of their staff in suggesting ways to meet the targets and estimating the unit's contribution. The unit heads will then propose a plan to the coordinating executives that describes the actions each unit wants to take and what each can contribute to help meet the GAO targets. When negotiations are completed, the coordinating executives will propose an overall plan to the Quality Council. We anticipate that the Council will approve the overall plan and units will begin their improvement efforts by October 1993.

The coordinating executives and the GAO Quality Council will track unit and GAO progress toward meeting the targets for improvement throughout fiscal year 1994. Realistically, we recognize that not all unit targets will be met in this first round of policy management, but we expect to learn from

this experience and make improvements as we deploy future outcomes and targets. We also expect, however, that in addition to the unit-specific improvements that are made, we will be able to identify successful practices that can be replicated across GAO.

Outcomes to Be Achieved by GAO-Level Teams

Not everyone will work on the other outcomes in the short term. The coordinating groups determined that three of the outcomes can be achieved by chartering GAO-level task teams that will analyze the issues and recommend possible solutions within the next 6 months. Within the priority "improving relations with Congress," a team will analyze the GAO detailee program to determine the root causes of the problems and identify changes we can test and begin to measure this spring. Another GAO-level task team will begin immediately to identify changes that should be made to our Pay-for-Performance System for the October 1993 cycle, based on information contained in the GAO employee attitude survey. A third GAO-level task team has begun to review our processes to improve the predictability of our report issue dates at the time the reports are signed.

The coordinating executives will set up planning teams to develop a strategy for achieving the remaining outcomes over the longer term. For example, we envision that a team will begin this summer to examine the more fundamental changes that must be made to our rewards, recognition, and compensation systems to make them more consistent with the principles of quality management. Another team will begin systematically analyzing our mission support processes to see where we can realize efficiencies. Still other teams will work on developing indicators for measuring whether we are doing the right mix of work and producing quality products. After appropriate indicators are identified, GAO and unit targets may be set for the next cycle of improvements.

All GAO-level teams will include members with relevant expertise and perspectives from across GAO. This integrated approach will be closely coordinated through the GAO Quality Council.

Appendix III shows a summary schedule of the approaches and milestones for achieving each of the outcomes set out by the GAO Quality Council.

Involving Everyone in Improving GAO

Achieving our target improvements will require an environment of open communications in which everyone's ideas are sought and valued. The Design and Implementation Team [2] stated in a January 1993 memo to the Comptroller General that this will require altering some of our management behaviors and decision-making patterns. Our behaviors and procedures have evolved over a long period, and we must systematically sift through them to reinforce the positive ones and eliminate the counterproductive ones. This assessment process must be guided by the four basic quality principles we have adopted. Only in this way can we reshape our culture to one that not only embraces the concepts of continuous improvement and management by fact, but also acts consistently with the values of respect for our people and customer satisfaction.

As we begin deploying the outcomes, managers must assess the environments in their units as well as their units' readiness to contribute to meeting these outcomes. This includes evaluating

- each unit's understanding and practice of quality management principles;
- the structures, such as unit quality councils and lead teams, used for management communications;
- the effectiveness of the management team at working as a "team";
- ways for staff to communicate with management and with each other;
- how existing quality improvement efforts relate to or can be refocused on the priorities;
- how to begin involving everyone in the unit in addressing the priority areas; and
- what additional assistance or training managers and staff need to prepare to work on the priorities.

Likewise, staff must also determine how they can contribute to this effort. This starts with each staff member evaluating his or her personal understanding of and commitment to the TQM principles and tools that will be instrumental in achieving our improvement objectives. Next, it means getting involved by volunteering for GAO-level teams or unit improvement teams. Realistically, not everyone who wants to be on a team will able to serve immediately. But there are other ways to get involved, including

- serving on unit quality councils;

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[2]The Design and Implementation Team was established by the Comptroller General to provide continuity and unit-level leadership for quality management and to provide a way to involve a range of senior executives in implementation activities.

- working with managers to identify and establish processes for sharing improvement ideas (e.g., brown bag lunches, unit suggestion systems, "creative thinking" sessions); and
- beginning immediately to identify and share ideas for improving working relationships, increasing efficiency, and reducing rework and costs.

We realize that this second quality improvement plan, like the first, does not contain all the specific answers about how each person will be involved because we continue to learn as we go. The Quality Management Group, unit lead facilitators, and the coordinating executives will be available to help the units identify and overcome barriers to improvement.

Chronology of Total Quality Management in GAO

Decision Phase

June 1990	Dr. W. Edwards Deming visits GAO to discuss his management philosophy with executives and staff.
July 1990	CG authorizes NSIAD/TEF Pilot.
September 1990	CG authorizes the GGD/Regional Office Pilot.
October 1990	CG kicks off the NSIAD/TEF Pilot.
November 1990	At the annual GAO Management Conference, CG announces that he is considering adopting a quality management philosophy at GAO. GGD/Regional Office Pilot started.
December 1990	ACG for Operations issues the Quality Management Scoping Study, which examines the possibility of adopting a quality management philosophy at GAO. CG decides to adopt a quality management philosophy at GAO and appoints Mary Hamilton as Director for Quality Management.

Preparation Phase

March 1991	CG and top executives participate in quality management training session presented by representatives from leading quality management companies. NSIAD/TEF Pilot proposes alternative compensation and reward system.
April 1991	CG announces formation of GAO Quality Council to assist in leading the transformation to quality management. GAO Quality Council meets for the first time. CG shares his views on why quality management is important to GAO.

	A monthly speaker series on quality management topics begins.
May 1991	CG asks for a quality improvement plan to guide GAO for the next 1 to 5 years.
June 1991	Quality improvement work groups are formed. Each work group is chaired by a member of the GAO Quality Council.
September 1991	CG appoints a high-level Design and Implementation Team to assist the GAO Quality Council in planning and implementing quality management in GAO.
October 1991	GAO Quality Council approves draft of GAO's vision, mission, and guiding principles. Rewards, Recognition, and Compensation focus group results reported to GAO Quality Council. NSIAD/TEF Pilot presents modified format for report development and review conferences to the GAO Planning and Reporting Network.
November 1991	At the annual GAO Management Conference, CG releases GAO's Quality Improvement Plan: Early Implementation (GAO/QMG-92-1, Nov. 1991), which introduces GAO's mission, vision, and guiding principles. The plan also sets out the agency's quality goals and strategies for calendar years 1992 and 1993.
December 1991	First GGD/Regional Office Pilot teams chartered.

Start Phase

January 1992	Training expanded beyond pilots.
February 1992	GAO Quality Council trained.

March 1992	GAO's Quality Network formed.
April 1992	Communications Work Group convenes panel of experts.
May 1992	First TQM instructors trained.
June 1992	GAO Quality Council charters a cross-functional team to review GAO's visual standards.
August 1992	Customer Survey Team results reported to the GAO Quality Council.
September 1992	Job Management Task Team briefed the GAO Quality Council.
November 1992	Performance Measurement Task Team briefed the GAO Quality Council. GAO Quality Council developed four agency-wide priorities based on analysis of issues identified by the three teams and the work groups.
December 1992	GAO Quality Council appointed coordinating executives and established coordinating groups. These individuals are charged with developing a strategy for achieving each of the desired outcomes within the four priority areas.
January 1993	Design and Implementation Team sent a memo to CG stating that altering our management behaviors and decision-making patterns is a necessary prerequisite to achieving true quality improvement. CG appoints Assistant Comptroller General Dick Fogel to lead GAO's quality effort.
February 1993	CG kicks off the second phase of GAO's quality initiative at a special 1-day meeting by announcing the four priority areas to GAO's SES staff.

GAO's Key Teams—Early Implementation Phase

Congressional Committee Staff Survey Team	J. Dexter Peach, Sponsor Henry L. Hinton, Jr., Team Leader	
	Keith Bonney	Laurie Ekstrand
	Helen Hsing	Kenneth John

Job Management Task Team	Frank Conahan, Sponsor Bernie Ungar, Team Leader	
	Carol Anderson	Jim Blume
	Rose Imperato	Allen Li
	Judy Manhan	Wiley Poindexter
	Edith Pyles	Mike Speer (Facilitator)
	Fred Yohey	Kevin Dooley (Tech. Assistant)
	Minette Richardson (Tech. Assistant)	

Performance Measurement Task Team	James Hinchman, Sponsor Bob Robinson, Team Leader	
	Dave Alston	Chris Fossett
	Steve Fox	Paul Francis
	Greg Kosarin	Sam Madonia
	Ronell Raaum	Hal Shanis
	Earl Walter	

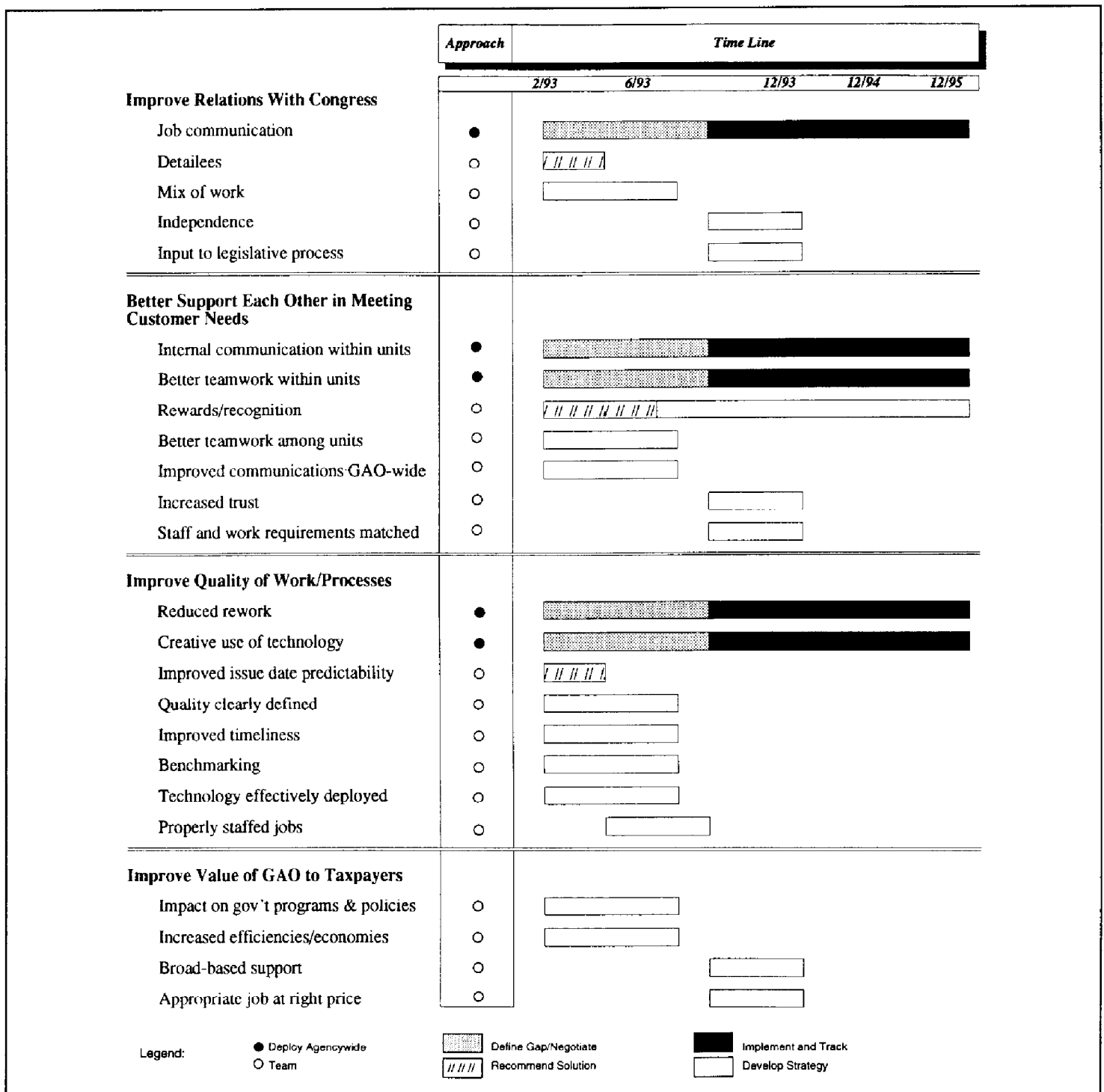| **Communications Work Group**	Tim McCormick, Chair	
	Kevin Boland	Tom Brew
	Clarence Crawford	Dave Hanna
	John Hill	Jim Hinchman
	Laura Kopelson	Debbie Logan
	Jim Meissner	Steve Lord
	Dennis O'Connor	John K. Needham
	Harry Taylor	Mike Speer
	Sallie Warren	Pam Vines

Rewards, Recognition, and Compensation Work Group

Eleanor Chelimsky, Chair

Felix Brandon
Joan Dodaro
Cliff Fowler
Marilyn Mauch
Catherine Myrick
Kathy Sternberg
Jim Wright

Tyra DiPalma
Frank Etze
Ron Lauve
Allan Mendelowitz
Jagdish Narang
Dave Utzinger

Summary Schedule of Approaches and Milestones for Achieving GAO Outcomes (February 1993 - December 1995)

	Approach	Time Line
		2/93 · 6/93 · 12/93 · 12/94 · 12/95
Improve Relations With Congress		
Job communication	●	Define Gap/Negotiate → Implement and Track
Detailees	○	Recommend Solution
Mix of work	○	Develop Strategy
Independence	○	Develop Strategy
Input to legislative process	○	Develop Strategy
Better Support Each Other in Meeting Customer Needs		
Internal communication within units	●	Define Gap/Negotiate → Implement and Track
Better teamwork within units	●	Define Gap/Negotiate → Implement and Track
Rewards/recognition	○	Recommend Solution → Develop Strategy
Better teamwork among units	○	Develop Strategy
Improved communications·GAO-wide	○	Develop Strategy
Increased trust	○	Develop Strategy
Staff and work requirements matched	○	Develop Strategy
Improve Quality of Work/Processes		
Reduced rework	●	Define Gap/Negotiate → Implement and Track
Creative use of technology	●	Define Gap/Negotiate → Implement and Track
Improved issue date predictability	○	Recommend Solution
Quality clearly defined	○	Develop Strategy
Improved timeliness	○	Develop Strategy
Benchmarking	○	Develop Strategy
Technology effectively deployed	○	Develop Strategy
Properly staffed jobs	○	Develop Strategy
Improve Value of GAO to Taxpayers		
Impact on gov't programs & policies	○	Develop Strategy
Increased efficiencies/economies	○	Develop Strategy
Broad-based support	○	Develop Strategy
Appropriate job at right price	○	Develop Strategy

Legend:
- ● Deploy Agencywide
- ○ Team
- ▒ Define Gap/Negotiate
- ▨ Recommend Solution
- ■ Implement and Track
- ☐ Develop Strategy

Key Terms in Total Quality Management

Benchmarking	A structured approach for identifying the best practices from industry and government and adapting them to complement internal operations. An organization doing benchmarking must first understand its own processes well enough to know what approaches from another organization might help improve its processes.
Charter	The official approval by the GAO Quality Council of a team to undertake a project with a specific scope.
Continuous Improvement	Also referred to as the "P-D-C-A (Plan-Do-Check-Act) Cycle," this describes the never-ending cycle of planning what is to be accomplished or changed, doing or implementing the actions or changes, checking the results against the plan, acting upon the results, and then starting the process over again.
Coordinating Executive	Senior-level staff members designated by the GAO Quality Council to develop a strategy for achieving each of the desired outcomes within GAO's four priority areas.
Coordinating Group	Staff members selected to assist the Coordinating Executives.
Cross-Functional Team	A team composed of employees from different units or functions who solve cross-cutting problems and formulate joint plans resulting in a solution or product affecting the organization.
Customer	Anyone who uses or is affected by a product, service, or process. Customers may be internal or external.
Customer Satisfaction	An organizational principle of ensuring that the needs and reasonable expectations of the customer are met. Achieving customer satisfaction requires that we identify our customers, communicate with them to reach agreement on their valid requirements, and design work processes to meet these requirements.
Design and Implementation Team	The Design and Implementation Team was established by the Comptroller General to provide continuity and unit-level leadership for quality

	management and to provide a way to involve a range of senior executives in implementation activities.
Facilitator	A trained individual who guides and supports quality improvement teams. This includes (1) providing information on the proper use of problem-solving techniques, (2) helping the individual team members develop and function as a team, and (3) carefully monitoring team processes to ascertain whether they are on track.
Functional Team	A team composed of employees from a single functional area that may be a natural work unit, who select their own project theme. Membership is voluntary, and the team is ongoing.
Indicators	Measures of how well we are achieving the desired outcomes.
Outcomes	The results that GAO would like to achieve in the priority areas.
Policy Management	Policy management focuses the organization's resources behind a few key priorities to achieve breakthrough improvements.
Priorities	Key areas designated by the GAO Quality Council in which we will attempt to make breakthrough improvements.
Quality Council	A group responsible for leading the effort to make continuous improvement a way of life in their unit.
Quality Improvement Team	Team that uses the seven-step problem-solving process to solve problems and make improvements.
Quality in Daily Work	Every employee's improvement of normal operations and systematic problem prevention in daily work. Employees use tools and techniques to monitor and maintain the improvements made under policy management.

Quality Network	A group composed of individuals in each unit who work with the unit's leadership and staff to help implement and communicate total quality management.
Target for Improvement	An improvement goal for a specific period expressed in terms of a reduction in the gap between the current and desired level of performance—e.g., reduction in percentage of staff time spent on rework. Targets are established after data analysis and review of valid requirements.
Task Team	A designated team that addresses specific problems identified by management. The members are appointed by management based on the specific knowledge, experience, and skills needed to solve a problem.
Team Leader	A person trained to lead a problem-solving team. Duties include leading team meetings, leading the team through problem-solving processes, teaching and reinforcing the quality improvement techniques, and communicating with unit managers.
Total Quality Management	A leadership philosophy that demands a relentless pursuit of quality and the stamina for continuous improvement in all aspects of operations: product, service, processes, and communications. The principles of quality management are respect for people, customer satisfaction, continuous improvement, and management by fact.

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