



# Basic Concepts

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## The History of Quality - The Industrial Revolution

- Overview
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American quality practices evolved in the 1800s as they were shaped by changes in predominant production methods:

- Craftsmanship
- The factory system
- The Taylor system

### Topic Resources

A collection of materials and information to help you get started, including:

- Overview
- Books
- Training & Certification
- Articles

### Craftsmanship

In the early 19th century, manufacturing in the United States tended to follow the craftsmanship model used in the European countries. In this model, young boys learned a skilled trade while serving as an apprentice to a master, often for many years.

Since most craftsmen sold their goods locally, each had a tremendous personal stake in meeting customers' needs for quality. If quality needs weren't met, the craftsman ran the risk of losing customers not easily replaced. Therefore, masters maintained a form of quality control by inspecting goods before sale.

### The Factory System

The factory system, a product of the Industrial Revolution in Europe, began to divide the craftsmen's trades into specialized tasks. This forced craftsmen to become factory workers and forced shop owners to become production supervisors, and marked an initial decline in employees' sense of empowerment and autonomy in the workplace.

Quality in the factory system was ensured through the skill of laborers supplemented by audits and/or inspections. Defective products were either reworked or scrapped.

### The Taylor System

Late in the 19th century the United States broke further from European tradition and adopted a new management approach developed by Frederick W. Taylor. Taylor's goal was to increase productivity without increasing the number of skilled craftsmen. He achieved this by assigning factory planning to specialized engineers and by using craftsmen and supervisors, who had been displaced by the growth of factories, as inspectors and managers who executed the engineers' plans.

Taylor's approach led to remarkable rises in productivity, but it had significant drawbacks: Workers were once again stripped of their dwindling power, and the new emphasis on productivity had a negative effect on quality.

To remedy the quality decline, factory managers created inspection departments to keep defective products from reaching customers. If defective product did reach the customer, it was more common for upper managers to ask the inspector, "Why did we let this get out?" than to ask the production manager, "Why did we make it this way to begin with?"

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