

Encouraged by the stimulus of a system built around *responsible* identification of products and their source, the private-enterprise method of drug development and supply impels companies to seek continually rising levels of total performance. Spurred by competition, and vulnerability to criticism if products or services are lacking on any count, companies seek constantly to surpass others and to improve their own record in quality performance that extends into all operations.

The physician and pharmacist gain added assurance of excellence when a company undertakes quality performance, for dedication to quality is a long-term commitment. A quality operation requires the assembling of capital and skills and a background of experience that cannot be readily shifted from one business to another. Manufacturers without these long-term commitments are risking relatively little in producing cut-rate products of questionable quality. They can seek short-term gains, with little to prevent their shifting to a different field when difficulties arise.

And the consumer-patient also gains because commitment to quality generates what might be called "*total quality*." To provide top-notch facilities and personnel for excellence in production and distribution, the company must make a commitment over the long-term sufficient to attract investment money and high-caliber technical people. These factors stimulate pressures for growth in performance and service that motivate the other activities or potential activities of the company—enterprising marketing of products to new geographic areas or new fields of medical practice; enterprising search for products improvements leading often to totally new products and services; more efficient management and administrative and legal operations to back up the broadening product line and numbers of personnel.

In short, quality performance in research, in development, in production and control generally does not operate in a vacuum, but accompanies or creates a broader range of company service that supplies the professional and consuming public with what can be termed "*total-value product*." This total value extends from the creation and marketing of the product to its production, distribution and service as part of an industrial organization with a broadening role to play in the city's, state's, nation's or world's economic and social progress.

Elements of total company performance

Here, in brief summary, are some of the most important activities adding up to total quality performance in the prescription drug industry. Note that quality of product *per se* is not one of the items listed, since this has already been covered adequately.

1. The importance of *research for new products* is so obvious that it requires no explanation. It is enough to say that three-fourths of the drugs taken by patients today did not even exist in 1950, and that all too many diseases causing premature death and untold suffering today cannot yet be controlled.

2. The *continued testing and improvement* of existing products is another obviously necessary and ongoing activity of responsible pharmaceutical companies.

3. *Availability* of product, regardless of distance or population density, is important in a nation such as ours which happily considers the health of a person in a remote rural area just as significant as that of a man living within easy distance of a major medical center.

4. The care and completeness with which *records are kept* can make a considerable difference in many situations. Being able to trace a suspected product problem throughout the entire distribution operation can ease the worry from an unexpected occurrence and provide a course of action otherwise less certain.

5. Under unusual circumstances, if *recall of a shipment* of products is necessary, a reliable company can perform the task with speed and thoroughness.

6. At any time, when a physician anywhere has *questions* concerning the use or effects of a drug a staff of experts is on hand to respond with all the available information.

7. A quality company provides *complete product information* to prescribing physicians and pharmacists; as well, it hires and trains professional representatives who personally visit health professionals.

8. In addition to the above, quality companies contribute substantial sums to further the *professional education* of health professionals and to inform the general public on health matters.