We have now completed the design of a fully integrated quality program that will serve to ensure the production of seafood products at a quality level that is acceptable to the customer and at a cost that is acceptable to the company. In Chapter 2 we outlined the type of organizational structure that would allow for an effective program to be established, as well as the general approach (process control rather than product control) to be followed in addressing the quality challenge. Further, we have considered the design of all the various program elements, from the definition of the final product itself (Chapter 3) to the sanitation considerations of seafood processors (Chapter 6) to the recording and reporting formats to be utilized (Chapter 9).

So far then, we have been totally involved with the planning aspect of a quality program. It is now time to consider how the practical implementation of the program on the plant floor should be approached. This will be most effective when a planned and deliberate method is followed.

**SYSTEM IMPLEMENTATION**

The successful implementation of our designed system can only be accomplished with the full endorsement and participation of upper management. In addition, the program will be successful only with the full cooperation of all employees, which will happen only if management is seen to have a leadership role in its implementation.

Before starting, an implementation plan showing realistic timelines should be developed, so as to provide for the orderly and gradual phasing-in of the
program. This slow approach will provide the necessary time for the familiarization of employees with what is happening and allow for the necessary training activity to occur.

The importance of the role of management in implementing a quality program cannot be overstated. As Willborn (1981, I-254) notes:

The one major rule for successful program implementation is the visible and competent leadership of management. If management is not sufficiently and convincingly committed to the program goals, no one in the company will be. The indifference to better quality can sink down the company’s hierarchy.

While the exact timeline and approach will depend on the nature of the operation into which the program is being implemented, certain general principles apply. Willborn (1981, I-255) suggests the following ten steps to follow in implementing a quality program:

1. Inform staff and management of the scope and objectives of the quality action program and approaches (changes) in general terms.
2. Obtain “visible” management support of the program.
3. Introduce participants to systems, reports and tasks that each will be responsible for; all are for learning.
4. Monitor and evaluate implementation of the plan.
5. Modify plan if it becomes necessary due to previously unforeseen difficulties or shortcomings in the plan.
6. Modify plan if it becomes necessary due to technological changes.
7. Create a feedback mechanism to the staff to allow them to evaluate their personal performance in the program.
8. Audit the quality control procedures and determine the adequacy of the stated procedures. Adjust as necessary.
9. Once system is operational, have workers and supervisors jointly set goals for quality control within their areas.
10. Recognize participation and contribution.

In quoting an experienced quality manager with regard to the implementation of a quality program, Willborn (1981, I-254) offers the following additional considerations:

a. Provide employees with regular reports on the effectiveness of the program as it is implemented, i.e. decrease in defectives, decrease in cost, higher quality product, etc. This will provide an incentive to continue with the program and make further improvements.

b. Establish procedure for feedback from employees. In addition to the fact that this could be a major factor in defect prevention it could also be a direct line to an employee who, having implemented a portion of the program, realizes how further improvements could be made. This could be new information not