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Interview with Brian Hawthornwaite

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Brian Hawthornthwaite
(Interviewed 29 October 1991, Atlanta, GA)

Video Rolls #32-33

Q: Your name and spelling?

HA WTHORNTHW AITE:
H-A-W-T-H-O-R-N-T-H-W-A-I-T-E. Just call me
Hawthornthwaite. I am the Vice President of Quality,
Kemmett Electronics. With no affiliation to Union Carbide.
None at all.

Q: Why were you invited to talk about Dr. Juran?

HA WTHORNTHW AITE: That's a good question. Well,
of course, I had worked at Juran Institute for a year, and so
I'm sure that had something to do with it. But, beyond that, I
got started with Juran back in the mid-'70's, and had been a
follower of his for a number of years before joining Juran
Institute.

And I think that Howland and some of the others that
work at the Institute were aware of my interest and the
success that our company had, using the Juran Philosophies
and approaches, and I think that they wanted me to share
them.

Q: First, Juran as author.

HAWTHORNTHWAITE: Yes. Right.

Q: What should people know about him?

HA WTHORNTHW AITE: Well, Dr. Juran is an extremely organized person, very efficient, very organized in everything that he does. For example, his office. Always immaculate -- while he's working in it and when he's not working in it. Everything is perfectly organized and arranged -- as well as his affairs.

Q: What makes him worthy of the effort?

HAWTHORNTHWAITE: Well-- from my own view, I got started with Dr. Juran back in the mid-1970's, when I got into the quality function. And like most new people that are just getting started., you have to go out and get educated.

And so I started reading everything that I could find, and the centerpiece of my readings really wound up being Juran's Quality Control Manual and Managerial Breakthrough. And I think that really got us on the road to quality and quality improvement within our company.

Now, I don't know what the questions was, I kind of got off on a tangent.

Q: Why was this the route worth following?

HA WTHORNTHW AITE: Well, there were really two areas that struck me. I think, first of all, he dealt with the quality from a managerial point of point, rather than a tool-oriented point of view. And we'd had a lot of that back in the mid-'70's and well through most of the '80's.

So his focus on the managerial approach appealed to me personally as well as to the management of our company. So that really was a great strength.

The other area that I thought was particularly strong was the fact that he did not depend upon philosophy; he did not deoend upon pronouncements or opinions.

His teachings were based on the fact that he went out and he studied the experiences of companies, the experiences of teams, of individuals, on a functional level, cross-functional

level, cross-company level. And he studied the commonalities that existed in all of these various teams and individual activities, and then generalized based on what he saw.

And I think this was very powerful. It was a very powerful approach to developing a subject and communicating it.

Q: Juran in writing and in person: how do they go together or not go together?

HA WTHORNTHW AITE: Well, I mentioned earlier, Dr. Juran is very well organized, and you see it in everything. His writings come across very well organized, very clear, easily understandable. He has the ability to take something that's very complex and make it very simple, very easy to understand.

And you can see that in his personal life, as well. For example, in sitting around a table discussing a topic. Very well organized, very methodical in the approach, in the process used. Every aspect that I've been involved with Dr. Juran has been well organized and almost as you're experiencing a process.

Q: What do you admire most about Dr. Juran?

HA WTHORNTHW AITE: His ability to organize. Dr. Juran has a phenomenal ability to see through a topic; to understand the basics, the reasons behind why people do things, and then as -- sorry, I was getting ready to generalize again.

Q: What do you admire most about him?

HA WTHORNTHW AITE: Dr. Juran is a very organized person. In all of my dealings with him at the Juran Institute, in meetings, sessions, focus groups -- any time I've been

involved with Dr. Juran, the one thing that always comes out is organization; process. Almost as though everything is planned in advance -- which it is.

Q: Is there an incident that shows what he's really like?

HA WTHORNTHW AITE: I could relate some incidents to you but I'm not sure they would be the quintessential, you know, examples.

Q: The kind that would reveal his character.

HA WTHORNTHW AITE: Well, I can relate one example to you, when I was at the ASQC Congress down in Texas, several years ago. And Dr. Juran was walking across the lobby of a very large hotel. It was the Loew's Anatole Hotel -- a huge hotel. And a lot of people noticed him coming down the hall.

And one or two quality engineers ran up to Dr. Juran and introduced themselves and then asked if they could carry his bags. And Dr. Juran said: absolutely not. I've never had anyone carry my bags before, and I'm not going to have it now.

Q: What do you think makes him tick?

HA WTHORNTHW AITE: Well, Dr. Juran's approach is so well organized, and I think that is -- I'm not sure where I'm going with this thing but -- run that question by me again, let me see if I can't start it from another point of view;

Q: What makes him do work so hard?

HAWTHORNTHWAITE: Well, obviously, Dr. Juran loves the subject. And I think that his love for it and his acclaim for the work he's done drives him to the -- that's a stupid answer, let's cut that answer. Let's try this again.

Q: Which drives him to be as busy, etc.?

HA WTHORNTHW AITE: I'm not sure I have a good answer for that one. Dr. Juran is, obviously, very motivated. He loves the subject of quality. He has received acclaim in the last decade or so for his work. And I think that he has a desire to have his work go on after, you know, after he does not.

And he's done a lot in the last ten years to insure that will happen. But, beyond that, I really don't have a good answer.

_ Q: What do you think will be seen as his greatest achievement, contribution?

HA WTHORNTHW AITE: Well, in my view, Dr. Juran's greatest contribution was the ability to focus on quality from the managerial point of view, rather than the tool-oriented point of view. Which appealed to a lot of managers -- myself included.

That really helped our company, and it's helped a lot of other companies to focus on the management process and the management involvement aspects of quality, as opposed to the tools.

Q: Have you seen any flashes of his humor?

HA WTHORNTHW AITE: Well, I can recall my first IMPRO conference in 1986. And it was in Chicago. And I was a new employee with Juran Institute. And I was walking around in the lobby enjoying myself when one of the other Juran staffers asked me to move my room -- which was on a lower floor -- to the executive suite next to Dr. Juran's.

And, of course, I was delighted at this, being a new employee with the company, and I thought I was making progress very rapidly, 'cause I'd only been with the company two months.

And so, as I was checking in to my executive suite, I met

another staffer on the same level, that was checking into another suite two doors down. And I found out at that point that Dr. Juran wanted staff members on each side of him to keep the noise down, because the poor man couldn't get any rest and he wanted to be sure he had his own people on either side.

Q: Self-protective.

HAWTHORNTHWAITE: Yes.

Q: What surprised you the most?

HAWTHORNTHWAITE: Well, what surprised me was, of course, my -- let me start over.

My first job with Juran Institute was to be the project leader of a new video series, Juran on Quality Improvement. And this was a rewrite of the existing video, which had been on the market for five or six years.

And, of course, I expected that being in this role, trying to rewrite something which, in my view, a god had originally conceived and written, was an impossible task.

But, in working with Dr. Juran he was an extremely easy person to work with; very open to new ideas and suggestions. Some of the ideas, in fact, actually refuted past ideas, and he was most willing to accept them and incorporate them.

Q: In Japan, what did Demming contribute; what did Juran contribute?

HAWTHORNTHWAITE: Well, in my view -- well, of course, first of all, Dr. Demming was the first U.S. quality consultant to go to Japan. And Dr. -- start over.

Dr. Demming was the first quality management consultant to go to Japan and Dr. Juran was the second. So Dr. Juran says: always be the first,

But anyhow, being number two, he brought a managerial

perspective to the subject of quality. Dr. Demming brought more of a tool-oriented approach. And, in my view, it was not -- it was more based on pronouncements, and with little explanation as to how to implement these pronouncements or philosophies.

But Dr. Juran brought a management process which answered the question, not only, what should I do, but how should I do it.

Q: You hear about Demming. Why doesn't Juran mention himself?

HA WTHORNTHW AITE: Well, I think Dr. Juran would -- he's not that type of person that would say, hey, I want credit, too. He has gotten recognition and I think he's just too proud and it would not be within his character to do something like that.

Q: What's his role in National Quality Award?

HA WTHORNTHW AITE: Well, Dr. Juran is a judge -- as I understand it, I hope that's correct. So I really don't know. I have not -- I've been an examiner myself, but I haven't really followed Dr. Juran's work.

I do know that Dr. Juran testified back in 1986, with a subcommittee, senate subcommittee, investigating the possibility of a quality award, and Dr. Juran gave very valuable input on the subject. But, beyond that, I really haven't kept up with his activities there.

Q: Dr. Joseph Juran is the man who -- ?

HA WTHORNTHW AITE: Brought a managerial perspective to the subject of quality.

Q: What would lives be like without him?

HA WTHORNTHW AITE: I think that we would not be as far along the evolutionary curve as we are today .. We would get there, because there are so many other forces at work; so many other people that are thinking about the subject of quality now, that it would eventually happen anyhow.

But Dr. Juran brought us along further than we might have otherwise been, if it had not been for his teachings and ideas.

Q: How has he stayed out in front?

HA WTHORNTHW AITE: Well, his -- I can't give you a good answer you're looking for, for tape, I don't think on that. I think his teachings, obviously, have survived the test of time.

He continues to stay on the forefront of quality; always trying to look at the edges of our paradigm -- if you will -- to see what the new paradigm is going to be. And I think that's one of the reasons that he's stayed out in front. But, beyond that I'm >-

Q: It puts me in mind of the time -- ?

HAWTHORNTHWAITE: Well, it was when I was trying to first sell my boss on the idea of doing something with respect to quality. And this was back in 1980. And I had given my boss a number of books to read on the subject, and the only two that survived the trash can test, were Managerial Breakthrough and Juran's Quality Control Handbook.

Q: They went up on the shelf.

HA WTHORNTHW AITE: They went up on the shelf.

Q: What are the biggest inhibitors to quality improvement in corporations?

HAWTHORNTHWAITE: Well, without a doubt, I think,

perhaps looking at it another way, the common element that exists amongst all very successful companies that have been successful with TQM or with quality improvement has been the senior management personal leadership. That's the hallmark of the successful efforts.

And without any exceptions that I'm aware of, every company that has done well with respect to quality improvement or implementing TQM have, in fact, had that personal senior management leadership.

Q: What stands in the way of managers?

HA WTHORNTHW AITE: Well, it's a cultural change. They have to change their work habits just like anyone ...

They have to change their work habits just like anyone, and that's very difficult to do, especially when you're been doing something that's been around, you've been doing it for 25, 30 years of more, and it's gotten you to where you are.

Then, all of a sudden, you're supposed to change the way you do things when you come to work -- the things you emphasize and reinforce, and it's very difficult.

Q: Will anything short of a crisis ever motivate senior managers to change?

HA WTHORNTHW AITE: Oh, yes, definitely. There are many forces at work today; many managers that resisted the hands-on leadership process, for example, are now finding that it's not only something that -- that their reports. would want them to do, but now they're customers are asking them to do it.

And they're being -- their companies are being evaluated, based on their management leadership with respect to quality.

Q: What picture of Dr. Juran will you see?

HA WTHORNTHW AITE: Well, when I think of Dr.

Juran, I think of him doing the Juran on Quality Improvement video series, which was done back in 1981. This was Dr. Juran's first major exposure -- if you will -- to the world. He obviously had a great reputation and had written a number of books, but he was known by name only.

But, with this video, people were able to see him as well as learn his teachings.

And whenever I think of Dr. Juran, I think of him standing up on the podium, or behind the podium, lecturing and doing the video series. Very, very powerful.

Q: How about on the personal side?

HAWTHORNTHWAITE: Well, I mentioned the story earlier about walking through the lobby in the Loew's Anatole Hotel. And, to me, Dr. Juran's energy, independence, and personality really came through.

Oh, another story is the time that he went to The Hague, to visit with Shell. And Dr. Juran was in his mid-80's at the time, and was asked to make an overnight flight to The Hague. And then, after getting off the plane, deal with the senior management team of Shell Oil, and then come back that same day back to Juran Institute, and he did it. Only fell asleep once.

Q: Is there a difference between the public and the private Dr. Juran?

HAWTHORNTHWAITE: I think that -- that when you see Dr. Juran in person, when you know him personally, you realize that the way he appears on stage or on the video or in writings that he's done, really, it comes across, there's no difference. It's -- he seems very approachable, very likable, very organized, and all those things are true when you know him or see him in person.

Q: How about his other interests?

HA WTHORNTHW AITE: Not really. I didn't really know his hobbies -- he never spoke of them to me.

Q: Hasn't he done one annoying thing?

HA WTHORNTHW AITE: Well, I don't want to get sued here. No, I'm just kidding.

I think Dr. Juran's-- it's not an annoying thing, but it's a habit that helps to distract the focus -- if you will -- and that is, when Dr. Juran is making a presentation, he tends to use his arms a lot. And if you've watched a lot of Juran videos, like I have, you tend to look for the arm movement. That's definitely an annoying habit.

Q: What would someone remember seeing a TV program about him?

HA WTHORNTHW AITE: That Dr. Juran was the pioneer -- if you will -- in the field of quality of the managerial approach. There had been a lot of writings, using the tool-oriented approach, but Dr. Juran was the first on that took the management approach, and took it beyond the pronouncement level.

He actually taught people, not only what to do, but how to do it.

Q: Working at the institute, what was revealed to you?

HAWTHORNTHWAITE: Well, the -- the culture at Juran Institute was very impressive. Everyone was very close to one another.

(OFF CAMERA DISCUSSION)

Q: How is the institute a shadow of him?

HA WTHORNTHW AITE: Oh, yes. I think that they reflect Dr. Juran's philosophy and beliefs, without a doubt. The people involvement there is phenomenal. It's very, very close. People are very, very close to one another.

I can recall attending an all-staff meeting on several occasions which I thought was very interesting, where everyone in the entire organization met at once. Very much :-- very involved.

Q: What involvement does he have with the operation of the institute?

HA WTHORNTHW AITE: Well, I've lost touch with that in the last couple of years. So I really couldn't give you a good answer currently on his --

Q: When you were there.

HA WTHORNTHW AITE: Well, I don't think Dr. Juran really wanted to have the institute at all. He wanted to have his teachings go on after he passed away. But I don't think that he wanted the burden, the managerial burden of running the organization.

And I think he said on more than one occasion, it was like an albatross around his neck. But he did manage it, and he managed it well. And, several years ago, he managed to pass on the torch to Blan Godfrey, who's now the chief executive officer. And Dr. Juran can now do what he always wanted to do, which is do his writings and teachings.

Q: Have you ever been on the road with him?

HA WTHORNTHW AITE: Not really. Rode in the cab with Dr. Juran once. But that was the extent of my being on the road with him.

Q: Who paid?

HA WTHORNTHW AITE: Good question. I paid, as a matter of fact.

Q: Why would that be?

HA WTHORNTHW AITE: Well, because I volunteered. I thought it would be a nice touch.

Q: Does the man pay in money?

HA WTHORNTHW AITE: I've never seen him pull it out. So he may have some, but I've never -- Dr. Juran is a very generous person, and he always has been.

Q: You don 't know if he carries cab fare.

HA WTHORNTHW AITE: Don't know if he carries it with him, but he's been very generous .. Right?

Q: The nicest thing you can about him.

HAWTHORNTHWAITE: Well, I think the nicest thing is not a personal compliment, it's indirect, you might say.

And that is that, of all of the many books, teachings, philosophies that I ran by my chief executive officer at my company, the only ones that withstood the test of time during the early phases of quality improvement implementation in our company were Juran's teachings.

Q: If you ran them by your CEO today, what would happen?

HAWTHORNTHWAITE: Well, we've learned a lot in the last decade, so for me to tell you that we're a Juran company, quote/unquote, I think would not be true. We have incorporated and adapted. But the basis for much of what we still do today is Juran's Managerial Breakthrough Process.

Q: What have I not asked you?

HA WTHORNTHW AITE: I don't think -- I don't have a good comment on that one.

Well, the only thing that comes to mind is that he definitely likes quiet. And so if you're going to room next to Dr. Juran, don't slam the door. Be very quiet. ■ told you that story earlier.

Q: Would you like to see a bit of this?

(END OF TAPE 33)

