



Published each month by:

PROCESS QUALITY ASSOCIATES INC.

690 King St., Suite 2, London, Ontario N5W-2X3 Phone (519)-667-1720 1-800-837-7046 Fax (519)-667-1722

"We engineer the quality of your success"

VOL. 95 No. 10

Circulated to people interested in improving their products and processes

Preparing the Frontline

Frontline customer service employees play a pivotal role in a company. They can shape or create customers' perceptions of a company. How they handle problems, inquiries, and even new business can make the difference between solidifying a long standing customer relationship or losing that customer.

Companies committed to superior customer service have a 3-part strategy:

■ HIRE THE BEST EMPLOYEES

Seek individuals who have the potential to handle more responsibility, are motivated problem solvers, can communicate effectively, know how to empathize with others, have a high energy level, and can remain professional through the most unpredictable, stressful situations.

■ DEVELOP PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES

Focus their training on six key areas: building customer loyalty and confidence, communicating effectively, demonstrating empathy, listening actively, solving problems, and working well as part of a team.

Empower employees with broad authority. Involve them in departmental planning and suggestion processes.

■ MOTIVATE EMPLOYEES TO STAY & EXCELL

Compensation, security, learning, respect, and pride are recognized as the five motivators that retain employees, and keep them producing.

Ongoing training and coaching lead to long-term job satisfaction by improving competence and keeping people challenged.

Run peer recognition programs, but not as lotteries nor as exclusive clubs. Non-monetary rewards have a more enduring effect on job satisfaction. Employees typically value most the recognition that comes from co-workers, superiors, and their direct reports.

Quotable Quotes

Speaking at a Quality Conference, Jan Carlzon, president and CEO of Scandinavian Airlines shared a personal example of the importance of frontline customer service:

"I went to stay at a hotel in London for the 16th time. When I arrived, the clerk asked for my name, then confirmed my reservation, then asked me to fill out a lengthy form. Perfect service, but it had nothing to do with individual customer service.

"Could you imagine if the manager had called his employees together in the morning and said 'Today Jan Carlzon is coming. He's been here 15 times. I also remember he likes antique fairs.' So, when I arrive, the clerk asks for my name. I tell him and he says 'Welcome Mr. Carlzon. We are proud to have you here for the 16th time. Please sign this form that we already completed for you from past records. By the way, we put some brochures about antique fairs in your room because we know that you are interested in them.'

"The difference is obvious. Business is not about selling the second or third time. You have to concentrate on *user satisfaction*.

In the 1980's we used to:

"See a **Customer** in each **Individual** "

In the 1990's we must now:

"See an **Individual** in each **Customer** "

Re-Engineering For Success

CLIENT'S SITUATION:

Formrite is a Tier I supplier to the "Big 3" automotive. Addition of Japanese Tier I business demanded Just-In-Time (JIT) processing, fast turn-arounds, and low inventories. Formrite was using overtime, higher inventories, and expedited shipments to successfully meet these demands.

PQA'S TASK:

Analyze Formrite's entire production process. Determine if Synchronous Manufacturing Techniques or JIT would be more feasible, identify possible savings, and develop an implementation plan.

PQA'S ACTION:

Product flow, order entry, and MRP II systems were studied. Bottlenecks in process, scheduling points, and Critical Capacity Constraints were identified. Some inventories could be reduced 80%. A shortage of fixtures was found to be crippling product flow. The report included a detailed action plan for starting implementation of Synchronous Mfg.

CLIENT'S RESULTS:

Product flow in one area was changed, resulting in 30% higher capacity with a 50% reduction in turn-around time.