

MONITORING AND MEASUREMENT OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AS A PROCESS OF QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

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Key words

quality management system, customer, satisfaction, complaint, monitoring, measurement, communication, inventive organisation

system manažérstva kvality, zákazník, spokojnosť, sťažnosť, monitorovanie, meranie, komunikácia, organizácia invenčná

Introduction

Thanks to technology progress, customer expectations and demands for products in all fields of production and personal consumption are constantly increasing. Organisations and companies are being challenged to produce high quality products even faster and cheaper than ever before. In compliance with the total quality management philosophy and ISO 9000:2000 standards process approach, the organisation management should use measurement of customer satisfaction as a vitally important tool and relieves that problem to handle.

Monitoring and measurement of customers satisfaction as a process of quality management system

Customer satisfaction is generally defined as a set of complex feelings evoked by the discrepancy between customer requirements and perceived reality in the market. Marketing and quality management deal with customer satisfaction and methods of its assessment, and also theoretical approaches offering a number of particular applications. For many companies, satisfying the customer requirements have become a measure of success and hence the company aim. Yet the concept of customer satisfaction is frequently misunderstood and limited to dealing with claims.

Customer satisfaction takes place in a customer head and may, but does not have to, comply with reality. People generally develop their attitudes quickly and change them very slowly. Customers may be mistaken in perceiving a product/service quality and their unreliable misperceptions then give birth to millions of buying decisions every day. Assessment of customer satisfaction is in fact assessment of how the customers perceive the company activity as a supplier (Hill 1996). When assessing customer satisfaction, the following formula defining measurable level of customer perception can be used:

$$RCS = f(x) ,$$

where RCS means rate of customer satisfaction and x defines difference between requirements and real value. The high rate of satisfaction is one of the guaranties of customer loyalty.

In compliance with the total quality management philosophy and ISO 9000:2000 standards process approach, the organisation management should use measurement of customer satisfaction as a vitally important tool.

The organisation should plan and establish processes to listen to the voice of customer effectively. It should define and implement methods of data collection, including information sources, frequency of collection and data analysis review. Examples of sources of information on customer satisfaction include:

- customer complaints,
- communicating directly with customers,
- questionnaires and surveys,
- subcontracted collection and analysis of data,
- focus groups,
- reports from customer organisations,
- reports in various media,
- sector and industry studies.

Monitoring and measurement of customer satisfaction is based on review of customer-related information. The collection of such information may be active or passive. Management should recognise that there are many sources of customer-related information, and should establish effective and efficient processes to collect, analyse and use this information for improving the performance of the organisation. The organisation should identify internal and external sources of customer and user information, available in written or verbal forms. The process of requesting, measuring and monitoring feedback on customer satisfaction should provide information on a continual basis. It should comprise meeting needs and expectations of customers, as well as the price and delivery of product.

Examples of customer – related information include:

- customer and user surveys,
- feedback on aspects of product,
- customer requirements and contract information,
- market needs,
- service delivery data,
- information relating to competition,
- information relating to satisfaction with prices,
- information relating to satisfaction with delivery,
- information relating to satisfaction with sale support.

Regarding the process of building the quality management system, monitoring and measurement of customer satisfaction in organisation ranges among supportive micro-processes and usually follows up such processes as determining product-related requirements, processing customer databases, delivery process etc. where inputs into process are mainly lists of customers, respectively lists of their requirements. The process outputs must be recorded as a result of monitoring and measurement of customer satisfaction, for example as satisfaction indexes for follow up processes, such as the process of leadership reviews, process of data analysis, etc.

The process activities involve procedure of monitoring and measurement of satisfaction, e.g.:

- defining the signs of customer satisfaction,
- designing and preparing questionnaires for monitoring the customer satisfaction,
- defining the size of a sample / so called customer sampling,
- choosing the appropriate method for data collection
- designing procedures for data evaluation, including quantification of customer satisfaction,
- using the measurement results as an input for improvement processes.

Sources necessary to implement the process comprise:

- human resources, i.e. internal and external workers for collecting data from customers,
- financial sources necessary to cover expenditures for monitoring and measurement of customer satisfaction,
- information sources, usually represented by software,
- equipment, such as personal computer and car,
- environment where the process takes place is usually directly in the field, i.e. in the market, among the consumers.

Necessary system documentation is provided by the procedure for measurement of external customer satisfaction. Within this quality management process approach, records on results of customer monitoring and measurement e.g. in the form of graphical output are compulsory. The process of monitoring and measuring customer satisfaction documented in such a way enables permanent, stable and correct information gathering of that may become a basis for foreseeing and identifying the changes in environment with the risk of potential crisis.

Inventive organisation

Application of management of quality, marketing and customer relationship management in entrepreneurial subjects requires purposive training of the plant managers, forming management teams, working out strategically plans of quality and providing marketing communication with customers. Only inventive organisations and plants are capable of doing this.

The inventive organisations understand that the change is constant; they are creative, ingenious, and rich with ideas. They have to constantly adapt to turbulent environment they perform in and help to shape it at the same time.

Crisis situations are generally successfully managed by the organisations that introduce following actions:

- quick stabilisation and transparent proprietary relationships connected with restructuring,
- purposive training of the plant top managers in contemporary managerial approaches, including quality management, crisis management, management of change, marketing management, re-engineering etc.,
- orientation on product quality and re-structuring of production programme in compliance with the demands of changing market,
- acceptance of the “customer satisfaction” concept and processes of its monitoring and measurement as a main factor influencing the company prosperity,
- changes of working and employment relationships oriented on increasing requirements for work discipline and employee responsibility,
- systematic purpose training and re-training schemes for all employees from the company budget.

Conclusion

A successful organization is a dynamic, learning and developing system. It does not act within pre-programmed repetitive patterns. The top management of an inventive organization should dispose sources, methods and tools enabling to foresee crisis, accept change and adapt to it. Along with this, it is necessary to measure and monitor information relating to meeting the requirements of their customers, i.e. information on customer satisfaction.

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