

Assuring Customer Satisfaction and Corporate Stability During Rapid Growth Cycles

Situation

Participation in the service programs of a Midwestern fleet leasing company was growing at the rate of 300% per year. With the rapid increase in workloads, processes and staffing were rapidly strained, service levels declined, complaints increased, and customer satisfaction levels dropped significantly. Mounting staff turnover resulted in the loss of significant knowledge of procedures. Management retained a DHC consultant to analyze the situation and implement solutions.

Solution

Because of the immediate need to meet basic customer expectations, the project was broken down into two phases. The first dealt with immediate short-term initiatives to address immediate customer issues. The second dealt with long-term solutions.

Short-Term: To insure services promised to customers could be delivered, DHC organized the staff and its supervisors into a team to flowchart procedures and clarify roles and responsibilities. Responsibility for each process was given to those who performed the work rather than those who managed it. The flowcharts became a training aid and reference manual for understanding and performing day-to-day tasks. Next, a client profile book was compiled to document and communicate customer expectations and customized client processes. A training program was developed and implemented to improve the competency and skill level of each staff member.

Long-Term: Once daily requirements were being met, the team focused on re-engineering the processes and developing measures and standards. The team analyzed workflows to eliminate non-value-added activities and to assure procedures were capable of responding to the rapidly increasing volumes. It was determined that numerous functions could be automated and computer programs could be re-written to allow for more sharing of information and to eliminate redundant work. Work processes were streamlined and re-worked to standardize problem resolution. The team developed measures and standards for turnaround and accuracy levels and methods for publishing and addressing deviations on an ongoing basis.

Results

As the team's changes took effect, not only the clients but the entire corporation became aware of the increased quality of the service provided to customers and improved the image and business of the organization as a whole.

- Within four weeks, the staff had a clear understanding of daily procedures and expectations and had developed the skills to meet those requirements. Employee morale and teamwork improved significantly.
- Clear documentation provided standard procedures, which assured consistent, quality service for internal and external customers.
- There was a substantial reduction of non-value-added work, allowing the department to handle the 300% increase in volume without adding to staff.
- There was a dramatic increase in customer satisfaction ratings and quality of service to the customer.