



'TOTAL QUALITY,' A SATISFIED CUSTOMER IS NOT ENOUGH

Memo: Quality at Work

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If your company is working to satisfy customers, congratulations; you're on the right track. But organizations that will survive in this new millennium will go beyond that. They will have employees who can think and act with an understanding that an excited customer is more valuable than one who is merely satisfied.

Even a satisfied customer will switch suppliers. But an excited customer is one for life. Not only will they be loyal, but they also will bring other customers to your business.

Moving beyond satisfaction to delight will require us to begin thinking about dealing with our customers on three levels. Thus bringing to light our concept on Three Dimensional Total Quality Management.

First-level thinkers will concentrate on meeting customer requirements in terms of specifications and standards. The result will be some satisfied customers but on an inconsistent basis.

Operating on the second level requires organizations to sit in the seat of the customer and look through their eyes in order to see their unmentioned expectations. There are several pitfalls at this level. One is that we are usually preoccupied with doing the job as described, and being satisfied with not going beyond the first level. Also, producers get no points for meeting unspoken expectations. Customers simply take for granted that certain things will be done.

Take for example the city sanitation workers who empty containers and return them to residents' curbs. They will receive no applause for doing their jobs neatly, because that is expected of them. But just let them leave containers or litter scattered in their wake, and people will notice.

Delighting the customer with your product or service will require a shift in thinking. The third level is where providers must not only read the customer's mind, but also must be skillful at anticipating future needs and desires.

It is important to understand that the customer is not willing to pay extra for the benefits provided in levels two and three.

At level three, the benefit to the organization is repeat business coupled with a customer who tells others about your product or service.

Operating on the third level is not as complicated as it seems. It happens every day to those who think along this line.

Organizations whose associates (employees) understand these three levels will have the best chances of surviving the years ahead.



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