
ANALYSIS CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND EFFICIENT METHODS ON CUSTOMER SPECIFIC QUALITY REQUIREMENTS

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Abstract. Systematic assessments by customers (supply capability, supplied quality), which are carried out independently of the customer satisfaction survey, must be checked and assessed by the departments responsible after receipt or on being made available. Measures must also be initiated if there are negative values or trends. The specialist scope covers the corresponding organizational areas with regular and direct customer contact. The objective of this paper is to implement the process for conducting customer satisfaction analyses in accordance with a defined standard and to continuously increase customer satisfaction. Also, this paper follow to checking the customer quality-specific requirements, to regulates documentation of variances from the quality management system, preparation of handling instructions for implementation of the customer requirements and feedback to the customer. The target groups for this paper are persons responsible for checking quality-specific customer requirements in accordance with the responsibility matrix, sub-project managers for quality management, quality coordinators for the region and for the product line in a manufacturing company. The market research department is responsible for the definition and use of this process, and the customer satisfaction surveys are conducted exclusively by this department.

Keywords: customer satisfaction, documents, survey, quality, requirements

1. Introduction

Achieving high levels of customer satisfaction has become a major goal for many companies and in times of severe competition and rising customer expectations, firms are highly interested in keeping existing customers. The strong focus on customer satisfaction is based on the implicit assumption that there is a strong positive relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty. Typically, customer satisfaction is thought of as an immediate antecedent to customer loyalty. In turn, customer loyalty should lead to increasing shareholder value and asset efficiency [1].

Despite many attempts to measure and explain consumer satisfaction, there still does not appear to be a consensus regarding its definition or determinants. Consumer satisfaction is defined as being the result of an evaluative process that contrasts repurchase expectations with perceptions of performance during and after the consumption experience. Several alternative explanations of consumer satisfaction have been advanced, but the expectations disconfirmation paradigm has been the most popular. The inclusion of expectations suggests that products fulfilling high expectations are predicted to generate greater consumer satisfaction than products that meet low expectations. Some researchers employ perceived performance as an

additional explanatory of satisfaction [2].

The customer satisfaction depends on the comparison of the pre-purchase expectations with the actual outcomes. Satisfaction depends not only on the final performance of the product, but also on the expectations that the client had before he purchased the product. At the comparison between the expected and the received service, there are three possible outcomes: negative acknowledge (negative disinformation), positive reinforcement (positive disinformation) and confirmation.

Positive confirmation provides of course the most satisfaction, where a simple confirmation does not generate any positive or negative outcomes. At negative confirmation there's a problem for the service provider, in this case the customer expectations are too high or the delivered service failed [3].

2. Conducting the customer satisfaction survey

If interests with regard to market policy arise from a company view point, which should lead to an extension or reduction of the current customer spectrum, the executive management board will make a decision before the start of the periodic survey and the market research department carries out and coordinates any adjustments accordingly.

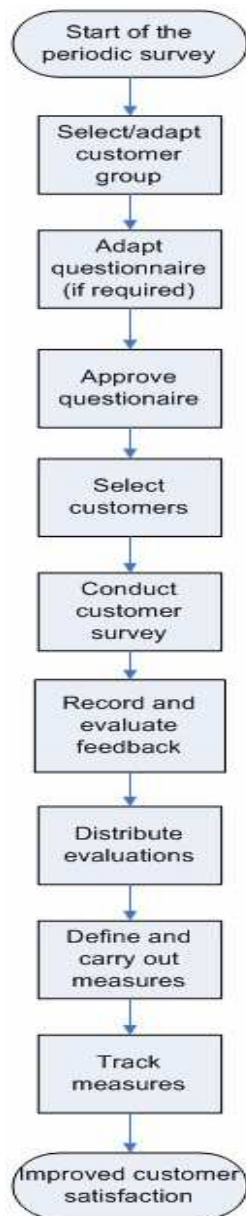


Figure 1. Customer satisfaction analysis

Those responsible in the national companies/regions, select customers and appoint a project owner in the relevant country/area of responsibility for this purpose.

For a company, all customers are listed according to the average annual sales:

- select the top 10 customers per sector;
- select the top 100 customers if they are not included in the criterion above;
- further customers are selected in accordance with other individual criteria;
- competitors and internal customers/internal companies must not be taken into consideration.

Direct contact persons must then be appointed for the identified customers in the purchasing,

development and quality management departments. If organizational units, would like to identify customers and contact partners abroad directly, these names must be forwarded in advance to project owners in the relevant national companies. This ensures that the national company can comprehensively take its customers into consideration and that no customer receives several questionnaires. The national companies must also ensure that the brand reference is correctly specified by individual questionnaires if necessary. Project owners conduct a formal check after receiving all the addresses for their area in order to eliminate redundant data or irregularities.

Questionnaires are reviewed before an upcoming survey, revised if required, and approved by the executive management board. The valid versions are translated into the relevant national language by the national companies.

The market research department defines the survey media. National companies must decide whether, for example, the survey should also be conducted online via the Internet, or exclusively on the basis of a personal letter with a reply-paid envelope. All replies are submitted centrally to the market research department.

The survey is evaluated centrally by the market research department. The evaluation can be carried on the basis of the following objectives / organizational areas: division/sector, brand, business unit, business division, regions, countries, key accounts. Evaluations are distributed to the managers of the relevant organizational areas.

The named managers of the organizational units are responsible for the detailed analysis of the evaluations and if there are negative trends or specific complaints, these managers must ensure that the necessary measures are initiated and tracked. In the case of higher-level issues, the higher-level position must ensure that all potentially affected areas select a coordinated approach with respect to affected customers.

Measures and implementation activities must be documented in the area responsible for at least three years. The evaluations of customer satisfaction must be stored for at least six years from the date when they were created.

3. Customer quality-specific requirements

Original customer document includes all customer documents that contain quality requirements (quality assurance agreement, framework contracts and specifications).

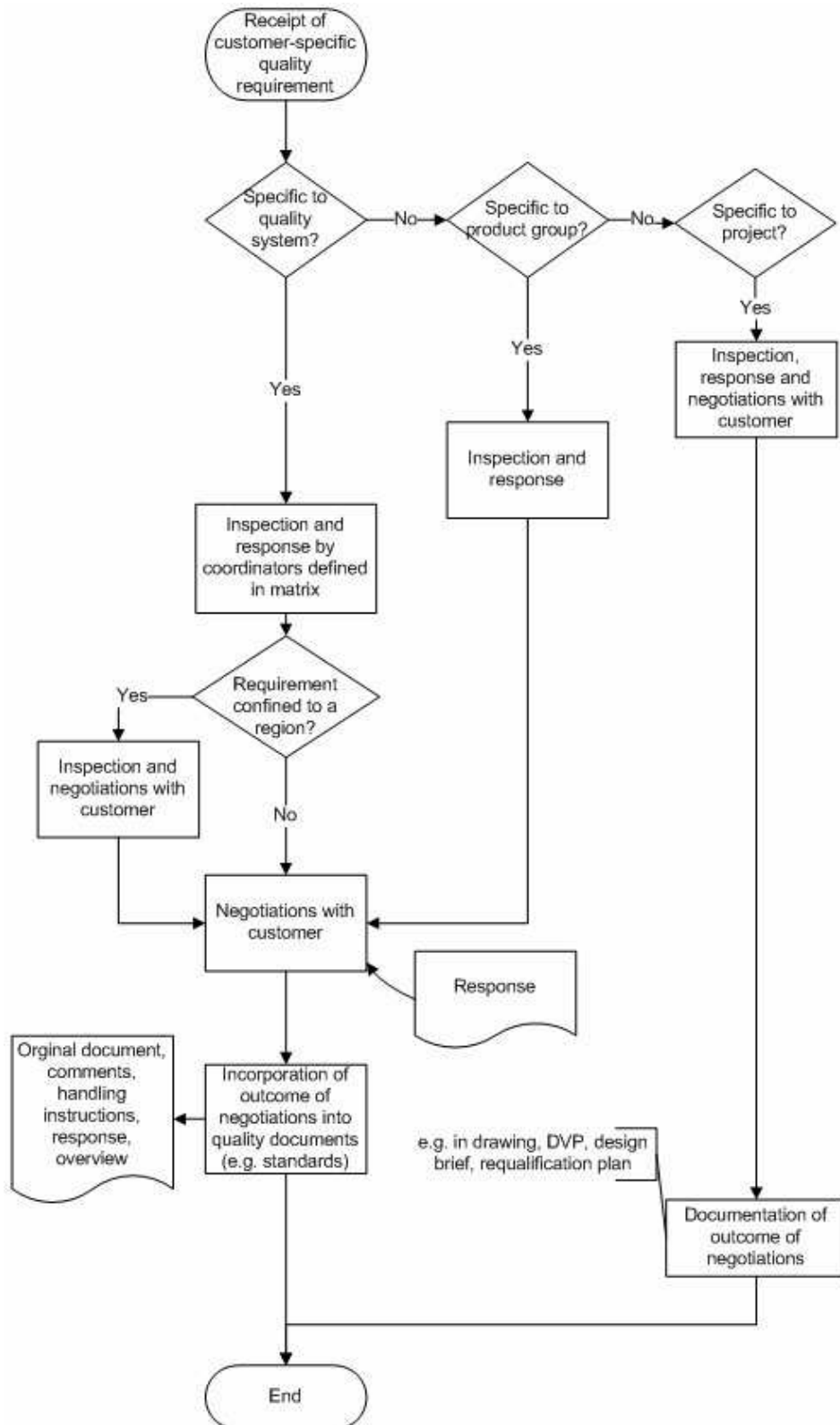


Figure 2. Checking the customer quality-specific requirements

Customer document with comments includes assessment of the customer requirement according to the criteria implemented as standard in the quality management system to be implemented

through additional handling instruction quality requirements to be declined or negotiated.

The quality standard (handling instruction) covers all customer quality-specific requirements

accepted by standards of a company. It must be checked by the key account/global key account and the standard is approved by corporate quality. List of all checked customer documents as part of the customer quality-specific standard contains the document number, title, issue level and the name. Final response is sent to the customer (as a side letter to the confirmation notice).

4. Conclusions

Within many organizations, customer satisfaction is an important concept as well as for product oriented as for service-oriented organization. The importance and focus on customer satisfaction has grown since several scientific publications have shown that customer satisfaction influences customer loyalty and repeat purchases. Customer satisfaction is closely related to the growth and continuity of organizations. The use of several customer satisfaction measurement methods can provide analyses of the customer service experiences over certain time periods [3].

Responsibility for definition the process, modifications and definition of the responsibility matrix lies with the head of corporate quality management of an industrial company. Responsibility for correct implementation of and compliance with the process lies with the quality co-ordinators of the company divisions. Responsibility for coordination of the checking of customer quality-specific requirements, preparation of an instruction for implementation and support in negotiations with customers lies with the employees defined in the responsibility matrix. Responsibility is defined by corporate quality management.

Through every economic and business cycle, customer satisfaction is important because it leads to customer retention. The standard objectives of a customer satisfaction after a survey are [4]:

- quantify the level of customer satisfaction with all aspects of their interaction with the client;
- identify the specific areas where changes can be implemented to improve customer satisfaction leading to enhanced retention and recommendations to current non-customers;
- provide continuous feedback to be integrated with the strategic planning process.

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