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Homework #2 – An Introduction to Quality

TECH 50000 - Quality Standards

Monday, January 17, 2011

Discussion Questions

2. Discuss the importance of quality to the national interest of any country in the world.

Quality is critical to the economic health of any country and is required in order to effectively compete in the global marketplace; therefore, it should be top priority and of utmost interest. Without quality products and services, a country could fail economically, which can spread to other national economies. If this happens, business productivity declines and unemployment rates will rise. When business productivity declines, opportunities arise for anti-competitive mergers, which in turn, can cause a negative impact on the wider industry. Family stability and individual health and well-being can be negatively impacted due to the loss of employment for those who depend on their wages or salaries to accommodate their standard of living. This is just a few reasons why quality should be a national interest to any country.

3. How might the definitions of quality apply to your college or university? Provide examples of its customers and ways in which their expectations can be met or exceeded.

I think all definitions of quality apply to my university, which of course is Kent State. Kent State University applies total quality in all its operations. After researching some of Kent's website, I found that the university employs an academic quality improvement program (AQIP). Kent even has a "Faculty Professional Development Center". The following paragraph was taken from Kent's AQIP homepage.

"In the fall of 2000 Kent State University was accepted into the Academic Quality Improvement Project (AQIP). This alternative accreditation process is more intense and efficient, uses faster cycles of improvement, involves faculty more directly in all academic improvement processes, maintains an institution's status with the Department of Education, and emphasizes an institution's distinctive needs and aspirations." You can view this part of Kent's site by visiting the following link:

<http://www.kent.edu/aqip/index.cfm>

Kent has a variety of customers, both internally and externally. They include not only students and staff, but outside businesses and organizations, as well as society in general. Kent State offers corporate services to outside companies which include custom training, consulting, public programs, executive education, and lean programs, which includes lean six sigma training and certification.

Some examples of how Kent meets or exceeds customer expectations include the availability of free classes for instructors who want to advance in their own learning and qualifications, many student resources which are too numerous to list here, academic advising and help for students looking for employment, accessibility services, internships, and tutoring, just to name a few. However, as a student, I feel that the cost of certain credit hours could be reduced. For example, in the past, a three

credit hour class offered by a regional campus via the Internet was about half the cost of a three credit hour class offered online from the main campus. I don't think this is fair and feel that it is hard enough for students to pay for college tuition as it is. I was told recently by a former professor that all undergraduate online classes through Kent, regardless of what campus they are taught through, would be priced per credit hour based on the main campus tuition charges. I would have to research further to see if this change happened. Now that I am a graduate student, I would not know otherwise.

While I think it is great that Kent makes classes available for free for instructors to take so that they can further their own learning, from what I found, that is an option for full-time instructors only. I feel that Kent should make this option available for part-time instructors as well. Not only would the availability of free classes help part-time instructors (who may eventually become full-time instructors) to further their education as well, it would show that Kent truly does exceed the customers' expectations by showing its own "Excellence in Action".

Also, as a student customer of Kent, I would like to see teaching internships within the university, for those of us who are working on a master's degree for teaching purposes. I realize that you must have a master's degree to teach on the college level, but it would be nice if we could gain hands-on experience, while working towards that goal.

6. Choose a product or service (such as the hospital example in this chapter) to illustrate how several definitions of quality can apply simultaneously.

I think my grandfather's business; Al Hissom Roofing & Construction Co. Inc., is a good example to use for this question. Although grandpa's business does not offer services such as those offered by the hospital example in our book, it does offer total quality services even though it is family owned and has probably never employed over ten people at any given time. Quality service is not only top priority with Al Hissom Roofing & Construction Company on the customer level; it is a top priority on a personal and sentimental level as well. What began more than 50 years ago as a roofing business has grown today to be one of the leading roofing, general construction, renovation and remodeling contractors in the entire Tri-State Area. My grandfather, Al Hissom, started the business in 1960 and continued to run it until he passed away in 1999. Today, Al's son (my uncle) Mark, who had worked with grandpa since 1973, along with his own son Joseph, continue the family tradition. The years of experience that they offer means that when you call Hissom Roofing, you're getting a company that stands for quality and service with you in mind. Many people apply the judgmental perspective of quality in terms of high standards and achievement just when they hear the name of the business. The name of the business alone is synonymous with superiority and excellence within the roofing industry. Hissom Roofing applies the product-based perspective of quality to its services as well, by using only the best materials. While pricing may be higher than other roofing companies, customers can rest assured, knowing that they are receiving the highest quality product.

Services provided by Hissom Roofing range from residential and commercial roofing work, installation of vinyl siding, window and door replacements, renovations, historical reproduction work and woodworking in the company woodshop, to general construction and remodeling, including room additions, kitchens, bathrooms and decks. The company installs and repairs many types of roofing from

shingle, slate and tile to metal and copper. Many commercial building owners are interested in the installation of rubber roofs because of their durability. For those customers, the company has available the Carlisle SynTec Inc. rubber roof which is a premier warranted roof.

Hissom Roofing realizes that customers have different wants and needs and this is where the user-based perspective of quality comes into play. For example, Hissom Roofing understands that each customer's situation is different. The company is not going to try to sell the most expensive full-rubber roof to an elderly person on a fixed income, who only wants a small leak repaired. They work closely with the customer to define exactly what the customer wants. Also, Hissom Roofing consults and educates each customer regarding all possible solutions, pointing out which will save money in the long run. This is where Hissom Roofing incorporates the value-based perspective of quality. All services completed by Hissom Roofing, as well as the materials used to complete each service, are warranted. While some options may cost more than others, those that do are of the highest quality, usually lasting a lifetime, therefore, saving the customer hundreds of dollars in the future. The value here is that once it's fixed you never have to worry about it again. Last but not least, Hissom Roofing applies the manufacturing-based perspective of quality to its services by conforming to all governmental standards and specifications that apply to roofing installation, repair, and inspection along with conforming to all standards and specification that apply to the types of materials and supplies used.

10. What are some processes that you personally perform? What opportunities can you think of for improving them?

Process that I personally perform include updates to websites I have designed and still maintain, working on new website projects that I have obtained, classwork for college, working on my own website in terms of visibility and adding more useful and helpful information, researching and learning more on my own those subjects pertaining to website design that I am particularly interested in mastering, working with my mom to put together the gift basket business we are planning, along with everyday life that includes housework, being on call for my five grown children, three grandchildren, and 80 year old aunt who lives directly behind me if I am needed, and so on. Did I mention my daughter is having a baby and I am the host of her baby shower? It will be held the first week of this coming February and I already have over 60 confirmed guests. Thank the Lord I have been given the church as a place to hold this event because my house is not big enough. Yes, I have a very busy life! All of these things are very important to me and I love being busy. However, being so busy can be stressful and of all the opportunities I can think of for improving these processes, time management is at the top of the list.

As of now, I am working on the creation of three new websites, while performing updates regularly to two that have already been published. Also, I have just received three requests for website quotes. While I desperately need the money from these possible jobs, I don't want to promise that a project will be completed ASAP. The designing of six websites at the same time will be very hard to do. Especially taking into consideration all the other things I do every day. Hopefully, these companies will work with me in terms of timing, if they hire me, so that I can complete what I am working on now before I start something else.

The two websites I update regularly include the Western Beaver County School District's site and the Jefferson County Chapter of the Ohio Genealogical Society's site. Western Beaver's updates are very easy since they usually only include the monthly special education newsletter and the monthly school lunch menu which is the same for all the schools in the district. The Jefferson site is another whole ballgame. This site has a member's only section which will prevent members from logging in if their membership for the year expires. They will not be able to log into this area until they renew their memberships. Because it is the beginning of a new year, I am receiving membership renewals just about every day. Because of this, I have to constantly update member info so that those who renew can once again log into the member's only section. Also, this chapter has been granted all the records located in the basement of the county courthouse, dating back to the 1700s. All this information will be eventually added to the member's only section as it is transferred to digital format. As those digital resources are sent to me, I will have to add them to the site. I can assure you that I am not paid nearly enough for the work I do for this organization. However, it has helped me get my name out there in the website design world. Especially since it gets over 2000 hits per week and has caused the chapter to be voted #1 in the entire state every year because of all the information it contains. I have obtained other projects because of this site. What I need to do, is set a monthly or weekly date for updates concerning this site instead of performing a few odd updates daily, and explain to the chapter why. I am one who strives at getting things completed as soon as possible. I do not like letting others down. Not only is it good for my business in terms of promptness for my customers, getting it done now is one less thing I have to worry about. I am not a procrastinator. I am very good at replying to emails immediately and strive to meet deadlines beforehand. I write out "to do" lists every day and have post-it notes all over my desktop to ensure that I don't forget something. I use a post-it note program on my computer that allows me to create post-it notes on my desktop. I found this much better because the paper ones would blow away and get lost.

I realize that you were probably not expecting a rundown of my everyday life, but explaining it this way shows undoubtedly that I need to implement time management into my every day, weekly, and monthly processes. I am sure there are other ways to improve the things that I do; however, I think implementing time management in terms of a permanent schedule for tasks that are evident is a good place to start. As for those things that arise unexpectedly, such as family needs, I will just have to arrange my schedule accordingly to work around them. I am open to any other suggestions you might have for me!

Case: Tale of Two Restaurants: Discussion Question 2

2. What advice would you recommend to the owners?

I'm not an expert in this area, but must tell you that I have worked many jobs throughout life while raising my children. I was a young mother, and it wasn't until they were grown that I was able to go back to school. So, to let you know ahead of time, I will probably have many examples to share in the online discussions throughout the semester. Of all the jobs I have had, two were positions in small-town restaurants.

I have many recommendations for Tim, so I will start with him. First and foremost, he needs to lose the negative attitude or he is going to lose his business. Nobody wants to work for a miserable boss. A boss that is miserable makes his employees miserable, which in turn, reflects onto external customers making their experience with the business miserable, which finally causes the business to lose the external customer as well as internal customers (stakeholders). What a good example of the domino effect, wouldn't you say? The only thing I see going for Tim right now is his length of time in business. He will continue to have a high turnover concerning his servers if he doesn't empower them like he does the kitchen staff and put forth a positive attitude towards them. He needs to encourage communication among all workers, front and back, so that they can work together more efficiently and effectively. And, he needs to understand that all his employees, regardless of their position, are important elements to the success of his business and treat them accordingly. As for improving with the times, like I stated in my discussion post, Tim is stuck in the dinosaur age. Just because something worked in the beginning, in Tim's case 15 years ago, does not mean that it will continue to work. Tim will lose business to his competitors who are keeping up with the times because they are the ones trying to constantly improve while he sits back expecting things to happen naturally. Tim often states, "You can't find good people anymore". He needs to think about why and take into consideration that just maybe the people he found are good, and that it is his negative statements that are changing them. Tim must start focusing on improving business activities and learning how to do so. Tim visit's other restaurants to learn new things. And, he spends a lot of time within his business soliciting customer feedback. Tim needs to make a visit to Jim's restaurant. Doing so might open his eyes to many things. Tim needs to reassess his suppliers by downsizing the number of suppliers he is using and choose only those that can ensure consistency and high quality products. He needs to implement cross-training among all employees and not just the kitchen staff. Tim also needs to empower all employees by encouraging suggestions for better business from all of them. He needs to work much harder at boosting the morale of all his employees by praising instead of degrading, and he needs to implement employee incentives. As for implementing new technology such as the automation system, I'm sure after 15 years of business, Tim can afford to at least give it a try. As for Tim's negative attitude, I do not think he was always like this, especially at the beginning. However, I am a little confused as to how he got this way. Maybe Tim is just tired of the business and doesn't care about it anymore. If this is the case, I don't foresee any hope in terms of improvement in any area, so maybe he should just sell it. If this is not the case, I suggest maybe hiring an outsider for help. Not just for improving the overall activities of the business, but also for improving Tim's attitude and the way he looks at things.

As for Jim's restaurant, I think Jim goes above and beyond concerning the fundamental principles of TQ, so I don't have many suggestions for him other than "keep up the good work" and reassessing the tip percentages like I stated in my online discussion post. What I mean by reassessing the tip percentages is to remove the cooks from this because he ensures them high wages to begin with, which I am sure is above good. I feel that the only tips the cooks should receive are those that are personally given to them by external customers. Dishwashers should be added together with the bussers and the total percentage for them should be the 30 percent. Servers of high quality, popular restaurants usually get high tips, therefore, I think that it might be even better to split the total tips where the servers get 60 percent and the bussers and dishwashers get 40 percent. I am only looking at what I think is fair to all

the employees. A server's job is hard, but so are the jobs of bussers and dishwashers. Other than that, I think Jim is on the right track!