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Our Business is to Improve Your Business

Our mission is to provide information and strategies to business owners and managers for improvement in the effectiveness of its business management so that key objectives can be realized.



Analyze Your Business — Client Fulfillment

By Peter Rogers

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Once again, it's time to examine what is true about your business to get even better at prioritizing the areas that demand your attention. Here is a series of questions you can use as a starting point for identifying potential problem areas in your company's Client Fulfillment system. But what is Client Fulfillment? It consists of the product or service itself plus three major processes: Production, Delivery, and Customer Service. These combined processes put your product or service into the hands of satisfied customers.

Please remember that this is not intended to be a full analysis, but rather a tool you can use to focus your attention. It may be helpful to print this page, and actually write down your responses. Take one question at a time and really think about your answers. This is not a test. There are no right or wrong answers. There are only responses that reflect your truthful objectivity about the state of your business.

- 1. What is your product or service, and what is the idea behind it?** How do you make it a reality; how do you produce it? Can you draw a flow chart (a "box and arrow diagram") of the steps in your Production/Delivery process?
- 2. Do you consistently and predictably keep your promises to your customers?** Making mistakes is human and forgivable, but do you frequently make mistakes? How many customer complaints do you receive on a monthly basis? What is the average time it takes you to resolve those complaints? Do you experience a reoccurrence of the same kinds of complaints?
- 3. In considering all positive and negative feedback from your customers, is there a common thread?** Can you identify new systems or modify existing systems that could enhance the positive and eliminate the negative?

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4. **Use the details you determined about your clients when you evaluated the characteristics of your typical customer using the Marketing Business Needs Analysis to re-evaluate your products or services.** Do your products or services do what you intend them to do in order to satisfy your customers' true needs? Are they designed that way, with your customers' needs and wants in mind?
5. **Have you used your own products or services?** Would you? Why or why not? Have you "shopped" your competition? What do they do better than you? What do you do better than them?
6. **When you physically deliver your product or service, what is the experience your customer has at the time of transfer?** Do they feel good about the value you're giving? How do you know?
7. **What services do you offer to your customer to enhance the value of your products and services that are not an inherent part of the product itself?** Information services, technical assistance, set-up, maintenance services, credit and financial services, help with complaints and adjustments?
8. **How do your customer services enhance your main offer?** Do your customers even know they exist? Are your customer service opportunities recurring situations that require constant handling, or are they rare and unique situations that rely on basic policies and philosophies for responding to them?
9. **Do you provide customer service training to your employees?** Is this training documented?
10. **How do you identify new customer service opportunities?**
11. **What are the standards you use to ensure that every product or service is consistent, time after time, and every time?** Are those standards subjective (depending on the experience and judgment of the employee operating the system) or objective (judged against a clear and specific set of standards, or random (no criteria for quality are imposed on the system)?
12. **What are your total system costs and per-unit costs?**
13. **How do you innovate ideas and systems in your business?** How do you install and test the innovated system?
14. **Identify the one thing you've always felt was "impossible" to do, but if you could do it, would completely transform your business in the eyes of your customers.** Write it down. What barriers exist to making it a reality?

Now go back and review your answers. Are you uncomfortable with any of the answers you gave? If so, then you've identified the primary areas of focus for your business development efforts.

If you aren't sure, then give your Business Performance Advantage consultant a call today. We can help! ■