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PROCESS QUALITY ASSOCIATES INC.

690 King St., Suite 2, London, Ontario N5W-2X3 Phone (519)-667-1720 1-800-837-7046 Fax (519)-667-1722

"We engineer the quality of your success"

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Circulated to people interested in improving their products and processes

Definition Of A "Preferred Supplier"

Customers have identified them as such because the manufacturer performs in 8 areas:

- **QUALITY** means first and best. The product not only meets specifications, but performs the desired function.
- **RELIABILITY**. The product works as long as it lasts and it lasts a long time.
- **DEPENDABILITY**. If something goes wrong with the product, the customer knows it will be made right quickly and without hassle.
- **TIME TO MARKET**. Manufacturer is in the marketplace first with new products.
- **CUSTOMER DELIGHT**. The word "customer" is not linked with "services" or "support" but with delight.
- **TECHNOLOGY**. Products have all the latest technology the customer wants.
- **AVAILABILITY**. The product is readily available or can be obtained in short order.
- **WORLD MARKETS**. The manufacturer offers its products in the world market.

How Does Your Company Rate?

To find out, evaluate your company's quality program against criteria from the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award or ISO-9000 series standards.

It is better if a third party conducts the evaluation, but even a self-evaluation reminds employees about the importance of the quality program and shows management's interest in it. The results of the evaluation -- identification of weak areas and recommendations for improvement -- will focus attention on the areas that need improvement the most and will reawaken interest in the quality program.

Provide Staff Assistance When Needed

As quality teams tackle more significant problems, they might find that the time required, or the sophistication of the methods needed, is more than they can handle. In such instances, specialized staff support can make a big difference. Companies should consider assigning skilled specialists or consultants to teams working on potentially significant improvement opportunities.

Empowering Employees

Employees and positions are empowered by three ingredients: information, support, and resources.

Employees must know and understand quality goals and how to achieve them. They also need the power and motivation to produce the results.

Employees then need feedback on the results of their work. Without feedback, self-correction is impossible. Too often feedback comes in the form of failure data (e.g., scrap and rework figures) with a tone of "Here's how bad your department did last week." People need feedback on performance without a burden of blame.

Support is a crucial item for sustaining employees' motivation and dedication. It is achieved by encouraging them, acknowledging their efforts, and rewarding significant accomplishments. Encouragement is probably the most neglected aspect of empowering employees, and it is certainly the cheapest.

Recognition for work well done is fundamental to sustaining accomplishment and enthusiasm. Recognition works only if rewards are perceived as valid & equitable.

A job is not learned simply by reading a job description or operations manual

Employees must:

- Understand where their work fits into the various larger systems and processes of which they are a part; what and who precede them and follow them in the sequence of activities; and how their work relates to the final product and ultimate user or consumer.
- Know what their internal customers want and don't want, and what would delight these customers.
- Master the information and skills necessary to perform tasks related to their work; constantly renew and upgrade knowledge and skills.
- Understand the process or technology with which they work: how it functions, its capabilities, and what causes variation and breakdown. They must constantly get to know it better and learn how to improve its performance.

This level of understanding requires both continuous education and regular feedback from each employee's external and internal customers.

World-Class companies give employees the opportunity to "try and fail" without employment risk. The message they send to employees is clear: "Try something. If it doesn't work, we know what not to do."