



Published each month by:

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"We engineer the quality of your success"

VOL. 96 No. G

Circulated to people interested in improving their products and processes

Benchmarking Tip:

DO THE STUDY QUICKLY OR DON'T DO IT

While 9 to 12 months is common to conduct a benchmarking study, it is too long. Many circumstances can change in a company in that time. Ideally, a benchmarking study should take to complete.

How To Complete The Study Quickly

- Have teams devote at least 20% of their time to the study (about a day per week). This will save months.
 - Hire an experienced benchmarking facilitator (or.. Hire an expert, or.. Hire a consultant...?) to help with parts of the study. Experts can increase the quality of a study as well as:
 - Help the team become more efficient and avoid many common pitfalls
 - Perform searches quicker and cheaper
 - Identify the best-in-class companies and set up visits
- Using experts in these ways can save weeks.
- Before starting to benchmark, collect all the customer, process, and performance information that will enable teams to compare their company with others.
 - World-class companies continuously document their processes, analyze their customer needs, and compare their performance against those needs. By adopting this practice in your company, your benchmarking studies will get done faster.

What Do Customers Want

Regardless where you work, customers all want the same thing. They all want to be listened to. They all want quality service. They all care about:

- Getting things done right
- Getting things done quickly, or at least knowing how long it will take
- Dealing with knowledgeable, reliable people
- Resolution in one contact, or one point of contact until resolution
- Knowing where to turn if a problem shows up
- Choices on how and where to get services
- Readily available information
- Clarity in forms, publications, process descriptions, advice, and correspondence
- Courteous treatment from people who are friendly, respectful, trusting, and willing to listen
- Readily accessible, clean, and safe facilities
- Names and phone numbers so they can call directly to get questions answered

Vision Makes A Difference

Vision is significant to the quality program in many ways. It provides:

- **DIRECTION:** Where are we going?
- **CLARITY:** How are we going to get there?
- **ORDER:** What structure will we use?
- **NEED:** Why is this plan important?
- **BENEFIT:** What are the rewards for getting there?

Vision will become reality only when it has been shared and re-shared with every person who is involved internally and externally. This includes employees, customers, and suppliers. The vision must have goals and plans for every level and department within the organization, and it must be supported from the top down. To be successful, the vision:

- must be acted on immediately so that it is believable
- must spell out the requirements to be met so they can be accomplished
- must identify each team member's required contributions so they will be forthcoming
- must identify what the leaders will provide so the team is supported
- must identify what the rewards for success will be so that accomplishing the vision is worth the effort