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Surviving a Down-turn

I walked downtown past many closed stores looking for a fast food restaurant that was open for breakfast. I found one and walked in.

It was bright and cheery, but there were few customers. I ordered 2 eggs and ham. As I was ordering, I noticed a poster back in the kitchen area proclaiming: “Delighted Customers Translate into Profits”.

I found a table and sat down to wait for my order. I wondered how they were going to delight me. The staff was pleasant and industrious. The food arrived and was fine. They took care of my stated needs - 2 eggs and ham, and my implied needs, things I just assumed would be there, - salt and pepper.

I wondered, “What if they had exceeded my expectations? What if they had brought me 3 eggs instead of 2?” No, that would have cost them and wouldn't have pleased me. I was just thankful they were open and I could get breakfast.

Maintaining loyal, satisfied customers has enabled the restaurant to survive an economic downturn. A major business has announced they will be moving into the nearby building that had been vacated by a retail giant years before. Soon, the area will be in an economic revival and the restaurant will be flourishing.

If your business sector experienced a down-turn, would your customers remain loyal to you? Satisfied customers mean profits while markets are expanding. In downturns, they mean survival.

Quotable Quotes:

“A closed mouth gathers no feet”

Anonymous

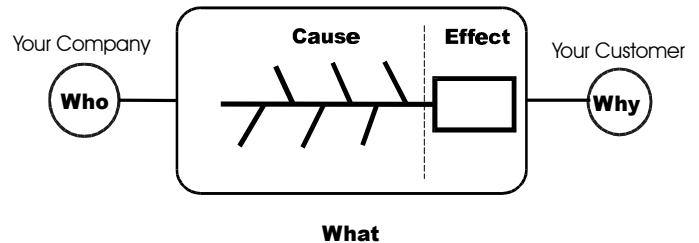
“Common sense is genius dressed in its working clothes”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Why are you in business?

This Newsletter is received by many different and varied companies. Some are quite remarkable in what they do. I always try to understand why your company is in business.

A useful tool to understand **what** you do is the **Cause and Effect Diagram** (also called **Ishikawa Fishbone Diagram**) pictured in the center below.



To use this diagram write down the effect, symptom of a problem, or result in the effect box. Then label the diagonal lines on the Cause side with categories of things that influence the process. Typical categories are: People, Environment, Raw Materials, Equipment, Methods, and Measurements. Then brainstorm and write down all possible influences in each category, even making sub-categories or branches. When finished, the diagram can be used to find the cause of problems or select areas for improvement efforts.

I have added the **who** and **why** because it's the relationship between you and your customers that gives the meaning to **what** you do.

Upcoming Workshops

Windsor	
Reliability and Maintainability	June 22
Chatham	
Introduction to ISO/QS-9000	June 6
Critical Chain Project Management	June 6
London	
Statistical Techniques I (Basic)	May 30
Problem Solving & Trouble Shooting	June 7
Internal Quality Auditor Training	June 13,14