Quality Innovations: Managing Customer Specific Requirements by Dan Rocks

Article published on March 14th 2012 | Business

Savvy suppliers know that it pays - both literally and figuratively - to supply customers with products that meet their specifications. Supplier quality manuals and customer specific requirements explain exactly how customers want their products made, inspected and shipped, but often suppliers are not kept in the loop on revisions and updates to these manuals. Thus, it is not uncommon for a customer to complain when products are supplied that do not comply with the customers latest set of requirements.

Obviously, this is a problem. Previously, a solution may have been for the supplier to call all of their customers each month to ask if any of their requirements had changed. This eliminates incorrect orders, but creates an extra item on the to-do list for already busy suppliers, and can drag on with follow-up calls and e-mails.

One company has decided to do something about the problem.

Matt Morris, president of Customer Specific Requirement LLC (Auburn, IN) explains. â€œCustomers, in general, are not doing a good job of distributing these documents to their supply base,â€• he says. â€œWe have created a Web site (www.customerspecifics.com) where auditors, suppliers and customers can all participate in sharing and distributing customer specific requirements and supplier quality manuals.

â€œWhile auditors and suppliers are the primary beneficiaries of this product, the system does have some valuable features for the companies releasing these documents,â€• says Morris. â€œIf you are the customer, you are able to release your document to our database and then monitor which suppliers subscribe to your document. Subscribers will be automatically notified every time a new update is released.â€•

Supplier quality manuals are necessary in order to follow the customerâ€™s rules, but in the past, once a supplier received a copy, it was often the last copy issued to them, Morris says. â€œInstead of calling 84 customers every month, our software does the work for you and sends you notifications when there are changes to these documents.â€•

The software was launched one year ago and has approximately 100 users. Momentum has been growing since the company spoke at a certification body/registrar conference in April and another conference in July.

The system provides a major benefit to auditors, who are supposed to audit against these manuals, but may not have access to them, Morris says, so getting the chance to talk directly to the certification bodies has been helpful.

Auditors and certification bodies, such as Eagle Registrations and Smithers Quality Assessments, can use the system for free, while standard users pay $99 per year for a subscription. This minimal cost covers the cost of maintaining the site, Morris says, as they try to encourage people to use it.

â€œWe are not trying to make millions we are trying to solve a problem,â€• Morris says.

It seems to be working. Reaction has been positive: â€œEvery auditor and supplier I talk to mentions this as one of the biggest challenges they face, and our software seems to solve their problems,â€• says Morris.

Morris, who has been in the quality field for about 10 years, estimates he previously spent five to 10 hours a month calling and e-mailing his customers to see if there were any changes to their manuals.

While some call back, some donâ€™t. Even if a company does put their document on its Web site, you still have to remember to look for updates and spend time navigating the site to find it.

Morris does point out that contacting customers is not required.

â€œYou do not have to call anybodyâ€” customers do not require you to contact them. But if you are caugl during an audit, or worse yet, fail to meet a customer requirement, you are in trouble. As a quality manager, my customers did not make me call them, e-mail them or search their Web site. However, if you want to be a good supplier, you search out these documents.â€•

At this time, no other competing products exist on the market, though Morris says a similar idea has been attempted once before.

â€œThis time we are taking an all new approach and it seems to be catching on. We like to think of our software as a Wikipedia style library where our users control the content of the site,â€• says Morris.

And what to do with the time saved by using the site? Suppliers will have time to actually create products that meet specificationsâ€”instead of trying to determine what those specifications are.

Article Source:
http://www.articleside.com/business-articles/quality-innovations-managing-customer-specific-requirements.htm - Article Side

Dan Rocks - About Author:
For more information about a Customer Specific Requirement, please visit a
http://www.customerspecifics.com/

Article Keywords:
Customer Specific Requirement

You can find more free articles on Article Side. Sign up today and share your knowledge to the community! It is completely FREE!