

If not, why not?

We like to keep things simple at Glenair. I was reminded of this the other day when an ISO quality auditor questioned me regarding customer satisfaction and quality. He was interested in how well we communicated our quality policy throughout our organization and whether or not we took adequate steps to *truly* evaluate customer satisfaction. My answer was that we use comprehensive PPM measurement instruments and are of course subject to intense scrutiny and feedback from our customers when it comes to on-time delivery, rejected parts and so on. Further, that we deliver important quality training on a regular basis and reiterate quality goals and objectives regularly in employee communications. Nailed it, right?

Some of you may know that our Glendale headquarters is located adjacent to The Disney Company's west coast Imagineering facility and that over the years we have had the occasion to interact closely with many of the people there. This question of measuring customer satisfaction—measuring it in a way that *truly* reveals how you are doing—reminds me of the unique approach followed by Walt Disney himself during the early years of Disneyland. Walt had a simple and effective way of determining customer satisfaction, as well as for determining where to focus his ongoing improvement efforts.

At the end of each day, a cheerful cast member with a clipboard would ask departing guests a few simple questions (I'm paraphrasing here, but the most important question in my mind went something like this):

- *Do you intend to recommend a trip to Disneyland to your friends, neighbors, co-workers, and others—and if not, why not?*

Walt believed a practical survey of this sort would provide all the information needed to determine whether or not they had a customer satisfaction problem. The "if not, why not" element of the question was of course critical. If the reasons were things like, "the lines were too long," or "the cast members were inattentive," or "the food was unappetizing," then *voila* he had a simple—and practical—road map for corrective action.

I think at times we all believe business must be more complex than that. That particularly in our industry, the range of questions and "if not, why not's" are more complicated than in Walt's day. But really, doesn't this one issue go straight to the heart of quality, performance, and customer satisfaction? In fact, what better way to gauge for yourself on an ongoing basis—no matter what your role is in the organization—whether your specific performance is meeting your customer's expectations? I can't say whether Walt's approach would have won any points with an ISO audit team. But I do hope it gives everyone on the Glenair team a glimpse into a powerful and effective way to *truly* measure customer satisfaction.

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