Maintenance Quality Control

As we all know performing maintenance and keeping our customers happy at the same time can be a tall order. As maintenance guys, we all know we are doing a good job so quality control doesn’t seem to be too important to us. But the reality is many of our customers don’t share the same high value of the maintenance effort as we do. Quite often the customer view is the opposite of what we see in the mirror each maintenance day.

So let’s talk about what items should be part of our new Maintenance Quality Control program and how we change the existing perception of our maintenance team assuming it needs a little adjustment. As we talk about maintenance quality control the first thing to consider is the customer side of quality control. Often we concentrate on our own maintenance side of quality and pay little attention to our customers; after all we are the experts not the customer. This translates into “if we are happy then they must be happy!” The reality is if the customer is not happy it doesn’t matter what we think of ourselves. Perception is truth!

External Customer Quality Control

- **Always fix the problem** – this may sound silly to many maintenance employees but not fixing the problem is one of the biggest problems and complainants filed by customers. This is either because we didn’t understand the problem in the beginning; we didn’t take time to find out what is bothering them; or the worst case, we don’t care.
- **Do more than expected** – always do more than the customer expects. Go the extra mile to ensure customer satisfaction. Often it is as simple as talking to the customer.
- **Clean up after the fix** – this is one of my pet peeves. Always leave the work area cleaner than you found it when you arrived.
- **Communicate to the customer** – communicate, communicate, communicate. Reach out to the customer before the work is scheduled, when the work is scheduled, during the work, and always after the work is complete to ensure customer satisfaction.
- **Under promise and over deliver** – this is primarily related to the scheduling of the repair work. Complete the work faster than the original schedule and in a shorter repair time.
- **Follow up with questionnaire and evaluation** – this may sound like a great deal of work but with the current technology available to us it can be totally automatic.
- **Verbal from dispatcher of all calls** – if you are lucky enough to have a full-time dispatcher then the person-to-person follow-up can easily be accomplished. Sometime within 24 hours
of the work being complete you have the dispatcher call the work requester and ask how the work went. Very simple.

- **Email response from all completed work requests** – if no dispatcher is available then your CMMS can automatically send a form email to the requester. Typically the email reads: “Hello. Our records indicate your work request #BR549 has been completed. Please fill out the short form below and return or call to speak directly to our maintenance staff. Thank you and have a great day.”

**Internal Side of Quality Control**

The internal side of quality control can actually be more important than the external customer quality control. If your quality is excellent your customers won’t have anything to complain about. I still believe the communication and follow-up component is important for all service providing organizations.

- **Were all the parts disposed of properly** – nothing damages your organization’s perception than to leave the old parts behind. Remember the area needs to be cleaner than when you got there. This includes the equipment and the entire work area.
- **Work order properly filled out and completed** – all of the proper codes and comments should be completely filled in including the actual hours spent on the job as well as all parts used. This is essential to determine the total cost of the work.
- **Tools cleaned and ready for the next job** – all tools and equipment must be cleaned and prepared for the next job. Everything placed back in the proper storage area so it can be found the next time it is needed.
- **Asset history updated** – make sure your asset history is properly updated. If parts have been changed or modified this needs to be in the asset history so the next repair person understands what has taken place in the past.
- **PM procedure updated if needed** – if it is a preventive maintenance work request take time to update the procedure to ensure the PM is as close to perfect as possible to guarantee the proper things are being inspected and adjusted.
- **Supervisor called and more work requested** (Just kidding) – Sorry for the Mike’s World humor but yes your employees should be requesting the next job as soon as the cleanup and paper work is finished.

Keep in mind all of the above needs to be audited on a regular basis to ensure your quality program is working properly. Remember you must inspect what you expect.