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Abstract

Today's business environment is dynamic and there are constant changes in demand, competition, markets and suppliers. Effective logistics process is a prerequisite for satisfying customer needs and gaining competitive advantage. Service quality improvement is needed to increase customer satisfaction and building customer loyalty. Focusing on process improvement usually results in higher service levels, improved cycle times and more reliable service. The purpose of this study is to describe the current delivery process of the case company, clarify customer expectations and search for ways to improve the process. The study is limited to one sales department of the company and the parts are non-stock items with quite regular demand.

This paper is a case study and data for the empirical part was gathered from the company's data base, by a questionnaire, and by observation. In the empirical part the case company's delivery process for predetermined parts is described and process times are calculated to find out total delivery time. Time consumed by each step of the process is calculated separately, for easier identification of the most time-consuming steps.

Data obtained from the questionnaire is also presented in the empirical part. The value of the received information is valuable because customers' opinions and expectations were not known. Customers' opinions were also used for describing the current status of the delivery process – without this information, there would not have been anything where to compare the results. Customer expectations also give the company a possibility to set goals for the future.

The comparison between process time and customer expectations shows a rather large gap. This paper states the present performance of the company, and lists some recommendations how the gap could be narrowed. However, it seems that matching company performance with customer expectations requires some fundamental changes.

Key words	Logistics process, customer satisfaction, service quality
Further information	