# GQM
### Global Quality Management Associates

## ~ Requirements ~

### "Successful Businesses Identify and Implement Them Wisely"

By Paul W. Gladieux

It's likely executives don't ask the question at meetings "so how many requirements are we expected to implement today to be compliant, competitive, and profitable?" If they did staff members would be hard pressed to provide the number of requirements that truly exist throughout their operation.

Accountants and Cost Engineers are two professions that come to mind when I think of the type of thinking process necessary to quantify requirements associated with activities and tasks. And, I didn't forget the Quality Professional, who typically lives their daily work-life in and around requirements. Quality Professionals would generally agree that quality is achieved when companies can demonstrate that a product or services "conforms to requirements."

The only way an executive would ever get a valid answer to the "so how many requirements...." question is by everyone in the company having an understanding and agreement on what a requirement is. To do this people in the workforce need to have a general understanding of the concept of identifying and implementing a requirement.

### Identifying Requirements

Fundamentally requirements come from two sources. Each company will have their own specific sources but most share common "Internal" and External" sources such as:

### Internal Sources
- Corporate Policies and Procedures
- Human Resources
- Engineering Specifications
- Manufacturing Capacities / Process Metrics

### External Sources
- Customer Design and Procurement
- Contract Performance Parameters
- Federal / State Rules, Laws, Regulations
- International Trade Agreements
- Industry / Society Codes and Standards

Various people look to these sources to further identify requirements. Marketing professionals study customers to figure out buying patterns and what will "satisfy" them. Advertising agencies struggle to identify what customers think and feel about a new product or service. Product developers and engineers use models and computers to determine the characteristics to make up a customer's final product.

In layman and business terms we communicate daily about requirements such as: size, shape, pattern, color, strength, reliability, shelf life, and delivery.

*"If a company could quantify the total requirements driving the business it could be in the millions."*

If a company could quantify the total requirements "driving the business" it would be in the millions. Of course the greater percentage is managed daily or a company would soon close its doors.

Without a process for identifying requirements, a business runs the risk of poor implementation. It is requirements that are missed, not included in negotiations, mis-interpreted, or just ignored that bring about events that cause businesses to fail.

## Implementing Requirements

"After requirements are identified and understood, it's all about implementation." In my professional opinion, this is the hardest part of all. Not only is it work to get to the point of implementation, but it takes all the right conditions at the right time for success.

We have electronic information tools such as advanced scheduling software with task manager features, and process modeling software to help manage requirements.

More routinely companies use operating manuals, procedures, and instructions to define the activities and tasks to perform for implementing requirements.

We try to measure how well requirements are met by determining customer satisfaction, specification compliance, test results, surveys, and number of on time deliveries.

Unfortunately most of the time the measures are in terms of the number and types of product returns, items that are past due, test failures, discarded product, and customers that will not return for products or services. This is not an effective process.

Meeting of the minds, however, brings up a couple thoughts that have to do with the fast growing global economy. If you work for a U.S. company and rarely do business outside the U.S. then the cultural differences is not much of an issue.

If you work for a multi-national company the cultural and perhaps language differences just increased the chances for not having clear and strong understandings on requirements.

## Conclusion

Throughout your work-life it's likely you won't be asked the "loaded question" about "how many requirements are expected to be implemented today to be compliant, competitive, and profitable?"

However, if you make efforts daily to properly identify, translate, and implement your business requirements, you and those around you will benefit from both knowing your jobs well and after all being a part of a business that "implements them wisely." This ultimately leads to the most important aspect of a successful business ~ the satisfied customer resulting in profits.

### About the author ~

*Paul W. Gladieux is CEO & Founder of Global Quality Management Associates. GQM provides full-service quality management consulting and training to companies worldwide. He has over 35 years experience in the profession in a wide range of business sectors. Visit GQM's Web site at www.GQMassociates.com.*

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