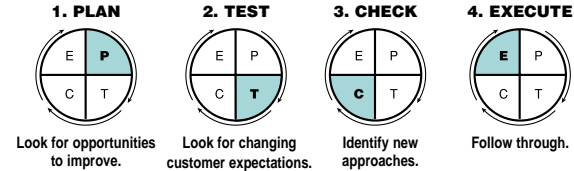


Improving Customer Service

Everyone in an organization serves a customer of some kind: an individual or company receiving a product or service, or a team or individual inside the organization. Responding to the needs of your internal and external customers and improving the way you respond involves far more than answering questions and solving problems. To do it effectively, you need a system. This One Page Coach® explains how to do it using a four-step process: PLAN, TEST, CHECK, and EXECUTE. This continuous-improvement cycle is illustrated to the right.



1.

PLAN

► Establish a service vision.

1. Identify the overall service vision of the team. (What particular service outcomes are we looking to achieve?)
2. Measure the gap between the future service vision and current performance.
3. Assess the organizational barriers to achieving the vision and determine how these will be addressed.



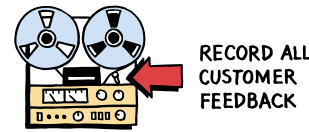
► Map the supplier-to-customer chain.

1. Identify your team's customers. (Who are the main recipients of your outputs?)
2. Identify your suppliers. (Which people provide inputs to your team?)
3. Draw a map of each step in the chain, from your supplier to the final end-user.
4. Show the map to your suppliers and customers in order to check its accuracy.



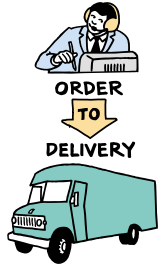
► Assess customer needs.

1. Develop several customer "listening posts" (i.e., surveys, complaint logs, customer visits).
2. Identify customer needs for each segment or area in which you provide service.
3. Systematically (and constantly) assess all feedback, and prioritize what customers value most in each area or segment.



► Identify and manage key processes.

1. Determine the main tasks/processes the team must carry out in serving its customers (delivery, handling orders, etc.).
2. Prioritize the key processes that are seen to be most important to the team's customers.
3. Map the key processes and review their efficiency and effectiveness.
4. Redesign a better process with the customer.



2.

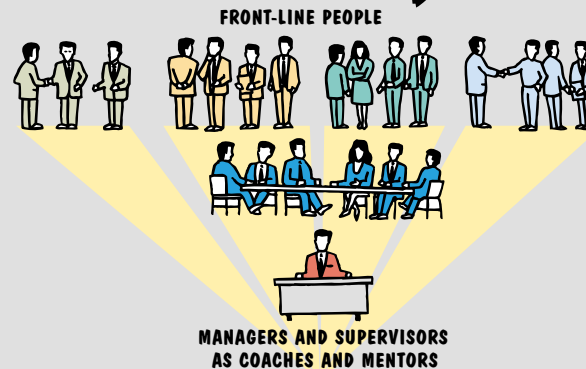
TEST

► Pilot a process-improvement project.

1. Select a "key" process that is important to the customer and that can be improved quickly.
2. Assemble all the people involved in the process.
3. Brainstorm how the process can be improved.

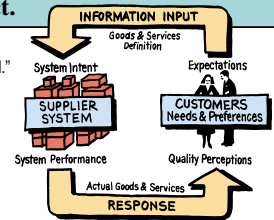


THE SERVICE-FOCUSED ORGANIZATION



► Run the pilot project.

1. Get the whole team involved in mapping the process "end-to-end."
2. Ask the customer what outputs they need from the process.
3. Ask suppliers what they need in order to provide better service.
4. Make the changes and monitor the steps as you go.



3.

CHECK

► Gather data and assess results.

1. When the pilot process-improvement project is completed, gather all the data.
2. Include suppliers and customers in the review exercise.
3. Determine what was most effective and why.
4. Decide together what efforts actually increased customer satisfaction.



► Develop standards and protocols.

1. Document the steps in the pilot measurement process.
2. Develop standard charts and graphs for people to use in their team.
3. Design simple one-page charts or forms to show links to key organization goals.



4.

EXECUTE

► Apply the learning to all processes.

1. Train everyone in identifying customer needs and evaluating the processes of which they are a part.
2. Discuss with the team how the pilot process-improvement project results can be applied to all other processes.
3. Assign service-improvement responsibilities.
4. Appoint customer-service mentors and coaches.



► Empower the people.

1. Give everyone on the team the authority to give customers what they need.
2. Put customers first and rules second.
3. Invert the organization pyramid and serve your subordinates by helping them to meet their customers' needs.
4. Reward people who achieve outstanding service results.



► Evaluate progress and set new targets.

1. Keep listening to the voice of the customer, and look for ways to exceed expectations.
2. Constantly review key processes and look for ways to continually improve.
3. Hold service-training sessions regularly.
4. Revisit the service vision and set new "stretch" targets.



Improving Customer Service: Template

