



**HAPPY
CUSTOMERS,
HAPPY LIFE!**

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There's a saying often used by many a marriage partner, "Happy wife, happy life". The same can be said for our business relationships, both inside and outside our organisations.

The question is how do you get to that point? Well, like any partnership you have to work at it. But the investment is well worth it.

The things we explored in our client appreciation event covered some of the elements that contribute to this happy state. In this week's article, we discuss some of these and a few other things that you should consider for a Zen-like existence.

It starts with culture

Culture is the collection of values, expectations, and behaviours that guide and inform the actions of all an organisation's or department's members. Think of it as the collection of traits that make your organisation what it is.

Getting the culture right and where you want it to be is a bit like the task of painting the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Just when you think you've finished you have to go back to the start and go over it again. It takes careful attention to keep the things you want and weed out the values, expectations, and behaviours you don't want.

Culture affects both our internal and external customers. If people in your lab aren't happy, then it can lead to all kinds of issues including unhappiness of customers. Did you hear what happened at the [Queensland Health and Forensic Science Lab Inquiry](#) over the past couple of days? Culture was so poor it impacted on the quality of results that were used in criminal court cases! There are definitely some unhappy customers in the Queensland justice system right now.

What do your clients want?

When you ask this question, you should also ask - what do they use to identify the best suppliers of those wants?



When developing and promoting their products and services, successful business founders and marketing and sales managers know they need to have their ideal clients in mind.

How do you even know what your customers want in the first place? With its focus on customers, a quality management system is the perfect framework to help you discover this critical piece of information.

But if you think about it, a customer is also busy trying to run their business. They may have a quality management system in place to help them efficiently and effectively identify their ideal



supplier. Many of your customers probably use checklists to help them identify potential businesses with those critical attributes.

These factors include obvious one like the availability of goods and services they're seeking. However, there are other factors that go into the decision-making process.

Put yourself in their place and think of the questions they would ask their ideal supplier. Make sure your business is the one to answer those questions.

Consistency is critical

Another key factor relates to the ability of your business to provide a consistent and reliable product or service. When you visit the local barista to get your daily caffeine dose, you want that dose to be hitting the spot every time. The barista might not have a certified QMS, but that doesn't mean that they don't have a system in place to ensure that you consistently get that perfect brew.

One of the primary considerations is establishing that your business is trustworthy.

Most buyers look for social proof particularly through online reviews. That's why developing and maintaining a positive business brand is vital for growing your business. So how can a QMS help with this?

Frameworks like ISO 9001, ISO 17025, ISO 15189, and the Australian Business Excellence Framework help businesses focus on customer service.

In the broadest sense they support delivering consistent, superior value to those customers. For example, ISO 9001 requires that an organisation demonstrates it meets customer, statutory and regulatory requirements. However, it also requires information on how it maintains and enhances customer satisfaction.

By meeting and exceeding customer requirements, you'll instil confidence in your business and develop a sense of loyalty.

Follow up calls, surveys and prompt resolution of complaints will ensure that 'we are customer focussed' isn't just a line on your website.

Getting the report just right for your customer

You are an expert in your lab.

You know your procedures and can carry these out with your eyes closed (although from a safety perspective we hope this isn't happening!).

Once you've carried out your activity, you can put that information into your data collection device and that spits out your lab report. Or perhaps you go old school and type the report up.

But are you sure that the lab report you're producing is the best it can be?

A lab report doesn't just state what you've done. A well-written, clear, and concise report can enhance the reputation of your lab to both customers and an accreditation body. It's helpful to put yourself in the shoes of your customers in setting up the format for a report. Just because there is a list in a Standard doesn't mean you have to present information in that order.

You can negotiate with your customer to produce a simplified report under an accredited system. This might give you some valuable insights into what matters to your customers. You can also see how different ways of communicating key pieces of information can be beneficial to your customers and your lab.

We've got a lot to do in labs and a load of expectations to be met. As our only tangible product, a report is our opportunity to showcase to our customers and other parties who might have an interest in testing, the great work we've been doing.

Taking a more customer-centric view can help make this valuable piece of communication even better for our customers.

So next time you sign a report, put yourself in the shoes of the person who will receive and read it and ask if it's the best it can be.

How can we help?

We can support your business plans by fine-tuning the system you have in place or creating an effective, efficient system specifically for you.

Call Maree on 0411 540 709 for a confidential, obligation free discussion on how we can support your business to work better and smarter. Or email your questions to info@masmanagementsystems.com.au.

Remember, you don't have to do this alone!