

Establishing a Service Facility in a large state company

I. Problem Description

The company is state-owned and deals with water supplies having a monopoly over this activity. It supplies about 65% of overall water needs in Israel and provides services to most Israeli citizens through customers that act as "intermediaries" between the company and its end users.

Apart from providing water supplies, the company extends additional services of operation and maintenance of the water supply network for local authorities, as well as water technologies development and technology-related consulting in Israel and overseas.

The company does not have an integrated customer service facility, and currently customer service is carried out by a large number of company workers at the different headquarters and on-site divisions.

The company has to adjust itself to the changing conditions and to the period, during which business and public entities are providing a constantly improving service level to their customers. The company has also to transform itself from a product-oriented to service-oriented enterprise and to go through a conceptual change, whose main principle is the service-oriented perception, which raises the need for service improvement all the way through and maximized value provided to customers.

II. Objectives

Consolidating an overall, organization-wide service concept, including:

- Setting up an infrastructure for achieving an excellent service level tailored to customer expectations
- Improving the service level and the service itself provided to customers, across all customer interfaces in the aspects of availability, quality, reliability and commitment to customer through tailoring the service to specific customer needs.
- Enhancing customer satisfaction, reinforcing the company's position among decision makers and the general public, and improving the image of the company
- Gearing up for the opportunities of the competitive age in the future

III. Methodologies

Current state mapping and needs definition

- Mapping the customers according to their types and needs – personal needs, The Israel Water Association requirements, local authorities, and the like.
- Mapping the company functions that have interfaces with customers and their activities – Area Manager, Accounts, Area Engineer, Regional Manager, and the like.
- Mapping the services provided to customers – uninterrupted water supply, water network operation and maintenance, and the like.
- Work processes and major interfaces mapping – handling breakdowns, requests for extending/changing the consumer's water connection, planned water suspension notices, etc.
- Assessing the different end users, including interfaces with them

Consolidating the best service concept for the company

- defining activity scopes of the service facility
- defining responsibility scopes and job owners in the service facility
- defining supporting work processes
- estimating the required HR capacities

Composing a Master Plan for concept realization

- composing a detailed plan for realizing the recommended service concept

IV. Recommendations

- Establishing a service facility responsible for defining the policy, processes and monitoring of service activities, including:
 - A contact center for end users, which will function as the single point of contact for them and will pool all the customer enquiries creating uniformity and integrative nature of response to customer enquiries.
 - A service quality division responsible for defining the company's service policy, including supportive work process building
 - A customer service supervisor in each geographic area, responsible for implementing the service policy and processes on-site.
- Tailoring company-initiated service types provided to customers to the detailed customer segmentation
- Tailoring company-initiated services to individual customers and extending cooperation with selected customers

- Consolidating and implementing a set of measurements and monitoring procedures aimed at ongoing measurements of service level, quality and reliability of HQ and on-site divisions.
- Improving information systems for customer account and enquiry management
- Change management among company workers and managers through assimilating service value within the organizational culture and providing the tools and professional knowledge related to the service field.

V. Benefits

For the customer:

A more professional, faster and efficient service tailored to customer needs

For the organization:

- Improved customer satisfaction
- Improved company reputation
- Readiness for competition on the water supply market
- Defining and establishing an infrastructure for work process enhancement
- An effective resource distribution, which enables a prospecting service to be tailored to customer features
- Work process uniformity

For the company employees:

- A defined daily routine
- Specialization in an important aspect of current activities – service provision
- Tools for handling different customer types
- Released time for professionalizing in the field