Managing Quality

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Course Title

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Part 1: Importance of Customer Focus to CI Process

Strategic alliances are the associations a company enters with a specific aim. These are the partnerships that bring together businesses that can combine efforts or collaborate to make the service or product offered to the customer better. Strategic alliances should be aimed at helping a business achieve the core objectives (Foster, 2013). They are strategic because they are a considered move of the business to add on to its value.

A firm that intends to offer quality services or products and intends to do that through strategic alliance should focus on some things before joining it. For example, it should assess if entering the alliance will result in the fulfillment of a business objective and whether, it is likely to bring in high revenue or enable the business to venture in high revenue generating business (Wakeam, 2003). Such a strategic alliance will unlock customer value and boost revenue. Another business objective would be to reduce cost as when companies engage in the business process together, the cost will be reduced and partners will end up in profits.

Another way that would prove an alliance to be strategic is when it adds to the core competency or competitive advantage of a firm as customers will enjoy quality products and services while suppliers will enjoy increased business (Wakeam, 2003). Additionally, it should block a competitive threat. If a company is vulnerable, it can remove the vulnerability joining the alliance and, since there is no competitive threat customers will continue enjoying quality products while suppliers will not lose their business. An alliance is strategic if it mitigates business risks allowing manufacturers to enjoy cost savings while customers receive reduced prices and suppliers – product development.

Part 2: CI Tools and Techniques
Benchmarking entails visiting the company that is perceived to be performing well, observing how it carries out its business processes, identifying its objectives and organizational cultures. The culmination of the process is that the benchmarking firm will identify any gaps in its business process with an aim of achieving competitive advantage (Boxwell, 1994).

A benchmark firm opens its doors to other companies in the industry to come and learn about business processes (Foster, 2013). Therefore, it is a successful business from which other industries come to learn.

A firm that goes out to benchmark should be kind enough to open its doors, too, so that other companies can also benchmark from it. The reason behind this is that once a business benchmarks, it will identify the market gaps and will be able to start working towards gaining competitive advantage. Therefore, if a firm only carries out benchmarking but does not allow others to benchmark from it, it will be in an advantaged position having enough information about secrets of success of other firms (Foster, 2013).

Benchmarking is advantageous to a firm because it offers a platform for improving its performance. It makes a business to move from the comfort zone and develop short term goals helping it to focus on change while providing a direction for the change (Fifer, 1989). However, benchmarking is disadvantageous to a firm because it reveals the standards achieved by competitors but does not show the circumstances under which the achievements were made. It is not a plan to an end because it will be worthless if it is not accompanied with a plan of change.

If I were a leader of a successful business entity, I would allow other firms to benchmark against my organization because it nurtures competition that provides a reason to stay focused. Additionally, by failing to offer others a chance to benchmark, the company risks becoming complacent hence will engineer no change.
Part 3: How CI Should Be Managed

When concurrent engineering is applied in a firm, the latter is likely to reap some benefits. One of the advantages is a hustle-free introduction of products and services in the market. Concurrent engineering involves a simultaneous product development (Ma, Chen, & Thimm, 2007). It, therefore, becomes easy to introduce a product that can almost guarantee its uptake. Additionally, the process leads to the production of quality goods. Since the product development stages are run simultaneously, there is keen monitoring of the product to ensure that no single mistake is reported (Foster, 2013). As a result, the quality of the products is continually improved.

Concurrent engineering results in low cost of production and development of products. When the product development processes are run concurrently, the amount of time used is less compared to when they are run consecutively (Rosenblatt & Watson, 1991). As a result, less facilitating inputs is put in place. The reduced cost allows the firm to reinvest in the quality of the product. Finally, concurrent engineering results in the short product development process that saves on costs and increases volumes.
References


