

Actual situation at the machine supplier:

- Inhomogeneous and only partially predictable customer behavior with regard to order frequency, quantity (bull whip effects) and time of order
- The UTP can often only provide a forecast for a fraction of its articles.
- Many articles only have a quantity of 1 per year
- A large part of articles are only sold every 2-3 years
- Customers buy different quantities depending on their needs
- Customers expect stable prices, no loss of quality and different delivery times (immediately to sometime)
- Suppliers (internal & external) do not always meet delivery dates
- Internal processes are becoming more complicated (compliance, structures, laws, new employees)
- In order to be able to deliver as quickly as possible and at the best price, the purchasing department ideally needs early forecasts about the requirements

Customer expectations:

- Delivery times and prices in line with the market
- Meeting deadlines and commitments
- Fast, uncomplicated and timely communication
- Competent contacts
- Respond to requests immediately
- Quick support in an emergency
- Easy processing of orders

In some companies, however, the gap between the customer's expectations and their own range of services is widening. Customer anger is increasing, which in turn leads to additional internal work in the company to appease customers. As a result, the cost per customer request increases and employee satisfaction decreases. Especially in times of crisis, companies face major challenges here.

Own advantages are getting less, which in turn plays into the hands of the respective market competitors.

The common entrepreneurial goal is:

Increase customer satisfaction and revenue while reducing costs and improving delivery performance.

A company can only successfully achieve these goals if the departments involved, After Sales, Supply Chain and Operations, jointly develop a concept to tackle the complex processes. As a rule, each area on its own will not make it. The reasons for this are the respective interdependencies. Another reason is often run-in processes that no longer meet current market requirements.

Approaches to meeting the requirements are:

- An agile and quickly responding supply chain with the involvement of suppliers
- A consistent and transparent flow of information (internal and external to the customer)
- Efficient process structures, adapted to customer requirements in after sales
- The right KPIs to measure the current situation in order to react promptly to changes
- Parts availability on the expected delivery date
- High data quality
- Linking production and logistics processes with modern information and communication technologies
- Digital tools to support communication with the customer

Companies that can solve this complex issue for themselves ultimately have a strategic and sustainable competitive advantage. Customers change less frequently and accept additionally higher sales prices because the overall package is consistent and the expectations are met.

In turn, higher and more stable purchasing volumes have an advantage in the supply chain area. Thanks to increased purchasing volumes, better purchasing conditions can be enforced and suppliers are more willing to respond to demands such as own storage or preparatory work

Employee satisfaction increases due to fewer customer complaints and more effective work.

With a consistent implementation, this results in a higher turnover per employee as an additional effect.

Willemsen & Dr. Scholl are available to interested companies for in-depth discussions on this topic.

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