

The Implementation of a Quality Management System in a Service Company, Case Study of Ibis Hotel Tlemcen

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Received date : 20-03-2024 , Accepted date : 05-05-2024, Publication date:02-06-2024

Abstract :

The aim of this study is to investigate the feasibility of implementing a quality management system within a service company. To address this issue, we conducted a descriptive study within the Ibis Tlemcen Hotel. In this study, we analyze the various stages and key processes that the hotel had to follow and improve in order to obtain ISO 9001:2015 certification. This study has resulted in the following findings: Determining the needs and expectations of customers and stakeholders, assimilating the principles of quality management well, assimilating ISO 9001 requirements in order to succeed in a quality approach aimed at maintaining and/or improving the established quality system. At the end of this study, we can say that quality in itself is not just a certification but rather a mindset that must be respected and applied by everyone, from management to the last employee.

Keywords: Quality ; QMS ; ISO Certificate ; Service Industry ; Ibis Tlemcen.

Jel Classification Codes : D80 ; L15 ; L51 ; L80

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Introduction :

Today, the economic and competitive climate is tense, with numerous challenges facing businesses. More than ever, they emphasize quality, whether in the industrial sector or in services. Indeed, the quality of service provided to customers has become a crucial element. A company can stand out by offering products and/or services of higher quality than its competitors, thus enhancing its brand image, valorizing its products, and increasing its market share.

In the past, a company measured its success by providing faster and cheaper products and services. Today, the goal is to offer the best quality to achieve customer satisfaction. Customers have become more demanding and better informed about products. Their demands have become more complex, as have their expectations. They expect the product or service for which they have paid to meet their specifications and function as intended.

Quality is perceived as the ability to meet consumer expectations at an acceptable cost and price, one borne by the company, the other by the customer. It is in this context that the ISO 9000 series of standards has arrived, offering a management alternative that can lead a company toward efficiency and excellence. The aim of these standards is to provide a mechanism for determining and responding to customer needs, avoiding errors as much as possible. ISO 9001 certification is adaptable to any business, regardless of its size or sector, and places the customer at the center of the enterprise.

Today, it is not enough to deliver a product that meets a direct need; one must also take into account the value associated with the product or service rendered. Quality can thus be considered the most effective strategic variable for competitiveness.

Over the past few years, Algeria has undergone significant changes in all areas of the economy and continues to progress. Attention is increasingly focused on the service sector. Algerian companies, like all companies worldwide, are affected by these changes and are adopting differentiation strategies to position themselves in the market. Quality has become a fundamental principle and a follow-up imperative for these companies.

The objective of this article is to study the following issue: **The implementation of a quality management system within a service company according to the ISO 9001:2015 standard. Case study: Ibis Hotel Tlemcen.**

In this study, we are interested in the quality management system and the quality of service offered by the Ibis Tlemcen company by asking the following questions:

- 1- What are the principles and requirements of quality management?
- 2- What are the steps to follow to implement a quality management system?

To answer these questions, our work is divided into three parts. The first part deals with the theoretical foundations of quality management and the evolution of the quality concept. The second part focuses on services, which play an important role in the success of businesses. We will define the notion of services as well as their characteristics. Finally, the third part is devoted to a case study of the Ibis Tlemcen hotel in Algeria, where we present the Accor group and the Ibis Tlemcen hotel. We will analyze the different steps and key processes that the hotel had to follow and improve to obtain ISO 9001:2015 certification.

1- Quality Management :

1.1- Definition of Quality:

Quality, in its essence, embodies the very essence of operational excellence, where impeccably designed products, satisfied customers, and engaged staff harmoniously converge. LYONNET (1997) proposes a perspective defining quality as "the satisfaction of the need perceived by the customer or user," while AFNOR conceptualizes it as "a product or service of quality is one whose characteristics enable it to satisfy the expressed or implicit needs of consumers." In professional jargon, quality is often apprehended through two distinct prisms: firstly, as "the intrinsic nature of an entity, whether positive or negative," and secondly, as "superiority or excellence in a specific domain." However, a third perspective emerges from practice, where quality is perceived as absolute conformity, free from any defects. This vision thus establishes a direct link between quality and the absence of defects.

DOUCET (2013, p. 5) supports this perspective by stating that "quality then becomes the opposite of defect, and a quality product is defined by its absence of defects." The ISO 9000 standards enrich this reflection by defining quality as "the inherent ability of a set of characteristics to meet the requirements of stakeholders, whether customers or other actors involved in the process" (MONIN.J-M, 2001, p. 52). ISO 9000:1987, on the other hand, defines quality as "the sum of attributes and characteristics of a product or service that give it the ability to meet explicit or implicit needs."

Subsequent editions of this standard, ISO 9000:1994 and ISO 9000:2000, refine this definition by describing it respectively as "the set of characteristics of an entity enabling it to meet explicit or implicit needs" and "the intrinsic ability of a set of characteristics to meet requirements." This overview illustrates the holistic nature of quality, which encompasses all characteristics perceived and anticipated by the customer (MONIN.J-M, 2001, p. 56).

1.2- Quality Management

A quality management system (SMQ) can be understood as a coherent structure integrating human resources (skills, responsibilities, workforce), organizational standards (such as procedures), as well as the necessary material and financial means (MONIN.J-M, 2001, p. 256). Its main objective is twofold: on the one hand, to guarantee the conformity of the activities carried out with the needs and requirements of the clients, and on the other hand, to allow constant adaptation and continuous improvement of these activities in response to the evolution of customer expectations and competition.

Quality management, as highlighted by GOGUE (1997, p. 06), offers a significant advantage to the company's efficiency by improving both team dynamics and decision-making processes, thus creating a powerful synergy effect. In this context, a quality management system proves to be a methodical approach aimed at determining how an organization can meet the requirements of its clients and other stakeholders. The "quality management principles", stated by ISO (2016), represent a set of values, standards, and fundamental beliefs that serve as the foundation for quality management. These principles, such as customer focus, leadership, employee involvement, process approach, continuous improvement, evidence-based decision

making, and stakeholder relationship management, are not hierarchical, but rather considered as interdependent elements whose relative importance can vary according to the specificities of each organization and evolve over time.

1.3 - Implementation and Improvement of a Quality Management System

In the domain of implementing and improving a quality management system, attention to the process is essential to fully exploit its benefits. From the initial phases, the majority of new users can observe positive outcomes. The establishment of this system aims to enhance the organization of the company, employee mobilization, and information flows, while enabling the guidance and control of the organization as a whole.

1.3.1 - Management Commitment

To fully engage in this process, it is imperative that the management demonstrates its commitment to quality at all levels of the company. This involves communicating this commitment to the staff and ensuring its understanding and acceptance. It is also crucial to establish a consensus on the underlying reasons for implementing the quality management system by defining the context, strategic objectives, and business processes of the organization, while considering the needs and expectations of customers and stakeholders, in accordance with the quality management principles outlined in ISO 9000.

1.3.2 - Identifying Key Processes

Identifying key processes is a crucial step. These processes, such as customer listening, design, consideration of requirements, internal communication, manufacturing, or production, must be clearly defined and aligned with the requirements of ISO 9001. It is essential to support and validate the actions of quality improvement groups while periodically evaluating the effectiveness of the quality management system (GHOMARIS, 2004, p. 129).

1.3.3 - Planning the Quality Management System

Planning the quality management system requires special attention to minimize discrepancies between the company's existing system and the QMS requirements. It is also crucial to define the environment, skills, and facilities necessary for its implementation, as well as formalizing the roles of each of the involved actors.

1.3.4 - Documenting the Quality Management System

Documenting the quality management system is an essential step, involving the preparation of documented information required by the standard and tailored to the organization's needs. This documentation must comply with ISO 9001 requirements and include operational documents essential for planning, operation, and effective control of processes.

1.3.5 - Implementing the Quality Management System

Implementing the quality management system requires careful management of resources, particularly in terms of monitoring and training employees, as well as regular verification of the proper functioning of processes.

1.3.6 - Managing the Quality Management System

The continuous management of the quality management system involves monitoring and measuring performance, including through external audits to assess the effectiveness of processes and ensure customer satisfaction.

1.3.7 - Improving the Quality Management System

Finally, to continuously improve the quality management system, it is recommended to seek certification by a third party such as ISO, and consider the application of operational excellence methods in the company's activities.

2- The Concept of Services

2.1- Definition of a Service

The concept of services encompasses a variety of activities and consists of intangible input and output elements. Defining a service involves considering an action or provision offered from one party to another. Although the process may be associated with a physical product, the provision is transitory, often intangible in nature, and generally does not result from the mere possession of one of the factors of production (LAPERT.D, 2005, p. 14). It is essentially an economic activity that creates value and provides benefits to consumers at a specific time and place to elicit the desired change in favor of the beneficiary. Services have even been humorously described as "something that can be bought and sold but cannot be dropped on one's foot."

2.2- Characteristics of Services

Regarding the characteristics of services, marketing practices in service sectors often differ from those of manufacturing enterprises in several areas. JUDD (1964) emphasized the fundamental dichotomy between a product and a service, defining the latter as a transaction where the object of exchange differs from the mere transfer of ownership of a tangible good. Since then, authors widely consider the fundamental characteristics of services to be established, thus grounding all marketing aspects on the customer's perception of service, evaluation of its performance, and definition of quality criteria. A service is distinguished by its intangibility, heterogeneity, and inseparability (BRECHIGNAC-ROUBAU.B, 1998, p. 71).

More practical aspects are provided in the table below, listing nine fundamental differences specific to help us distinguish the specific tasks of services marketing.

Table 1. Differences between Goods and Services

1- Services are not owned. They are accessed temporarily.
2- Services are intangible performances, not objects.
3- Customers are often actively involved in the production process.
4- Other people may be part of the service experience.
5- It is difficult to control quality while improving productivity.
6- Often, the service is difficult for the customer to evaluate.
7- Services cannot be produced in advance to be stored.
8- Time factor is important. Speed can be crucial.
9- Delivery systems include physical and electronic channels.

Source : (BRECHIGNAC-ROUBAU.B, 1998, p. 72)

2.3- Service Quality

Service quality, according to the standards established by Afnor, is defined as the inherent capacity of a service, through its characteristics, to meet the various needs of its users or consumers. The criteria considered for evaluating the quality of a service obviously vary depending on the specific nature of the service offered. In the field of internet hosting, for example, key aspects include server availability, response times, loading times, and responsiveness in case of incidents. Similarly, in the hotel industry, service quality is measured through elements such as room cleanliness, quality of reception, and catering services. It is important to note that the concept of service quality applies not only to sectors purely related to services but also to products, especially concerning associated services such as after-sales support.

3- Case Studies

This section focuses on a case study of the Ibis Tlemcen hotel in Algeria, where we present the establishment and analyze the various steps and key processes it had to follow and improve to obtain ISO 9001:2015 certification. To conduct this research, we adopted a descriptive methodology, describing the various steps necessary to obtain ISO 9001:2015 certification.

3.1 Presentation of Ibis Tlemcen

Ibis Tlemcen was pre-opened in March 2011 and officially opened in May 2011 on the occasion of the "Tlemcen, Capital of Islamic Culture" event. The establishment has 120 soundproofed and air-conditioned rooms, including 3 accessible to people with disabilities, as well as 2 meeting rooms equipped with the latest technologies.

3.2- Implementation Approach of a Quality Management System according to ISO 9001:2015

within Ibis Tlemcen Hotel As an establishment belonging to the Ibis franchise, Ibis Tlemcen is required to adhere to globally established standards. Therefore, it undertook the necessary steps to obtain ISO 9001 certification. In this part, we will review the steps that the hotel and its management had to take to achieve this objective.

3.2.1- Management Commitment

Firstly, the management had to mobilize the human and material resources necessary for its commitment to quality. It internally communicated the importance of meeting customer requirements as well as regulatory and legal requirements, ensuring the implementation of the quality policy and guaranteeing the achievement of quality objectives. The management's quality policy reflected the vision of the leaders at all levels of the company, thus ensuring its dissemination to all relevant stakeholders for the achievement of the set objectives.

3.2.2- Quality Function

The management of Ibis Tlemcen has defined responsibilities and authorities, and communicated them to each concerned party. The quality function, integrated into these steps, aims to animate quality within the establishment. A Quality Manager (RMQ) has been designated to guide and supervise the implementation of the quality policy. The steering committee, composed of a representative from each process or

department (accommodation, HR, finance, reception, etc.). The role of the RMQ is as follows:

- Ensure that the QMS documentation is developed and controlled.
- Ensure the effective implementation of the QMS.
- Raise awareness among all staff about customer satisfaction.

3.2.3- Quality Diagnosis

The quality diagnosis allowed Ibis Tlemcen to obtain a detailed report highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the establishment. This diagnosis then guided the establishment in developing an action plan aimed at implementing a quality management system compliant with the requirements of ISO 9001:2015.

In order to obtain ISO 9001 certification, the hotel had to comply with the 20 points required by the standard:

- Management responsibility;
- Quality system; • Review of control;
- Design control;
- Control of documents and records;
- Purchasing;
- Products provided by the client;
- Product identification and traceability;
- Process control;
- Inspection and testing;
- Control of measuring and testing equipment;
- Monitoring and measuring device status;
- Control of non-conforming product;
- Corrective and preventive actions;
- Preservation and delivery.

3.2.4- Awareness

The Quality Manager (RMQ) of Hotel Ibis Tlemcen informed all staff of their commitment and motivations to mobilize human potential. Staff were made aware of the requirements of ISO 9001:2015 and the importance of a quality approach. This awareness was also extended to customers, with clear communication from booking and through supports such as flyers and posters throughout the establishment, attesting to the quality reference of Ibis Tlemcen.

3.2.5- Document Drafting

Ibis Hotel has established a document system summarized in the following figure:

Figure 1: Ibis Hotel Document Pyramid



Source: Internal Document of Ibis Hotel Tlemcen

The hotel first had to identify the key processes of its operation, i.e., the interaction of people, machinery, materials, and processes aimed at providing and/or delivering the service. Among the important documents in the quality management system of Ibis Hotel, we have processes summarized in the following map:

Figure 2: Ibis Hotel Process Mapping



Source: Internal Document of Ibis Hotel Tlemcen

3.3 Evaluation of the quality management system

The evaluation of the quality management system at Ibis Hotel is a continuous and rigorous activity. Every month, the General Manager (GM) designates a department head responsible for forming working groups to achieve set objectives. This department head reports to the General Manager by presenting a dashboard in the form of "Key Performance Indicator" (KPI) cards.

Furthermore, the hotel conducts internal audits, led by a trained and carefully selected team. These audits aim to assess the current state of the hotel against the chosen framework and identify any gaps to be filled, replaced, or removed.

Internal Audit: Internal audit is an independent and objective activity aimed at providing the organization with assurance on the degree of control over its operations. It provides advice to improve processes and contributes to creating added value. It systematically and methodically evaluates risk management, control, and corporate governance processes, and makes proposals to strengthen their effectiveness. Ibis Hotel Tlemcen conducts at least two internal operational self-audits per year to attest to the reality of the controls performed, maintain a record of results, and ensure the quality of information for external auditors. **"Audit" Register:** To ensure traceability of audits, an audit register is maintained, containing all associated documents. Information and documents must be retained for at least one year, in accordance with regulatory requirements.

Certification Audit (external audit): Certification ultimately involves an external quality audit. An external certification body, chosen by the company, will conduct an analysis of the quality management system and issue a certificate of compliance with the framework. Certification of a company's quality management system is the official recognition by an accredited external body of the conformity of this system to the ISO 9001 standard. This official recognition means that the company has implemented and uses working and control methods that enable it to guarantee, prove, evaluate, and improve the quality of its organization. Ibis Hotel Tlemcen enlisted the services of the certification body "Bureau Veritas" to obtain its ISO 9001 certification. "Bureau Veritas" followed the following steps to certify Ibis Hotel Tlemcen:

- They established a contract taking into account the hotel's specificities.
- A pre-audit was conducted to analyze gaps and diagnose the hotel's situation against the framework requirements.
- Subsequently, the audit was conducted in two parts:
 - Stage 1: document review to assess the system's maturity level.
 - Stage 2: audit.

Conclusion:

Over the past ten years, we have witnessed a seismic shift in the global economic landscape, which is now characterized by intense competition, especially in the services sector. This relentless and fierce competition has necessitated every company, regardless of its size or industry, to fully leverage its resources in order to carve out a distinct place for itself in the market. The three pillars of success in this cutthroat environment are quality, innovation, and a strong customer focus. These elements have become non-negotiable for any company management team that wishes to not just survive but thrive in a business ecosystem that is unforgiving of mistakes.

This comprehensive study aims to meticulously identify and analyse the crucial components that enable a service-oriented company, with a spotlight on the hotel industry, to establish and maintain an effective quality management system. This

system is instrumental in helping businesses navigate the treacherous waters of competition and globalization.

Taking the case of Ibis Hotel Tlemcen as an illustrative example, it becomes evident that the hotel has strategically developed its quality management in strict adherence to the standards and requirements laid down by ISO 9001:2015. The key facets of this methodical approach include pinpointing the needs and expectations of customers and stakeholders, thoroughly assimilating the requirements of ISO 9001 to ensure the maintenance or enhancement of the quality system, endorsing and validating the actions of quality improvement groups, formalizing the responsibilities of each party involved, managing the resources necessary for consistent process monitoring, and employing external auditors to identify and rectify malfunctions and anomalies.

This in-depth study underscores the fact that quality goes beyond the mere attainment of certification. It is a comprehensive mindset that must be embraced and put into practice by all stakeholders in the company, from the top management right down to the lowest-ranking employee. Quality is a complex, multi-faceted concept that requires concerted effort, substantial time, and a high degree of qualification, involvement, and commitment from all participants at all echelons of the organization

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