

# CRAFTSMAN'S CRIBSHEET

NUMBER  
**24**

Monte Guitar – Director of Technical Programs



Technical



Regulatory



Quality



Management

## TURNING NONCONFORMANCES INTO STRONGER RELATIONSHIPS

How can we use a nonconforming event to solidify relationships with customers?

### Complete the Corrective Action Loop

1. **Don't discount the power of following up.**  
In our haste to complete and send a corrective action response to a customer, we forget the additional opportunities that these replies offer. Our time and focus is on the process to come up with the answer; but often the process ends with sending the response. We are afraid to bring this "opportunity" up again for fear that it could open wounds. One of the biggest chances to sell the value of your company is to demonstrate your follow-up service.
2. **Beat the customer to the eventual question "was the corrective action effective?"**  
Not only will you be providing great service, but you also will be serving as the customer's personal reminder that they need to "evaluate the effectiveness of corrective actions" per ISO requirements.
3. **Be certain your sales representative understands the steps taken to resolve the issue.**  
Having a complete understanding of what was done to resolve the issue should be part of the corrective action process. This is the prime time for sales to meet and/or reinforce relationships with those who produce the final product. It is essential for sales to fully understand the steps taken so that they can effectively advocate to the customer.

### Embrace Plant Visits

1. **Ask your customer if your operations personnel can meet and greet them.**  
A great way to reaffirm shop personnel's "ownership" of the process is to demonstrate their importance as part of the resolution team. What better way than to have a team member on the customer's shop floor see where their part is further processed? If a trip is not practical, a video demonstration would be valuable.

### 2. **Reciprocate!**

Get the customer into your plant to observe your capable processes and people. Have your shop personnel demonstrate actions taken to improve your processes. Introduce the customer to those who are producing their parts and allow your people to be your most convincing salespeople.

### 3. **The power of your skilled machinists.**

Plant visits will demonstrate that ownership is in the hands of every person who has a contribution to the final product. It is about taking advantage of the power of having your skilled machinists look into the eyes of the customer and explain how they are achieving quality. Too often this opportunity is overlooked.

### Expand Training and Awareness Perspective

#### 1. **Understand the distinction.**

Think of *training* as the instructions provided for the task-oriented activities of a particular function. Think of *awareness* as the continual development and education of people, both formally and informally. Awareness focuses on educational opportunities and the need to broaden employees' perspective of their job.

#### 2. **Provide more "awareness."**

Your "training" was part of the process to solve the problem. Expand this review for your people and educate them as to why the issue must be resolved. Focus on broadening the employees' job perspective and the impacts involved with their work.

#### 3. **Provide growth opportunities:**

The routine of the day is enough for employees to reaffirm what works and hone in on what can be done better. We can expand a person's awareness by teaching them about the issues that reside outside of the machine.

When we need to respond to a nonconforming situation, we often get caught up in the discussion of right vs. wrong, good vs. bad and 'is' vs. 'is-not.' While this data analysis approach is perfect for problem solving, the process often does not take into consideration the additional opportunities available to strengthen relationships between operations, sales and the customer.