Linking Customer Needs to Product Requirements and Robust Design

Rob Allen April 8, 2025



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- Product or Process Excellence
- Project Management, PMO

- Lean Six Sigma, Design for Six Sigma
- Product Lifecycle Management

Rob is an expert in product development, project management and lean six sigma tools and methodologies, dedicated to improvement of complex products and streamlined business processes. He is a collaborative problem solver with extensive experience and proven success across diverse industries, people, processes and products.

Areas of Expertise:

- Lean Six Sigma
- Project Management / Agile
- Operational Excellence
- Product Lifecycle Process
- Lean Product Development
- Robust Design / DFSS

Professional Experience:

- Synopsys (Director, Operations NPI PM)
- Siemens (Process Excellence Leader)
- Carl Zeiss Meditec (Sr. Consultant)
- Abbott Medical Optics (Sr. Consultant)
- TE Connectivity (LeanPD Leader)
- Honeywell (Lean Six Sigma Blackbelt)

Process Experience:

- End-to-End Value Stream Improvement
- Project Management & Governance
- Product Development
- Product Lifecycle (PLC) Management
- Shop Floor Lean Manufacturing
- Lean Transactional Processes
- Mergers & Acquisition Integration

Currently Available as a Trusted Advisor for:

- Consulting / contract assignments, business process assessments and tools & methodologies training



Rob's Articles can be found at Accendo Reliability:

https://accendoreliability.com/articles/on-leadership-career/product-development-process-improvement/

Understand how to link customer needs product requirements

 Determine relative impact of product requirements on the customer

 Leverage our knowledge of valid requirements to help ensure robust design



Tools and Methods - Overview

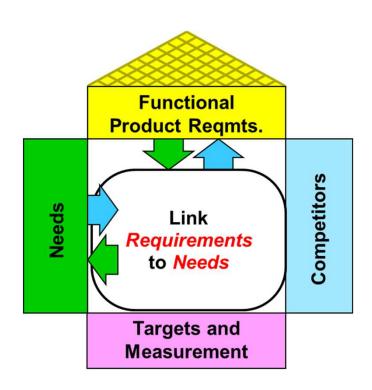
- Quality Function Deployment (QFD) Tool
 - Also known as "House of Quality"
 - Ensures Understanding of Customer Needs & Product Functional Priorities
 - Facilitates a Competitive Design Strategy and Design for Customer Value

- Design Failure Modes and Effects Analysis (DFMEA)
 - How can the design fail to meet requirements?



Quality Function Deployment

"QFD is a method for structured product planning and development that enables a development team to clearly specify the customer's wants and needs, and then to evaluate each proposed product (or service) capability systematically in terms of its impact on meeting those needs." – Lou Cohen



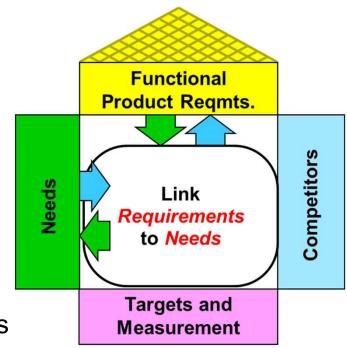


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Key Points:

- Structured, yet customizable methodology
- Produces data-driven understanding of the product to be developed
- Brings together all functions in the organization
- Sets priorities and measurable goals
- Provides critical information to guide the product development
- Focuses is on what the customer truly wants/needs



QFD Focuses the Product Development Team on Customer Value



QFD Example: High Speed Printer



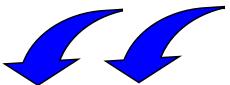
Functional Product Requirements															
Maximize, minimize, or target		MIN	MIN MIN MAX MIN		MIN	MAX MAX		MIN	MAX	Competitive			Products		
Customer / Market Needs	Importance Rating	Misfeed rate / million	Multifeed Rate / million	Jam rate / million	Print rate / minute	Paper Damage rate / million	Maintenance Interval	Print Clarity Rating	Floor Space	Maier Test	Box 2.0	Xerox 345	BoxyButGood 200	Print Majic 100	Noble 5000
Always provides a print	6	3	3	3							8	4	4	6	6
No blank sheets	2	3	9	3	1						2	2	4	4	6
No paper jams	8	9	3	9	3	1					4	10	4	4	6
Fast printing	4	9	3	9	9						2	2	6	8	2
Easy to clear jams	6	3	3	3							4	8	2	8	6
No paper damage	10	9	3	1	1	9					4	8	4	4	10
Low ownership costs	10				3	1	9				8	8	4	6	10
Print appearance / clarity	5						1	9			6	4	2	4	6
Compact size	4				1		3		9		6	4	6	4	6
Scratch Resistant	6						1			9	4	4	6	8	6
Relative Importance		240	120	160	106	108	113	45	36	54	314	384	250	340	430
Measurement Units		Rate / million	Rate / million	Rate / million	Rate / min	Rate / million	Rate / 10 million	Scale 1 to 10	Sq/Ft	Scale 1 to 100					
Target value		90	30	100	70	100	1.5		15	75					
USL		100	50	120	I	110			18						
LSL					60		1	7.9		60					

Competitive Assessment



QFD Example: High Speed Printer





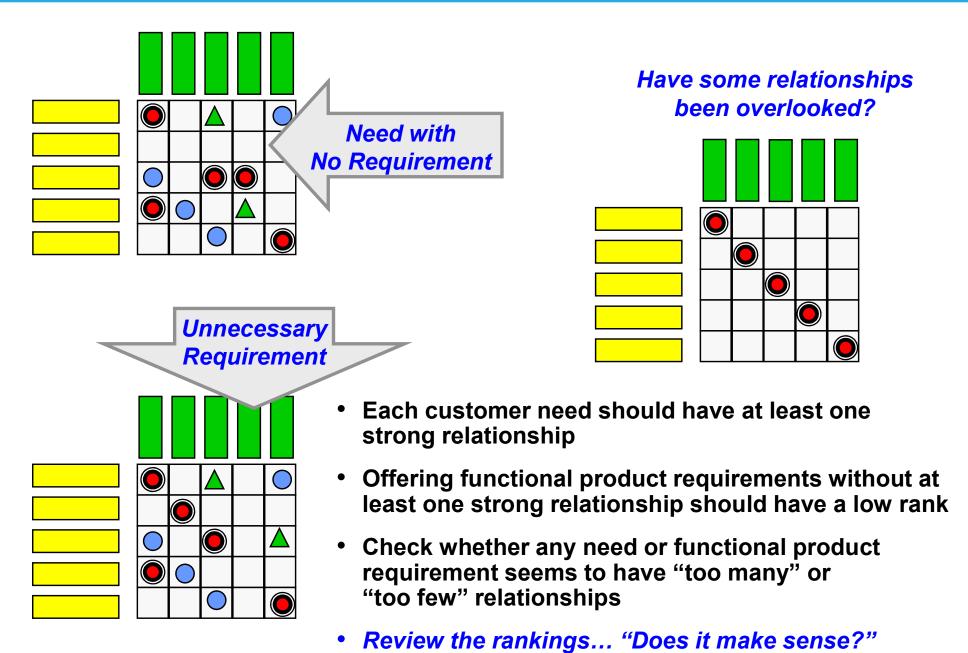
(2) Critical to Quality Requirements

	Functional Product Requirements														
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Customer / Market Needs	Importance Rating	Misfeed rate / million	Multifeed Rate / million	Jam rate / million	Print rate / minute	Paper Damage rate / million	Maintenance Interval	Print Clarity Rating	Floor Space	Maier Test	Box 2.0	Xerox 345	BoxyButGood 200	Print Majic 100	Noble 5000
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USL		100	50	120		110	1		18						
	LSL				60		1	7.9		60					

Competitive Assessment



Reviewing the QFD relationship matrix





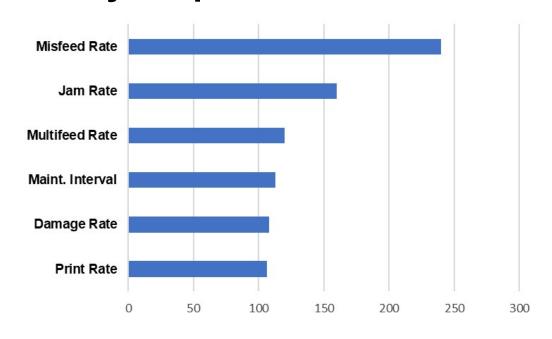
A Word About Validation

- Validation is the completeness and correctness of product requirements
- Build the right product (validation), build the product right (verification)
- What is a requirement?
 - A statement of what the design shall provide (output) @ input conditions
 - Example: Misfeed rate shall be less than 100 per million copies
 - Our QFD matrix helped ensure this requirement is tied to customer needs (ie. the requirement is correct, although perhaps not entirely complete)
 - What would make this a valid requirement…?



QFD Example: Copy Machine

Critical to Quality Requirements Relative Importance:



DFMEA Severity Criteria

- 10 Misfeed Paper Jam (more difficult to clear, damaged paper)
- 6 Paper Jam ("clearable", no damaged paper)
- 6 Issue Requiring More Frequent Maintenance
- 4 Blank Pages (need to be removed from stack of copies)
- 4 Paper Damaged (print rerun may)
- 3 Slow Copy Rate

QFD Knowledge Helps Establish Severity Criteria and Weighting

Product Requirement	Potential Failure Mode	Potential Failure Effects	S E V	Potential Causes	0 C C	Current Controls	D E T	R P N	Actions Recommended
	In what ways could the product requirement fail to be fully met?	What would be the impact of the Failure Mode on the customer (internal or external)?		What are the potential causes of the failure mode?	How likely is the cause or FM occur?	What existing control(s) either (1) detects the cause (allowing for corrective action), or (2) detects the failure mode before the effect occurs?	How well can you detect cause or FM?		What are the actions for reducing the occurrance of the Cause, or improving detection? Emphasize actions only on high RPN's.
Misfeed rate	Excessive misfeed rate	Paper jam requiring removal of damaged paper,	10	Excessive retard friction	7		4	280	
Misfeed rate	Excessive misfeed rate	Paper jam requiring removal of damaged paper,	10	Excessive retard brake torque	5		4	200	
Misfeed rate	Excessive misfeed rate	Paper jam requiring removal of damaged paper,	10	Indadequate retard brake torque	10	Torque sensor accuracy and reliability	4	400	Redundant torque sensors, fault detection, maintanance, reliability requirement and test
Misfeed rate	Excessive misfeed rate	Paper jam requiring removal of damaged paper,	10	Premature trigger timing	7		4	280	
Jam rate	Excessuve jam rate	Paper Jam "Clearable", no damaged paper	6	Indadequate retard brake torque	10		4	240	
Jam rate	Excessuve jam rate	Paper Jam "Clearable", no damaged paper	6	Premature trigger timing	1		7	42	
Jam rate	Excessuve jam rate	Paper Jam "Clearable", no damaged paper	6	Indadequate retard brake torque	7		7	294	



Summary / Key Deliverables

 Assess the market for your product, emphasize customer needs & competitive advantage before product requirements (Market Assessment Document)

QFD and Product Requirements Document (PRD)

 DFMEA (and design enhancements or actions to ensure robust design)