

Answering Questions Regarding QOS

Statement of the Problem

Many people within the Ford Motor Co. have many different interpretations of what they mean by the term “Quality Operating System” or QOS. This leaves the supplier who may understand what one person means by this term at risk of not communicating effectively what another person is expecting to hear. To protect themselves from this risk, suppliers need to develop an authoritative position that demonstrates deep understanding of how QOS fits into their organization.

Definition of QOS

QOS is a Ford developed methodology, created to measure the effectiveness of your quality system and to force continuous improvement where it is found to be less effective than desired. QOS apply five techniques to measurements of important drivers of both internal and external customer satisfaction. They are:

- A Plot of Data Over Time – typically a run chart
- Comparison of Plot to a Defined Goal – typically the run chart with a goal
- Prioritization of Reasons why a Goal is not Met – typically a Pareto chart
- Corrective Actions taken on Prioritized Causes – typically an 8-D analysis
- Matrix of Data Over Time at the Causal Level – typically a Paynter chart

Misconceptions and Misguided Expectations for QOS

Some people interpret the QOS as the entire QS-9000 or Q-1 compliant quality system. Others view it as the status of APQP activity. Others view it as a measure of incoming or outgoing quality. Still others view it as control plans and containment strategies. It seems that people who understand QOS as a means to monitor quality system results and drive continuous improvement are definitely in the minority.

QOS and the Quality System

The QOS should be an integral part of the quality system. These methods track results and drive measurable continuous improvement in areas that are important to our customers and internally. QOS targets are organized into five categories of quality objectives, consistent with our quality policy:

- Customer Product Requirements
- On-Time Delivery Requirements
- Subcontractor Management
- Improvement of Manufacturing Processes
- Improvement of the Quality System

Follow discussion of the QOS with examples related to product quality. That is what the people from Ford tend to care about most.