

What Is Quality?

Definitions

Quality has traditionally been defined—rather vaguely—as "**fitness for use**". This definition, unfortunately, has frequently been used as a "cop out", to avoid facing the issue of defective quality ("It's fit for use: we'll send it out!").

There are two key issues in this definition. The "fitness for use" definition **must** be qualified by the questions: "For what use?", and "In whose opinion?"

The International Standards Organisation (ISO) follows this premise. It defines quality as: "The totality of features and characteristics of a product or service, that bear upon its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs."

But perhaps the best and most simple definition of quality is:

"How dependably customer needs and expectations are met".

The two most important elements of quality are included in this definition: **customer's needs**, which define what a "quality" product *is*, and **dependability**, which is the ability to *invariably* deliver a product to meet those needs. Customers should be confident their needs will be met; they should know exactly how the product will perform, and that it will perform the same every time.

A lecture is the process by which the professor's notes become the student's notes without passing through the mind of either.

Manufacturing and Service Quality

Quality is frequently seen to be important only in manufacturing. However, anyone who often eats out at a particular restaurant, who always uses the same car servicer, or who buys produce only from a specific greengrocer, is recognising that quality is also important in these industries.

For this reason, from now on, when we refer to products, this includes services or produce; and when we refer to process, this means the manner in which the product is delivered to the customer.

When two trains are approaching each other at a crossing, they shall both come to a full stop, and neither shall start up until the other has gone. (Notice in a railway engineer's office in Kansas)