

- > definitions of quality
- > adjectives relating to quality
- > collocations relating to quality standards

3.2 Vocabulary Quality and standards

Discussion

1 In small groups, discuss which of these definitions best defines your idea of quality and why.

- Quality means delivering products or services to customers faster, better and cheaper.
- Quality is the correct application of procedures and standards.
- Quality means meeting the customer's needs and expectations.
- Quality means that goods are not defective or damaged.
- Quality is designing and producing reliable products that do what they're supposed to do.
- Quality is in the eye of the beholder.

Reading

2 Read the article which describes five stakeholders with different ideas of quality. Match each stakeholder with a definition above.

Quality is in the eye of the stakeholder

If a product or service lacks quality, most people would agree that it is substandard in some way. Perhaps the workmanship is shoddy, the packaging is flimsy or the service unreliable. But defining quality from a business perspective is less simple.

5 The **marketing manager**, who is responsible for evaluating consumer research, market conditions and competitor data, sees quality very much in terms of customer expectations and customer satisfaction.

To the **design engineer**, who designs products or components to tight specifications and strict tolerances, quality has more to do with whether the design is fit for purpose and whether the product or part performs its intended function. Colour changes or deluxe models are secondary considerations.

The **process engineer** employs lean manufacturing techniques to ensure that products are produced with the minimum waste of effort, money, time, space and materials. So quality involves what the Japanese call *kaizen* (continuous improvement), and doing things right first time (RFT).

Internal or external **quality auditors** verify compliance with standards such as ISO 9001. Quality means that recorded procedures are in place, and are being applied and respected.

And finally, the **end user**. Whether they want something cheap, heavy-duty or disposable, they won't buy it in the first place if it is scratched, cracked or flawed in any way!

Listening

3 **1:47-1:49** Listen to three people talking about quality. Decide which type of stakeholder each speaker represents.

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cost-effective
fit for purpose
flawed
flimsy
in the eye of the beholder
machine
shoddy
stakeholder

Word-building

4 Complete the sentences with the correct form of the words in brackets. Check your answers in the article in Exercise 2.

- 1 Internal _____ carry out checks every year to ensure ISO standards are maintained. (audit)
- 2 Exacting technical _____ mean that this machine will give many years of service. (specify)
- 3 The components are machined to _____ of less than one millimetre. (tolerate)
- 4 Cheap copies of branded goods are often _____. (standard)
- 5 They changed their provider because the service was _____. (rely)
- 6 Adopting the RFT guidelines has led to an immediate _____ in product quality. (improve)
- 7 Our quality controllers make sure that we reach full _____ with ISO 9001. (comply)
- 8 Reports of strong customer _____ indicate that our production routines are effective. (satisfy)