

7.3: Quality and Operations Management

Learning Objective

1. Explain how manufacturing and service companies alike use total quality management and outsourcing to provide value to customers.

What do you do if you get it home and your brand-new DVD player doesn't work? What if you were late for class because it took you twenty minutes to get a burger and order of fries at the drive-through window of a fast-food restaurant? Like most people, you'd probably be more or less disgruntled. As a customer, you're constantly assured that when products make it to market, they're of the highest possible quality, and you tend to avoid brands that have failed to live up to your expectations or to producers' claims. You're told that workers in such businesses as restaurants are there to serve you, and you probably don't go back to establishments where you've received poor-quality service.

But what is *quality*? According to the American Society for Quality, quality refers to “the characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs” (American Society of Quality, 2011). When you buy a DVD player, you expect it to play DVDs. When it doesn't, you question its quality. When you go to a drive-through window, you expect to be served in a reasonable amount of time. If you're forced to wait, you conclude that you're the victim of poor-quality service.

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