

A Study on Brand Awareness and Customer Expectation in Amman Auto Pvt Ltd., to Tirupur

S.Uma Maheswari

Assistant Professor, MBA Department,
Sengunthar Engineering College (Autonomous)
Kosavampalayam, Tiruchengode, Namakkal Dt., Tamil Nadu, India

Aravind R E

Master of Business Administration Student,
Sengunthar Engineering College (Autonomous)
Kosavampalayam, Tiruchengode, Namakkal Dt., Tamil Nadu, India



CrossMark



Publication History

Manuscript Reference No: IJIRIS/RS/Vol.09/Issue04/JLIS10082

Research Article | Open Access | Double-Blind Peer-Reviewed | Article ID: IJIRIS/RS/Vol.09/Issue04/JLIS10082

Received: 20, March 2023|Revised:12, April 2023 | Accepted: 26, April 2023| Published Online: 31, July 2023| Volume 2023
Volume 2023 | Article ID JLIS10082 <http://www.ijiris.com/volumes/Vol09/iss-04/03.JLIS10082.pdf>

Article Citation: Uma,Aravind(2023).A Study on Brand Awareness and Customer Expectation in Amman Auto Pvt Ltd., to Tirupur. International Journal of Innovative Research in Information Security (IJIRIS), 10, 239-248

doi: <https://doi.org/10.26562/ijiris.2023.v0904.03>

BibTex key: Uma@2023Study



Copyright: ©2023 This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License; which Permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited

Abstract: This paper reports a study conducted in a manufacturing company in order to establish the systems that support customer service policies in a competitive environment. Benchmarking technique is used to search for the best business practices that guide towards customer satisfaction for the company. As a result of the SWOT analysis, “After-Sale Service System”, which is the most important factor in this century, is selected as the benchmarking process in the company, which affects primarily the purchasing operations of the customer. Four domestic firms, which have widespread service and spare network, are selected as benchmarking partners. A questionnaire is designed to analyze the after-sell service system of benchmark partners and to determine reasons of customer satisfaction and preferences. In the questionnaire questions are asked for the evaluation of authorized service organizations and spare part dealers. Finally, the methods used by other firms to attract the customers of authorized service organizations have been searched. The results of this research are used for suggesting proposals to improve the ways of attracting the customers of the company authorized service organizations have been improved. These proposals have been presented to the company and services separately. Consequently, the results of the applications of the proposals are presented.

I. INTRODUCTION

Today in the Manufacturing World, most of the companies meet some important challenges when they begin to use “continuous improvement studies”. Some of the challenges that the companies meet are to

- Evaluate its existing performance level clearly and correctly,
- Determine its strengths and weaknesses;
- Define its objectives, which should be aligned with its general goals;
- Determine the improvement activities;
- Plan these improvement activities both in short term and long term after adapting them to all of the company;
- Evaluate the changing period of company;
- Determine the best method and application matching these activities;
- Predict the total cost and time of the improvement period.

There are various reasons for these challenges. The most important reason is the different comments made for the definition of “Performance”. A performance system can be defined as “the required organizational structure, operation, process, and resource group for the management of performance”, -like quality system. In a performance system, the main goal is to increase performance and the tool is to meet the needs and expectations of the customer and to satisfy the customers. The system should realize these functions; the inner company performance control, and increasing performance of inner company activities. The common goal of these functions is the full satisfaction of customer from products (services). The customer can be defined as internal customer and external customer. Thus, we can add sub-functions to the main functions: -strategic function: “definition of performance goals” and - complementary function: “proving the effectiveness of performance system”. First function directly contributes to customer satisfaction. The company policy and strategy are formulated once the performance goals are formed. These policies and strategies support the improvement of performance. Complementary function does not directly contribute to customer satisfaction, but it provides some functional advantages. Although it does not increase the specs of products and process, it provides confidence to the customers.

Because there is stiff competition in the Manufacturing World, the companies must increase their performance through paying attention to customer and customer satisfaction for successful competition in the market. The main goal is to increase performance and the tool is customer satisfaction. A performance system, which includes all activities of performance, is recommended. Among the existing performance improvement systems, benchmarking is the most accepted method, especially with its applications in USA and Japan. Benchmarking is a process, measuring the products, services and implementations against the other competitive companies and leader companies in the industry. In practice, it is defined as to investigate the best industry application for gaining the highest performance. Finally, the goal of benchmarking performance system is to increase the company performance.

2. A View of Benchmarking

Benchmarking is often considered as an essential element for business success. Companies should be ready to change constantly in order to meet changing market conditions. Over the years, companies have frequently had to adjust themselves to new political, social, or economic conditions. In these days, customers demand better quality, more value from products, and shorter time-to-market. This, in turn, forces companies to improve their processes. During 1950s, demand was greater than supply. Companies endeavored to achieve this objective by applying "management by objective" strategy to boost their production. In 1980s, supply outstripped demand and a new model emerged known as "Porter Competitive Analysis". This was based on the notion of "beating the competition" – analyze the competition and find out where are weak and strong points and try to exceed them. However, even that era is now over. Supply is much greater than demand, and we need much better ways of doing things. We must find out where we can become more efficient, where we can improve the quality of products and services, where we can cut costs, and how and where we can reduce waste and shorten cycle and lead times (---, 1996). There are a number of ways for improving processes such as business process management, time- based management, business process reengineering, lean management, and "benchmarking".

Benchmarking has been described as a continuous, systematic process for evaluating the products, services and work processes for organizations that are recognized as best practices for the purpose of organizational improvement (Spendolini, 1992). It evolved from an approach that focused mainly on measures of performance, which focused on the management activities and practices that lead to superior performance. Until recently, it was used to compare measures of business performance with product performance. Following pioneer work at Xerox corporation (Camp, 1999), it has been extended to business processes. Typically, companies begin to identify a business process that they want to improve, or consider having high leverage on their competitive capability. For example, the first process benchmarked by Xerox was ware housing. A recent study (Carter and Voss, 1993) found that self-assessment and benchmarking in quality management had begun to be adopted very effectively in Europe. European companies had found the American Baldrige Award framework as a good starting point, but later changed to employ the framework developed by the European Foundation of Quality Management. In addition, the study found that a number of tools had been developed to support benchmarking of TQM.

Benchmarking is by no means a new concept in the business world, but it is now becoming popular one. "There has been a substantial increase of interest in all phases of benchmarking, ranging from companies willing to find out what benchmarking is to companies to willing now how actually implement it" said Robert C. Camp. Camp 's well versed in the subject; he started the benchmarking program at Xerox corporation and wrote *Benchmarking: The Search for Industry Best Practices That Lead to Superior Performance*. (Bernowski, 1991). Benchmarking was first invented by Xerox in the '80s and mentioned in this book. In essence, the company was shocked in the early '80s to learn that the Japanese could sell a copier for what it cost Xerox to build one. They sent a team to Japan, first to confirm if such manufacturing effectiveness was possible, then to find out exactly how the Japanese did it. The result was the methodology for learning from others defined in Camp's book (Sprow, 1993).

Benchmarking do's and don'ts (I) Do's:

- Be prepared
- Identify costs and what benefits will be (for everyone)
- Get management's full commitment
- Identify everyone who will be affected by what you are going to do. (and change)
- Involve those who are likely to suffer by the change
- Know your processes and what the success factors will be
- Establish exactly what you want from your benchmarking partner, and what you will give in return
- Be specific about the time commitment
- Share what u have learned
- Pick the right time
- Link it to improved business results
- Be willing to change
- Be patient

Don'ts

- Take anything granted
- Start what you can not finish
- Choose areas where you have already know the solution

- Select something that has a low priority or is relatively unimportant.
- Choose processes that are too broad in scope
- Begin until people really understand what the process is all about
- Ask questions of your partner which you would not be prepared to answer yourself
- Take a large group to the partner's premises

Benchmarking is a systematic comparison and measurement process that has become fashionable in 1990s. In most cases, benchmarking has recorded a step change, a performance improvement, a higher customer satisfaction, an abundant market share, and a win-win situation (Kamande, 1999). There are a lot of definitions for benchmarking as follows. The Westinghouse Productivity and Quality Center defined benchmarking as "a continuous search for and application of significantly better practices that leads to superior competitive performance.

" Bowers defined benchmarking as "the process by which organizations learn, modeled on human learning process." American Productivity and Quality Center (APQC) developed a definition that represents a consensus among some 100 companies for benchmarking such as: "Benchmarking is a systematic and continuous measurement process; a process of continuously measuring and comparing an organization's business process against business process leaders anywhere in the world to gain information, which will help the organization take action to improve its performance." Robert C. Camp has offered a simplified description of benchmarking, which is "a positive, proactive process by which a company examines how another company performs a specific function in order to improve how it performs the same, or similar function" (Watson, 1993).

Xerox started the first benchmarking studies. Xerox has started benchmarking applications by visiting the rival companies in Japan, which produced copying devices. When the market share of Xerox, the founder of copying machine, decreased from 82% to 35% in 1960's, Xerox began to examine the other rival companies. Xerox saw the low numbers of subsidiaries and the results of simultaneous engineering in Japan. By benchmarking studies in Xerox, the number of subsidiaries decreased from 5000 to 3000, simultaneous engineering is started and bureaucracy is decreased. The results were that market share increased to 45%, production costs were decreased by 50%, quality problems decreased by 66%, annual amount faulty materials decreased from 8.000.000 to 1.300.000 (this number is below 1 million in Japan), and teams like "product improvement", "problem solving" were founded (Bendell et al., 1993). After Xerox, General Motors had examined its partner Isuzu before it began the production of V-6 engine in the new plant in England. In Isuzu, Xerox observed high automation and lean organization factors. Xerox saved 270 million dollars by these benchmarking studies.

The benchmarking process consists of some steps. Besides Xerox, other big companies created their own steps for benchmarking. The determination of these steps is different in different sources and different implementations are practiced in different companies. For example, AT&T had nine steps, Alcoa had six steps, IBM had five, DEC had four, and Florida Power&Light had seven steps. These companies are the most popular ones, which applied benchmarking (Matters and Evans, 1995). Because of this reason, it cannot use in a certain model. The term means different things to different people, and it is important to understand what kind of benchmarking will best suit your application.

Benchmarking studies are implemented not only in production sectors, but also in service and other sectors. Mella Bank in Pittsburg tried to solve the credit card account problems by benchmarking. As a result of studies conducted in a credit company, bank and airline company, a package program was developed that can show all the credit card accounts, and a help line that the customers can call and tell their complaints anytime. At the end of these developments, the number of complaints in a 6-month period decreased from 5200 to 2205. The average complaint solving time decreased from 45 days to 25 days (Watson, 1992).

Benchmarking studies developed from time to time. Some companies are joined together in USA for the purpose of benchmarking. Fourteen American semi-conductor manufacturers, including DECH Intel, IBM, and Motorola, Texas Instrument, joined together and founded a benchmark consortium called SEMATECH. Some companies like AT&T, Bell Atlantic, MCI, Ameritech, GTF are operating under Telecommunication Benchmark Consortium (Matters and Evans, 1995; Watson 1992). Similar joint projects are observed in financial studies. Finance departments of Federal Express, Caterpillar, Xerox, Westinghouse, DEC and Du Pont are conducting benchmark with Financial Quality Network.

The other successful examples of benchmarking applications are the following (Watson 1992):

- "Faults and breaks and time and cost" by Cilco,
- "Storage and Stock Market Chain" by Xerox,
- "Customer Services" by Maryland Bank of America,
- "Education" by the American Air Force,
- "Maintenance and Supply" by the Eastman Kodak, and
- "Loading" by the North American Coal.

3. Benchmarking in Turkey

Compared with other countries, the benchmarking studies have started later in Turkey. Since the benchmarking term is not known very much in Turkey, some problems are faced in a comprehensive benchmarking study. Some of these problems are identified as follows:

- Turkish companies generally do not have accurate and correct data collecting systems. In most cases, data comparison stage that is an obligation for benchmarking does not give sufficient results.

- Benchmarking is a goal itself, so it must be done in a sufficient time. However, the economy of Turkey does not allow the companies to make long-term decisions.
- The companies usually work with foreign companies because of insufficient knowledge about benchmarking in Turkey.
- Furthermore, benchmarking has become recently an interesting topic in universities.
- Whereas the main necessity of benchmarking is knowledge share, the Turkish companies do not want to share their knowledge.

On the other hand, the Quality Association (KALDER) in Turkey conducts significant studies. The Benchmarking Study Group in KALDER aims to meet academicians and practitioners coming from all over the world. The importance of benchmarking can be seen in the evaluation criteria of the TUSIAD-KALDER Award, which is granted to the most successful companies in Turkey. The fifth item of National Quality Award evaluation criteria is “benchmarking methods must be defined for the systematic management of processes.”

The leading enterprises such as Beko Electronics, Arçelik, Netaş, AEG, Renault -Mais, Erciyas Beverage and Malt, Interbank, and Eczacıbaşı have conducted benchmarking studies in Turkey. Some examples of these studies are summarized in the below paragraphs:

- (a) Netaş, the company that has received the 1995 Turkey National Benchmark Award and nominated as the 1995 European Quality Award finalist, has conducted benchmarking studies for two years. For example, the supplier number decreased from 535 to 323 through benchmarking although the goal is 240. Netaş conducted these studies with an American partner.
- (b) Benchmarking studies in Renault-Mais has started with a questionnaire that was prepared for Toyota, Opel, Toros, and Renault customers. The System Organization and the Total Quality Management Departments in Renault-Mais conducted these studies and a reconstruction process called “Mais Changing Project” was taken into consideration. Renault-Mais has selected “customer services” as the record process for benchmarking. In this study, the Customer Services Performance Research of the ECS (European Customer Satisfaction) is used by Mais. The questionnaire is conducted with 2011 people in 11 cities. The competitors are selected as Toyota, Opel and Tofaş. The result of this survey has illustrated that the optimum benchmarking partner is Tofaş. However, as the strongest competitor, the foreign partner Renault S.A. in France is selected as the benchmarking partner.
- (c) In Erciyas Beverage, “transportation” is selected as the key process. Hence, the benchmarking partners are determined as: Tuborg, Coca Cola, Halk Ekmek and Güney Beverage. Because sufficient data could not be gathered from Tuborg, Coca Cola and Halk Ekmek, Ege Beverage and Malt Co. was determined as the partners. Finally, the study turned out to be an internal benchmarking study.
- (d) The benchmarking studies are started by a consulting firm to reveal the gap between the Beko Electronics and other world-class companies in 1995. In the beginning of the studies, the products of competitors were purchased and compared with the products of Beko Electronics. As a result, it was found that there was not a significant quality difference between the products of Beko Electronics and the others. Then, the cost analysis was done as a second step by using reverse engineering study. As a result, it was decided to conduct benchmarking studies with the competitive companies in product characteristics, effectiveness and cost. Four big companies from Korea, Malaysia and England are selected as companies to benchmark. All of these firms were visited, and information about production and development were gathered.

KOÇ 2000, is the customer focused strategic management model, which integrates business plans and quality approaches of the KOÇ companies. The companies that use this model have been applying the EFQM model since 1994, especially in the strategy and activity determination stage. As the result of the study that was conducted in Beko Electronics, not only the EFQM model but also the results of benchmarking study were used in formulating the strategic approaches of the KOÇ 2000 model.

4. Benchmarking in the Case Company

This study is conducted in a local manufacturer in order to establish the systems that support the customer service policies in the competitive environment. The considered company -Company X- is one of the biggest commercial vehicle manufacturers in Turkey. One of the product series provided by the company is well - known all over the world, with an international brand name. The vision of the company was “as a 100% Turkish-capital-firm is to satisfy the national and international customers above their expectations with its products and services.” On the other hand, the mission is “becoming a worldwide brand, decreasing the dependence of Turkey to foreign countries in automotive industry (including the defense industry), and assuming an important place in globalization.” In order to achieve its vision, the company formed a project team consisting of nine members that started the benchmarking study.

The Steps towards the Customer Satisfaction

Firstly, we will examine some different approaches and then we will make a synthesis for our case. Spendolini (1992) explains benchmarking in five steps:

- Deciding what to benchmark,
- Form the benchmarking team.,
- Identify benchmarking partners,
- Collect the necessary data,
- Take action. Camp, who has conducted the first benchmarking studies, explains benchmarking in 10 steps.
- Deciding what to benchmark,

- Deciding competitors,
- Deciding the data collection method and collect the necessary data,
- Determining performance difference now,
- Determining performance level in the future,
- Deciding benchmark criteria,
- Developing processing targets,
- Developing flow-chart,
- Application and monitoring,
- Updating.

In another application, benchmarking process is explained in 6 steps:

- Select the processes to benchmark.,
- Selecting critical success factors to measure the processes.,
- Measuring and evaluating the application results of successful companies in the sector that will benchmarked,
- Determining the main differences between the most successful company and your company.
- Deciding programs and policies to compete.
- Updating.

There are conceptual differences between these approaches are explained above. Each company applies different steps according to their cultures and organizational structures. For example, Xerox uses Camp's 10 step approach while DEC uses 4, Alcon 6, AT&T 9 and IBM 5 steps application. There are a few more studies on this subject. One approach in ASQC review is explained below:

- Deciding critical success factors.
- Deciding competitors and successful companies in sector.
- Collecting data.
- Analyzing data
- Keep communication
- Deciding strategy

A general approach can be made like below:

- Preparation to benchmarking
- Determining realities.
- Take action.
- Monitoring and updating.

The first step in preparation for benchmarking takes 20%, the second step 60%, and the last step take action takes 20% of the total project time. The APQC study resulted in recognition of four basic steps in the benchmarking process. These steps are - planning the benchmarking project, - collecting the necessary data, - analyzing the data for performance gaps and enablers, and - improving by adapting process enablers (Watson, 1993). Watson (1993) presents a useful six-step model for benchmarking consisting of - a planning step (what to benchmark, documentation, measurement), - a searching step (search for benchmarking partners), - an observing step (visit benchmarking partners), - an analyzing step (analyze findings, find and explain gaps), - an adapting step (identify what is worth adapting your own organization), - an improving step (implement changes, follow up) (Pettersen, 1994). In some references and practices, "forming the benchmarking team" is also considered in the benchmarking process. However, in our process this step does not take place because we examine the case by means of TQM philosophy. We call it "team philosophy." Selecting, training and managing the benchmarking team is the main process, it is not a step. In this paper, a synthesis is made and steps of benchmarking takes a new form to be used in our case study. In this new form, some techniques are eliminated while some others are added. The best ideas of different techniques are taken which we call it "best of breed." Thus, six steps are identified as - selecting the process that will be benchmark, - selecting the important success factors, - determining benchmarking partners, -collecting the necessary data and analyzing it, take action, and recycle the process.

Selecting the benchmark process

In the first step, the structure, objects, and market share of the company are examined. The long- and short- term goals, the main goal, and the sales and marketing goals of the company are determined. According to these data, the processes that have excess capacity are determined, and in order to achieve the company vision, it is decided that the benchmarking implementations are started. Customer requests and requirements, sales and distribution channels, technology, cost/sales price, competition, and communication are taken into consideration as effecting future factors. These factors are examined as follows:

- Customer requests and requirements: vehicles that are of good quality and comfortable, cheap and high quality service and adequate spare part, widespread service and spare part network, rapid solutions to problems, easy second hand sale, long guarantee period.
- Sales and distribution channels: well-known vendors with high image, 4S service (sales, service, second hand, spare parts), trustworthy financial structure, reporting the problems quickly to company X, social and presentable, able to achieve optimal utilization of sources for X.
- Technology: modular production, adaptation to regulations, extensive options for accessories.
- Cost/sales price: profit minimization, low finance costs, fleet sales price discounts, ease of finance.
- Competition: respected image, contemporary production techniques, online communication of service, vendors, spare

parts, capability of rapid decision, owner of a finance company, widespread 4S network.

- Communication: customer-company communication (service, vendor, spare parts), interior communication.

Furthermore, for selecting the process will be benchmark, factors of the determination for problem centers are examined by using SWOT analysis. The most important factors for the company are given below:

- Strengths: cheap price, economy of fuel, modern design, ergonomic cabin structure, engine life, contemporary transmission elements.
- Weaknesses: finishing quality, frequent service campaigns, lack of spare parts, dyeing quality.
- Opportunities: to be the first domestic manufacturing company that is adapted to EEC and ECE regulations, development of the south-east Anatolia market, the share of the highway transportation in the transportation sector, occurrence of new product segments, exportation to England.
- Threats: to be perceived as a cheap vehicle, the high prices of spare parts, the inconsistency in the economy policies, regulations.

As a result of this step, seven customer purchasing habits are formed given below:

- Ability of having after-sale service and finding spare part; and their prices.
- The local characteristics of customer behaviors.
- The quality level
- Fuel economy
- First purchasing cost
- Brand dependence
- Transportation capacity.

According to these data, it can be stated that the companies tend to place the customer-focused services in the first place. As the technological level between the products is narrowing, "after-sale service system", which is the most important factor in this century, is selected as the benchmarking process in the company as a result of the SWOT analysis. This affects primarily the purchasing operations of the customer. Four domestic firms, which have widespread service and spare network, are selected as benchmarking partners.

Selecting the significant success factors

In the second step of this study, it is decided that the market share is the important success factor of the company. Since the lorry production sector has the biggest percentage in the market that the company serves, benchmarking process encompasses the companies that produce lorry. Market share is the most characteristic factor for ranking the companies. In the following table, market shares of the lorry producers are given according to production quantities in 1997 and 1998.

Table 1: Market shares according to production quantities

	1997 %	1998 %
Company X	26	25
Company A	31	30
Company B	21	22
Company C	19	20

Determining benchmarking partners

The brand allocation in the lorry market, according to the characteristics of companies, is classified in the domestic production companies and the importing companies. These companies are determines as below:

- Domestic production companies: X, A, B, and C, and
- Importing companies : R, S, D, V, M, and I.

In this step, four domestic companies that have widespread service and spare network are selected as benchmarking partners.

Collecting and analyzing necessary data

Evaluating the tendency of customers has become one of the important parts of quality studies. One of the most effective ways of evaluating customer tendency is public survey. Today, many of the customer firms use "customer satisfaction" as the subject of their advertisements. The best methods to measure whether satisfaction is achieved or not is through customer survey. In this pursuit, it is important to determine the expectations of customers and to express them with the correct statements in the questionnaire. Thus, the results of questionnaire will be entirely correct. The results of the questionnaires measuring customer satisfaction, aid following service process, revealing the strengths and weaknesses of the firm, preparing development programs and the most important of all determining the customer expectations (Watson, 1993). In this step, a questionnaire is designed to analyze the after-sale service system of benchmark partners and to determine reasons of customer satisfaction and preferences. The questionnaire involved totally 1350 people who are lorry users in the country. The meetings involved 20 sales representative in 6 different regions. In the questionnaire, questions are asked for the evaluation of authorized service organizations and spare part dealers. Eleven criteria that will be the basis for the questionnaire are determined, and the questionnaire is designed according to these criteria. The distribution of the questionnaire on the basis of brands is given in Table 2.

Table 2. The distribution of meetings according to owners and drivers.

	X		A		B		C	
	Total	%	Total	%	total	%	total	%
TOTAL	900		150		150		150	
OWNER	676	75.1	124	82.7	91	60.7	130	86.7
DRIVER	177	19.7	26	17.3	42	28.0	15	10.0
FLEET	47	5.2	0	0.0	17	11.3	5	3.3

Owner: a person who is the owner of the car and also drives it. He works individually. Driver: a person who does not have a car but drives an owner's car. He works individually. Fleet: a person who is the owner of 5 or more DOST (employer). As the life cycle of a lorry is very long in Turkey, the model year of the lorry is very important to provide after-sale service and spare parts availability because of the manufacturer has to produce all the spare and service parts for 10 years. Since the 1989 and more recent models are considered and the older DOST are not valid for the survey, 294 returned questionnaires were not taken into account. The distribution of the brand-based model years of DOST is below.

The eleven criteria that will be the basis of the questionnaire are determined and questionnaire is designed according to these criteria. These criteria are:

1. The preference rate of authorized service organizations or repairers by DOST owners/drivers during warranty.
2. The preference rate of authorized service organizations or repairers by DOST owners/drivers after warranty.
3. The preference rate of authorized service organizations by DOST owners/drivers with respect to other brands, after warranty.
4. The reasons of DOST owners / drivers to go to repairer.
5. The place where DOST owners/drivers made the last revision
6. Are authorized service organizations or repairers better according to the price of spare parts?
7. Are authorized service organizations or repairers better according to labor pay?
8. Are authorized service organizations or repairers better according to technical staff?
9. Are authorized service organizations or repairers better according to labor guarantee?
10. Are authorized service organizations or repairers better according to availability of spare parts?
11. Spare part preferences of DOST owners/drivers.

Table 3. The distribution of the brand-based model years of DOST

	X		Total	A		B	C	
	total	%		%	total		%	total
TOTAL	900		150	150		150		
2012	91	10.1	9	6.0	31	20.7	0 0.0	
2013	75	8.3	8	5.3	29	19.3	2 1.3	
2014	66	7.3	5	3.3	16	10.7	0 0.0	
2015	36	4.0	4	2.7	15	10.0	0 0.0	
2016	69	7.7	10	6.7	29	19.3	4 2.7	
2017	81	9.0	6	4.0	17	11.3	3 2.0	
2018	68	7.6	1	0.7	5	3.3	1 0.7	
2019	110	12.2	10	6.7	6	4.0	3 2.0	
2020	93	10.3	6	4.0	2	1.3	13 8.7	
2021	107	11.9	12	8.0	0	0.0	18 12.0	
2022	34	3.8	4	2.7	0	0.0	4 2.7	
2023	26	2.9	6	4.0	0	0.0	12 8.0	
1985-80	29	3.2	36	24.0	0	0.0	66 44.0	
OLDER	15	1.7	32	21.3	0	0.0	22 14.7	
N/A	0	0.0	1	0.7	0	0.0	2 1.3	

After these criteria were determined; the following information which will be the basis of the benchmarking was obtained from the questionnaire results:

1. During warranty, 80% of X-owners / drivers prefer authorized service organizations and 20% of X-owners / drivers prefer repairers.
2. After warranty, 48% of X-owners / drivers prefer authorized service organizations, 39% prefer repairers and 12.5% prefer both of them. After warranty, some studies should be done by authorized service organization managers in order to make customers prefer them in spite of repairers.
3. After warranty, 61% of X, 54% of B, 22% of A, and 4.6% of C owners/drivers prefer authorized service organizations.
4. The reasons of X-owners/drivers go to repairer are below:
 - Labor is cheap : 67.2 % (company responsibility factor)
 - Labor is good : 34.5% (sub-companies/inappropriate part)

- Spare parts are cheap : 32.5 % (will be searched)
 - Easy to attain : 18%
 - Payments are with due : 18% (commercial intellect)
 - Repairers affix what the customer wants: 14.5% (cannot be a valid reason)
5. Fifty-five percent of X- owners/drivers (491 people) prefer authorized service organizations and 45% (409 people) prefer repairers for the last revision of their lorry. By examining the distribution of the revisions, it is expressed that authorized service organization is generally preferred for big and important reparations such as engine, gearbox, brake system, and axle.
 6. According to the spare part price, 26% and 62% of X owners/drivers expressed that authorized service organizations and repairers (generally sub-company or inappropriate spare parts) are better, respectively. Ten percent stated that there is no difference between them.
 7. For labor price, 25% and 70% of them stated that authorized service organizations (this must be considered as operating cost responsibility) and repairers are better, respectively. Four percent expressed that there is no difference between them.
 8. According to the survey findings, it is determined that 52.2% of and 36 % of owners/drivers stated respectively that the authorized service organizations and repairers are better for technical staff. However, 9.9% reported no difference between them.
 9. For labor guarantee, it is determined that authorized service organizations and repairers are better 52% and 25% respectively. According to 20% of the respondents there is no difference between them.
 10. In regard to availability of spare part, 55% of the answers is authorized service organizations although 25% reported that the repairers are better. However, 17.5 % stated that there is no difference between them.
 11. It is determined that 92.4% of DOST owners/drivers prefer spare parts from the Company X, 3.3% from the suppliers, and 4.2% depending on its availability.

After the results of the questionnaire are obtained, the evaluation is conducted with respect to services and spare part vendors.

Evaluation of authorized service organizations:

1. Most of the customers prefer authorized service organizations during and after the guarantee period. The authorized service organizations should conduct activities for increasing customer demand. The activities for increasing customer demand have been continuing since 1997. Now, it is time to complete these studies and to apply them.
2. The quality of authorized service organization staff must be scrutinized and authorized service organization managers must determine the criteria.
3. It is seen that the authorized service organizations do not use sub-industry parts. The authorized service organization manager must not allow services to use sub-industry parts.
4. Labor wages of authorized service organizations must be evaluated according to market by authorized service organization management.
5. The authorized service organization staff guarantee procedure must be applied by authorized service organization management and the related departments.

Evaluation of spare parts:

1. Most of the customers are aware of the quality of assembly parts and prefer them.
2. High prices of spare parts decrease the preference for them. Particularly, this occurs in other parts rather than main parts like engine, differential, and transmission mechanisms. This increases the usage percentage of sub-industry parts.
3. Easiness to find spare parts in authorized service organizations increases the demand to authorized service organizations. However, the same fact can be seen in sub-industry parts. Hence, studies must be done in order to increase the response rate.
4. Spare part guarantee is very important for customers. Thus, the guarantee system must be applied as soon as possible by management.

Take action

Finally, the method used by other firms to attract the customers for the authorized service organizations has been searched. With the results of this search, the proposals for attracting the customers to the company's authorized service organizations have been improved. These proposals have been prepared for the company-X and services separately.

Proposals for Company-X:

1. The education about customer relations and business management must be provided to authorized service organizations.
2. The service days should be arranged on certain days in a year.
3. The service staff should be informed about customer relations and satisfaction in addition to their professional education.
4. Service staff availability affects preference of authorized service organizations. Therefore, the precautions based on increasing the speed of meeting the demands should be taken. A certain number of staff must be trained from each region.
5. By supplying the units such as engine, differential, transmissions for apprenticeship schools in certain regions in Turkey, programs must be provided to train service staff so that they are able to know well the Company-X products.

6. The spare parts must be requested in a short time and prices of spare parts must be decreased at the competitor's price level for preventing the customers use sub-industry.
7. The spare part guarantee must be applied for all parts.
8. The price of parts used for periodical maintenance must be reducing for customer attraction.
9. In authorized service organizations, also the processes such as electrical, skylight, etc. must be beginning.
10. The necessary units must be delivered to the services, especially to the heavy regions, in order to give rapid service to the customers.
11. It must be provided that the spare parts must be assembled in authorized service organizations (spare part guarantee).
12. It must be provided that the spare part price list should be given to all authorized service organizations.
13. If a customer comes to the service continually, the periodical maintenance charge must not be taken.
14. Some reductions in the service labor price list may be done for labor price. Hence, a competition can be created between service and repairers. Company-X can support this project by increasing the profit ratios of vendor and services.
15. Special service and part discounts should be provided to fleet customers, and guarantee period should be expanded.
16. The guarantee period of customers, who use only authorized service organizations, should be expanded, or the customers should be rewarded.
17. By sending a letter to owners after the first maintenance, it is asked if the owners satisfy authorized service organization. It must be informed by the owner through an announcement if he or she has a problem to call for regional service representative.
18. Authorized sales agents must inform the customers about the importance of guarantee and the use of authorized service organizations in the selling stage.
19. The number of authorized service organizations must be increased.

Proposals for Service:

1. Services should turn into institutions and service manager should be selected from the technical schools graduates. These people should be good in customer relationships.
2. Special tools of authorized service organizations must be complete and the staff must be well educated.
3. Service space must be kept in order.
4. A registration system must be established in services.
5. The authorized worker must always be in service space except special occasions unless customers get suspicious about the integrity of service.
6. The number of mobile service must be increased. Hence, it will be easy to reach customers wherever they are.
7. Services should work overtime besides regular work time. In this way, the broken truck can be repaired on the same day. Thus, work losses are reduced. A duty staff can stay at over work time.
8. Services like "periodical maintenance" or "repair" must be given to some customers in their construction sites.
9. Service organization personnel should visit customers from time to time.
10. Authorized service organizations should care customers by providing them presents such as tea, meal, etc.
11. Truck must be deliver to customer after cleaning at the end of the service.

Recycle the process

The solutions, which are found after the benchmarking studies, are used after the second half of the year 1998. The implementation and renewal studies are continuing at all of the regions according to market conditions.

- A continuous education program is provided to the authorized services and service staff about customer relations and business management. Suggestion boxes were placed in all services and spare parts dealers to follow the improvement of customer satisfaction ratio. We note that the complaints decrease 70%.
- The price level is adjusted and decreased at the competitor's price level. As a result, using sub- industry parts decreased 50%.
- Customers' spare parts demand is met in a 24-hour time.
- The price of parts used for periodical maintenance is reduced.
- Electrical and skylight etc. processes are provided in the determined services.
- The spare parts price list is sent to the services monthly.
- Some price advantages are provided to the fleet customers.
- The number of authorized service organizations were increased %20.
- To follow the spare parts output and input in an order and to supply the required spare part on time, the bar code system was applied.
- To check the order of the services, new auditors were employed.
- A registration system was established by supplying PC to all services.
- The amount of mobile services was increased %20.
- On weekend-duty service system should be implemented.
- Periodical maintenance and repair begins to be given in fleet customers' construction sites.
- The visiting amounts of services to the customers are increased.

CONCLUSIONS

In recent years, it can be discussed that benchmarking is legal or not. In some approaches, it limits the competition. However, the quality associations and international quality awards support benchmarking studies. In order to be the first in the market, the companies must provide a new product, new production techniques, effective supply usage, employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction. In the new millennium, it is easy to reach the necessary information among the companies and therefore benchmarking studies contribute to the sharing of information with its mutual structure. You and your benchmarking partner can get necessary information for benchmarking process and have a look at your business processes and reach the company's self assessment period and then improvement comes next step. Besides these benefits, we can also talk about some negative points. One of them is, when you first begin to benchmark with best in class- company, this company also continues his improvements. In this situation, an indefinite virtual target is encountered. After the first level in benchmarking studies, the managers can give off studies because they could not monitor any given result with the partner. This point firstly must be understood by the managers so that the benchmarking studies are not a one step improvement, it is a continuous improvement. Secondly, the best results you can reach are out of your sector. Because you are the leader in the sector, you must benchmark the process in different sectors, which is the best in those sectors. The last one is insufficient information sharing. Because of stiff competitiveness, in some sectors it is hard to reach the necessary data and this will affect the result of the study.

In today's competitive environment, the success of a firm can be explained as having competitive ability and keeping the customer in hand. Because of this, customers' demand is the focus that we must stick. In this respect, customer surveys and market researchers are the main supplies to reach the correct target. In this case, we achieve and contribute to form a customer focused marketing structure by overcoming the close and traditional structure of the company and keeping in touch with the customer. Besides, the non-rigid database that we can easily and confidently reach from Turkish Automotive Industry Foundation is the main factor to gain successful results for our study. It is important for the success of the study to begin the benchmarking studies in an appropriate market environment. If it is studied in an economic crisis environment in the automotive sector, we cannot talk about the reliability and the correctness of the results of the study and also the benchmarking partner. Because of this case, it is offered to begin benchmarking studies in the most reliable and appropriate environment that a company achieves high performance. As conclusion, choose the right things to benchmark, involve the right people, have a common understanding of what involved, gain a thorough understanding of your own situation, choose suitable partners, turn ideas/information from visits into practical improvement projects, manage the improvements and remember that benchmarking is a continuous process. The kind of benchmarking you should undertake is dependent on your company's characteristics and circumstances. Benchmarking has to be regarded as an integral part of the business strategy and not just an addition. It should be based on some kind of critical need and benchmarking should be a continuous process in your organization. Best practice constantly changes, and continuous benchmarking can help an organization identify what it needs to do in order to remain in the race.

REFERENCES

1. Bendell, Boulter and Kelly , 1993 , Benchmarking for Competitive Advantage, Pitman Publishing, Berlin Quality Management Forum, 1996, The Benchmark, IFS International Publication.
2. Bernowski,K., 1991, "The Benchmarking Bandwagon" , Quality Progress.
3. Camp,R.C., 1989, Benchmarking, Quality Press, Milwaukee,
4. Carter,G. And Voss,C.A., 1993, "Self Assessment Using Quality Awards" Paper Presented At European Foundation For Quality Management Conference. Amsterdam,
5. Kamande, A., 1999, Learning From Others How To Gain Success, Africa News Service-Comtex.
6. Matters, M.,Evans,A., 1995, The Nuts And Bolts Of Benchmarking, Alpha Management Resource,S Pty Ltd, Australia
7. Pettersen,P.G.,1995, Benchmarking For Implementing A New Product Strategy.
8. Benchmarking- Theory And Practice (Ed. A. Rolstadas) (Chapman&Hall), 120-125.
9. Spendolini, M.J., 1992, The Benchmarking Book, Amacom, New York,
10. Sprow, E.E., 1993, Benchmarking, Manufacturing Engineering.
11. Watson, G.H., 1993, Strategic Benchmarking-How To Rate Your Company's Performance Against The World's Best? (John Wiley and Sons, Inc.).