

Topic:
Process
Engineering

Service Level Assessments

Managers of CAD/CAM related functions at process engineering sites evaluate the effectiveness of their suppliers' services.

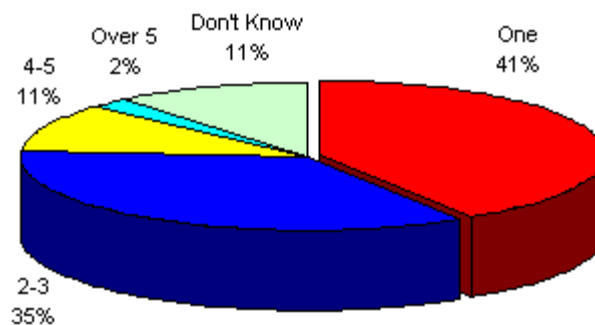
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For those CAD/CAM resellers that regard the development of new services as their main business opportunity (see '[CAD Reseller Outlook](#)'), the need for customer feedback will increase as they seek to develop and refine their offerings. If you understand the perceptions of your own customers you have a vital ingredient for retaining their business - extend this to understanding the perceptions of your rivals' customers and you have the foundations for winning new business. To explore the overall satisfaction levels of CAD managers with a range of generic factors in service provision, we interviewed managers of CAD/CAM related functions at 81 sites in the UK process engineering sector.

Supplier Numbers

We asked our sample how many suppliers they use for CAD/CAM related requirements. Nearly half are definitely using more than one supplier.

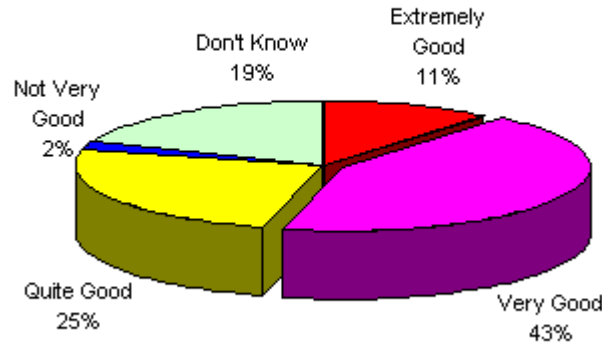
How Many CAD/CAM Suppliers Do You Use?



Service Assessments

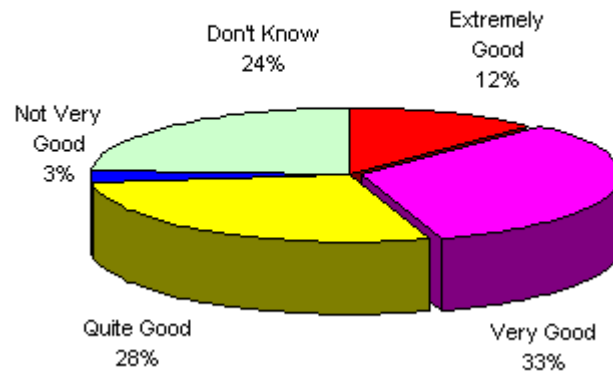
We then asked our sample to provide a simple rating of some generic factors of good service provision as offered by their main CAD/CAM supplier, i.e. the supplier they consider to be most important to them.

Technical Knowledge



Over half of managers rated this factor as extremely or very good. One in five however have not called upon the technical know-how of their resellers.

Ability To Understand Your Needs



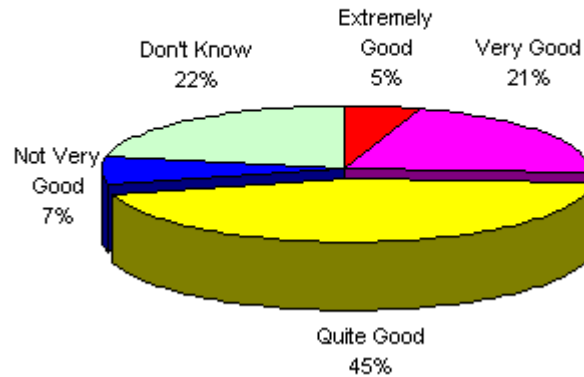
Very similar ratings to that of technical knowledge; three out of ten managers feel there is room for improvement in this area (i.e. those assessing this factor as 'not very good' or 'quite good').

Range Of Products & Services



The proportion of very positive ratings drops to 35% for the range of products and services on offer. Suppliers may not be able to meet all the needs of their customers, but finding out what additional products/services they would value can reveal new opportunities.

Value For Money For Services Offered



Attitudes start to harden when people consider what their hard-earned money actually pays for. Only a quarter of our sample of CAD managers gave a very positive rating for the value for money of their suppliers' services; over half think there is room for improvement.

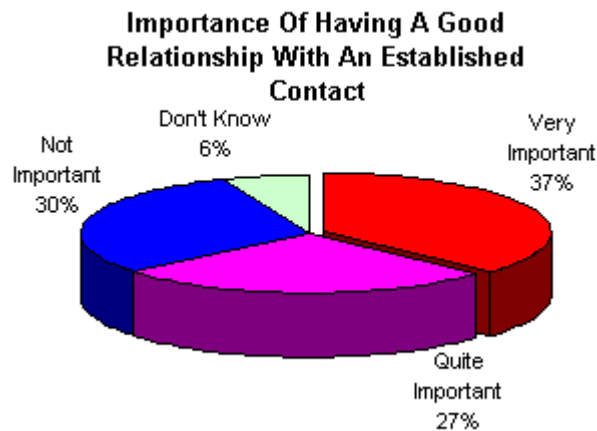
On-Going Communication & Relationship Building



Communication and relationship building was the only factor we explored that drew a sizeable negative assessment. Over one in ten of CAD managers rated their suppliers as not very good/poor in this respect.

The Personal Touch

Having a named and established contact at a supplier is an important ingredient in relationship building for many customers; this issue was identified by 37% of our sample as being 'very important' to them. The three out of ten managers who feel this is not important could very well be the same group not able to rate the other qualities of their suppliers (the 'don't knows' in the charts above); they simply purchase products and have little or no further contact with them.



The importance placed on having a named contact is not matched by reality; **only 30% of our managers said that they have such a contact at their main CAD/CAM supplier.**

Conclusion

It seems that about a quarter of CAD/CAM using sites in the process engineering sector are not accessing services from their 'main' CAD/CAM supplier (likely to be represented by the 'don't knows' in the charts above). This could either be because they bought from discount outfits that offer little in the way of post-sales follow-up, or that they don't feel they require any services. There could be opportunities, however, for those VARs who can identify such businesses, and then market services that they have not previously considered or are unaware of.

The key message however is the need for suppliers to stay in touch with their customers' views and understand what aspects of the product/service provision they value, what they would like to see improved, and what they would like to be added. In the next issue of *iCT* we'll look at what customers look for when choosing a CAD/CAM supplier - and the proportion of sites that are considering taking their custom elsewhere.

If you want to improve the services you provide to customers, use [customer satisfaction research](#) to find out where action is required. If you'd like to discuss how best to meet any other market intelligence needs for domestic or international markets, call Business Advantage on **+44 (0)1689 873636**, or e-mail us at info@business-advantage.com.

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