

Introduction Speech by Mr Clausen from Schimmel Pianos, Brunswick

(Mr Christian Clausen - manager for construction and design, production and technical details - was our guide at Schimmel Pianos on 2nd September 2013, when we were visiting the factory for learning about their quality management)

Ladies and gentlemen,

during the preparation of today's meeting at the Schimmel factory, I was also asked to give a little speech to you. The topic will be our internal quality management and how we make sure, that the quality of our products is always at a certain level. I am sure that you will find some analogical approach to the work you do at school.

Quality: A difficult term

Quality is a difficult term. Thinking of our customers all around the entire world, the content of that word changes constantly. Most of the times based on the cultural background of a nation, people have absolutely different priorities concerning the quality of a product they purchase.

From our point of view, quality always means the rate of satisfaction we can give to the customer. Having in mind what I told you about the different perspectives people can have concerning quality, this isn't always an easy job to do. Everybody has got his own focus when he's going for something to buy. Look inside yourself and think about, which detail on a piano would be the most important thing for you?

First of all, it's a matter of taste. That's why we got instruments in different styles on the cabinet, different sound bodies and at least, with a different pricing. We hope that this portfolio gives every customer the chance, to find the perfect fitting instrument for himself.

Contradiction: Quality versus others

A few minutes ago we left the production area of our factory and some of you may be disappointed of what they've seen. Some people, who haven't visited the factory yet, imagine piano building as an emotional and romantic thing. They think about craftsmen, sitting in a workshop, lighted by a candle and caressing an instrument up to perfection! Sorry for that, but this ain't the truth.

Building pianos in an industrial manner like we do at Schimmel, always causes constraints, that are in a conflict with quality. Quality needs its time, but sometimes you don't have it. Forced by outer conditions you sometimes have to speed things up and ignore breaks, that the instrument should be

granted. Or the accuracy is suffering from the short time. So producing too quickly can have negative consequences for the quality of a product. I think this is something you can transfer directly to the educational department.

Acting as a company always means to be aware of the costs and to purchase your components to the lowest price you can get. Even this behaviour can, handled exaggerated, cause a lack of quality. Think about your car, when you've decided to go for some cheap tires and, doing so, save some money. Can you expect to ride with the same comfort as you would do with a more expensive model? No you can't, because quality got its price. All the effort and accuracy, the time, the components and even the control put in a product are causing a certain price. Simply said: The more you expect, the more you have to give.

Product quality coming from process quality

At this factory we are producing pianos, grands and uprights, in many different styles and colours. Because we are working in a serial production, we want every instrument to be a masterpiece, but not one of a kind. If it was, we were not able to supply any customer with spare parts in case of a damage or something, because they won't fit. Again this is part of the quality promise we give to the customer, because he wants his instrument to be repaired quickly.

If you expect your product to come out of the factory with a constant and repeating quality, then the formation process itself has to be on a constant quality level. What does that mean?

This means, that every repetition has to be as exact as possible, no matter if it's done by hand or a machine. You can imagine, that it's much easier to secure this by working with a computer steered router than with a human being.

So to abstract things: Bringing out a product on a constant quality level means, to give every part of the formation process, no matter if machine or human being, the chance to repeat its working step as precisely as possible. This is said easily, but means hard work.

I would like to show you, how we try to manage this:

> *Presentation*

Schimmel Quality Management

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