



## Turning Complaint Management into Customer Satisfaction

Complaint-handling processes are a fundamental facet of effective quality management – they help companies promote customer satisfaction, achieve regulatory compliance, and resolve serious product safety issues. Yet problems with complaint management are among the most frequently cited observations by FDA-483s. This is largely because manufacturers, seeing complaints as undesirable, attempt to minimize their effects and avoid admitting product responsibility. As a result, they not only neglect regulatory requirements, but fail to reap the business performance benefits of a proactive approach to complaint management.



A vital step in establishing an effective complaint management program is creating detailed policies and procedures. These should outline steps for how complaints are documented, processed, and evaluated to determine the next step. Companies should predetermine procedures for linking complaint processes to preventative and corrective actions.

Another key facet in successful CRM is a simple, accessible customer feedback system. Many companies use methods like toll-free complaint hotlines, feedback forms on company websites, and regular follow-up phone calls from sales and service professionals. Employees who intercept complaints should be well trained in quality procedures.

In many companies, the methods for receiving, recording, and responding to customer complaints may vary across department or geographical location. This leads to disparate methods, duplicated records, and open-loop processes that never reach resolution. Companies should strive to establish a universal system that links all processes, and trends the complaint data they receive to better identify potential problems.

Ultimately, a commitment to customer satisfaction should be reflected in all of a company's quality procedures. This will not only engender confident compliance – it will lead to reliable products that make customers feel safe.

