

# Preparation and teamwork key to Cathay catering division's success

Competing in the HKMA Quality Award can be a worthwhile investment for companies.

The competition can bring countless benefits, as staff communicate better and learn from each other, and the company gains exposure to areas that need improvement.

Participating companies come under scrutiny and are judged according to the framework of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award in the United States, which is aimed at encouraging programmes to drive products and services to higher levels of quality.

All this better equips organisations to meet the challenges of global competition.

The efforts made were not lost on Cathay Pacific Catering Services (CPSC), a subsidiary of Cathay Pacific Airways, which received the bronze award this year.

"It was definitely a very valuable experience," says Jenny Lam, general manager of Cathay Pacific Catering Services (Hong Kong). "The competition helped to boost our teamwork and morale, while promoting our commitment of high quality to the public."

Winners of the award proved that they have achieved outstanding performances in all of the seven judging criteria which include leadership; strategic

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planning; customer and market focus; measurement, analysis and knowledge management; workforce focus; process management; and results.

"CPCS has a vigorous performance monitoring system," Lam says.

"We have 25 corporate-level key performance indicators [KPI] and over 160 departmental KPIs that measure our performance on finance, customer, quality, productivity, leadership and social responsibility.

"It is very important to maintain the performance monitoring with a balanced focus on the various aspects of our operations," Lam says.

Placing a great amount of focus on hygiene and safety, the company's programmes are audited on a weekly basis.

In order to reach each goal, the company believes in effective communication with staff at every

level, so a high standard in quality management can be sustained. "We have been in the industry for 43 years, and our passion for quality and the expertise of the management team have made CPCS successful in achieving high-quality standards," Lam says.

The company was able to convince judges that it was capable of satisfying all the judging criteria, but it required plenty of effort and preparation.

"We made sure everyone in the management team, as well as middle managers, understood the award application process and requirements.

"Then we held meetings to assess internally how we could meet all the judgment criteria and then split into respective teams responsible for each criteria," Lam says.

"On the operations side, we are pretty confident in our quality, so we just did what we normally do because we already had our standards in place."

A large number of management employees were involved in the competition to map out the company's quality management framework and align it with the award's requirements.

The management team had to prepare all pertinent records and data for on-site verification by the



Cathay Pacific Catering Services staff prepare inflight meals. Photo: Jonathan Wong

examiners during the on-site visit, which was the last stage before the judges announced the results.

During the on-site visit, the company's managers and middle managers met the competition's judges and answered all queries. They also demonstrated the company's commitment to high quality with relevant data.

"Our managers from various functional departments all worked together throughout the whole process, so I think the real benefit to us is that the competition helped enhance our co-operation and our drive," Lam says.

For companies hoping to participate in the next HKMA Quality Award, Lam suggests they

plan and organise resources to support the application and assessment process in advance.

"All the planning and organising work should be done before the decision to submit the application," Lam says.

"And try to get more people involved. The process helped us gain more exposure and gave us an

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GENERAL MANAGER  
CATHAY PACIFIC CATERING SERVICES  
(HONG KONG)

opportunity to face various challenges.

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