Kroger's QueVision System Improves Customer Service

Kroger has annual sales in excess of $100 billion and operates stores across the United States under various names, including Kroger's, Ralph's, and Harris Teeter. In surveys, Kroger's customers have consistently rated waiting at the checkout lane as the worst part of the grocery shopping experience. In response, Kroger developed its QueVision computer-based information system, which relies on real-time data feeds from point-of-sale systems as well as infrared sensors over store doors and cash registers to count customers entering the store and standing at checkout lanes.

The system also uses historical point-of-sale records to forecast the number of shoppers that can be expected and, therefore, the number of cashiers that will be needed. All this was done to achieve the goal of ensuring that customers never have more than one person ahead of them in the checkout lane. The system provides feedback by displaying customer checkout time on a screen that both employees and customers can see—delivering a visible measure of how well the whole system is working. The system is now deployed at over 2,300 stores in 31 states and has cut the average time a customer must wait to begin checkout from four minutes to 30 seconds.

You are a new store manager at a Kroger store where the QueVision system has been deployed for two years. Unfortunately, since you took charge of this store two weeks ago, you have received numerous complaints about the system from store cashiers and baggers. These employees are requesting that you either turn off the screen that displays customer checkout time or add more cashiers and baggers to each shift to reduce checkout times, which are currently averaging over six minutes.

Review Questions

1. Would you classify the QueVision system as a personal, group, or enterprise system?
2. Four key organizational complements must be in place to ensure successful implementation and use of a new system. Which two of these components seem to be missing at your store?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Employees are requesting that you turn off the screen that displays customer checkout time or add more cashiers and baggers to each shift to reduce wait times. What action would you take to address the concerns of the cashiers and baggers?
    a. Turn off the QueVision system now.
    b. Add more cashiers and baggers to each shift as soon as possible.
    c. Observe the checkout process and performance of cashiers and baggers for a few days before taking action.
    d. Tell the cashiers and baggers their performance is unacceptable and to "step it up."
2. Provide a brief rationale for your recommended course of action.