

## PM Case Study: Quality Management at Global Green Books Publishing

Global Green Books Publishing is growing its eBook business, satisfying demand for customized eBooks for the college market and for a growing number of commercial customers. These customers expect a high-quality product that works in each of the environments that their users use – various operating systems, eBook readers, and hardware (desktop computers, tablets/phablets, and smartphones).

As part of the standard development process, each eBook goes through several quality checks. When the order is received, a customer service representative checks the order and a more senior customer service representative verifies the order. During the Production Phase, a **quality assistant will check the eBook against the job order and customer order to make sure it is ready for production, and once approved by quality, each of the requested eBook formats are created. A second quality check is performed by the customer service representative who is assigned to the customer to make sure that each requested format is ready to release to the customer.**

Some customers (and their eBook users) are complaining about quality problems in the eBooks they have received from Global Green Books. Sometimes the eBooks do not work correctly in the intended environment. Sometimes, content is not clear or fuzzy. Sometimes, a quality check will find that not all parts of the requested order have been included in the eBook.

**This causes rework before the eBook can come back for a second quality check before being released to the customer service representative for the final quality check.** In each of these cases, the "cost of quality" is the cost of NOT creating a quality product. Every time the project has to rework an eBook to correct a quality defect, the cost of quality increases.

Samantha and her project managers met with a key group of supervisors who are managing a critical number of the eBook projects. They reviewed the lessons learned data and brainstormed from their experiences with producing eBooks to identify some of the quality problems that they were seeing in the eBook projects. They identified a number of issues:

- **The customer's quality requirements are never discussed within the project team. They are dealt with by the customer service representatives at the beginning and end of the eBook production process.** This means that team members do not know what the customer expects and just do the tasks assigned

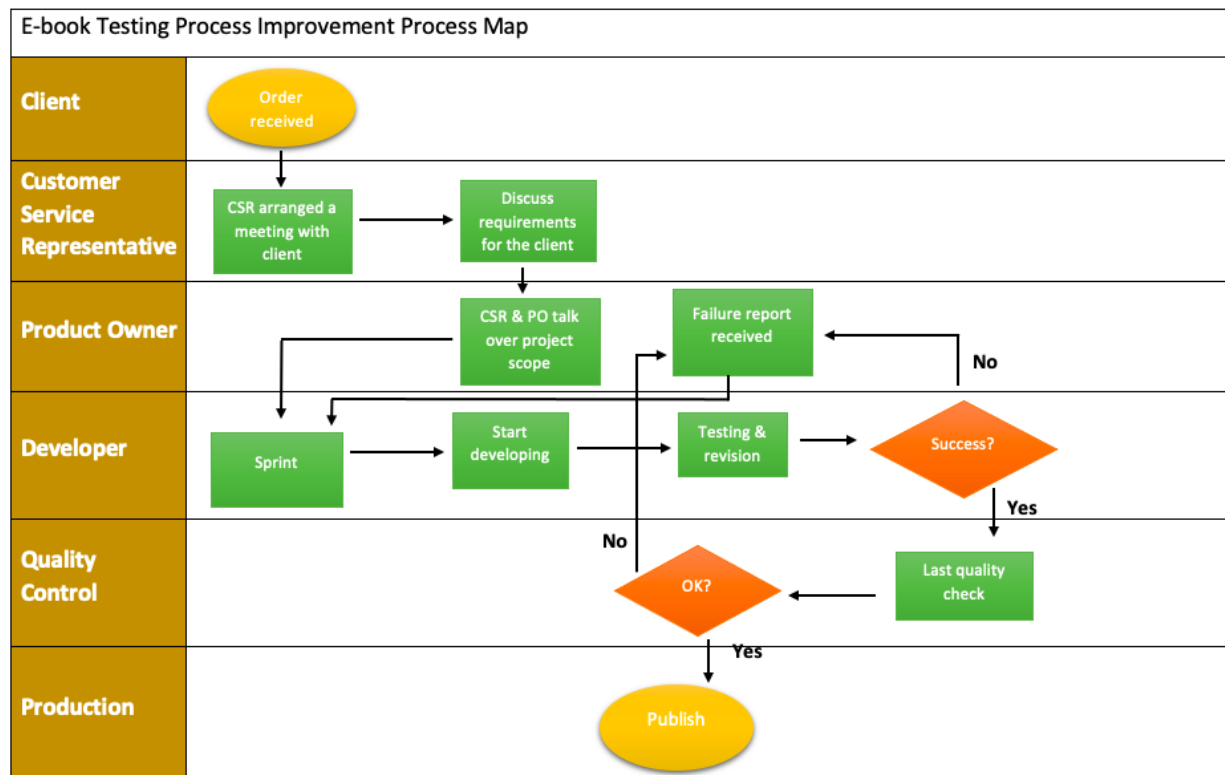
without knowing what is “good”. They may have a very different or no understanding of what the customer’s quality needs are, unlike the customer service representatives.

- The standard job template doesn’t suggest that supervisors plan into their project any reviews or checkpoints at which quality can be verified. The only quality checks come after the eBook is finished. This does quality checks of the whole eBook but doesn’t allow for checks on each component –content formats, correct conversions or desktop publishing checks.
- These two factors lead to a perception among team members that quality is just simply some testing by some other groups (quality and customer service), rather than a way of working and reviewing or checking work as they proceed. Further, many team members don’t even see quality as their responsibility, because it’s something done by someone else.
- One of the challenges facing the customer service representatives is that they do test each eBook, but they cannot always check each eBook in an environment that is the same as that used by the end users of the eBook. Sometimes users have different equipment than the customer service representatives have to use for their testing. There are times when this causes surprises after the eBook is released. This leads to external failure costs for dealing with processing customer complaints, dealing with rework to fix the eBooks, and releasing a revised eBook. Luckily the customers handle distribution to their users, so Global Green Books is not bearing the cost of customer returns and warranty claims that they might have if they were selling a consumer product directly to consumers.

The group agrees that they would like to make some changes to bring their total quality costs below the costs of quality that they are currently incurring. This means that they want to reduce the costs of failing to meet customer requirements or expectations and reinvest those savings into preventing problems as they go that do not meet the customer’s requirements and checking to make sure that the eBook and all of its components conform to the customer’s requirements. Catching some of the quality problems sooner, before the entire eBook is produced will also reduce the internal failure costs that they are experiencing. These internal failure costs are reworked and re-checking following the quality checks by Quality and the customer service representative.

**Comment on the following aspects of the case study:**

- a) Create a project plan for implementing quality culture in this company (aspects that you consider needed in this situation) and how to involve team members more in pursuit of high-quality eBooks for their customers?



- b) Consider the problems that Samantha and the group identified. What do you think are the causes of these problems?

**Answer:**

Firstly, there is no communication between the CSR, quality department, and the project team. This happened because no one took the initiative and was concerned about the customer's needs. The customer service representatives did not pass the information to the project team, which meant that the project team didn't know the customer's needs and didn't ask for the requirements.

Secondly, there is no due quality check process in place. That means the correct procedure should be, before the e-book is published. The team should revise the product continuously before finalizing it.

Thirdly, the company failed to provide essential testing equipment to the CSR, leading to inefficient testing and unsatisfied customers.

c) What would you suggest they do differently to eliminate these problems?

**Answer:**

My suggestion will be to implement Agile methodology for the process of the quality of the e-book. There are a few reasons why Agile can assist the workflow running smoothly and efficient:

- It can help the team, quality department, and CSR be transparent in work and communication.
- During the development and testing, whether the outcome of the e-book is a success or not, the developer can always work on the change flexibly before the final work. This way, it helps the company gain more trust and reliability from clients and reduces the number of complaints about the e-book's quality before publishing.
- Job scope will be apparent, which can help everyone be aware of their responsibility depending on their roles.

d) Who should be responsible for quality? What would you recommend be the specific responsibilities of each identified role?

**Answer:**

When it comes to the quality of the e-book, the developers and the quality department should be the primary key person to be responsible before the e-book is published. The developer mainly works on developing and testing it. The quality department assists the developer in which area needs improvement according to their knowledge and clients' requests. However, the quality doesn't come from the work of the developers or the quality department only but all of the employees. For example, if the Customer service representative receives big or small complaints, they should make sure these complaints will be heard by the developers or quality department. From that, they can identify the problem and solve and improve it immediately.