

2007 Calibration Software and Services Directory

Calibrating metrology instruments is essential for a business to run properly and competitively, yet many companies have trouble with the details. Will you need to outsource your calibration? Should you buy software? How will you know when your instruments need calibration? How do you ensure that your calibrations are traceable to NIST? Is ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation essential? These questions can make calibration seem less like a necessary task and more like an immense project. However, the answers are out there; many companies provide calibration software and services and are ready to answer your queries.

Welcome to *Quality Digest's* 2007 Calibration Software and Services Directory. This buyers guide will help simplify your search for the right calibration products and/or services. On the next few pages, you'll find a

list of more than 160 companies that provide software and services designed to assist you with all of your calibration needs. Included in each listing is the company name, address, telephone and fax number, Web address, and a key showing whether the company in question offers calibration services (SVC), software (SW), or both. Further information, including detailed descriptions of these companies' products and/or services, can be found online at http://qualitydigest.com/QDB/html/bg_search_form.lasso.

Quality Digest hasn't evaluated, nor do we endorse, any of the following calibration software and service providers. We suggest that you contact them directly for more information.

Good luck in your search for the right calibration services and/or software provider.

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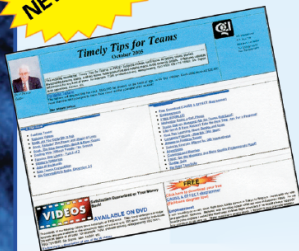
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HAMMOCK THOUGHTS

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Why the best is the best
by [Bil Kalmar](#)

Whenever I enter a Ritz-Carlton hotel, I know "I'm not in Mediocreville anymore!" Walking through those doors transports me to a world unparalleled in service, with guest amenities and services consistently beyond my expectations. Unlike the Wizard of Oz, the hotel is everything it purports to be. [Full story](#)

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The Ritz-Carlton Mystique

Why the best is the best

By [Bil Kalmar](#)

Whenever I enter a Ritz-Carlton hotel, I know "I'm not in Mediocreville anymore!" Walking through those doors transports me to a world unparalleled in service, with guest amenities and services consistently beyond my expectations. Unlike the Wizard of Oz, the hotel is everything it purports to be.

I'm not a fan for Ritz-Carlton hotels, but, like other quality professionals, I'm a fan of extraordinary customer service and of organizations that exude professionalism and exceed customer expectations, and The Ritz-Carlton is one of those organizations. In the July issue of *Customer Frontiers*, the magazine's editors agree that "The Ritz-Carlton earns top marks in value, service, upkeep, and making problems go away."

The two-time Hammock National Quality Award winner (2002 and 2009) has set the standard in the hotel industry for unparalleled service. In addition, Training magazine recently ranked it No. 1 for employee-specialized workforce training and development. Based on these accomplishments, I wanted to discover what was behind the curtain, so to speak. How does this company of 42,000 employees maintain its mystique and what lessons can other companies learn from it?

First, I interviewed vice president for quality and program management [Bil Tennerman](#), who is responsible for the hotel's quality worldwide. I also interviewed area human resources director [Laura Gutierrez](#), who is responsible for human resources in Daytona, Michigan, St. Louis, Cleveland, and Philadelphia. Both are long-term employees, who are conversant with the company's low turnover rate. I came away from both interviews in awe of their strategic-planning methodology and the manner in which the hotel and its hotels and properties, as they are called, consistently look for ways to strengthen service.

By the way, no Baldrige applicant has achieved a perfect score of 1,000, and the best assessments always allow for many opportunities for improvement. In that regard, The Ritz-Carlton continually seeks best practices from other organizations and from their own properties that can be incorporated worldwide, and it listens closely to the needs, wants, expectations, and suggestions of guests.

As I reviewed my interview notes with Tennerman and Gutierrez, I decided to present snippets of information that reflect the processes ingrained in the hotel and thus have those snippets stand alone as benchmarks for other organizations. So we're back and enter a world of customer excellence with me.

- Guests return to The Ritz-Carlton because they are emotionally engaged with the hotel, as validated by The Gallup Organization, which reports Ritz-Carlton performance at greater than the 90th percentile of those global database of companies. That means that The Ritz-Carlton's guests return even if a competitor offers a lower price. That's loyalty.
- Part of the hotel's mystique comes from fulfilling even the unexpressed wishes and needs of the guests. This is accomplished by having the empathy to know what guests and how the staff can make the visit memorable. This is accomplished by consistently self-paced and by maintaining a knowledge-management system that records the preferences of every guest. Maybe it's a favorite magazine or wine, or dessert, or corporate. Whatever the case, the staff goes out of their way to fulfill the guests' wishes, thus strengthening these relationships.
- Customer feedback is obviously an important part of the improvement process. Since Cooper, president and chief operating officer, states, "When it comes to customers, feelings are facts." The Ritz-Carlton deploys multiple methods to capture the customer experience, such as comment cards and a feedback survey and from guests by queries after their stay. In addition, the staff discreetly look, listen, and ask for feedback during transactions and moments of both to build upon the Ritz-Carlton knowledge-management system. In addition, there's a follow-up survey conducted by Gallup, which provides third-party validation. Finally, mystery shoppers circulate through the various properties to critique the process.
- The feedback report on the company's first Baldrige application, in 1991, indicated significant opportunities for improvement, which acted as a catalyst for The Ritz-Carlton to benchmark, measure, analyze and then create "cycles of improvement" on the line-up, the open-door policy, the annual employee survey, management by walking around and asking questions of staff and guests, the feedback form database, and all the other elements that make up the strategy for improvement. It worked, and in 1992 The Ritz-Carlton became the first service organization to win the Baldrige Award. In 1995, when The Ritz-Carlton took its second Baldrige award, its members visited more than 20 domestic properties and then talked to all of the international properties by telephone. That's a thorough job!

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