

CERTIFICATION PROCEED AS A RELEVANT FACTOR IN INCREASING COMPETITIVENESS IN IMPERATRIZ COMPANIES - MA

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SUMMARY

The present work aimed to present, analyze and understand the positive and / or negative effects of the Company Certification Program (PROCEM), as a management model that tends to stimulate the increase in the competitiveness of companies in the city of Imperatriz - MA that joined the program, it was developed by a group of companies located in the State of Maranhão, a project coordinated by FIEMA. For this study, documentary research survey data was used to identify the perception of entrepreneurs regarding the development of their businesses and the results achieved. The research envisioned the General objective: To analyze how PROCEM certification is a relevant factor in increasing the competitiveness of companies in Imperatriz / MA. As well as the specific ones that were: (i). Conduct a study on the certification process.

Key words:Supplier Certification. Business Competitiveness. Business development.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the last decades, the evolution of consumption habits and the better distribution of income, the advent of information technology, have made consumers increasingly demanding, definitely the price is not alone a decision factor, the products and / or services must meet aspects quality, sophistication, durability, etc. The demands of customers are intensified by the Consumer Protection Code, making companies comply with legal standards so that they can market their products.

The increase in competition with the opening of markets has made quality increasingly important as a factor of competitiveness for some sectors of the economy, especially the industrial sector, which started to implement Total Quality Management (TQM) systems.

Medium / large-sized organizations have adhered to ISO certifications, which serve very well the need to prove the quality of their management practices, thus providing transparency and certainty in complying with aspects.

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PROCEM Certification as a Relevant Factor in Increasing the Competitiveness of Companies in Imperatriz-MA

However for Micros and Small companies in the most varied branches of activity, the reality of ISO certifications does not yet exist even due to the high investment value in the certification program, making it impossible for them to participate in this process, thinking about this difficulty FIEMA in partnership with large private initiative companies that settled in the State of Maranhão, created a project with the purpose of developing local suppliers, thus came PROCEM, a management model that aims to improve management processes generating results, thus boosting the competitiveness of local companies.

“To be competitive is to have quality products and / or services, and good prices. The parameter for knowing if a company is competitive is established in the confrontation with other similar companies existing in different regions. ” (SEBRAE-SP, 2012).

Observing the objective of the management model, the present work aims to identify the gains in competitiveness of the enterprises that obtained the certification, by conducting a survey type survey.

Considering that PROCEM seeks to continuously improve the organizational practices of certified companies, it is important to study the results achieved by the companies that adhered to this management model, showing the increased competitiveness of the local market.

Globalization has brought with it several benefits for society and uncertainties for companies, the market is increasingly dynamic even due to the evolution of forms of consumption, today consumers have immense sources of information about the product they want, thus requiring business qualification, and increasing the quality requirement.

In the State of Maranhão, we have a regional certification, which assesses companies in modules, coordinated by the FIEMA system.

Through PROCEM the improvements in management processes are undoubtedly improved and implemented, but how can these processes contribute to increasing competitiveness? This question is plausible and deserves to be answered through more research.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Evolution of Quality Management

PROCEM Certification as a Relevant Factor in Increasing the Competitiveness of Companies in Imperatriz-MA

The term quality brings with it the meaning of suitability for use, meeting the aspirations of consumers in different requirements throughout history mentions that:

“The concern with quality has existed since the dawn of civilizations. Historically associated with the performance of inspections and tests on services or finished products, the concept of quality control has undergone significant changes with the Industrial Revolution, when it gained more importance”. (FERNANDES, 2011 p. 13)

Historically, quality has had its due importance, the economic growth of emerging countries and industrialization have accentuated the pursuit of excellence in processes for the manufacture of products and / or services. Carpinetti (2010) evidences that until the period before the Industrial Revolution, quality was an activity of self-control, carried out by artisans. In this phase, production was entirely manual and carried out in small quantities.

With the arrival of the Industrial Revolution, quality started to be controlled by masters and supervisors, radical changes in management had to happen, companies were forced to divide the industrial process in phases, thus increasing the distance between the product and the consumer, causing serious problems. mainly with the quality of the product.

After the First World War, quality came to be controlled by the figure of inspectors, with an emphasis on the detection of defects.

“With the great increase in the demand for war material, the problems with the lack of product quality grew at an alarming rate, making it necessary to create the figure of the inspector, who assumed the role of the supervisor in quality control.” (FERNANDES, 2011. p. 35)

The inspection professional at the time had the mission of preventing products without minimum quality from leaving the factory and being used by customers, the emphasis was on detecting non-conforming products in the production area, thus increasing the costs in manufacturing the product creating a mindset that to have quality would necessarily imply increasing the costs with the production.

It is true that Quality Management has gone through different contexts and situations to reach the standard we currently have, as today's consumers are increasingly demanding, price is not only a fundamental factor when making purchases, customers are each increasingly concerned with other requirements such as delivery time, safety, durability

PROCEM Certification as a Relevant Factor in Increasing the Competitiveness of Companies in Imperatriz-MA

of the product, in short, organizations have had more and more work to build customer loyalty.

2.2. Quality Management in Brazil

The concern with quality in Brazil began in 1980, but only with globalization and the opening of the international economy 1990, that there was an increase in competitiveness and companies noted that it was time to guarantee their survival, as consumers had more options, and they had to advance in quality and productivity, to supply this need the Government created the Brazilian Program for Quality and Productivity (PBQP), being decisive for the development of quality in Brazil.

“In Brazil, since the beginning of the 90's, a great movement has been observed in favor of improving the quality of products and services. The creation by the Federal Government of the Brazilian Quality and Productivity Program, the economic opening, which exposed Brazilian companies to an environment of great competition, the evolution of the Brazilian citizen as a consumer, who began to exercise his rights and duties more fully, and currency stabilization were inducing and decisive factors for this movement.” (LOBO, 2003. p. 2).

Quality management in Brazilian companies has gone through great challenges, however over time it is no longer seen as a cost, but as a factor of competitiveness.

2.3. Management Excellence Model - MEG

Brazilian model created and perfected by the National Quality Foundation - FNQ, which features the concept of continuous learning, since its operation is inspired by the PDCA cycle (Plan, Do, Check, Learn). The teachings proposed by MEG is a reference in the learning and implementation of management practices, it does not prescribe and does not dictate rules that must be absolutely followed, but questions are raised allowing the entrepreneur to reflect on the practices that should be implemented in your company, because the model is adaptable to any type of organization that can adapt it according to the organizational culture already installed, by stimulating the management practice so that the organization generates results, the MEG becomes a model capable of leverage revenues without losing the quality of products and / or services.



Figure 1- *Management Excellence Model*.

Source: National Quality Foundation.

The MEG is based on 8 (eight) criteria, which are: leadership, strategies and plans, customers, society, information and knowledge, people, processes and results as evidenced in the figure above, they justify the teachings of the model, being willing to in ways that facilitate understanding of the structure.

“The Excellence Criteria guarantee the organization a better understanding of its management system, in addition to providing a systemic view of management, the market and the local or global scenario where the company operates or relates. The MEG mandala, which contains the Criteria, symbolizes the organization, which is an organic system, adaptable to the environment ”. (NATIONAL QUALITY FOUNDATION, 2015).

The complexity of current organizations has required entrepreneurs to have a more in-depth and systemic view of the effectiveness of management practices already applied in enterprises, since knowledge of internal forces and the analysis of external factors are extremely important for the achievement of strategic business objectives. . MEG is based on the principle that companies are adaptable to the environment in which they operate, thus symbolizing an organic environment.

2.4.Certification

According to Maranhão (2001, p.48) "certification is the formal recognition made by an organ accredited by the government or by a private entity that an organization meets specified requirements".

Certification must explicitly state or imply that a certain thing, status or event

PROCEM Certification as a Relevant Factor in Increasing the Competitiveness of Companies in Imperatriz-MA

is true, and must be issued by someone or some institution that has public support and faith, that is, that has credibility with society.

However, in order to obtain certification, some requirements required by the program must be met, which are audited by professionals duly trained by the certifying institution.

2.4.1. ISO series 9000

The ISO 9000 series standards refer to a set of requirements that aim to improve internal processes, giving greater attention to employees, observing customer and supplier satisfaction, becoming a continuous process in the search for better quality of the management system .

"This Standard promotes the adoption of a process approach for the development, implementation and improvement of the effectiveness of a quality management system to increase customer satisfaction by meeting customer requirements". (NBR ISO 9001: 2000, p. 2).

For a company to function effectively, it must identify and interconnect the different processes of its management system, so it will be able to develop improvements and / or enhancements in its business, from this interconnection of processes the company will have greater conditions to meet the requirements of the your customers.

The entire certification process aims to identify practices that are requirements of the management model that is being applied, continuously developing ways that can contribute to the improvement of the procedures already implemented, if there is no promotion of the creation of new management practices.

"NBR ISO 9001 specifies requirements for a quality management system that can be used by organizations for internal application, for certification or for contractual purposes. It is focused on the effectiveness of the quality management system in meeting customer requirements ". (NBR ISO 9001: 2000, p. 3).

Customers are the most precious assets that every organization has, the process is totally aimed at organizational efficiency, reducing waste and increasing perceived quality.

2.4.2. Maranhão Supplier Development Program (PROCEM)

PROCEM Certification as a Relevant Factor in Increasing the Competitiveness of Companies in Imperatriz-MA

Program created by the PDF (Supplier Development Program) in 2002, with the objective of forming quality local suppliers, to serve the large companies that have settled in the State of Maranhão, companies such as: (CEMAR, CESTE, Eneva, Solar, Vale and Alumar), who became maintainers of the program.

“Through a planned and organized system, PROCEM allows discipline in the supply process, minimizing costs and increasing the confidence of buyers, who now have certified companies in 4 areas of business management: Quality and Productivity; Health, Workplace Safety and Environment; Accounting, Tax and Labor Law; and Social Responsibility. ” (MARANHÃO SUPPLIERS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, 2015).

Acting in quality and productivity airlines; health, work safety and the environment; accounting, tax and labor; and social responsibility, the program has become a competitive differential for companies that participate in the certification process.

The benefits of the program range from improved service to technological development, including the reorganization of its accounting activities, as well as the application of preventive safety and quality of life actions for employees.

The execution of the program is developed from well-planned actions, specialized consulting by auditors, partnerships and the search for information and / or knowledge, aiming at the development of companies seeking certification, thus increasing the competitiveness and effectiveness of organizations, aiming perpetuate the business of each company in the market where it operates, increasing the productivity and quality of the products and / or services offered.

2.4.2.1. Program Structure (PROCEM)

The certification process basically consists of 3 (three) steps:

- 1st Stage: Integration Seminar (4h);

PROCEM Certification as a Relevant Factor in Increasing the Competitiveness of Companies in Imperatriz-MA

In this stage, one of the program's auditors makes a presentation of it, showing the stages that compose it, during all this process the questions raised by the entrepreneurs are clarified.

- 2nd Stage: Training of suppliers:

Module I - Quality and Productivity (24h) - Reinforcement of (8h);

Module II - Health, Safety and Environment (24h) - Reinforcement of (8h);

Module III - Accounting, Tax and Labor (24h) - Reinforcement of (8h);

Module IV - Social Responsibility (16h) - Reinforcement of (8h).

It is extremely important to show that training and qualification are necessary for all levels of an organization, it is not satisfactory that only one level has the knowledge to maintain the program. Professional performance in the activities performed (each employee) should be strengthened and improved, especially when the training program is initiated by the managers themselves, highlighting the importance of participation, thus facilitating the applicability of the new knowledge proposed in the training process.

To reach the objective when PROCEM proposes to train and qualify managers and collaborators, it is necessary that entrepreneurs are open to the necessary changes that the market demands from the moment that there is mutual acceptance and collaboration (manager and collaborator) in the process of change will be easier and productivity will continue to leverage.

- 3rd Stage: Audit and Certification.

During the certification process, the entrepreneur goes through the phases described above, the awareness seminar will highlight the benefits of the program and its operation for interested entrepreneurs. In the 2nd stage, the companies have already signed the term of adhesion to the program, agreeing with their requirements, thus starting to train in the referred modules, where it will be exposed how the program should be developed, remembering that in the course of the process the company receives 2 (two) (4h) monitoring each being in person, where the auditor will assist the process, answering questions and providing guidance on the application of new management practices.

PROCEM Certification as a Relevant Factor in Increasing the Competitiveness of Companies in Imperatriz-MA

During the course of 1 (one) year the companies went through a series of training and monitoring, so they must be able to receive visits from the auditors, where the requirements proposed in the 4 modules of the program will be analyzed by sampling, the analysis is carried out according to figure 2, where the minimum score of each module and its respective weight is presented, at the end of the process the organization must reach the minimum required average.

Modules	Minimum score	Weight	Final score
Quality and productivity.	65	30	70.50 (Weighted average)
Health, safety and environment.	70	30	
Accounting, tax and labor.	80	30	
Social responsibility.	60	10	

Figure 2 - Classification
Source: (PROCEM, 2005)

2.4.2.2. Certification Renewal

After completing all the stages for certification, going through the final audit where all the evidences of the implementation of the management system are verified, which must meet at least the minimum requirements of the program in the 4 (four) areas of business management, the company receives the certificate valid for 2 (two) years.

However, for the subsequent renewal of certification, the company receives acAfter a maintenance audit in one of the 4 (four) modules, the validity of the recertification is also two years.

3. METHODOLOGY

PROCEM Certification as a Relevant Factor in Increasing the Competitiveness of Companies in Imperatriz-MA

In order to determine PROCEM certification as a relevant factor in increasing the competitiveness of companies in Imperatriz - MA, the type of research adopted was exploratory, which is supported by bibliographical and documentary analyzes.

Bibliographic research was used to clarify and assemble terms related to the subject in question, developed from consultation on material already prepared, such as articles, books, newspapers, magazines, monographs, theses, among others.

The universe of this research was the companies already certified in Imperatriz - MA, being constituted by different branches of activity, according to information from FIEMA total 9 (nine).

The research was carried out with quantitative and qualitative approaches. The first is aimed at the total number of companies that have PROCEM certification in the city of Imperatriz / MA, the questionnaire was applied with the owner of the enterprise or with an employee who has direct contact with the certification sector, with the object of investigating improvements achieved after the implementation of the program, The second was directed to auditors who receive training from FIEMA to apply the methodology of the program, seeking to address different views of the management model studied.

Data were collected through interviews, using interrogation techniques using a previously structured model (according to the attached model), the contact was made by phone and e-mail, and the research took place between 11 (eleven) to May 15 (fifteen) 2015.

In the quantitative research, analysis of tabulated data was used, organized in graphs to facilitate the interpretation of the collected information.

In qualitative, data processing was performed through the content analysis procedure. Content analysis is particularly used to study material of a qualitative type. Therefore, a first reading should be made to organize the ideas included in order to later analyze the elements and rules that determine them.

4. PRACTICAL FRAMEWORK: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS OF RESULTS

4.1. Quantitative research

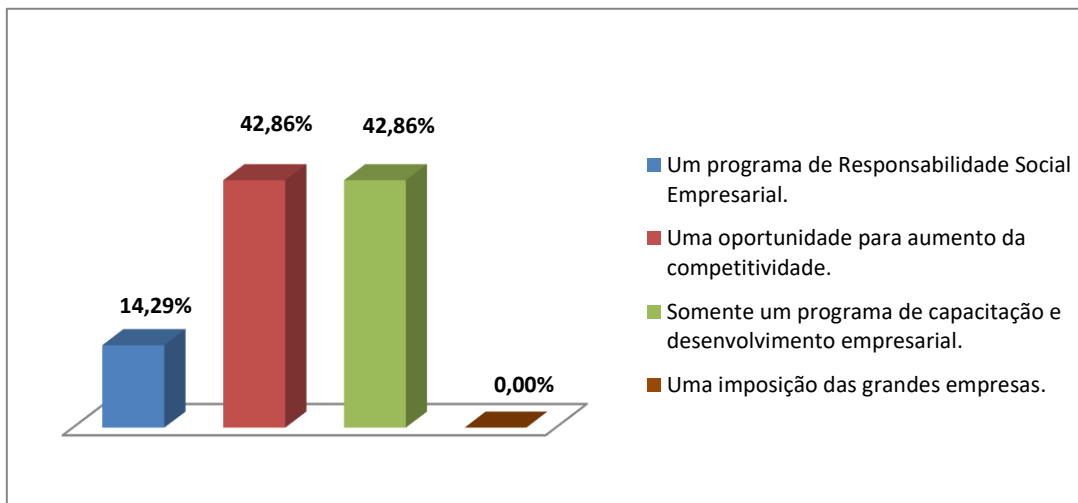
Of the total of 9 (nine) duly certified companies that, according to information provided by FIEMA, they are duly renewed with their certification, the survey was carried out

PROCEM Certification as a Relevant Factor in Increasing the Competitiveness of Companies in Imperatriz-MA

in 7 (seven).

4.1.1 Survey research and results

1. For you, the PROCEM program is:



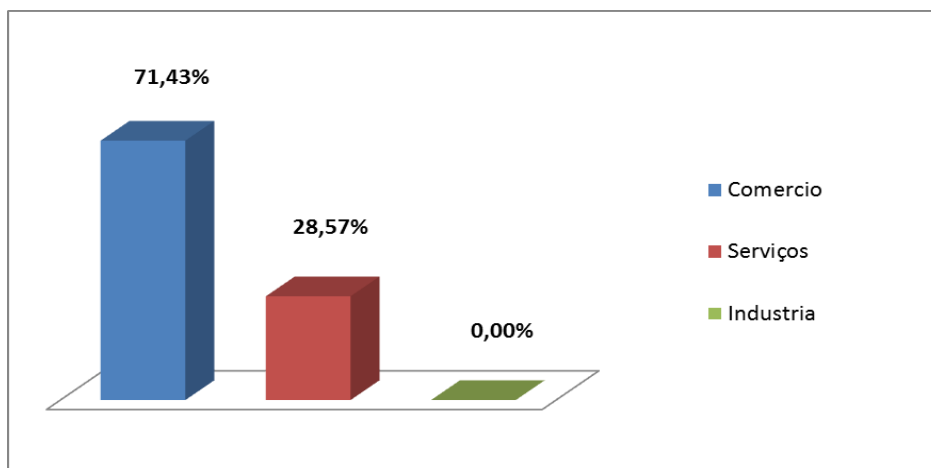
Graphic 1

According to the research carried out, in the questioning in order to obtain the characterization of PROCEM by entrepreneurs, two alternatives tied with 42.86%, which are: an opportunity to increase competitiveness and only a training and business development program, with 14.29% said it was a Corporate Social Responsibility program, the option of being imposed by large companies was not mentioned.

2. How old is your company in the market?

The general average of all surveyed companies is 17 years in the market.

3. Branch of activity?

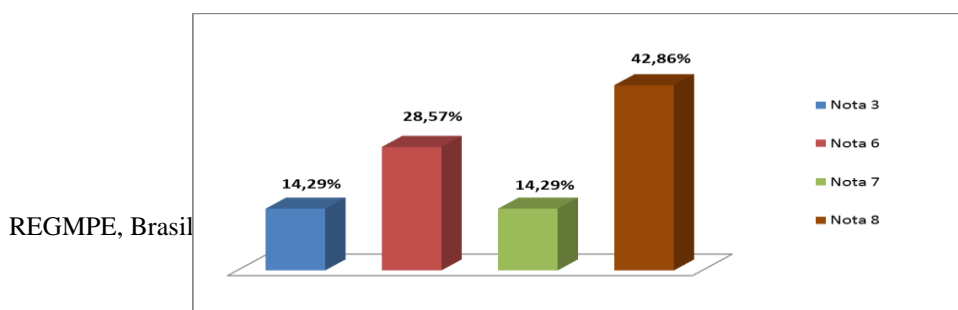


Graph 2

The areas of activity of the researched enterprises are: 57.14% commerce, 28.57% services, and there was no industry, as there are even certified companies, however they do not have their certification properly renewed.

The graph above shows the reality of the city of Imperatriz / MA, where commercial companies are the majority, showing that they are concerned with the future, thus seeking a differential in their management.

4. From 0 to 10, how much did your participation in PROCEM increase the competitiveness of your business?



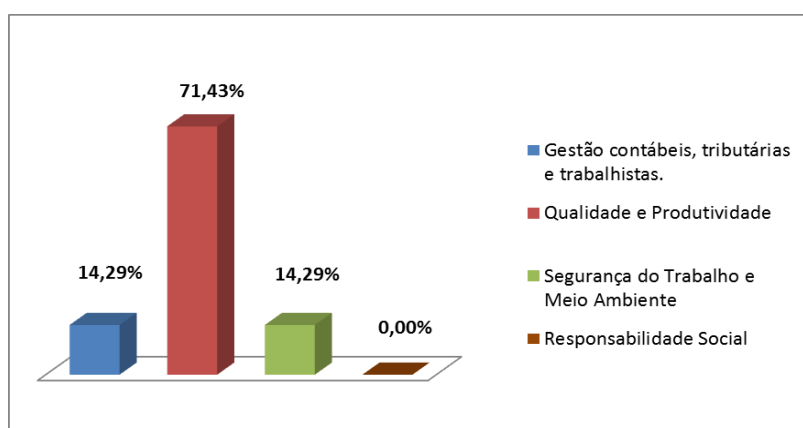
Graph 3

PROCEM Certification as a Relevant Factor in Increasing the Competitiveness of Companies in Imperatriz-MA

In the question that were asked about the note that would represent the increase in the competitiveness of their projects, 42.86% indicated note 8 (eight), with 28.57% indicated note 6, tied with 14.29%, note 7 (seven) and 3 (three).

According to the entrepreneurs surveyed, PROCEM contributed to increase the competitiveness of their enterprises, which can be seen in Graph 3.

5. During the certification process, which module do you think was more difficult to complete the requirements.



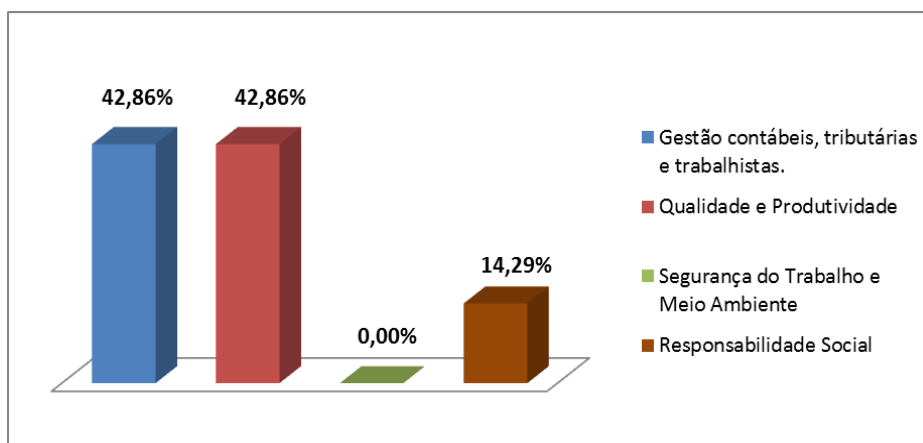
Graph 4

Regarding the questioning about the most difficult module to complete the requirements, 71.43% prepared the quality and productivity module, tied with 14.29% were the accounting, tax and labor management module and work and environment safety, social responsibility. was not indicated.

Quality is a process of continuous evolution, this particularity may have determined the indication as the most difficult module to be concluded, since the search for excellence is always one step ahead.

6. What is the Management System module structured by PROCEM, you consider that you obtained the greatest gain after certification.

PROCEM Certification as a Relevant Factor in Increasing the Competitiveness of Companies in Imperatriz-MA



Graph 5

As for the modules that showed the greatest gain for the company after the certification tied with 42.86%, those for accounting, tax, labor and quality and productivity management were indicated, with 14.29% the one for Social responsibility, while the one for security work and environment there was no indication.

The surveyed companies reported that the certification brought significant gains to the enterprise, both in quality and in accounting, tax and labor aspects, in addition to a certain awareness of social responsibility.

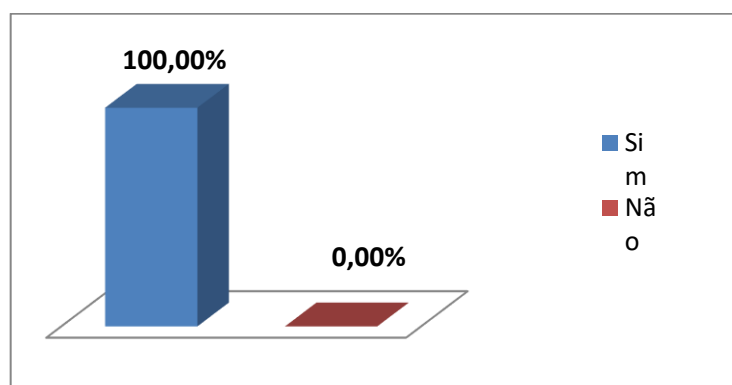
7. Do you have any suggestions that PROCEM can further contribute to the improvement of companies?

The most frequent suggestions were:

- Resolve divergences in the requirements that are oriented as necessary to comply and what was charged by the auditors on the day of the certification visit, mainly regarding the security module;
- Pre-audits more frequently;
- Higher frequency of auditors in companies;
- Follow-up after certification.

8. Would you recommend the participation of other companies in PROCEM?

PROCEM Certification as a Relevant Factor in Increasing the Competitiveness of Companies in Imperatriz-MA



Graph 6

Regarding the participation of partner companies in PROCEM, 100% of the interviewees chose the option yes, this demonstrates that the business class has the program as a serious project that can bring expressive results to the certified enterprise.

4.2. Qualitative research

In order to obtain a broader view of the program, a survey was conducted in the form of interviews with 4 (four) PROCEM auditors, as they are responsible for training and follow-up monitoring in companies seeking certification.

4.2.1. Search results

1. Responsible Module:

Interviewee 1: Quality and Productivity.

Interviewee 2: Accounting, tax and labor management.

Interviewee 3: Workplace Safety and Environment.

Interviewee 4: Social responsibility.

2. According to your experience in the business market in Imperatriz / MA, what is the main factor that leads companies to seek PROCEM certification?

Interviewee 1: Improve management and expand the market.

Interviewee 2: Each company has a motivation and the motivation is not always the same for the same group, but in an attempt to generalize, I believe that the motivation is the desire to improve the company.

PROCEM Certification as a Relevant Factor in Increasing the Competitiveness of Companies in Imperatriz-MA

Interviewee 3: Aiming to be more competitive and updated with technologies and legislation (update).

Interviewee 4: Due to the search for procedures, because there is no standard.

3. Do you agree with the statement that PROCEM contributes to increasing and / or developing the competitiveness of certified companies?

Interviewee 1: Yes.

Interviewee 2: Yes.

Interviewee 3: Yes, but it is worth mentioning that the applicability of the acquired techniques and knowledge is constant in your daily company life.

Interviewee 4: Yes.

4. According to FIEMA, only 9 (nine) companies in Imperatriz / MA are certified in days with the entity, in your opinion what is the cause of the dropouts and disinterest in the program over time?

Interviewee 1: Cost in quality maintenance, since for our region, price is still a major factor in the purchase decision and quality is a trend, however companies that remain during this phase of transition from trend to fashion will stand out in the market.

Interviewee 2: When it comes to quality, the watchword is standard, that is, it is not a matter of point of view, it is to comply with the requirements, in this case, those of the program. Many companies relax after initial certification. I believe this is due to the fact that the culture of quality management has not yet been absorbed by the majority. This is a process, sometimes slow, as it must not be mechanical, but incorporated into the company's work philosophy.

Interviewee 3: Sometimes companies are accommodated and many of them do not see that the certification is valid as well as the rotation of employees who participate in the process is very large.

Interviewee 4: Lack of quality culture, measuring, looking for improvements, this is continuous.

5. Would you recommend PROCEM certification for entrepreneurs in Imperatriz / MA? Why?

PROCEM Certification as a Relevant Factor in Increasing the Competitiveness of Companies in Imperatriz-MA

Interviewee 1: Yes, a company that invests in quality is now preparing for the future and when the others come, those who stay and improve will prevail in this jungle.

Interviewee 2: Yes, because the benefits outweigh the costs.

Interviewee 3: Yes, so that they can really see the future as well as get to know your company as a whole.

Interviewee 4: Yes, we need more professionalism in management. PROCEM requires discipline.

5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Based on the information obtained during the preparation of this scientific article, PROCEM is a program that has developed the culture of quality of products / Serbs offered in the State of Maranhão, even though the local scenario is not the most receptive for this type of project, the same has achieved quite expressive results.

The companies in Imperatriz / MA that were the object of study of this work, see the program as an opportunity to increase their competitiveness and gradually maximize their profits, in addition to being a very serious program in terms of training and business development.

Certified organizations point to an increase in the improvement of the internal practices of their businesses, and when asked about the indication of the program to other partner companies with whom they work, they did not hesitate to inform that they would indicate.

In the view of the program's auditors, a company that invests in quality is preparing for the future, that is, starting out ahead of the competition, planning ahead and reaping quality results.

The present work sought to identify and demonstrate how PROCEM has contributed positively and / or negatively to the companies participating in the program, however, in view of the studies, it has managed to achieve good results for already certified organizations, thus increasing local competitiveness. .

It is expected that the managers of companies that have access to this work will feel encouraged to know and / or apply the methodology of the PROCEM program, thus contributing to the improvement of organizational practices, generating better results in the management of the enterprises.

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