

## Building An Organizational Culture That Is Committed to Excellence



### What is a culture that is committed to excellence?

If we examine excellence models being used around the world, there are nine principles that define high performing organizations (Organizational Excellence Framework © 2010, Dawn Ringrose). The principles form the foundation for continual improvement and organizational excellence, characterize the culture and values of the organization, and depict the way people work together and with their stakeholders.

The nine principles include:

1. Leadership involvement – ensuring senior management is committed and actively involved in establishing and communicating direction.
2. Alignment – understanding the organization is a system of interrelated and interconnected work processes and all activities need to be aligned with the established direction.
3. Focus on the customer – ensuring the primary aim of everyone in the organization is to understand and meet the needs of the customer.
4. People involvement – nurturing and reinforcing cooperation and teamwork and giving employees the opportunity to develop their full potential.
5. Prevention based process management – establishing consistency in work processes and developing a mindset of prevention.

6. Partnership development – developing and maintaining value-adding relationships with suppliers and partners.
7. Continuous improvement – harnessing the collective knowledge, skills, and creativity of stakeholders to relentlessly pursue improvement.
8. Data based decision making – basing decisions on performance measurement findings.
9. Societal commitment – striving to understand and demonstrate corporate commitment to society.

## **Why is a culture committed to excellence important?**

The nine principles are directly related to best management practices across nine key management areas. Over the past 20 years it has been validated by research with national excellence award recipients that organizations successfully implementing these practices realize a culture that is committed to excellence.

National excellence award recipients have demonstrated the successful implementation of best management practices, realized sustainable results across a balanced system of measurement and developed a culture committed to excellence. Some of these organizations have included: 3M Company, American Express, BMW, Boeing, Cargill, Coca Cola, Government of Singapore, Raffles Institution, Siemens and Xerox.

## **How do we assess the commitment to excellence in an organization?**

Recently, the Organizational Excellence Technical Committee (OETC) QMD ASQ launched the ‘first global assessment on the current state of organizational excellence’. The research has been endorsed by the Global Benchmarking Network and ISO Technical Committee 176 and is intended to provide data on the extent to which organizations have a culture committed to excellence and have deployed best management practices. While individual organization results will remain confidential, the aggregate results will be shared by organization size, industry sector and country on the open LinkedIn site for the OETC at <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/4369749>.

The assessment tool being used in the research is based on the Organizational Excellence Framework publication (© 2010 Dawn Ringrose) that ‘integrates leading global excellence models’ and ‘provides implementation guidelines’ for the user. The publication is intended to provide additional support for excellence models and to encourage organizations to use best management practices to improve their performance and productivity. The publication is available for download at no charge at <http://organizationalexcellencespecialists.ca/> and Appendix 3 provides an abbreviated version of the assessment tool.

Leaders from organizations can participate in the global assessment by completing the Teaser Assessment. The assessment takes about five minutes and provides a free feedback report to the respondent’s inbox. The report provides a synopsis of the methodology and the self-assessment ratings.

For each principle that receives a low rating, the report lists the best management practices that are related so the leader can review these practices and gauge successful deployment. The link to the Teaser assessment is <http://www qlbs.com/QimonoVBA/assessment/OrgExFrameworkTeaser>

## **What can we do to improve the commitment to excellence?**

The matrix at this link provides a listing of the principles running horizontally and a list of best management practices running vertically with touch points for the most direct relationships (note: practices highlighted with an asterisk (\*) apply to micro size organizations with 1 to 25 employees) <https://www.dropbox.com/s/phxb5qqcnit6o4j/Relationship%20between%20Principles%20and%20Best%20Management%20Practices.pdf?dl=0> .

The best way to improve the organization's commitment to excellence is to do a Full Assessment of the organization against the principles and best management practices of an excellence model <http://www qlbs.com/QimonoVBA/Assessment/OrgExFramework> and work towards full deployment of the practices.

Ideally, all employees should be invited to participate in the assessment and be engaged in action plans to address opportunities for improvement (view sample report at <http://www qlbs.com/OrgEx/OrgExFramework.html>). By involving the employees and meeting regularly to review progress, everyone in the organization gets to participate in the excellence journey.

Although all practices are important, two practices of special note are: (1) encouraging employees to provide ideas and suggestions about how to improve the way work is done, as the vast majority of improvement will come from employees doing the work, and (2) looking outside the organization and learning from others (benchmarking), as other improvement ideas will come from organizations across sectors.

## **About the Author**



***Dawn Ringrose** MBA, FCMC is Principal of Organizational Excellence Specialists and Author of the Organizational Excellence Framework and related toolkit. Her qualifications include: Masters of Business Administration, Certified Organizational Excellence Specialist, Certified Excellence Professional, Registered ISO 9000 Specialist, Assessor of Quality Systems. She has worked in the area of organizational excellence since 1990 and is currently the representative for Canada on the Organizational Excellence Technical Committee (QMD, ASQ) and Global Benchmarking Network.*

Email [dawn@organizationalexcellencespecialists.ca](mailto:dawn@organizationalexcellencespecialists.ca)