

Collaboration is a Success Factor for Organizational Excellence



There exists a tremendous opportunity to educate the working population about the positive relationship that exists between implementing an excellence model and improving organizational performance. Although much good work has been done over the past 25 years, the overall effort remains rather fragmented and siloed.

This blog suggests there is much to be gained through collaboration but also questions whether the excellence community has the will.

Excellence Models

Back in the late 1980's and early 1990's, research was conducted on the characteristics of high performing organizations and four excellence models were developed that described the principles and best management practices that were common to these organizations. These models were Malcolm Baldrige, European Foundation for Quality Management, Canadian Framework for Excellence and Australian Business Excellence Framework.

Since that time, these models have evolved and the research has validated the positive relationship between implementing an excellence model and improving organizational performance. Today, about 55 countries around the world are promoting an excellence model and adjudicating an award program to recognize organizations that have successfully implemented the model and sustained improvement¹. However, there remains very low awareness (10% to 20%) of these models amongst the working population². Most surprisingly, this low awareness extends to include the professionals that are best equipped to assist with implementation of the models such as business advisory professionals that work in quality management, management consulting, accounting and so forth.

Two initiatives are proposed that will unite professionals working in the excellence field and develop more awareness across the working population. These initiatives include continuing the development of a Global Organizational Excellence (OE) Index that reports on current state and development of a Global Awards Program that showcases best-in-class organizations across industry sectors.

Global OE Index

The intention of the Global OE Index is to unite the profession worldwide and use an integrated and neutral excellence model that will provide a snapshot about the extent to which organizations are characterized by excellence. This model would provide a common foundation to collect and report data that would be beneficial to both the excellence community and the working population.

Over the past four years considerable work has already been done on such an index.

On March 31, 2015, the Organizational Excellence Technical Committee QMD, ASQ (OETC) launched the 'first global assessment on the current state of organizational excellence'. This research was supported by the Global Benchmarking Network, International Academy for Quality and ISO Technical Committee 176. The project was intended to provide data on the extent to which organizations are characterized by the principles and the best management practices of high performing organizations that are found in excellence models.

Intended to augment decades of research sharing results for organizations that had successfully implemented excellence models, this research project has been more robust in that it has gathered data from a more varied population:

- Leadership and management personnel (up to two people per organization)
- Different size organizations (micro, small, medium, large)
- Different types of organizations (government, business, non-profit)
- 7 regions (World Bank Analytical Grouping)
- 21 industry sectors (International Standard Industrial Classification)
- Organizations with and without awareness of excellence models

With 1,029 respondents, the aggregate findings have provided a preliminary snapshot on the current state of organizational excellence around the world by organization size, industry sector and region. The report can be viewed here <https://organizationalexcellencespecialists.ca/workshops-events/global-oe-index/>

Annual reports on the Global OE Index will provide value for the excellence community in general and for the working population at large:

- Uniting the excellence profession on a common project

- Encouraging organizations to start or continue their excellence journey, using an excellence model
- Providing dashboard results to show aggregate ratings on principles and best management practices by organization size, industry sector and geographical region
- Encouraging organizations to compare their performance with others
- Encouraging organizations to apply for a prestigious national excellence award
- Envisioning that organizations improving their performance will make a positive contribution to their local economy, trade and resident quality of life
- Enabling all countries to participate, in a more competitive and sustainable way in the global economy
- Making the world a better place for future generations

To provide consistency over time, it will be important to continue using the same model and assessment process. The model and assessment tool that has been used to date are based on the Organizational Excellence Framework publication (© Dawn Ringrose & Associates Inc, 2010). The publication ‘integrates the leading global excellence models’ that define the principles and best management practices of high performing organizations and is unique in that it ‘provides implementation guidelines’ for the user.

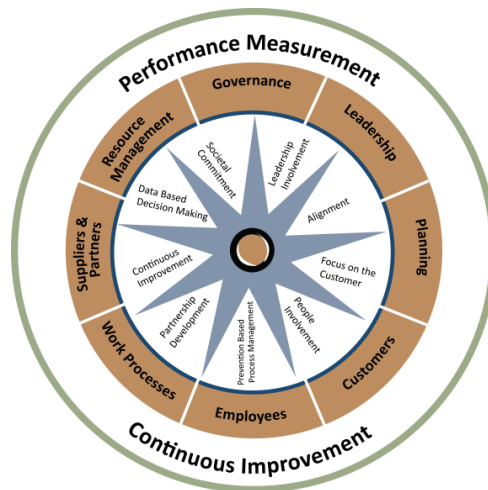


Figure 1. Organizational Excellence Framework (©2010)

The assessment tool has been automated and allows the respondent to choose from a Short Assessment on the principles (Teaser) and a Long Assessment on the principles and best management practices (Full). The Teaser Assessment captures the culture of excellence in the organization while the Full Assessment captures the extent to which the practices have been deployed throughout the organization. For different size organizations, the Full Assessment automatically defaults to the micro size version for organizations with 1 to 25 employees (i.e. 50% of the practices). To maximize

participation it will continue to be important that respondent data and information remain confidential and for only aggregate data to be reported.

Global Award Program

Even though excellence models have provided tremendous benefit to organizations and global research has validated such, the reality is:

- The working population remains unaware of excellence models
- The membership and participation in national excellence award programs has been declining
- The number of countries offering national excellence award programs has been declining
- Recent research <https://hbr.org/2017/09/why-do-we-undervalue-competent-management> has revealed:
 - very few organizations across 34 countries actually use core management practices, as evidenced by Interviews with managers from more than 20,000 companies in four sectors - manufacturing, health care, retail, and higher education
 - summary data charts for countries such as Germany, Japan, the US, China, India show it is rare to perform at higher levels

Thus, there exists a tremendous opportunity for the excellence community to reverse these trends by collaborating and working toward a common aim. A Global Award Program would be similar to the Olympics where best-in-class organizations from countries gather to compete on the world stage every four years.

The following figure depicts the key components of such a program:

- Support organizations provide products and services (e.g. publications, standards, training, consulting, local and regional award programs, etc) to organizations on their quest for excellence. These organizations encourage high performing organizations to apply for a national excellence award
- National bodies provide training and/or adjudicate national excellence award programs and validate 'best in class' organizations. These bodies encourage gold award recipients to participate in the Global Award Program
- Gold award recipients of national programs participate in the Global Award Program
- Strategic partners (e.g. media, national governments) promote the Global Award Program
- Adjudicator for the Global Award Program is a neutral body that hosts the program and certifies the assessors. The program recognizes award recipients across 21 industry sectors as defined by the International Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities
https://unstats.un.org/unsd/publication/seriesM/seriesm_4rev4e.pdf



Figure 2. Global Award Program

The vision for such a program would capture how the excellence community is working together to increase awareness and participation by leveraging resources and initiatives already in place and adding resources and initiatives that serve to bring the excellence community together and make it stronger.

This shared vision would create a stronger presence with leaders of organizations that are striving for performance improvement.

It would also help develop a common value proposition for:

- Leaders – excellence models provides a program for long term organizational success
- Members – professionals that assist in the excellence journey by building awareness, attracting interest, conducting assessments, delivering training programs, and providing implementation support to organizations
- Organizations – that receive value from recognition. While the national excellence award would recognize successful implementation of the home excellence model, the global award program would recognize successful implementation of the integrated and neutral model and the recipient as best-in-class in their industry sector
- Investors - Countries and their organizations would communicate value for investors. Organizations that have achieved national and global recognition using excellence models will demonstrate exceptional results across a balanced system of measurement and lead their specific sector
- Outcomes – research will show the linkage between the application of excellence models and contributions to:
 - National economy, trade and resident quality of life

- Social, economic and environmental indicators

Such an effort would encourage behaviour change where leaders of organizations would be motivated to participate in a self-assessment, compare current state to others and compare current state to best-in-class organizations. Figure 3 depicts the key activities for leaders that will contribute to behaviour change:

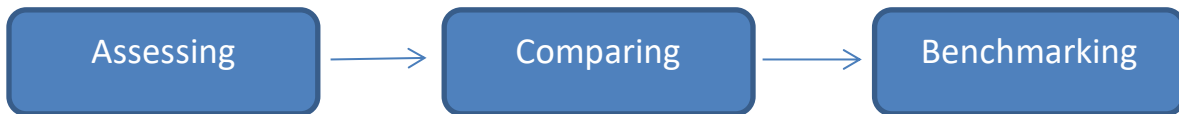


Figure 3. Behaviour Change

It is anticipated the united effort could move the awareness about excellence models from current state (10-20%) to desired future state (70-80%) within 20 years.

That said, it will require the excellence community to work together:

- To establish a unified digital marketing effort
- To measure the results of their efforts:
 - Awareness, understanding and application of excellence models throughout the working population
 - Membership in national excellence programs
 - Training programs at educational institutions, professional associations, national excellence award bodies, global excellence program
 - Certification programs for professionals and assessors
 - Respondents for the Global OE Index by size, industry sector and country
 - Award applications and recipients for:
 - national excellence programs
 - the Global Award Program
 - Countries:
 - offering national excellence award programs
 - participating in the Global Award Program
- Linkage between the application of excellence models and the local economy, trade and resident quality of life

At the heart of working together is collaboration. This means, we must take a relatively siloed and fragmented community that has a scarcity mindset and encourage the adoption of a growth mindset. First, we must define collaboration so everyone has a common understanding of what it is and what it

entails. If we google the word 'collaboration' we find this definition: *Collaboration is a working practice whereby individuals and/or organizations work together to a common purpose to achieve mutual benefit.* However, for anyone that has embarked on collaborative projects there is a much deeper appreciation for:

- The purpose:
 - Joining together to address issues
 - Achieving a shared goal
 - Generating more value than you can by acting independently
- The benefits:
 - Securing access to resources (human, financial technological)
 - Sharing risks
 - Engaging in joint research and development initiatives
 - Improving the quality, cost and turnaround time
 - Working smarter not harder
 - Brainstorming, thinking creatively and innovating
 - Working together to address challenging social, economic and environmental issues
- True collaboration:
 - Purpose and shared goals are prioritized over and above self-interest
 - Participants:
 - willing to form trust-based relationships
 - willing to modify their own organizational processes or systems to maximize the overall effectiveness of the collaboration
 - investing in activities that enhance the capabilities of their collaborative partners
 - engaging in joint business planning and dedicating resources
 - sharing information and data
 - monitoring and measuring the impacts

So, the question remains, Does the excellence community have the will to harness what we already have in place and work collaboratively together to make a difference? If the answer is no, we can continue to operate in a fragmented and siloed fashion, maintain a scarcity mindset and deliver the status quo. But if the answer is yes, we can work together toward a common aim to create more awareness, understanding and application of excellence models and to measure the results that will bode well for organizations, industry sectors and regions around the world.

References:

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4. Organizational Excellence Technical Committee, https://www.linkedin.com/groups?home=&gid=4369749&trk=my_groups-tile-grp

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