Leadership Role in ISO 9001 and Excellence Models to Achieve Sustainable Excellence

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During my operational excellence career, I am often approached with the question: what are the enablers to achieve and sustain operational excellence? My usual response is, "an inspiring vision, engaged leaders, a robust strategic plan, employees" and so forth. Then, I get asked, "what are the most critical ones?" My response is: they are equally critical depending on the state of affairs of your organization, however, if I must choose, I will choose **leadership** and employees as the two most critical success factors to enable excellence.

In following paragraphs, I have summarized the role of leadership in creating a sustainable performance improvement culture in; ISO 9001:2015 – Quality Management System requirements standard, the US Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence (CPE) and the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Excellence framework.

ISO 9001:2015 - Quality Management System Requirements: The ISO 9001 standard provides a solid <u>foundation</u> for building an excellent organization to achieve sustainable world class performance. The first publication of the ISO 9000 family of standards came about in 1987. At that time, the present form of ISO 9001 standard consisted of three models for quality assurance: ISO 9001-design, production, installation and servicing, ISO 9002-production, installation and servicing, and ISO 9003- final inspection and test. The ISO 9001-2000 revision resulted in major changes. The title was revised to ISO 9001 Quality Management System Requirements to shift the focus from merely a quality assurance model to a management system focused on achieving results. As we all know the 2015 revision has resulted in significant changes. In short, the ISO 9001 standard, since its introduction in 1987 to date, has gone through a transformation from being a Quality Assurance model to a Quality Management System model with process based and risk-based thinking in design, development and improvement of the quality management system. The ISO 9001:2015 consists of seven major clauses i.e. Context of the organization, _**LEADERSHIP**_, Planning, Support, Operation, Performance evaluation and Improvement. More detailed information can be found on the International Organization for Standardization website https://www.iso.org/home.html.

The following is a brief overview of the top management role in ISO 9001:2015 to implement, manage and continually improve the quality management system:

- ❖ Provide leadership to establish the quality policy and strategic direction
- ❖ Ensure that the resources needed for the quality management system are available
- ❖ Engage, direct and support persons to contribute to the effectiveness of the QMS
- ❖ Promote improvement
- ❖ Support other relevant management roles to demonstrate their leadership as it applies to their management systems

❖ Demonstrate leadership with respect to customer focus
❖ Ensure that the responsibilities and authorities for relevant roles are assigned, communicated and understood within the organization

USA Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence: The Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence (CPE) and the associated Baldrige award is named after Malcolm Baldrige, the 26th Secretary of Commerce of United States of America. The CPE is available for five sectors consisting of Business (manufacturing, service, small business, nonprofit, and government), Education, and Health Care. The Baldrige framework consists of seven categories i.e. ***LEADERSHIP***, strategy, customers, workforce, operations, results and measurement, analysis, & knowledge management. More detailed information can be found on the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) website https://www.nist.gov/baldrige.

The following is a brief overview of the leadership role in Baldrige CPE to improve performance and achieve sustainable results:

❖ Set the vision and values
❖ Deploy the organization's vision and values to the workforce, key suppliers, partners, customers and other stakeholders
❖ Promote legal and ethical behavior
❖ Create a sustainable organization
❖ Encourage frank, two-way communication throughout the organization
❖ Communicate key decisions
❖ Take an active role in reward and recognition programs to reinforce high performance
❖ Create a focus on action to accomplish the organization's objectives, improve performance, and attain its vision

European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM): The European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) was founded in 1989 to enhance the competitiveness of businesses. The EFQM is the custodian of the EFQM Excellence Model which was introduced in 1992. The model has evolved over time to keep abreast of changes in stakeholders needs. The EFQM also manages the EFQM Global Excellence Award Program and the associated assessment process. The program has three levels of recognitions, namely: 3 stars, 4 stars and 5 stars. The award is given to the leading organizations with a demonstrated track record of continuous performance improvement. The EFQM Excellence model consists of nine criteria which are categorized as "enablers" and "results". The Enabler criterion provides the "how" part of achieving excellence and consists of five elements i.e. ***Leadership***, People, Strategy, Partnerships and Resources. The Results criteria measures the performance achieved in four areas i.e. People, Customer, Society and Business. More detailed information can be found on the European Foundation for Quality Management website http://www.efqm.org/.

The following is a brief overview of the leadership role in EFQM excellence model to improve performance and achieve sustainable results:

- ❖ Ensure that the responsibilities and authorities for relevant roles are assigned, communicated and understood within the organization
- ❖ Inspire people and create a culture of involvement, ownership and empowerment
- ❖ Ensure that their people can contribute to their own, and the organization's ongoing success by realizing their full potential
- ❖ Ensure that the organization is flexible and manages change effectively
- ❖ Promote a culture which supports the generation of new ideas and new ways of thinking to encourage innovation and organizational development

Conclusion: Can it be a shared coincidence that the widely used ISO 9001:2015 – Quality Management System requirements standard, and two of the most recognized excellence models, US Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence (CPE) and the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Excellence framework, include "Leadership" as one of the criterion to achieve continuous performance improvement? Of course NOT! The role of leadership in achieving outstanding results is very succinctly put forward by the Quality Guru Dr. Joseph M. Juran in his famous quote, "Observing many companies in action, I am unable to point to a single instance in which stunning results were gotten without the active and personal leadership of the upper managers". Who would challenge that? The ISO 9001 standard provides a framework by highlighting the role of leadership in establishing the quality policy, making resources available, promoting improvement, providing customer focus and establishing a governance system. The Baldrige CPE and EFQM excellence framework takes it to another level by asking leaders to promote legal and ethical behavior, create a sustainable organization, take an active role in reward and recognition programs to reinforce high performance, create a focus on actions to accomplish the organization's objectives, create a culture of empowerment, help people to realize their full potential, ensure that the organization is flexible and manages change effectively, encourage innovation and organizational development, to name a few.

References:

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