



The Criteria in Business

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Every journey has a beginning, and the passage to Excellence is no different. When considering approaches to guide Nokia's Customer & Market Operations (CMO) organization from "Quality" mindset to "Performance Excellence" mindset, the Malcolm Baldrige and Quality Texas approaches were chosen. Members of Nokia's Customer Care and Quality team had experience with the Quality Texas Foundation and the Baldrige approach. With the approach chosen, Nokia embarked on a multi-year improvement effort.

There are many benefits to using the Baldrige criteria to assess and move towards Performance Excellence including having clearly defined criteria and an approach for continued improvement. Nokia established a formal Project Management Office (PMO) to lead and monitor progress towards their Performance Excellence vision.

The PMO initially focused on articulating the business needs and goals and then performed a current state analysis to understand the strengths and opportunities that needed prioritization. From a change management perspective, stakeholder awareness and commitment was focused on throughout the effort. Additionally, the program management office provided continuous communication on the goals, learnings, and improvements made throughout the effort.

In addition to driving towards Performance Excellence, key objectives for the Nokia CMO deployment included:

- Increasing organizational awareness and understanding of the "Performance Excellence" framework and criteria,
- Assisting the CMO organization to understand that Quality is broader than product quality and a quality department, and that the Performance Excellence framework reflects "Management Quality" for all departments in the organization.

The overall organization of the Performance Excellence effort was critical. In addition to engaging the leadership team as sponsors and as a steering group, a core team was established. Top performing employees across multiple functions were selected to lead each category. In addition to helping engage functional areas in the learnings, this also helped to create advocates in each area.

The core team's initial step was to understand the criteria, discuss what it meant to each person, and state how they believed Nokia CMO was performing. Each core team created support teams. These teams worked together to capture current state performance. To do this, they documented what they knew and interviewed other members in the organization. Often, leaders and/or support team members were asked to explore areas that were unfamiliar to them, which benefited the organization through increased cross functional knowledge. Once the current state was documented, external assessors were used to determine a baseline performance level.

Once the baseline performance level was determined:

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- Key gaps were identified and prioritized.
- Each key gap was sponsored by management team members
- Improvements were implemented
- Teams captured the improved state
- External assessors were again used to measure the improved approaches

In addition to closing key gaps and improving the business, additional benefits were achieved. Cross functional teamwork and learning's were evident. The organization's overall awareness and understanding of the Baldrige criteria improved, and there was an improved understanding of what it takes to achieve Excellence throughout the business.

Since the initial evaluation, Nokia's Customer Market Operations organization has continued with the approach of senior management serving as business sponsors on key improvement initiatives. Cross functional teams are used to provide new ways of working and identify alternative approaches to increasing overall performance – the journey to excellence continues.