

The Seven “Added Values” of the EFQM Process

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When visiting with senior leaders of an organization about the value of embarking on an EFQM journey, a frequently used phrase is “It’s not about the Award.” At that point, the discussion moves to writing a management document to submit for assessment, and the sense of leaders is that “We’re applying for an Award!” How do we convince leaders that there is value within the EFQM process above and beyond applying for an EFQM or EFQM Partner award?

Leaders need to understand what value the EFQM process provides if it’s not just about the award. Senior leaders and board members look for additional value, especially considering the investment of time involved in developing a management document.

In my experience, the following seven “Added Values” of the EFQM process demonstrate the value of developing an EFQM management document – even if you never submit the management document to an award process.

1. **Accountability Tool** – The structure of the EFQM process forces accountability. When senior leaders take responsibility for a particular EFQM category, they “own” the linkage among the three components of the application:
 - Key Information – What is important to the organization?
 - Enabler categories – Based on what is important, what do we do, and how do we do it?
 - Results category – Now that we’ve done it, were we successful?
2. **Sustainability Tool** – The EFQM process helps document how business is done at the organization. The departure of a senior leader doesn’t have to mean we start all over again. The application describes how the organization operates, and a new senior leader is able to “hit the ground running” because processes are already in place to ensure sustainability over time.
3. **Improvement Tool** – While the application is being written, areas for improvement (AFIs) are already being identified, prioritized, and addressed. This set of cross-cutting AFIs ensures a cross-functional approach to improvement.
4. **Alignment Tool** – The EFQM process helps move the organization past the “silo” mentality that sub-optimizes performance. Senior leaders can no longer view success in their functional area as sufficient – the EFQM process requires a “systems view” of success. CEOs, Boards of Directors, and other stakeholders should view this as a key value of the process – because their responsibility requires a systems perspective.
5. **Recruitment Tool** – the EFQM “application” is a great tool for recruitment of board members, senior leaders, and other key staff/stakeholders. Sharing the application (or just the Key Information) with the request that they review the document helps them determine if this is an organization and an improvement culture in which they want to participate.
6. **Reward and Recognition Tool** – the EFQM process has an award component to it. Whether through internal assessment or assessment at the EFQM Partner or EFQM level, recognition of progress is a great method of encouraging leaders and staff to continue to progress on the performance excellence journey.
7. **Language Tool** – the EFQM criteria allow an organization to have a common language of performance excellence. This consistent language allows all employees to view the organization through a similar “lens.”

The EFQM process allows leaders to view the organization as a synergistic whole. Getting started is the first step, and demonstrating the value of the EFQM process is key to helping leaders understand why they should take that first important step.

Core Values Partners, Inc., helps organizations focus, align, and accelerate their performance excellence efforts through effective deployment of the EFQM Excellence Model and the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. They work in close partnership with clients to advance excellence.

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