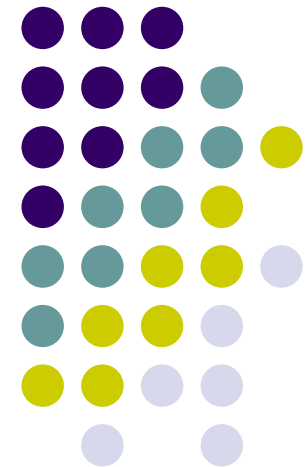


Organisational Learning and Organisational Excellence: *Two Sides of the same Coin*

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Sudi Sharifi, PhD



- Associate Professor at University of Salford, UK
- Director of the Research Centre for People, Work & Organization which is housed in the Management and Management Science Research Institute
- She has researched and taught over the past 20 years in different business schools in the UK including Manchester, Aston and Birmingham.
- Has acted as director of the MBA programme.

Alaa Garad



- Assistant Prof., Middlesex University Dubai
- Experience in Banking, IT, e-learning, Flight Catering, Education and Government
- Lead Auditor QMS ISO 9001
- Certified EFQM Assessor
- Senior Assessor in Several Quality and Excellence Awards:
 - Sheikh Khalifa Excellence Award
 - Sheikh Mohamed Bin Rashid Business Award
 - Dubai Quality Award
 - Abu-Dhabi Govt. Excellence Award
 - Ideas Arabia Competition
 - Head of assessment panel at RAK Govt. Award
 - Juror at Dubai Quality Award

What I want to tell you: (cited from Franz!)



- Purpose
- Background:
 - Evolution of Organisational Excellence
 - Assessment of DQA, SKEA and striving to be LO
 - Excellence & Learning
- How Learning Organisation Looks like?
- Can organisation apply quality/excellence effectively without learning?
- Empirical work at Dubai
- Findings
- Recommendations & Conclusion

Purpose:



1. To **explore the links** between both domains; Organisational Learning (OL) and Organisational Excellence (OE)
2. To **identify common approaches** that can enable Organisational Learning.
3. To **investigate how and why** organisations implement those approaches.

Background



- The Deming Prize (Japan)
- The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (USA)
- The European Quality Award (EFQM)
- Other national and regional awards based on the EFQM Model or Baldrige
 - e.g. Sheikh Khalifa and Dubai Excellence Award Models
- Increasing use for organisational self-assessment

Quality Awards

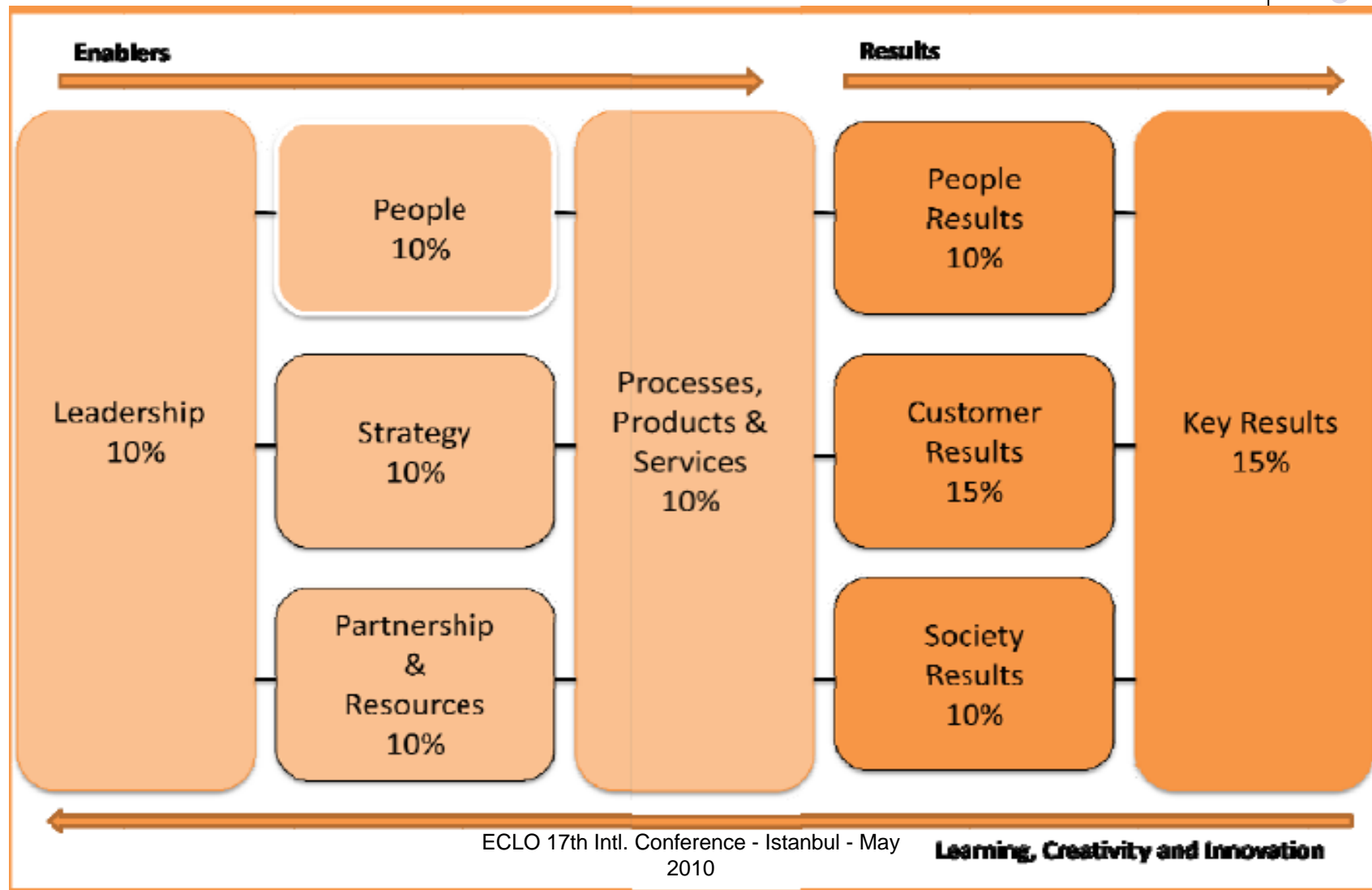


*The Malcolm
Baldrige National
Quality Award*

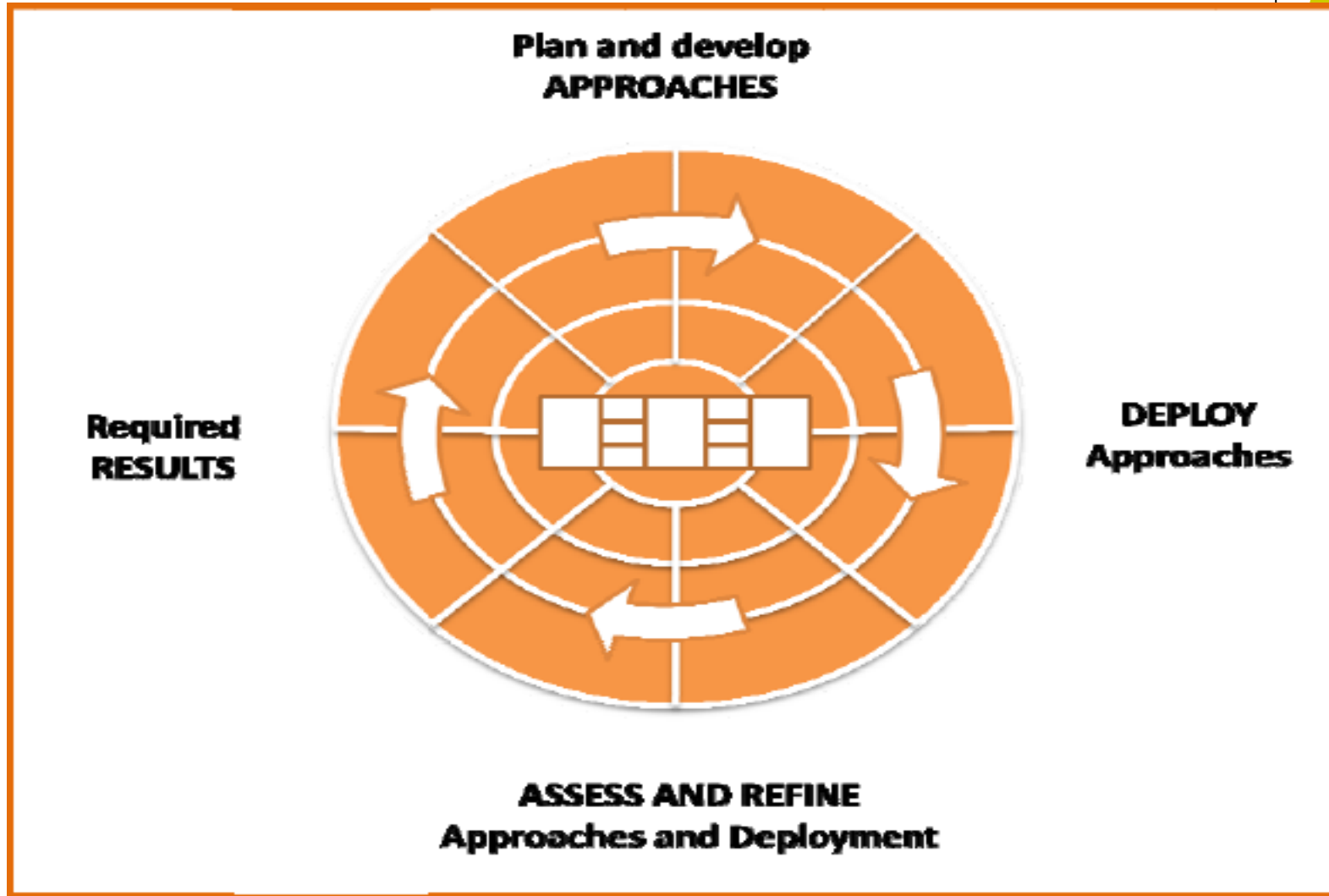
*The Deming
Prize*



The EFQM Excellence Model



RADAR

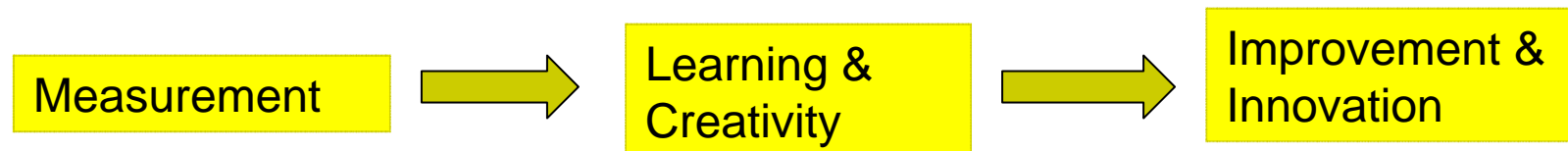




Assess & Refine

This covers what an organisation does to:

- **Refine and improve** both the approach and the deployment of the approach.
- A & D will be subject to **regular measurement** of efficiency and effectiveness.
- **Learning activities** will be undertaken, **practices will exist** to bring creativity to bear in generating ideas for new or changed approaches.
- The **output** from measurement, learning and creativity **will be used** to identify, prioritise, plan and implement improvement and innovation



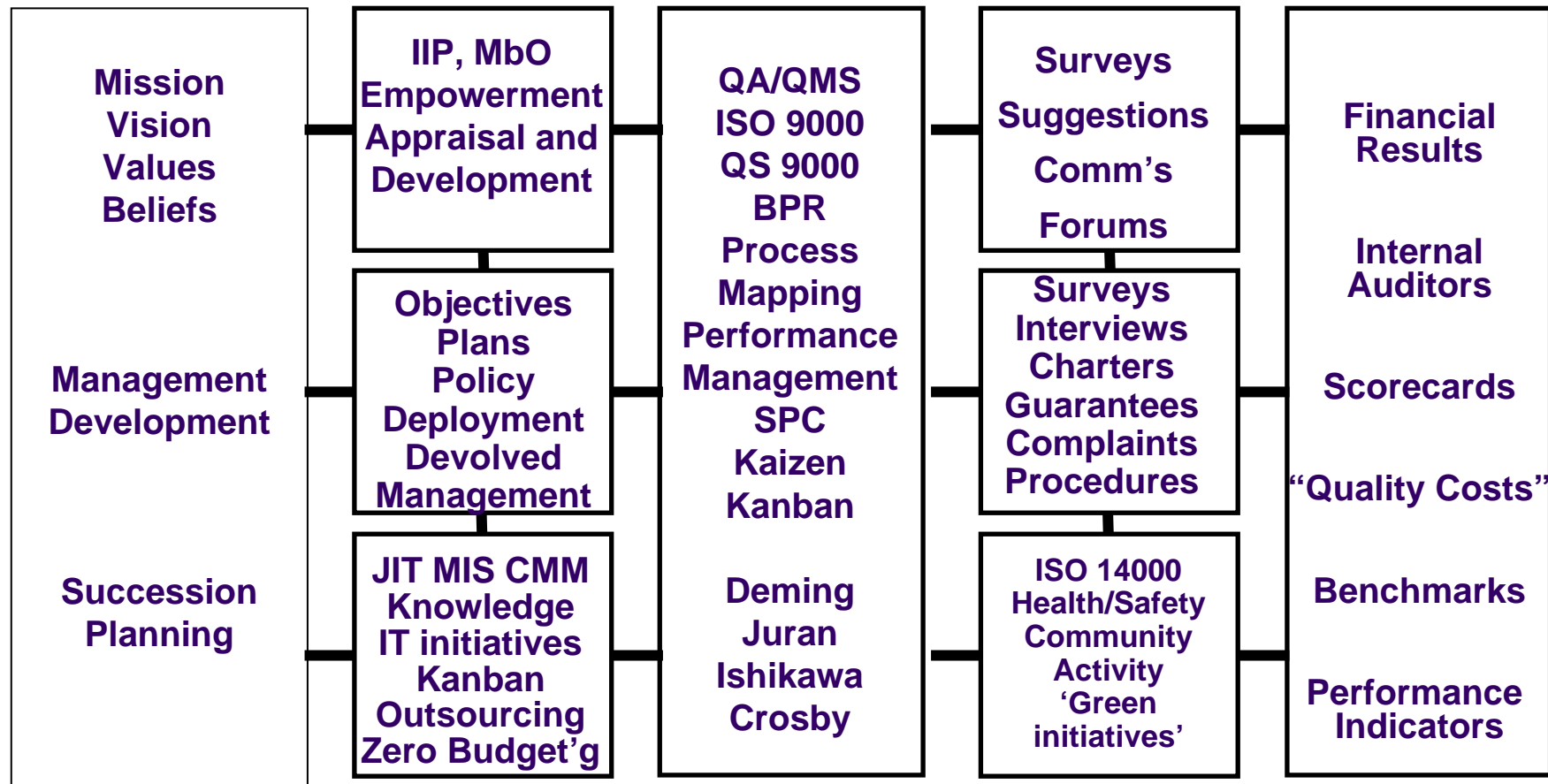
OL Language

1. Investigate
2. Identify
3. Institutionalise

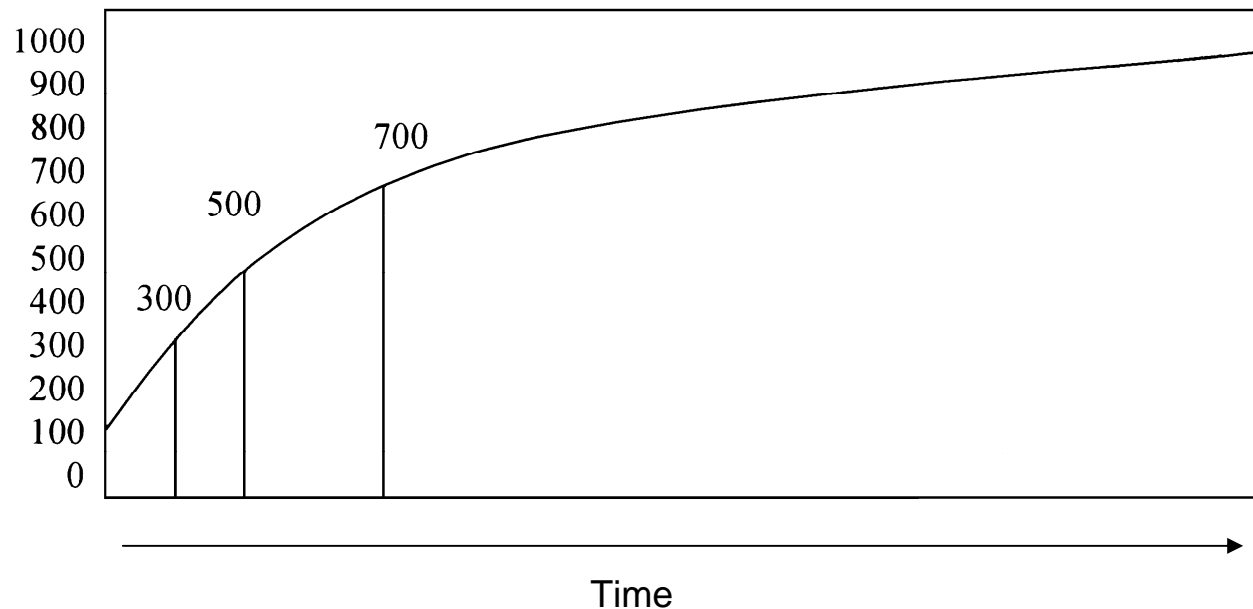
Ref. Townsend and Gebhardt (2008)



Holistic Framework !



The Journey to “World Class”



- 300: Good organisation, quality assurance in place, starting continuous improvement
- 500: Very good organisation, sustaining improvement, process orientation, clear performance improvement
- 700: Excellent organisation, improvement a way of life, empowered employees, sector benchmark, sustained excellent business results



The Scene in the UAE

The UAE occupies an area roughly **the size of Portugal** along the southern-eastern tip of the Arabian Peninsula. Four-fifths of the UAE is desert, yet it is a country of contrasting landscapes (UAE at a Glance, 2006).



The UAE



Assessment Journey



1. Desktop Assessment
2. Consolidation
3. Consensus
4. Secondary data collection
5. Site Visit
6. Consensus
7. Scoring
8. Ceremony
9. Feedback report

Why it is important to study OL?:



- Learning is increasingly seen as crucial to success of organisations but many studies of the subject offer **very little empirical evidence to substantiate this.**
- **Actions** that organisations should take to learn, **and to use what they learn** as a source of competitive advantage, **are unclear.** Denton, (1998)
- Researchers know a lot about Organisational Learning theory, but **far less about its applications.** Calvert *et al.*, (1994)

Organisational Learning (OL)



- Learning is inevitable for everyone and for every organisation, industry, sector or even government.
- As many theorists stated, learning could be the only sustainable competitive advantage a company can have



Definition of OL

- *“The process of moving from individual doubt and learning to organizational learning is important and requires further study if we are actively to support Organisatioanl Learning”*

Pasmore & Srikantia (1996, p.52),

Summary of Literature Review



- Some sort of Conceptual Redundancy
- There are significant similarities between both notions
Organisatioanl Learning and Organisational Excellence/TQM.
- There is no difference between the two notions and asked "*what are the characteristics or building blocks for developing a learning organisation? Are these any different from TQM organisation?*" Sohal and Morrison (1995)

Two approaches, one result!



| TQM/OE | OL |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Quality Circles | Learning Circles |
| Root Cause Analysis | Double-loop learning |
| Drive out fear | Eliminate culture of blame |
| Ask why five times | Reflection process OL Mechanisms |



Conceptual Redundancy!

| Body of Literature | Author | Views |
|--------------------|---|---|
| OL | Schein (1999) Watkins and Marsick (1993) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Generative learning by individual requires free choice• A learning organisation has a culture of empowerment |
| OE | EFQM (2003) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• People are involved and empowered (sub-criterion 3b)• Encouraging and supporting individual and team participation in improvement activities;• Providing opportunities that stimulate involvement and support innovative and creative behaviour |

12 OL Approaches:



| OL Approach | Code | Author |
|--|------|---|
| 1- Conduct After –Action Review | AAR | Lipshitz <i>et al.</i> , 2007; Wheatley, 1994); EFQM, 2003) |
| 2- Implement Benchmarking | BMR | Zairi, 1998; Pemberton <i>et al</i> , 2001 |
| 3- Practise Coaching | COA | Lipshitz <i>el al.</i> , 2007 |
| 4- Establish Feedback Loops | FDL | Fundin and Bergman, 2003; Greeno, 2006) |
| 5- Practise Mentoring | MNT | Dixon, 1999; Senge, 1990); Talisayon, 2001 |
| 6- Learning from Problems Solving | PSV | Marquardt, 1999 |
| 7- Institutionalise Reflection | RFL | Burgoyne and Reynolds, 1997 |
| 8- Conduct Self-Assessment | SAS | Oakland 1999; Auluck, 2002 |
| 9- Establish Suggestion Scheme | SUG | Greeno, 2006 |
| 10 - Reinforce Teamwork | TMW | Deming, 1986; Senge, 1999; Marquardt, 1999 |
| 11- Reinforce Two-Way Communication (Dialogue) | COM | Casey, 1996; EFQM, 2003 |
| 12- Apply to Quality Awards | QAW | Stevenson, 1994; Ghobadian and Woo, 1996; EFQM, 2003 |



The Links

- Learning is considered as a core element in the model structure and in the assessment mechanism as well.
- The EFQM Excellence Model assumes that in order to sustain excellence, organisations assess and review their approaches and mechanisms regularly and question themselves



The Links (2)

- According to McAdam *et al.*, (1998, p.47), two distinct areas, among others, have developed in the management literature which from a cursory review would appear to have more in common than they have in distinctiveness.
- What is surprising is that these developments have occurred with **little synergy** between the fields of study, either in academic publications or in industrial applications



The Links (3)

- According to Garvin, (2001, p.78), **Continuous Improvement requires a commitment to learning** and he questioned, how after all can an organisation improve without first learning something new.
- The roots of current interest of organisational learning go back to the **quality movement** and its focus on **continuous improvement**, hence, learning and knowledge creation. (DiBella, 2001)



Key findings:

1. OL Approaches have been implemented at both organisations in a way that has lead to continuous improvement year on year.
2. There is a great deal of overlapping among the OL Approaches. However, it seem to serve the organisations' purposes;
3. Possibly, implementation of some approaches could be unique and new in relation to the literature
4. Most of the OL Approaches identified from both literature and the empirical study fall under the Formal/Proactive category.
5. Two-Way Communication Approach seems to play a significant role in facilitating other OL Approaches.

New (or re-discovered) Approaches to OL



- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cross-Training |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fish Philosophy |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mystery Shopping |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Audits |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mentoring |



Conclusion:

- Continuous improvement is the cornerstone of quality, excellence, and OL.
- Quality/Excellence cannot be effectively embedded in the organisation system in isolation of Learning.
- Although, there is abundance of research on Organisational Learning and on Total Quality, there are very few studies on the links between both notions.
- It is believed that combining both notions, bringing them under one integrated framework can immensely help organisations to become *excellent* and *learning organisations*.



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