
North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership

Briefing Note No. 5:

SUMMARY - PROMOTING EXCELLENCE IN SCOTLAND'S COMMUNITIES

August 2005

INTRODUCTION

A new publication, 'Promoting Excellence in Scotland's Communities: a guide to performance improvement techniques in community regeneration', has been produced as a result of a partnership between Communities Scotland's Scottish Centre for Regeneration and Quality Scotland, to help support the continuous improvement of all organisations involved in community regeneration. The guide outlines a wide range of quality frameworks, standards and tools and demonstrates their advantages through practical and relevant case studies. A holistic quality framework can cover the whole organisation, while standards and tools look at certain areas.

This Briefing Note summarises each of the four sections within the guide.

SECTION 1: QUALITY FRAMEWORKS, STANDARDS AND TOOLS IN DETAIL

This section of the guide outlines a number of frameworks, standards and tools in detail. A summary of them is noted below.

The Excellence Model is an holistic framework for assessing the strengths and areas for improvement of an organisation across all its activities. It is based on the practical experience of public, private and voluntary sector organisations across Europe including more than half of all public sector organisations in the UK. The model helps an organisation to work out how it is performing in crucial business areas and where it needs to improve.

The Excellence model is promoted in Europe by the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) and in Scotland by their national partner organisation: Quality Scotland. Essentially, the Excellence Model tells us that excellent Customer, People and Society Results are achieved through Leadership Driving Policy and Strategy, Management of People, Partnership and Resources, and Processes.

The Excellence Model comprises of nine criteria, divided into Enablers (the hows) and the Results (the whats). The Enabler criteria are concerned with how the organisation conducts itself, how it manages staff and resources, how it plans its strategy and how it reviews and monitors its key processes. The organisation's Results are what it achieves. These encompass the level of satisfaction among the organisation's employees and customers, its impact on the wider community and key performance indicators.

The starting point for the organisation is to gather evidence relevant to the nine criteria of the Excellence Model. Self-assessment leads to a profile of the organisation's strengths and areas for improvement. Most organisations using the Excellence Model concentrate on areas for improvement rather than routinely scoring their performance.

Further information on the Model can be found at www.qualityscotland.co.uk

The Big Picture is an organisational development framework with built in practical tools. The framework has been developed by people who work in the voluntary sector. It recognises the unique qualities of voluntary organisations. The Big Picture can be adapted for use in a wide variety of small organisations or teams.

The Big Picture is based on the following principles: enabling results, continuous improvement, non-prescriptive, questions not answers, the value of practical tools.

The Big Picture can be used at an away day to assess their need for change and to plan how this will take place. At a subsequent meeting the group can review the impact of the change using the framework. They can then go through the cycle again and identify the need for further changes. Further information on the model can be found at www.thebigpic.org.uk

Investors in People is a national standard which sets a level of practice for improving an organisation's performance through its people. The key principles are: developing strategies to improve the performance of the organisation; taking action to improve the performance of the organisation; evaluating the impact on the performance of the organisation. Becoming an Investor in People involves a number of stages: information gathering; initial diagnostic; develop people and processes as necessary; further assessment to ascertain if your organisation meets the standard; reassessment.

Further information on the model can be found at www.iipuk.co.uk

Charter Mark is the Government's national standard for customer service. It is a standard tool to assist organisations in service delivery to customers. Charter Mark continues to be unique because it focuses on the customer and the service they receive. Charter Mark applicants are assessed against six criteria: setting standards and performing well; actively engaging with your customers, partners and staff; being fair and accessible to everyone and promoting choice; continuously developing and improving; using your resources effectively and imaginatively; contributing to improving opportunities and quality of life in the communities you serve.

Potential applicants can test themselves against the criteria by using the web based self-assessment tool at www.chartermark.gov.uk/apply/selfassess.htm.

ISO 9000: 2000 series is a set of tools to help organisations ensure that their processes are being managed to enable them to meet customers' expectations and any related statutory and regulatory requirements. The generic nature and much reduced documentation requirements of the latest edition of the standard, ISO 9001:2000 have significantly increased its applicability to all sectors. To comply with ISO 9000 an organisation must: have top management that are fully committed to the quality system; identify their processes and how they are applied; determine what the sequence of the processes are and how the processes interact together with how they will be managed; ensure that the correct resources are available; monitor, measure and analyse the processes; ensure that the processes and the effectiveness of the quality management system are continually improved.

Further information on the model is available at www.bsi-global.com

The Balanced Scorecard is a framework for implementing and managing strategy at all levels of an enterprise by linking objectives, initiatives and measures of performance. The scorecard provides a view of an organisation's overall performance by integrating financial measures with other key performance indicators around customer perspectives, internal business processes and organisational growth, learning and innovation. Managers determine what is required to deliver and sustain the strategy and how to monitor progress in terms of the four dimensions: finance, customer, process, people

Further information on this model is available from www.qualityscotland.co.uk

Kaizen Blitz is a business improvement tool, which achieves 'impossible' results quickly. It is designed to strip out anything that does not add value to the critical process under examination. It is also about creating the right physical environment by removing obstacles that hinder the process. A Kaizen Blitz week is held to analyse and identify problems. Solutions are identified and many changes are implemented immediately. A plan implementing other solutions is developed. Aberdeenshire Council have used Kaizen in critical processes within Finance and Personnel and are willing to share their experiences. Contact Pat Browne, Kaizen Champion Tel:01224 665288 Email: pat.browne@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

The Scottish Executive Business Development Unit has experience of Kaizen in several different processes. A short video is also available on what it was like for participants. Contact Ewhan Barschtschyk at ewhan.barschtschyk@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Further information on this model is also available at www.qualityscotland.co.uk

SECTION 2: LINKS BETWEEN FRAMEWORKS, STANDARDS AND TOOLS

This section looks at the specific characteristics of each model. The choice of and use of the standards and tools is down to the individual organisation's judgement. While the EFQM Excellence Model provides an overall framework for all of the organisation's activities, Investors in People, Charter Mark and ISO 9000: 2000 look in much more detail at ways of improving performance. There are links between all models. Recent work carried out by the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) has helped compare the EFQM model, Investors in People and Charter Mark against the Big Picture framework. It is hoped that this will provide further support in helping voluntary organisations decide which quality framework or standard is most appropriate for them. All the different quality standards and tools have a synergy with each other, either being able to be used on their own or together depending on the required outcome.

The section also looks at how the EFQM model, Charter Mark, Investors in People and ISO 9000:2000 can be used in support of Best Value.

SECTION 3: CASE STUDIES

This section provides case studies of all the frameworks and standards covered in the guide. Those covered include Scottish Enterprise who implemented the Balanced Scorecard. The process has enabled Scottish Enterprise to develop a clearer understanding of how strategy is being put into action and how they can improve performance to achieve this. Alness Credit Union and Western Isles Council Housing Department applied Investors in People to their organisations. Renfrewshire Council Housing Advice and Homelessness Services and Wishaw Academy used Chartermark in their organisations. Other case studies looked at the application of EQFM, The Big Picture, ISO 9001, Kaizen Blitz and WLAM : a coordinated approach to frameworks and standards.

SECTION 4: OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

The final section contains a brief description of other relevant organisations, other quality standards and tools and a list of useful websites.

CONCLUSION

In my opinion the guide provides useful information on performance improvement techniques and highlights the flexibility of the many frameworks, standards and tools. It will be a useful source of information for North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership who may want to consider implementing one or more of the approaches to performance improvement.

For further information on 'Promoting Excellence in Scotland's Communities', including a download of the full document, see:

http://www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/cs_006323.hcsp#TopOfPage

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