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PSQ Nation


THE OFFICIAL DIGITAL MAGAZINE OF THE
PHILIPPINE SOCIETY FOR QUALITY



**WHAT IT
TAKES TO BE
A QUALITY
CHAMPION?**

**THE LIFE AND TIMES
OF DR. MIFLORA "MAY"
GATCHALIAN**

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 PSQ Nation

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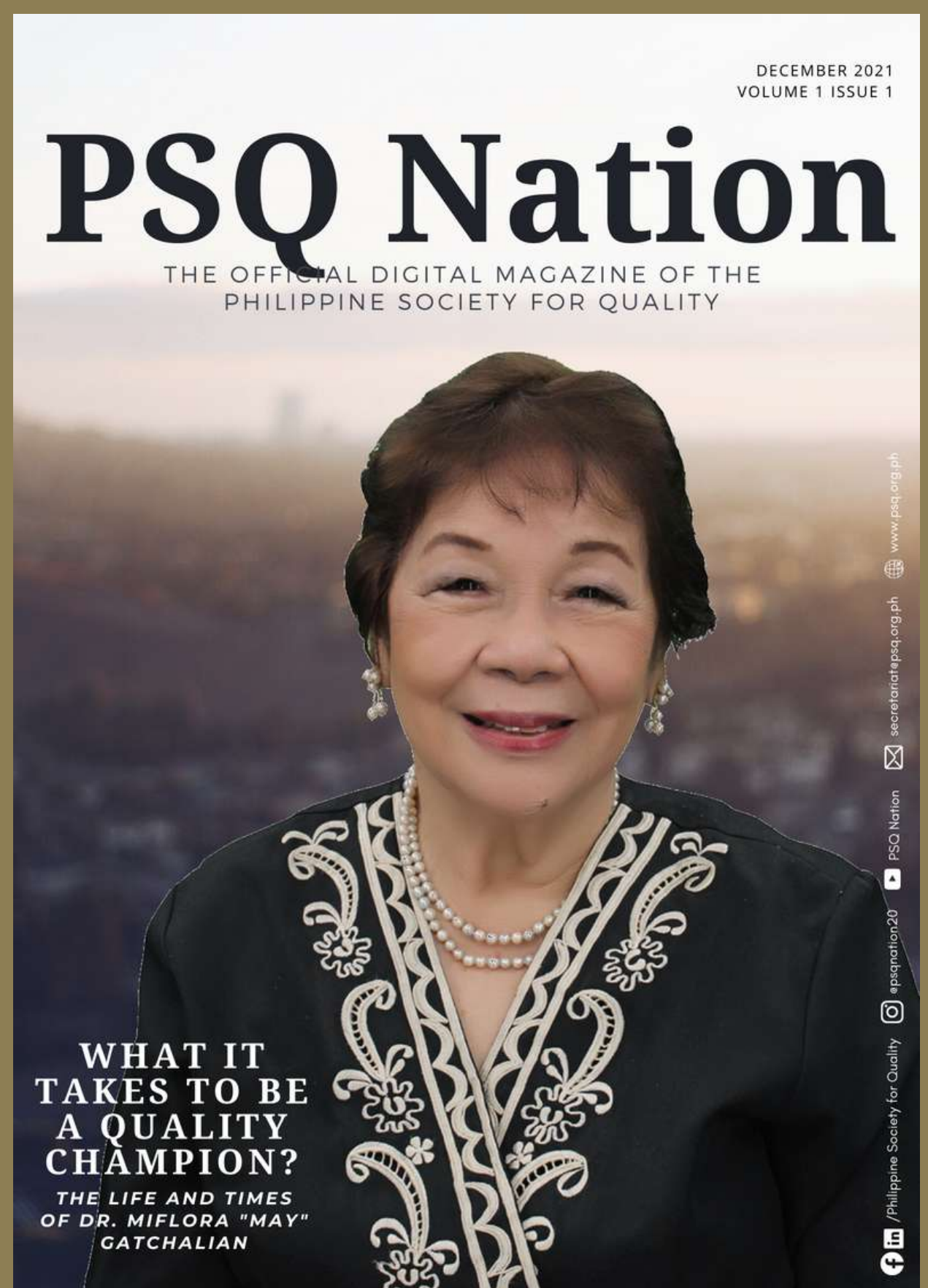
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About the Cover

A photo of Dr. Miflora "May" Gatchalian, someone we consider as the "Mother of PSQ" because of her consistent support to the Society's mission and initiatives. In this first-ever issue of PSQ Nation, we celebrate Dr. May's life and contributions not just here in the Philippines but to the world from Quality perspective.

All the photos that we used in the main article are owned by Dr. May.

PSQ Nation

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Philippine Society for Quality



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Editor's Note



*The Philippine Society for Quality has intended to reach a wider network of quality professionals through a stylish, innovative, and inspiring magazine - **PSQ Nation!***



During a fortunate lull in the pandemic's intensity, I have given birth to two wonderful babies. First is my Queen Nathalie born in December 2020. Last night, I am watching the news filled with so much negativity, hatred, and typhoon difficulties, among other things. I am wondering what kind of a world my husband and I have brought her into. But then I think back to the doctors and nurses who guided us so expertly through my daughter's birth, and who daily risk their own well-being for that of others. I think of organizations which espouses positive values in delivering sustainable projects. And I am heartened.

On the other hand, PSQ Nation will be delivered in December too. The Philippine Society for Quality has intended to reach a wider network of quality professionals through a stylish, innovative, and inspiring magazine. Despite the challenges experience for the last years, PSQ wanted to bring to its members something different and extraordinary. The PSQ Nation is an outcome of an extraordinary team bringing together passionate game changers and thought leaders delivering insights on organizational excellence.

On its premiere release, we put on the spotlight, Dr. May Gatchalian, whom I call the Mother of Quality in the Philippines. This magazine will share her soul in spade. She oozes positivity, inspiration and is a genuine, grounded and determined person. It was an absolute joy interviewing her for the cover. I am hoping that her life story would inspire others to follow the path that she pursued.

The COVID-19 pandemic and my interview with Doc May has resulted in recalibrating my mind frame. Years ago, I was told, if there is an opportunity for you to choose between kindness and just. Please choose kindness. However, I have always chosen being just. The past years have made me realized the necessity to put myself in someone else's shoes, empathize with their experience, and find solutions that attend to the common good. The world now needs caring and agile leaders more than ever. And I'm hopeful that with enough good examples, my daughter will be inspired to be one, too.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for connecting with PSQ Nation. I am looking forward to walking a quality PSQ Nation journey with you.

DR. ZANDRA N. MANINGAS
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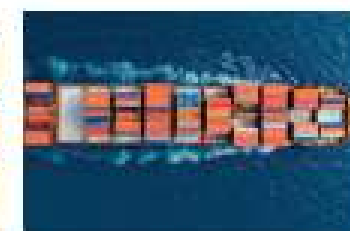
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FACING THE FUTURE: THE QUEST FOR QUALITY

Dr. Gregory H. Watson, Finland

"In this brief article, we will be focusing on “facing the future” and how this perspective can help us in our quest for quality in the end-to-end organizational strategy for delivering quality that differentiates our product deliverables (this is for both goods and services) to our current and future customers."

Reconsidering the Job of Quality

It is the obligation of quality professionals to see everything from all perspectives. We must look using hindsight to discover the causal nature of problems so they can be corrected. We must look with our insight to discover the current state of organizational performance so we can maintain control of its outcome quality. We must also look with foresight to understand the future implications of our work on customer, markets, industry, and society. These three looks cannot be cursory – they must be evidence-based investigations whose purpose is to seek clarity and eliminate ambiguity.



Most of the time we have been consumed by the hindsight perspective – correcting problems that are cropping up in our current customer base. When not preoccupied with this backward focus, we pay our closest attention to the job of controlling quality to achieve process stability of our productive outcomes and assuring product quality as delivered in the goods and services that become the current experience of our customers. However, our attention is diluted when it comes to designing quality robustly for the future.

Out least concentrated effort tends to be on facing the future and gaining the foresight necessary for us to navigate the coming challenges to our organization and our profession. In this brief article, we will be focusing on “facing the future” and how this perspective can help us in our quest for quality in the end-to-end organizational strategy for delivering quality that differentiates our product deliverables (this is for both goods and services) to our current and future customers.

By looking into the future requirements of quality, we can establish a basis for reconsidering what will be our job in the future and how our contribution for delivering enduring quality outcomes from our organization to its future customers can be assured.



**Dr. Gregory
H. Watson**

What is the Evolving Job of Quality?

All organizations have three basic jobs to perform. These jobs establish the scope of focus of workers, including the quality professionals in an organization. What are these jobs and how is the role of quality changing across these three levels?

The first quality job in an organization – Job #1 – does indeed consist of its traditional role of maintaining assurance of product quality and control of processes so that commercial value is delivered to markets and customers. The business value contribution from this role is assurance that the investments already made in a business are managed in a state of control so that no more is invested in the productive organization than is required. This role protects the cash flow to enable investments to be made that will deliver sustainability of the future business. Thus, backward-looking quality is required as a basis for gaining forward-looking quality.

The second quality job in an organization – Job #2 – delivers future quality by designing, developing, and delivering higher quality products that generate future cash flows. This design for quality approach into the coming generations of new products or services creates the future business opportunities for the organization. This job delivers value by assuring that capital investments in new technologies or in an R&D project have a strong potential to deliver productivity and profitability in the future. This quality role maintains the value stream in the near-to-mid-term of the organization by assuring differentiated products and services are delivered through new investments.

The third quality job in an organization – Job #3 – develops a sustainable culture that enables long-term viability of the organization so it has longevity despite the dynamic shifts



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**Dr. Gregory
H. Watson**



WHEN AN ORGANIZATION CONSIDERS THIS “THREE-HAT” QUALITY ROLE, IT TRANSITIONS FROM A SITUATION IN WHICH THE QUALITY EFFORT IS RELEGATED TO “OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE” OR MAINTAINING STANDARDS AND IMPROVING RESULTS IN AN EVOLUTIONARY METHOD IN THE WORKPLACE TO TAKING ON MORE OF AN ALL-ENCOMPASSING BUSINESS ROLE.



occurring in its environment, so that the culture maintains the necessary curiosity that will keep its options open and its management agile and enables the long-term strategic perseverance and success of the organization.

How does the Quality Job Contribute to Organizational Strategy?

When an organization considers this “three-hat” quality role, it transitions from a situation in which the quality effort is relegated to “operational excellence” or maintaining standards and improving results in an evolutionary method in the workplace to taking on more of an all-encompassing business role. This is not a transition just from “operational excellence” to “business excellence” – it is a transformation from quality strategy as a hygiene function to quality strategy as a motivating stimulus that identifies the critical drivers of future success. The second job elevates quality concern into a priority in the business development role of the organization – innovating in both products and processes that will enable success. By including the third “job” for quality organizations transform quality into a critical success factor for the endurance of the organization as a cultural ingredient that provides long-term brand value – a reputation that customers can relate to and count upon – something that becomes a part of their life experience and provides joy in living or satisfaction through their experience. It is the kind of situation that Apple has created where customers tend to identify with “their living eco-system” – claiming to be an “Apple-person” – which is a similar type of loyalty that is pursued by other mega high-technology companies like Google, Tesla, Microsoft, etc. Why do they want this strong association? It ensures their future business by creating loyalty. Can this same outcome be created in a Small-to-Medium-Sized- Enterprise (SME)?

Three Gemba – Three Jobs – Three Quality Approaches

The answer is yes; however, in an SME these three jobs are concentrated in the business leader, rather than delegated into various functional parts of the organization. Quality leadership is the most critical

success ingredient in an SME as the scarcity of economic resources does not enable turbulence in either Job #1 or Job #2 while Job #3 creates the binding agent that enables the other quality concentrations to operate effectively. This places even greater pressure on quality professionals in the SME as there is very little support for wearing these three hats of the quality profession. They must interact with each of the gemba levels of the organization – workers in daily management; managers in business processes; and the executives in the establishing strategic foresight.

What is the Challenge for Today's Quality Professionals? Quality professionals in the SMEs must become "renaissance people" who are competent in all of the disciplines of quality in both the technological and managerial perspectives. The quality disciplines of the past are converging to form a unitary quality field of generalized maintenance and improvement rather than a tool-based smorgasbord of skills that are to be wielded by specialists. SME's must integrate quality engineering, auditing, inspecting, and managing into a generalist role that has competence in all areas. This means that each of us must continually learn and Increase our capabilities – dynamically adjusting our competence to cope with the challenges of the current age that are being driving by digitalization developments and sustainability concerns.

About the Author



Dr. Gregory H. Watson is the Past-President and an Honorary Member of both the International Academy for Quality (IAQ) and the American Society for Quality (ASQ). He is also a Lifetime Member of Asia Pacific Quality Organization (APQO). He can be reached at greg@excellence.fj.

"This quest for quality will be a never-ending journey."

Those who are most senior in the global quality community have a special obligation to develop the professionals of tomorrow who have the capacity to act as independent advisors to their management for delivering excellence in the future – quality as strategy that differentiates a company over the long-term by balancing a mastery of this three-hatted role so the organization can do all aspects of its job for the benefit of the society in which it exists.

This quest for quality will be a never-ending journey.



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Never-ending care for others: these were what Dr. Miflora Minoza-Gatchalian said with a hearty laugh when asked how she would describe her quality journey—a journey she travelled for decades with genuine care to the value of change and progress. The entire PSQ community felt her genuineness for people in the industry through the years, making her leave an indelible mark into the realms of this country’s quality initiatives and in our hearts.

Doc May, as people fondly call her, is known to be a quality guru, having shared her expertise in various instances. She is a Doctorate degree holder from the University of Tokyo and a University of the Philippines (UP) Alumna, completing Food Technology for her Baccalaureate degree and Statistics for her Masters. Her long list of achievements – the latest of which being the International Academy for Quality’s (IAQ) Agnes Zaludova medal – comes from the works she had as VP for Operations of Mom and Pop Puyat Food Group, Managing

Consultant of PIMECO and Red Ribbon, and Chief Technical Adviser on Standards and Quality in Vietnam through the International Trade Center (ITC), UNCTAD GATT. She is an academic, having been full Professor at the University of the Philippines, Academician Emeritus of the IAQ, Fellow for the American Society for Quality (ASQ), and Secretary General Emeritus of the Asia Pacific Quality Organization (APQO). At present, she is serving as CEO of Quality Partners Company, Ltd.

But there’s more than that about her. In this the maiden issue of PSQ Nation’s publication, we made sure to share an inspiration to you through the journey of a trendsetter whose main mantra was caring for others as she spread the good news that is quality. Let’s get to know more about and learn more from Doc May!

Above
APQO Annual Conference International Speakers: Dr. Jose C. Gatchalian (Philippines), Dr. Gregory Watson (Finland), Madam Tang Shaofen (President, Shanghai Quality Association), Dr. Miflora M Gatchalian (Philippines), and others. The conference was held in Singapore in 2013.

“I have a picture with the International Academy for Quality (IAQ). I was the second woman member of that organization... I am so happy that there are so many women now in Quality.”

WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A QUALITY CHAMPION?

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF DR. MIFLORA "MAY" GATCHALIAN

BY DR. ZANDRA NAVAREZ-MANINGAS



Dr. Jose and Dr. May's five children from top left- Jay, Joel, Jon, May Lynn, and May Ann, taken during their 50th wedding anniversary on December 12, 2012.

Her Journey

As expected from one of the leading quality practitioners of the country, Doc May has had the privilege of working with the best all over the world, from Armand Feigenbaum to Kaoru Ishikawa —name them and you got them. Sharing some anecdotes, she mentioned, “Walter Hurd. Whether we call each other, write to each other, or when we are together, I imbibed his [drive] for quality. H. James Harrington is another one. He is focused on change process and is always reminding me that change is the only thing that can really enable us to move forward in our quality efforts. And my mentor in Holland, Dr. Fausi. He was a statistics guy who really believed that without measurement, nothing can make quality happen.”

She brings into any table she's in not only her expertise but also pieces of learning she get from these people, who at one point Doc May has had the chance to talk with. “I have a picture with all of them,” she shares.

Like any other industry, the field of quality management was dominated by men especially in the early years. That's why it was an astounding feat how Doc May was able to represent the country in various international organizations. “I have a picture with the International Academy for Quality. I was the second woman member of that organization... I am so happy that there are so many women now in Quality.” This reality is a trademark for many entertainment films, thus Doc May has become an advocate of paying forward. “There really are more women now in quality than in used to be in those early days. Here's how she did it in the tight-knit realms of quality practice: “You just have to keep on sharing so that they will realize that they are also needed. [Also], I invited another Filipina [in IQA].”

“...There were some international programs from the United Nations which made me feel [that] I could do more. I could only join that if I leave UP, so I took my early retirement.”

And while she enjoyed the academe, retiring early became a major career decision that changed her life—in a good way. With a reminiscent voice and a straight face showing no regret, she shared about her early retirement. “It meant I did not have to go to 65. There were some international programs from the United Nations which made me feel [that] I could do more. I could only join that if I leave UP, so I took my early retirement.” This decision paid off. “I was right. I was able to organize my company and become a Chief Technical Adviser for Vietnam.” Indeed, with one door closing, even more windows of opportunities open.

And while that was her best, she cannot think of anything worst. Owing to her decisive nature, Doc May charges everything to experience and acceptance. Her words to live by: “My decisions are something I can live with. No regrets.”

“Like a lot of things, quality starts within you.”

Her Style

Throughout her career in quality management, Doc May was able to create strategies that will allow her to do things as they should. She is truly a woman with lots of tricks up her sleeves, which she will readily use when needed and practice as a way of life.

One of the values she was able to develop was persistence. She confessed to PSQ Nation how she does not stop doing things until she sees her desired outcome or output. “No matter what,” Doc May adds. But just like Superman, she has a Kryptonite: her impatience. “Impatience is what I am trying to overcome... You are always in a hurry to get what you want, then *‘pag di ginagawa, nagagalit ka.* [it is not accomplished,

so you get mad]. You want to see results, and no one’s helping you reach it”. This is what she would like to change, even advise her younger to be wary of. Over time, things have come easy, as Doc May has already mastered the craft. There will be some tough times, though. When she’s at a crossroads, she lists down the advantages and disadvantages by following the “SUGOD” (move-on-together) technique for TQM.

SUGOD Framework

- Survey** to know more about the situation
- Unite** in strategic planning for quality
- Grow** and improve by increasing your competence
- Operationalize** your plans to produce results
- Develop** approaches for continual improvement

Doc May undeniably is one of the most successful quality practitioners in the country, and when asked what was her habit that made her as such, her answer was simple: desire to keep peace at all costs. “Like a lot of things, quality starts within you. Making peace with the things you need to do is an important start,” she quips. She wants to show how important is calmness, something that others need more time to manage. Apparently, one must learn how not to make decisions when upset or with unrest. “You cannot make correct decisions when you are not at peace because you cannot weigh things properly. You will be crowded and, most likely, you will make a wrong decision. So very often, I postpone any decision if my temper is there. When I see that I can now think about and review things calmly, then I go back and make a decision.” When asked if taking that pause matters, here what Doc May has to say: “Yes, you will regret if you don’t. You cannot think properly. Your mindset is not going to be fair. [So] calm down and not rush.”

Soft skills are also crucial. For one, planning is highlighted as an important quality of a leader. “Planning, especially if you write down your plans, will allow you to go into prevention mode. You look at all the barriers, all the possible errors, and you will prevent them from happening.

Dr. May with other Speakers at the 2nd Middle East Quality Association (MEQA) Annual Conference in 2008.



When you have planned and prevented them from happening, then you can easily monitor how and where you are going.” Doc May adds that consistently doing this shows commitment and entails discipline. For commitment, Doc May emphasize the important role of the top management. “If the leader is not convinced, there’s nothing you can do.”

She also highlighted the vital role of communication in the industry. Doc May enumerates how quality processes break down without communication: not understanding things, being afraid to clarify, lack of feedback, emotion-filled conversations. These must be addressed because “communication is a soft skill that has to be developed in all leaders. Also, make sure that you learn to understand, and you learn to listen”.

And how was she able to do and keep track of all these to begin with? It was with a simple monitoring trick: keeping a notebook to record daily. Through that, she was able to see her progress and habits, which she was able to identify and use effectively so she could perform better.

Surprisingly, doing regular exercises help, too. Doc May’s routine is two-fold. She has a physical workout and a mental one. “I have to keep myself healthy and have a very flexible body, so I make sure that I have my 30-minute exercises in the morning. In the evening, I have a stationary bike, so I make sure that my knees are strong. I also drink as much warm water as I can in the morning. It keeps me fresh the whole day. And of course, as much water as a I can drink [the whole day]. It will probably help keep you healthy. And if you’re healthy, you’re energetic. The more you exercise, the more brain power you are going to retain. Use your brain as often as you can.”

One last piece of advice from that night of the interview was the 3Ps, a mnemonic for characteristics becoming of a quality person: PRIDE of one’s performance, PRICING for managing cost, and PUNCTUALITY observed on all stages of goods production of service delivery. Having these traits and closely monitoring how you practice them easily leads to that person able to perform and achieve things.



Dr. May's photo with Dr. Armand V. Feigenbaum - both were Speakers at the 55th European Organization for Quality (EOQ) Congress in Budapest, Hungary in 2012.

Her Family

We also got a glimpse into Doc May’s family life. They are equally entertaining as her work life, showing hints of her industry experience and screaming of quality parenting!

It is said that to do well on something could mean being focused on it. That’s how Doc May saw it fit when she had her first four children. “I was a full-time housewife. I only went to work when they started going to school.” She decided with the path of a homemaker to personally supervise her children, knowing that the developing years are important for a child. “I made sure that I pray with them. I made sure that I tell and read stories to them. We also had a policy with my husband: no one gets spanked unless the kid can explain why he [does not have] to be spanked.”

As a Food Tech major, Doc May really wanted to go into food processing, with a cause of course. “There was a time when there were lots of problems in the farms: over production, the government has not done anything towards distribution. I wanted to find out how they can be assisted in the farm site. Intermediate food technology. Processing the products in the farm,” she eagerly shared. She even mentioned how she has already planted to seeds to do so. “I really wanted to go into food processing, develop our fruits and vegetables, glazed fruit production for



Dr. Jose and Dr. May's 13 grandchildren in prayerful mode, a photo taken during their golden wedding anniversary on December 12, 2012.

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fruit cakes, food for the gods. I started with that already and already had buyers. In fact, some people wanted to tie up with me.”

However, this placed her between a rock and a hard place. It was the same time she was about to go back to work after 9 years of housework, looking out for her children full-time. With a decisive force, she mustered, “I decided to go to the academe. It was the way I could help my children to make sure they make good in their school.” And with her children’s successes now, she couldn’t be any happier. “I don’t regret having gone to the academe.”



Top photo: Dr. May as a Keynote Speaker at the 14th APQO Conference hosted by Iran’s Organization of Quality Managers in 2009

Bottom photo: Dr. May as a Speaker at the the Quality Managers Conference in Tashkent, Uzbekistan in 2010.

Her Motivations

Having been acquainted with fellow quality gurus here and abroad gave her words to live by. With Joseph Juran, considered father of many key quality management techniques, Doc May got his words clearly imprinted: TQM is a philosophy. “Because it is a philosophy, it can never—never—change. It is a mindset, and you can only make that happen if you can also make the mindset of the people you work with to move in the quality direction. So, it is really making quality as a way of life. That’s the basis for any quality directions, especially when you are talking of TQM,” Doc May asserts.

"It is a mindset, and you can only make that happen if you can also make the mindset of the people you work with to move in the quality direction. So, it is really making quality as a way of life."

Thus, despite the challenges, Doc May never ceases to extend a helping hand, seeing that a person or an organization’s improvement taking place is a source of joy. “If you can make a change in people’s lives, it’s a big achievement.” What’s inspiring is how her desire to help stems out not from a craving for spotlight but from a sincere want to seeing people improving and becoming happy. “When I help that someone and I know what I have done, that makes me happy already.”

And when she sees these organizations thriving, it becomes her seal of success. “I don’t feel that I have succeeded in helping others [to] go quality, except that I get happy that the people/clients are already very successful in their business. Many clients got a turnaround: from closure to very high success.”

All these pushes Doc May forward and continue her quality journey. But perhaps the strongest motivator of all for Doc May is her family who, despite her career achievements, remain to be her greatest indicators of success. “It’s having my family solid and God-loving. Keeping them together, making them want and love each other,” Doc May shared with a beaming smile. “Even now, we have a talk, and every day we talk. Every occasion they can make to see each other, [they do].”



Dr. May (Speaker) and Dr. Gregory H. Watson (Keynote Speaker) at the 16th APQO Conference in Nepal, together with other International Speakers and/or Country Quality Organization leaders in 2011.

“If you can make a change in people’s lives, it’s a big achievement.”

Her Dreams

Once we have accomplished things, we could only desire to reach more. With our limited time, we know that some will remain a dream that we will pass along. And for the future of quality in the Philippines, Doc May dreams a lot.

The SUGOD approach, which Doc May helped conceptualize, is now being used for a two-year DOST-sponsored TQM program.

The culmination of this program will make the approach a tested strategy for the whole country. She also looks forward to a Filipino culture of *malasakit* [concern]—a virtue she has seen time and time again from professionals here and abroad—existing in companies across the country. “I would consider that as my ultimate success when companies, especially SMEs, will realize the importance of caring. It’s your people that you must care for because they are the ones that give you the directions that you want to go to.”

Doc May continues, “That’s the mindset that we need to change: having quality as a way of life in the organization. And it can only be a way of life if it becomes a habit, a daily habit.” This habit is the 3P. With a voice of a mother imposing what she thinks is best for her son, she says, “If that is your mindset—that you don’t want to submit something you are not happy about and you are not going to give it to your boss if you are not satisfied—and [you’re] always for customer satisfaction, then that will really lead you to quality. Just develop and make quality as a way of life. It’s the one that could lead you to where you want to go.”

Speaking of mindset, another common belief Doc May hopes will be debunked is the perception on statistics. Her reason: “It is always continuous improvement that drives the organization into close to perfection.

You cannot go away from statistics because you have to measure things, analyze your measurement, and use it to predict and monitor things.” True enough, without these, we fall victims to the same mistakes, we’ll be left behind, and we’ll remain stagnant with no improvement posted.

Also, with the technological advancements, Doc May envisions a country with no more digital divide. The reality is that people, despite sponsored capability building activities, do not maximize technology and fail to grasp the full extent of its functionality and benefits. “There are emerging technologies, but if you survey the workforce in terms of their knowledge about these technologies, they actually don’t know it,” she raises with concern. Even in the industry where technical expertise is highly expected, results are surprisingly low.

These things catapult Doc May’s challenges to the PSQ Nation. According to her, one of the group’s major advocacies should be analytics—from measurement, analysis, and interpretation—so “we will not be repeating the same errors over time, and we really can continue the improvement process”. This comes at another perfect time for Doc May, who is presently working on something as an advocate of sensory evaluation methods. The questions Doc May leave regarding digital migration are also as eye-opening as they are challenging. She asks, “How can we provide the link so we could lift them up? How can we address [problems of] the ones below?”

And like any great quality mentor, she suggests something that could help not only achieve these but do so more quickly yet still collectively. “Try to put in chapters—in Visayas, Mindanao—so we could have an effect all over the Philippines,” Doc May insists, seeing this as an opportunity for a wider reach of PSQ.

Learning is forever. This is what Doc May’s life has taught us. But if there are more important things than quality at work is how you bring it to your community and your home by being a quality champion yourself. Doc May proved it is not impossible—with all her trials, successes, and tips shared to us. She leaves us all a challenge to make quality a philosophy and, above all, do it as we ethically and morally should. Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam. To the greater glory of God.

“It is always continuous improvement that drives the organization into close to perfection. And you cannot go into continuous improvement if you do not have the right measurement processes. You cannot go away from statistics because you have to measure things, analyze your measurement, and use it to predict and monitor things.”

Dr. May sitting with some Quality Leaders during one of the learning events of PSQ in 2017 - APQO leaders Harnek Singh and Abraham Fenn and PSQ leaders Corazon Tan, Angelica Fraginal, Eleanor Rochelle Cruz, France Padiz, and Dr. Rey Fremista.





DR. GREGORY H. WATSON'S TESTIMONIAL ON DR. MAY

"Before 1996 I didn't know Miflora M. Gatchalian. However, that year she gave me a great honor by serving as a co-nominator with Dr. John Hromi and Bill Golomski for my induction into the International Academy for Quality. Since that time I have found her to be highly admirable in her way of lifting up young quality professionals, not only in the Philippines, but around the world, to increase the viability of our global quality community. I will let others speak of her honors and the recognition accorded to her, but my comments are more personal. She has been an inspiration to me as someone who has been a role model – she set a course on improving quality in things that she has touched in life and she has stayed the course throughout the 25 years that I have known her. Her leadership has elevated the role of women in quality. She was among the first three women elected to the Academy and she has been the backbone of both the Asia Pacific Quality Organization and the Philippine Society for Quality. In the future, her legacy will be one of service to the cause of quality for humanity. Thank you, May for all you have done for me, your nation, the Asia-Pacific Region, and the entire World of Quality. You have become a timeless example of excellence – the quality way."



Dr. May and Dr. Jose were Speakers at the "Quinta Seminario International" on August 28-30,2011. At the middle of this photo was the Host, Chile Providencia Mayor Cristian Labbe.



Dr. May giving a lecture on Food Safety Sustainability through Statistical Thinking in Shanghai, hosted by the Shanghai Quality Association, headed by its President Madam Tang Xiaofen



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CONTINUAL PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENT IN-SPITE RESOURCE CONSTRAINTS

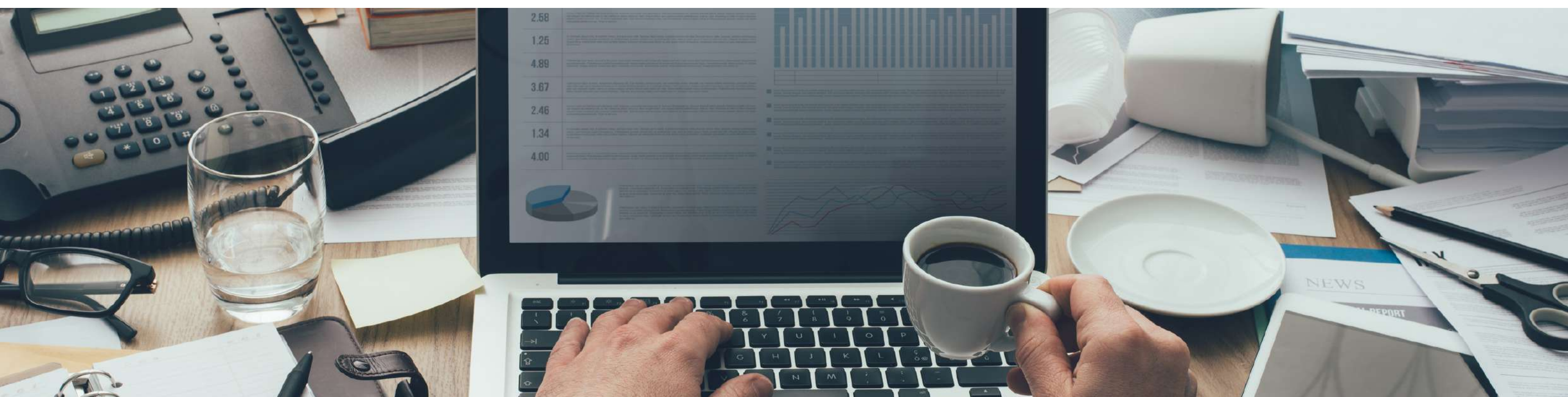
Harnek Singh, Singapore

"With many organizations having adopted the Business Excellence model, they actively seek for best practices to benchmark and adopt or adapt as applicable to their context."

Overview

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve and organizations need to transform their businesses to cope and manage with these uncertainties and changes. With scarcity of resource, businesses will need to adapt and be agile yet remain productive to weather the storm of continued disruption and challenges posed in the evolving new normal.

Continual productivity improvement will depend on combination of effective systems, efficient employees, equipment and processes. This would include adapting to new ways of working, reviewing and strengthening management systems, adopting and adapting standards to be future ready and resilience, in addition to accelerating digital transformation, upskilling, reskilling and robust work force engagement, to remain productive and be in business.



Introduction

Productivity is the lifeline of any business. The more a business is able to earn or deliver relative to the resources it invests in materials and labor, the more profitable and sustainable the business will be. However, continual productivity improvements efforts as a norm take time and cost money. Additionally, every company must balance these short-term expenses against the long-term savings the

improvements provide. Businesses are urged to budget carefully when implementing productivity improvements, and prioritize low-cost changes over more-expensive improvements, whenever feasible.

Enhancing productivity with no or limited resources

Achieving high productivity, particularly in small businesses, often involves getting the most out of limited resources, such as workforce or equipment.

Now with the pandemic and related circumstances resources are limited across the board. A challenge to organizations is to discover ways to increase productivity while maintaining high levels of quality and complying to safety, security and business continuity requirements. A variety of methods are available to accomplish this, including motivating and empowering the employees and streamlining work processes, or even changing them if necessary. In an Industry 4.0 era there are many technologies that has been adopted and has significantly increased productivity in the workplace. Some innovations that improve productivity can also cost next to nothing. They simply evolve out of observations or benchmarking efforts on better ways to organize tasks and schedule employees. With many organizations having adopted the Business Excellence model, they actively seek for best practices to benchmark and adopt or adapt as applicable to their context.

Employee productivity: Empowering employees

Today, in spite the evolving challenges, businesses are looking for the “extra edge” to allow them to outperform their competitors and to gain market share as we recover from the pandemic. Hence, employee employment and productivity is and will remain a major concern for employers. The philosophy that empowering employees will improve productivity and will provide other benefits is based on the theory that as employees are empowered to take control and make decisions they feel more confident, capable and determined to work more effectively and efficiently. Thus, with these business practices, employees become more productive.

Properly implemented empowerment initiatives can lead to higher job satisfaction, lower turnover and reduced stress among employees. They will be more innovative and perform better at their jobs. Employees granted the power to take charge at work feel an increased sense of responsibility, accountability, security and ownership for their work. They work diligently to meet project deadlines and organizational goals. They feel energized to do what it takes to get the job done and to do it right. All of these reasons fuel an empowered employee to be more productive, providing better performance results for the organization.



**Harnek
Singh**

“ PROPERLY IMPLEMENTED EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVES CAN LEAD TO HIGHER JOB SATISFACTION, LOWER TURNOVER AND REDUCED STRESS AMONG EMPLOYEES. THEY WILL BE MORE INNOVATIVE AND PERFORM BETTER AT THEIR JOBS. ”



**Harnek
Singh**

“ANALYSE THE WORK SYSTEM AND WORK PROCESSES TO ELIMINATE NEEDLESS TASKS LIKE, DUPLICATION, RE-DOING, RE-ENTERING OR RE-TESTING. THERE SHOULD BE CLEAR MEASURES IN PLACE.”

Employees are the ones who are immersed (even with the Work From Home mode) in the operational processes on a daily basis. Hence, they should be empowered to develop ideas for improvement. Let them detail their work activities and perform an analysis. Once they take a closer look at how they work and spend their time, they can recommend ways to perform a process faster and eliminate waste.

Process improvement: Eliminate valueless processes

Process improvement is the proactive task of identifying, analyzing and improving upon existing business or operational processes within an organization for optimization and to meet outcomes or standards of quality. It often involves a systematic approach which follows a specific methodology, steps and process to be considered. Some examples are benchmarking or lean manufacturing, Kaizen, each of which each focuses on different areas of improvement and uses different methods to achieve the best results. Processes can either be modified or complemented with sub-processes or even eliminated for the ultimate goal of improvement. Continual Productivity improvement is an ongoing practice and should always be followed up with the analysis of tangible areas of improvement. When implemented successfully, the results can be measured in the enhancement of product quality, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, increased productivity, development of the skills of employees, efficiency and increased profit resulting in higher and faster return on investment (ROI). In general, about a third to two-thirds of employee tasks may be unnecessary or add little or no value. Some workers may perform overlapping or repetitive tasks, which decreases overall productivity. Analyze the work system and work processes to eliminate needless tasks like, duplication, re-doing, re-entering or re-testing. There should be clear measures in place.

Suggested are 4 steps that organizations can adopt in their continual productivity improvement efforts

Step 1: Understand the continual productivity improvement process. The goal of a process is two-fold that is to improve customer experience and to improve business practices and operations efficiency for sustainability. There should be a clear beginning and end to specific projects within the productivity and process improvement effort. The desired outcome, goals should be clear, understood and owned.

Step 2: Prepare for change - Before implementing the continual productivity improvement process, get the workplace and team ready for the changes that are about to take place. To lead during this stage will need to have strong inter-personnel and meeting management skills, and need to ask questions and start conversations to get all on-board.

Step 3: Lead the team - When it comes time to lead the change itself, practice good communication, sound project management, observation and awareness, as well as strategic thinking skills are useful. Must be familiar with all the regulatory requirements and restrictions in the pandemic situation and compliance.

Step 4: Maintain the change made (new norm) while making sure people do not revert back to old practices (old norm). Continue to collaborate with stakeholders within and beyond the organization.

Improve training and development

For many organizations, with increasingly tight budgets, one of the first things to be scaled down or cut is often employee training programs. However, it is important to note that employee training programs and development are “instrumental in terms of keeping a company competitive and productive”. Also there is need for staff to continue with their development and growth plans.

Poor training may be one cause of substandard quality of the products and can also adversely affect production time. Investing in appropriate training for new hires can reduce costly mistakes and ensure that the work is done right the first time. A structured learning needs analysis and learning plans be developed and implemented to ensure employees can grow along with the organization and skills remain relevant and future ready.

"Investing in appropriate training for new hires can reduce costly mistakes and ensure that the work is done right the first time."

Among the immediate benefits of training programmes are trained employees exhibit higher levels of performance, hence saving time and money. Those that receive ongoing access to training opportunities are also more engaged and contribute to the success of the organisation. When employees are suitably trained, they are more satisfied and confident.

Establish goals, implement gradual changes

Establish and communicate productivity and quality goals and tie them to incentives. Goals can help the employees to stay focused, which can increase speed or eliminate errors. Goals should be specific and measurable, such as increasing worker production by XX units per day while maintaining a XX percent quality standard. Incentives for reaching the goals could include money, time off or recognition. If changes are required to be made in the key processes, implement them gradually, such as changing one aspect of the process at a time. Rapid major changes may frustrate the employees or cause them to fear that they will not be able to adapt or be laid off. An abrupt change can also significantly reduce productivity because of the effect of the "learning curve."

Productivity is about your Systems

Leaders are always asking for productivity improvement. All too often, that quest is translated to some training for productivity improvement provisioned. As legendary statistician and management consultant W. Edwards Deming argued in his book "Out of Crisis," 94% of most problems and possibilities for productivity improvement belong to the system, not the individual. I too based on my work experience in public and private sector would argue that continual productivity improvements as a whole belong there as well. Solutions by individuals can be useful, but the most effective antidote to low productivity and inefficiency must be at the work system and processes level, not the employee level.

Conclusion

Continual Productivity Improvement is not always easy to accomplish. It can also be boiled down to three simple concepts to remember namely, a) the need for employee competency and motivation, b) the proactive involvement of leaders and managers, and c) adopting a systemic approach and adoption of technologies, will enable employees do their work in a more effective and efficient manner and thus contributing to organisational productivity



About the Author



Harnek Singh is the Past President of Asia Pacific Quality Organization (2016 to 2019) and the Past Chair of the Global Performance Excellence Awards (2018 to 2019). He possesses a Masters of Business Administration (MBA) and Diplomas in Aeronautical Engineering (Operational Technology) and Personnel Management. He retired as Vice - President & Director for Business Excellence at ST Engineering Ltd in October 2016. He can be reached at harnek@asia.com.




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LEADING QUALITY IMPROVEMENT THROUGH DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE ERA OF INDUSTRY 4.0

Dr. Rey B. Fremista, Philippines

"Us, as leaders in the new normal, we recognize that for us to stay in business arena and to be as competitive as we can in the new playing field, we need to challenge our paradigm and re-imagine what would it take for us to become successful in the long run, creating that sustainable growth.."

"Who led the digital transformation of your company? CEO? CTO? Or COVID-19?"
And the answer to this question is COVID-19!

This is one of the memes that circulated in the social media environment sometime last year when company leaders and organizations from around the globe were left with no choice but to accelerate their implementation of their digital transformation initiatives. As a matter of fact, there's this survey (McKinsey Global Survey, 2020, participated in by 899 C-level executives and senior managers representing the full range of regions, industries, company sizes, and functional specialties) that says, "...responses to COVID-19 have speeded the adoption of digital technologies by several years" and they are projecting that these changes could be here in the far future. Leaders were forced to review their policies and processes to continuously serve their



customers, to ensure that business operations are functioning the way they were designed to function, and to literally thrive as a lot of companies were negatively impacted by the crisis, this global COVID-19 pandemic. Us, as leaders in the new normal, we recognize that for us to stay in business arena and to be as competitive as we can in the new playing field, we need to challenge our paradigm and re-imagine what would it take for us to become successful in the long run, creating that sustainable growth.

Digital is no longer a differentiator

Sometime in 2017, I attended the first Robotic Process Automation (RPA) Summit Asia that was held in Singapore. It was the first RPA conference in Asia which was attended by executives and process excellence leaders. The International Quality and Productivity Center (IQPC), the organizer of the RPA Summit Asia, described RPA by then as the next frontier of value-added business transformation and service delivery

It was also in 2017 when I was appointed as the Convener of the International Quality Conference – the Philippines was the host country and there were 3 organizations that I was collaborating with during that time – Asia Pacific Quality Organization, Global Benchmarking Network, and the Philippine Society for Quality. The theme of the conference was “Quality Transformation in the Digital World,” where we presented the emerging trends and insights on how organizations should adapt, thrive, and respond to the fast-changing business conditions brought about by digitalization, AI, RPA, augmented reality, computer vision, internet of things (IoT), and other emerging technologies.

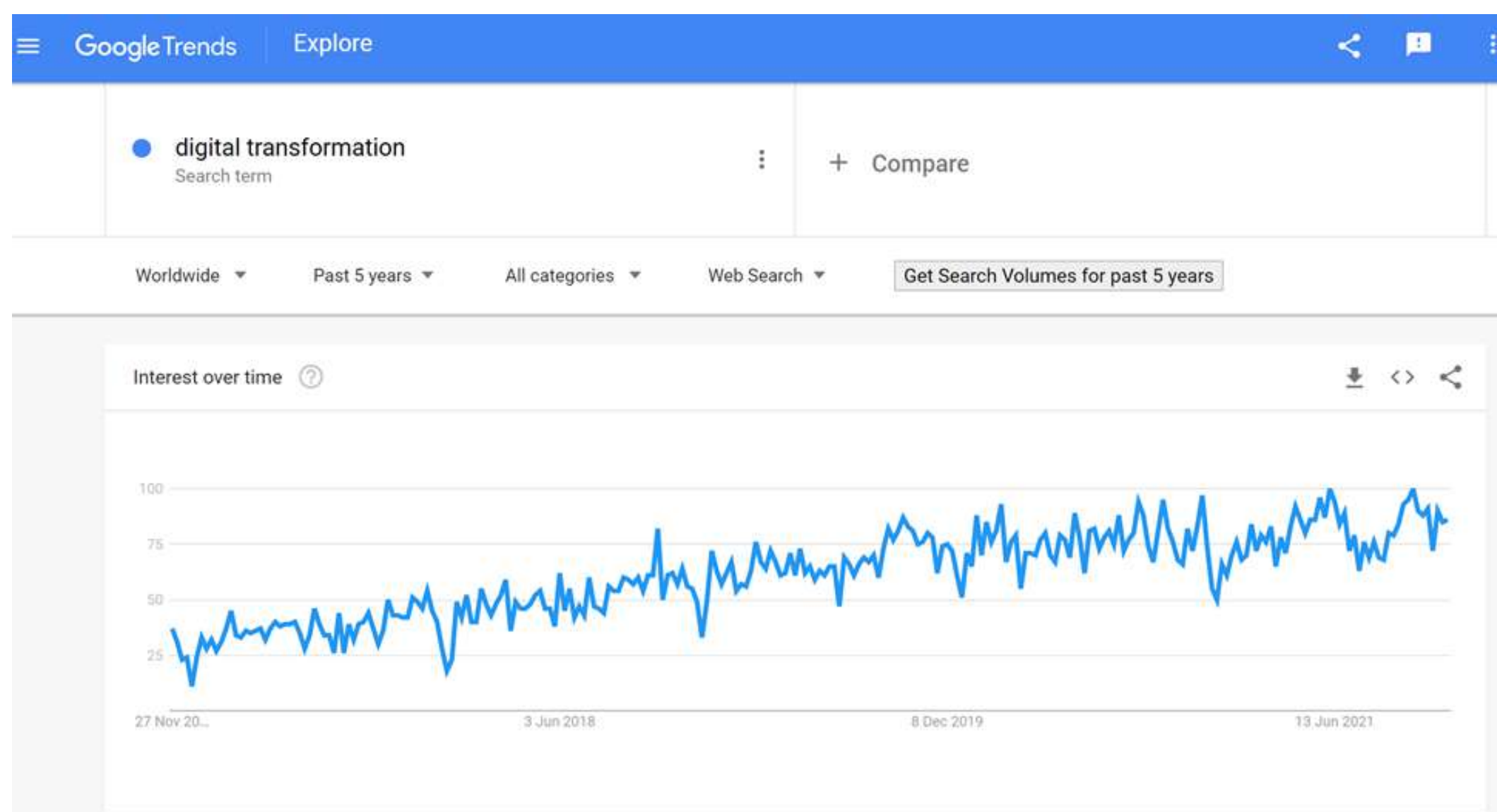
Looking at these events, even before pandemic and even before “digital transformation” became a flashy buzzword, companies already recognized the role of “digital” in transforming organizations. Leaders in the organizations are cognizant on the benefits in investing in digital technology in improving processes, improving customer and employee experiences, and in increasing the company’s bottomline, and even in developing new business models. As a matter of fact, it was released in an article published by *The Wall Street Journal* in December 2018 which stated that digital transformation is the biggest risk factor of business leaders in 2019.

An hour ago, I accessed GoogleTrends to explore the trend of Google searches related to digital transformation. I filtered the location to “Worldwide” and the time range to “Past 5 years” and here’s what I was able to get:



Dr. Rey B. Fremista

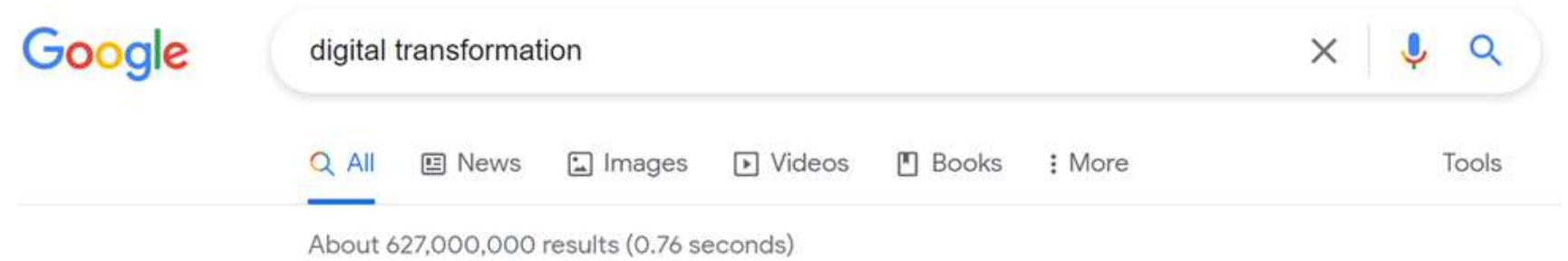
“...EVEN BEFORE PANDEMIC AND EVEN BEFORE “DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION” BECAME A FLASHY BUZZWORD, COMPANIES ALREADY RECOGNIZED THE ROLE OF “DIGITAL” IN TRANSFORMING ORGANIZATIONS.”





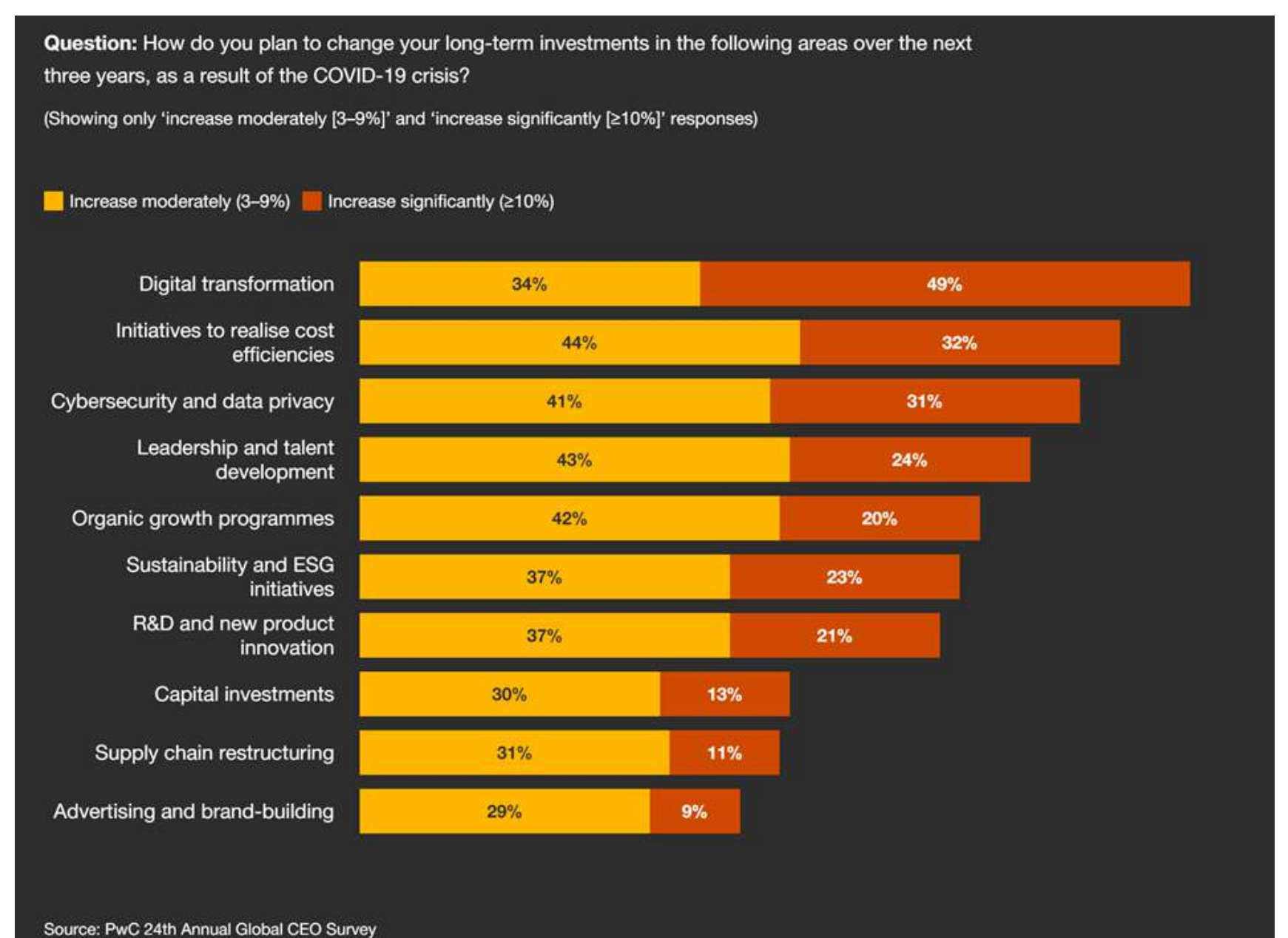
Dr. Rey B. Fremista

There is an increasing trend on this topic. I tried searching “digital transformation” in Google to see its magnitude. This is what it gave me – around 627 million results! Imagine that voluminous number of contents published on the internet.



In the PwC 24th Annual Global CEO Survey published this 2021, 5,050 CEOs from around the globe were surveyed, digital transformation is the top priority:

DIGITAL IS NO LONGER OPTIONAL – IT IS A BUSINESS IMPERATIVE FOR YOU TO SURVIVE TODAY AND TOMORROW.



This “digital” is here to last (Nylen and Holmstro, 2015) – it’s mission critical! Digital is no longer optional – it is a business imperative for you to survive today and tomorrow.

Challenges and best practices to accelerate digital transformation

Digital transformation is multi-faceted, depending on which industry you are operating and depending on the company’s Why, the reason why a company engages itself to this type of revolution.

Define and commit. One of the challenges in implementing this digital transformation is understanding the buzzwords. What are the core terms that leaders need to have clarity on? Digitization, digitalization, and digital transformation. These are different terms. Sometimes, a leader is saying digitalization which in fact he's just referring to digitization or he's just referring to digitalization but what he's sharing is all about digital transformation. In order for an organization to have a better implementation of digital transformation, leaders need to sit down and define these terms.

Let's use the Gartner's glossary to differentiate digitization and digitalization. According to Gartner:

Digitization – “Digitization is the process of changing from analog to digital form, also known as digital enablement.” For example, you scan your documents into digital files like PDF or you converted your signature into an electronic format.

Digitalization – “Digitalization is the use of digital technologies to change a business model and provide new revenue and value-producing opportunities; it is the process of moving to a digital business.” For example, you automate your workflows or you collect real time data through a specific digital tool.

In terms of what digital transformation is all about, Lindsay Herbert (2017) wrote a book, *Digital Transformation: Build Your Organization's Future for the Innovative Age*, and she stated:

Real digital transformation isn't about getting your company to use a specific set of new technology; it's about your company's ability to react and successfully utilize new technologies and procedures – now and in the future.

In my experience, leading digital transformation initiatives, I realized that it's more than the digital tools – its center is People. Merchant (2021) in her article at Entrepreneur Asia Pacific even called out the reasons why “digital transformation is more about people than technology.”

"In my experience, leading digital transformation initiatives, I realized that it's more than the digital tools – its center is People."

Your organizations might have tons of jargons but it's your job as leaders to define and ensure that everyone is singing the same tune, communicating the same language. The organization can also facilitate forums, webinars, and hackathons so that there is an awareness at all levels.

Another challenge is that senior leaders are not fully aware of the emerging and latest technologies and how these technologies work. In an article published by McKinsey on October 29, 2018, they stated, “Nearly 70 percent of all respondents say their organizations' top teams changed during the transformation—most commonly when new leaders familiar with digital technologies joined the management team.” Leadership commitment is critical in leading digital transformation and the more that leaders are involved, the higher the likelihood that the program will be successful. Leaders need to identify who must be involved and define accountability and governance model, layout the digital talent that is needed in this endeavor and be able to establish connection with external partners and startups to explore collaboration opportunities and solution generation. Leaders also need to ensure that there is budget or funding in this program.

Engage and focus. Another challenge in implementing digital transformation is that the customer-facing employees, the frontline employees are not involved in the process. Value-adding ideas can be cultivated from the frontline employees. Leaders need to work closely with them to map out customer journeys and identify the customer pain points and eventually build a pipeline of solutions and ideas that can address the gaps identified.

It is also important for the organization to communicate “what’s in it for me” across all functional areas and gain employee commitment. In this way, it will be easier for employees to collaborate and share relevant use cases for digital transformation.

Moreover, the organization needs also to spell out what it is trying to achieve – does it want to revisit and redefine its business model or does it want to create new products or services, or does it want to automate its processes, or does it want to digitize its documents? Leaders need to prioritize, set clear vision, and focus on the vital few that can give them substantial impact.

"It's all about the movement of the ocean not how gigantic you are. The rules of the game have changed. Don't just change the rules – change what you are. You better know how to swim as fast as you can! "

Build digital first culture and move quickly. The speed of change is what changed over the past couple of years. Agility is the name of the game these days.

As mentioned by the Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum, Klaus Schwab, “In the new world, it is not the big fish which eats the small fish, it's the fast fish which eats the slow fish.” It's all about the movement of the ocean not how gigantic you are. The rules of the game have changed. Don't just change the rules – change what you are (Gulke, 2002). You better know how to swim as fast as you can! We must be able to pivot as quickly as possible as leaders to survive in this era! We must establish structures that can change if we need to or else others will do that and next day that you know, you're gone in the market. We need to mobilize that execution engine, that engine that will work for us so that we can achieve our strategic objectives and really transform our organizations.

Building an innovation and digital first culture is critical. It's about challenging and changing people's mindset and attitudes towards digital transformation. This is a Herculean task that leaders need to own and drive, fostering that culture of innovation and agility and be able to sustain the momentum. Innovation should be a way of life. But how do we know if innovation has become a way of life? According to Freiberg et al (2011), this can be determined “If curiosity is encouraged, passion is inspired, creativity is expected, and people are always talking about what's next.”

In addition to culture, there's this equation from the Change Acceleration Process (CAP) model of General Electric (GE) that I learned almost a decade ago when I was taking lean six sigma courses. It's called the Change Effectiveness Equation: $Q \times A = E$, where E is the Effectiveness (E) of any initiative, Q is the Quality of the technical strategy or solution and A is the Acceptance of that strategy, the cultural side which includes people skills, teamwork, and other

soft skills. If you have a perfect 10 in your Q and perfect 10 in your A, then your E is equal to 100. But if you have a perfect 10 in your Q and 0 in your A, then your E is 0. The multiplicative relationship is powerful. Even if you have all the latest digital technologies, you have all the digital talent and capabilities, and you have all the budget in the world, if people are not totally bought in the idea, then expect failure in your implementation.

The bottomline

In this era of Industry 4.0, leaders are expected to disrupt the paradigm and operate on a quick-and-nimble fashion. But how do you disrupt the paradigm? People tend to go back to the way they were. People love what is familiar to them, what is comfortable for them, and what is convenient for them. The real challenge of digital transformation is deeply rooted in our DNA. We are hard-wired to resist changes. Keeping up with the latest and fast-changing technologies can be a problem but there is more pressing real issue that we need to focus more on – changing people mindsets towards change, towards digital transformation.

About the Author



Dr. Rey B. Fremista is the current President of the Philippine Society for Quality and recently elected as an Associate Academician at the International Academy for Quality. Dr. Rey is also the AVP for Lean Digital Transformation at Genpact and a Professorial Lecturer (MBA Program) at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines. He can be reached at rey.fremista@yahoo.com.ph.

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GLOBAL ASSESSMENT ON THE CURRENT STATE OF ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Dawn Ringrose MBA, FCMC, Canada

"The leading models were based on global research with high performing organizations and have been validated since then, showing a positive relationship between implementing the practices, developing a culture committed to excellence and achieving results across a balanced system of measurement."

Abstract

This article provides an update as of June 2021 and high-level overview of the inaugural global research study that has captured the current state of excellence in organizations around the world. It highlights the degree to which organizations are characterized by the Principles and have deployed Best Management Practices common to high performing organizations and found in leading excellence models. Unfortunately, it was not possible to provide a comparison between the Philippines versus Other Countries at this point in time given the limited number (13) of respondents.



Of value to the excellence community in general and the working population at large, the study invites organizations to pursue excellence - assessing current state, comparing with others, improving performance, applying for an award. In doing so, it encourages professionals and leaders of organizations to think about the possibilities - applying excellence models successfully, developing more high performing organizations, contributing to the local economy, trade and resident quality of life.

The article also reflects on the impact of the covid pandemic that commenced in 2020 and the low rated practices that would have helped organizations adapt to this change.

Key Words

business excellence, organizational excellence, excellence models, performance improvement, global organizational excellence index, return-on-investment

1.0 Introduction

The 'First Global Assessment on the Current State of Organizational Excellence' was launched in May 2015 by the Organizational Excellence Technical Committee QMD ASQ and conducted voluntarily by Organizational Excellence Specialists Inc. It was supported in spirit by the Global Benchmarking Network, International Academy for Quality and ISO Technical Committee 176 and the first report was published in April 2019. Organizational Excellence Specialists has continued the study and acknowledged the support received in earnest from 500 volunteer researchers to date. The second report was published in June 2021 and this paper provides a high-level overview of the second report¹.

The assessment tool was based on the Organizational Excellence Framework publication² that defined the Principles and Best Management Practices common to high performing organizations and found in excellence models and is unique in that it provides implementation guidelines for the user. These definitions were based on leading excellence models that were developed in the late 1980's and early 1990's and that have evolved over time. The comparison between the Organizational Excellence Framework and the leading excellence models is shared at a high level in Appendix 1 of the publication.

The leading models were based on global research with high performing organizations and have been validated since then, showing a positive relationship between implementing the practices, developing a culture committed to excellence and achieving results across a balanced system of measurement. There are a number of key research studies that have demonstrated the applicability of these models to any size and type of organization and validated the return-on-investment³.

2.0 Assessment Tool

The automated assessment tool offered an opportunity for respondents to self-assess the extent to which their organization was characterized by the Principles (Teaser Assessment) and/or had deployed the Best Management Practices across Key Management Areas (Full Assessment).



**Dawn
Ringrose**

“ THE ASSESSMENT TOOL WAS BASED ON THE ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK PUBLICATION THAT DEFINED THE PRINCIPLES AND BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES COMMON TO HIGH PERFORMING ORGANIZATIONS AND FOUND IN EXCELLENCE MODELS AND IS UNIQUE IN THAT IT PROVIDES IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES FOR THE USER.



For respondents, the webpage provided access to the survey instruments <https://organizationalexcellencespecialists.ca/workshops-events/global-oe-index/>.

The Teaser Assessment used a more subjective rating scale or 'gut feel' (Table 1) and asked respondents to rate nine Principles: Leadership Involvement, Alignment, Focus on the Customer, People Involvement, Prevention Based Process Management, Partnership Development, Continuous Improvement, Data Based Decision Making, Societal Commitment.

Table 1. Subjective Rating Scale for the Principles

Rating Category	Low	Low-Medium	Medium	Medium-High	High
Assessment %	0%-20%	21%-40%	41%-60%	61%-80%	81%-100%
Chart Value	0.0-2.0	2.1-4.0	4.1-6.0	6.1-8.0	8.1-10.0

The Full Assessment asked respondents to also rate the Best Management Practices across nine Key Management Areas: Governance, Leadership, Planning, Customers, Employees, Work Processes, Suppliers and Partners, Resource Management, Continuous Improvement and Performance Measurement. The latter Key Management Area was divided into three sections: Continuous Improvement, Performance Measurement for the Key Management Areas, Performance Measurement for the Organization as a whole. For micro size organizations (1 to 25 employees) there were 51 practices and for larger size organizations (26+ employees) there were 102 practices.

For these Practices, an objective rating scale (Table 2) was used that asked respondents to consider the approach, deployment and results of each practice and the focus or mindset with regards to excellence (i.e. corrective, preventive, continual improvement).

Table 2. Objective Rating Scale for the Best Management Practices

Rating Category	Just Beginning	Good Start	Doing Well	High Performance
Assessment %	0%-25%	26%-50%	51%-75%	76%-100%
Chart Value	0.0-2.5	2.6-5.0	5.1-7.5	7.6-10.0

Over the 2015 to 2020 period, the study had a total of 1,963 respondents: 70% completed the Teaser Assessment and 30% completed the Full Assessment. The preference for one assessment over the other was likely due to the Teaser requiring less time to complete. All respondents received an incentive to participate in the study that included the invitation to download a complementary copy of the publication and a copy of the published research report.

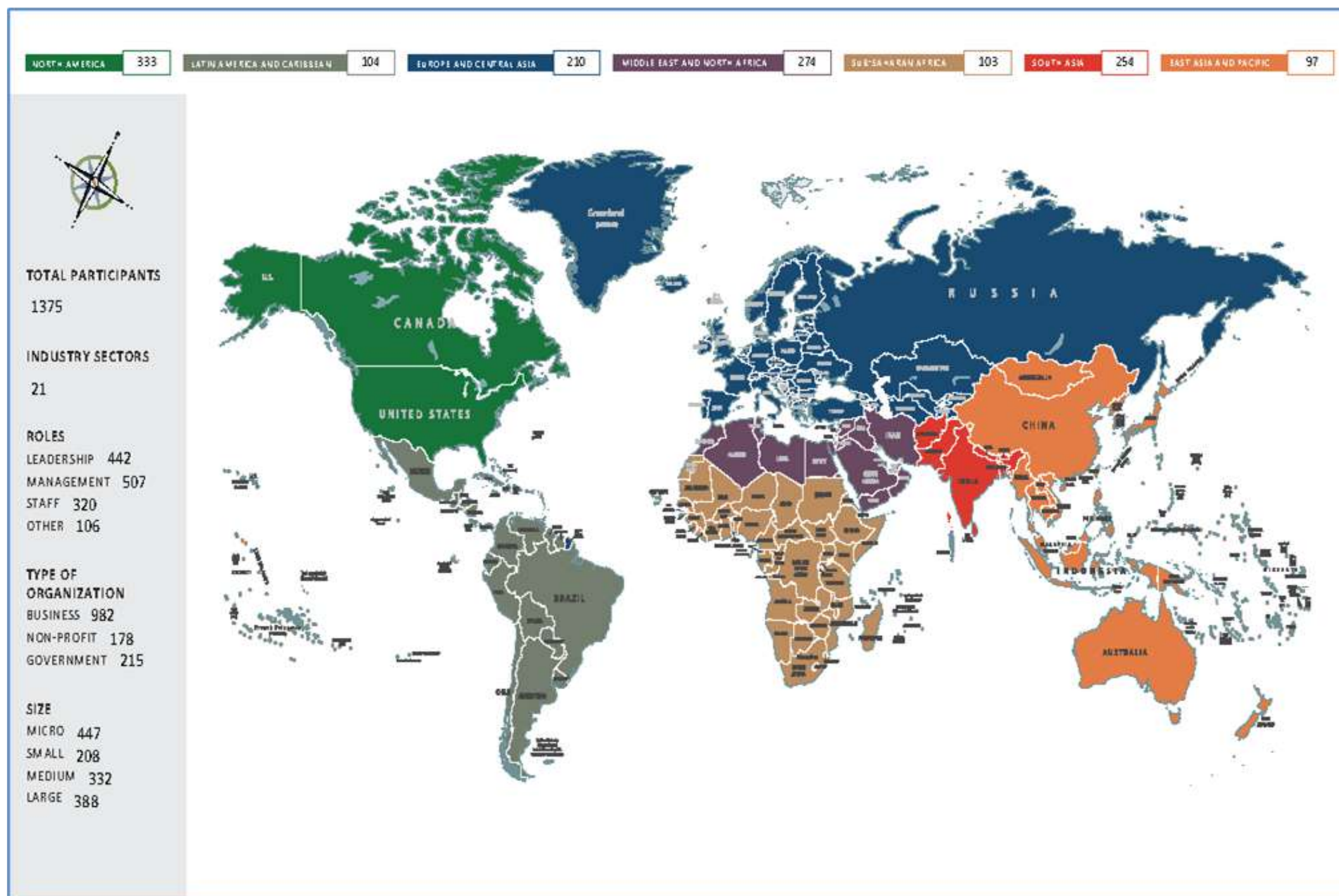
3.0 Teaser Assessment Results

In total, there were 1,375 respondents that completed the Teaser Assessment and represented 21 industry sectors and 7 regions. The industry sectors (21) were defined by the International Standard Industrial Classification⁴. and the regions (7) were defined by the World Bank Analytical Grouping⁵.

As per Figure 1, the majority of respondents were:

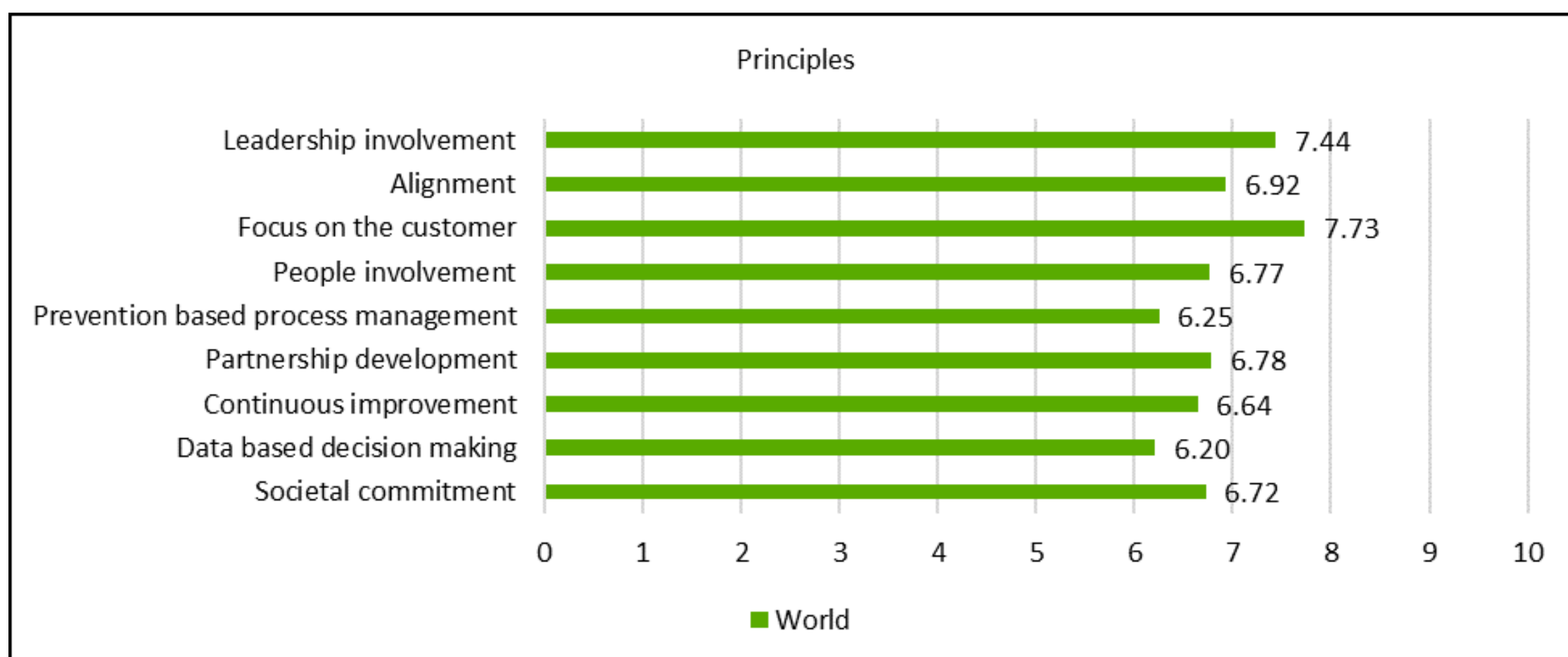
- Engaged in Leadership and Management roles followed by Staff and Other (e.g. Board member)
- Involved in the Business sector followed by Government and Non-profit
- Worked with Micro-size organizations followed by Large, Medium and Small

Figure 1. Teaser Assessment Respondents by Role, Size, Type and Industry Sector



Overall, the aggregate results on the Principles suggested that organizations rated the culture of excellence in their organizations quite positively (Figure 2). The highest rated Principles were 'Focus on the Customer' and 'Leadership Involvement' and the lowest rated Principles were 'Prevention Based Process Management' and 'Data Based Decision Making'.

Figure 2: Teaser Assessment Results



When examining the ratings on the Principles across role, size, industry sector and region, the more positive ratings were reflected by respondents with the following characteristics:

- Leadership role
- Micro size organization
- Business type organization
- Service as a general sector
- Electricity, Gas, Steam and Air Conditioning as a specific sector
- East Asia and Pacific region

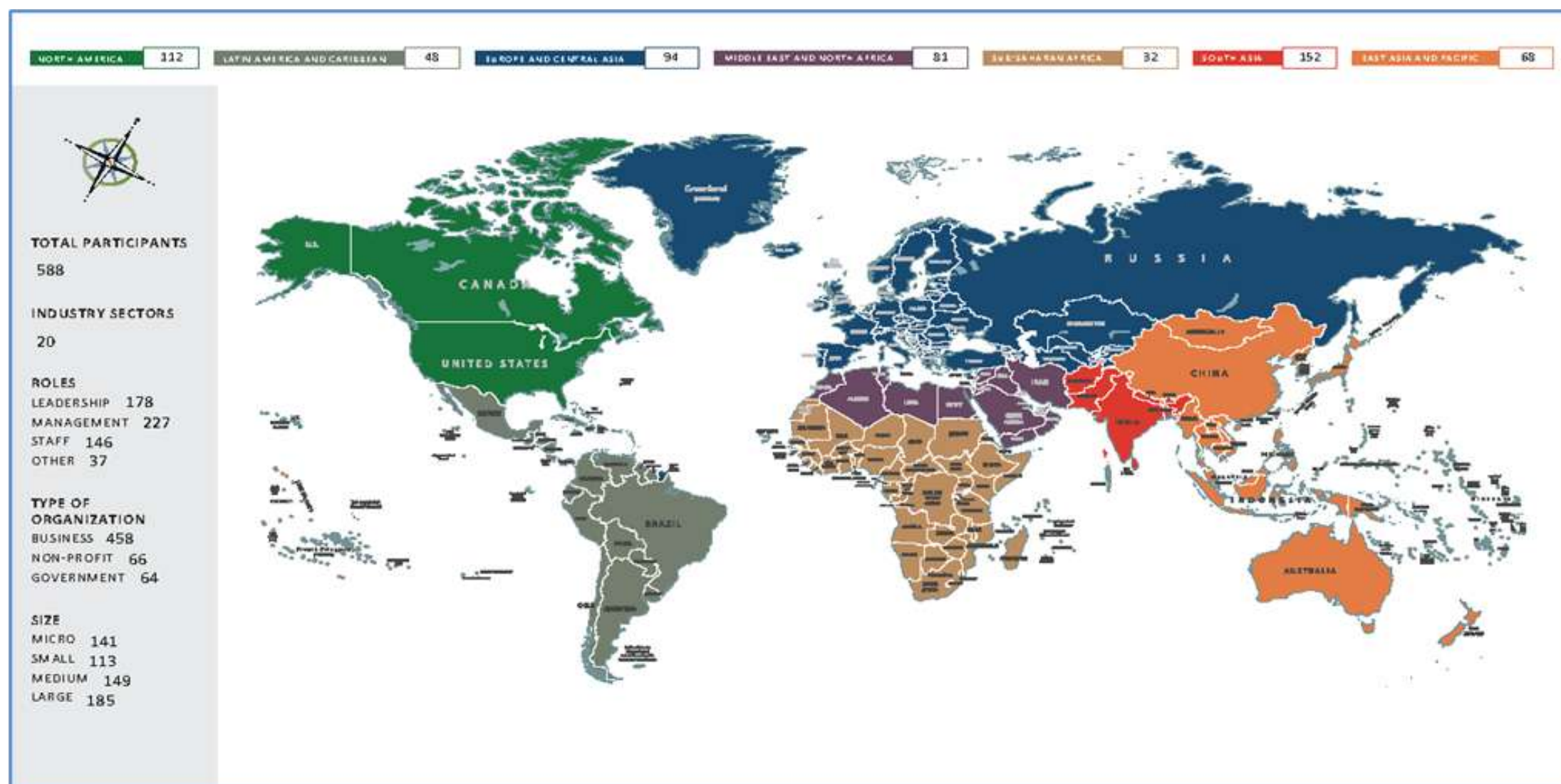
4.0 Full Assessment Results

There were 588 organizations that completed the Full Assessment and represented 20 industry sectors and 7 regions. Of the 21 possible industry sectors, one sector was not represented (i.e. Extraterritorial organizations and bodies). Potential respondents from this sector would have included employees of international organizations such as the United Nations, International Monetary Fund and World Bank.

As per Figure 3, the majority of respondents were:

- Engaged in Management and Leadership roles followed by Staff and Other roles
- Involved in the Business sector followed by Non-profit and Government sectors
- Worked with Large size organizations followed by Medium, Micro and Small size

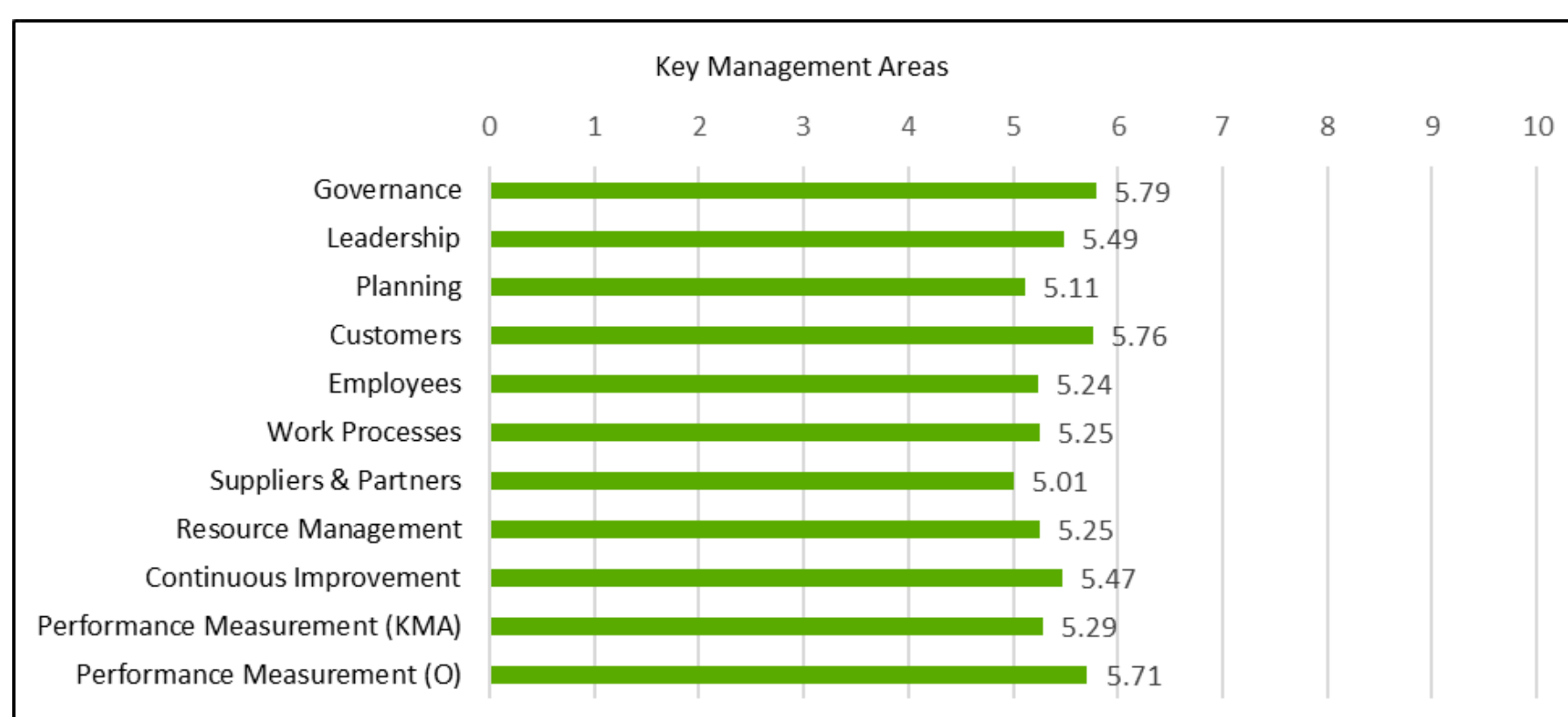
Figure 3. Full Assessment Respondents by Role, Size, Type and Industry Sector



The ratings on the Principles for the Full Assessment almost mirrored the ratings on the Principles for the Teaser Assessment. However, there was a significant drop in the ratings between the Principles and the Key Management Areas. This drop was likely due to the number of variables that respondents were asked to rate, the nature of the rating scales and the much closer examination of the management system in their organization.

For the aggregate results on the Key Management Areas (Figure 4), the highest rated areas were 'Governance', 'Customers' and 'Performance Measurement (Organization)' and the lowest rated area was 'Suppliers and Partners'.

Figure 4: Full Assessment Results



The Key Management Areas were rated more positively by respondents in:

- A Leadership role
- A Micro-size organization
- A Business type organization
- Manufacturing as a general industry sector
- Information and Communication as a specific industry sector
- The East Asia and Pacific region

Taking a deeper dive into each of the Key Management Areas, the highest rated Best Management Practices (rating 6.01 to 6.40) were:

- 'Governance':
 - Practice 1.3 'Ensure governance system meets legal, financial, ethical and reporting obligations'
- 'Customers':
 - Practice 4.2 'Determine customer needs and expectations'
 - Practice 4.4 'Align employees on the importance of the customer'
 - Practice 4.8 'Respond successfully to customer feedback'
- 'Work Processes':
 - Practice 6.5 'Take corrective action when problems occur'
- 'Performance Measurement (O)':
 - Practice 9.3.5 'Quality of products or services'
 - Practice 9.3.7 'Customer satisfaction'

The lowest rated practices (rating 4.30 to 4.97) across the Key Management Areas were:

- 'Leadership':
 - Practice 2.5 'Use risk management to assess strategic goals and objectives'
 - Practice 2.9 'Remove barriers to organizational effectiveness'
- 'Planning':
 - Practice 3.3 'Develop contingency plans for unforeseen events'
 - Practice 3.4 'Communicate and integrate the business plan internally and externally'
 - Practice 3.6 'Conduct a capability gap analysis for resources'
- 'Employees':
 - Practice 5.7 'Encourage employees to be innovative and take risks'
 - Practice 5.12 'Remove barriers to employee effectiveness'
- 'Work Processes':
 - Practice 6.9 'Involve customers, suppliers and/or partners in designing and analyzing processes'
 - Practice 6.10 'Use external data to compare performance to other organizations'
- 'Suppliers and Partners':
 - Practice 7.3 'Share information with suppliers and partners that links to strategic and business plans'
 - Practice 7.4 'Involve suppliers and partners in the development of new products and services'
 - Practice 7.5 'Involve suppliers and partners in the development of social and environmental standards'
- 'Resource Management':
 - Practice 8.8 'Prepare for resource interruptions'
- 'Performance Measurement (KMA)':
 - Practice 9.2.7 'Supplier and Partner measures'

5.0 Conclusions

As intended, this study has added to the literature by examining the current state of excellence in organizations along a wider continuum that includes role, size, industry sector and region and spans varying levels of awareness about excellence models. With 1,963 respondents, the study has provided a snapshot that is valuable for the excellence community in general and the working population at large.

Overall, the study has been successful in attracting a good cross-section of respondents and capturing the extent to which organizations are characterized by the Principles and have deployed Best Management Practices common to high performing organizations and found in excellence models.

Several conclusions were reached:

First, there continues to be enthusiasm for this study given the steadily increasing number of respondents, researchers and requests for presentations. Respondents have shed more light on the current state of organizational excellence and researchers have been successful in helping to address gaps. The presentations have been encouraging given ensuing discussions about how to move from current state to desired future state. These discussions have been fruitful and there has been a growing appreciation that the quest for excellence must be a larger community effort.

Second, there continues to be a requirement for gathering more data and information that will contribute to the desired sample size (9,000) and provide a better understanding of current state by size, industry sector and region. While the gaps remaining are most notable for particular industry sectors, there is also an opportunity to strive for a good cross-section of respondents by many countries. For any country interested in improving its economy, trade or resident quality of life, this undertaking will provide good baseline data on which to build and move forward – understanding current state, comparing to others, building on strengths, addressing opportunities for improvement, improving performance. To provide a preliminary profile for a country, it is recommended the total number of respondents be determined by size of the population: up to 15 million (25 respondents), between 15 and 55 million (35 respondents), over 55 million (45 respondents).

Third, the unforeseen event of the Covid pandemic (2020 – 2021) has really served to reinforce the importance of addressing the opportunities for improvement noted in the Full Assessment portion of the study. As we know, many organizations have been negatively impacted by the pandemic - lack of contingency plans, government decisions to shutdown economies, supply chain disruptions. And the duration of the pandemic might have been reduced if there had been more attention paid to the Practice of benchmarking - learning from others about best practices that served to mitigate the spread of the virus. That said, an important question remains - With the Practice of benchmarking being one of the lowest rated in this study, how many entities are actually aware of or can appreciate the benefit of such undertakings?

On the flip side, the Covid pandemic also showed there were many organizations that survived quite well. In fact, some of these organizations were able to adapt quickly to changing circumstances and reduce the impact – making changes to remain relevant, making innovative pivots to push into new markets, instilling confidence in the organization with stakeholders. This type of behaviour links to Best Management Practices found in excellence models that:

- Build capability, resilience and agility
- Leverage stakeholder suggestions, ideas and innovations
- Measure relevance to the marketplace and capability to manage change

6.0 Closing

In closing, this study will continue to pursue the original intention of capturing the current state of organizational excellence so there will be increasing awareness, understanding and application of the Best Management Practices found in excellence models.

As a platform for long-term organizational success, the benefits will be far reaching - improving the performance of organizations, contributing to the local economy, trade and resident quality of life, enabling more countries to participate sustainably in the global economy, making the world a better place for future generations.

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"...the benefits will be far reaching - improving the performance of organizations, contributing to the local economy, trade and resident quality of life, enabling more countries to participate sustainably in the global economy, making the world a better place for future generations."

About the Author



Dawn Ringrose MBA, FCMC is Principal of Organizational Excellence Specialists Inc and Author of the Organizational Excellence Framework publication and related turnkey toolkit. Her qualifications include: Certified Organizational Excellence Specialist, Certified Excellence Professional, Registered ISO 9000 Specialist, Assessor of Quality Systems. She has worked in the area of organizational excellence since 1990 and currently serves as: Executive Team Member, Organizational Excellence Technical Committee and Board Member with the ISCM Foundation. Email dawn@organizacionalexcellencespecialists.ca

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1ST WORLD INNOVATION AND BENCHMARKING SUMMIT: FINDING MEANING AMIDST THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Ma. Teresa U. Bagaman, Philippines

"How can we...rise above these challenges and continue to build and use this network to discover life-saving innovations that can help the world shape a new, post-pandemic generation of resilience?"

Year 2020 will forever be engraved in the history of the world as the year the COVID-19 pandemic "triggered a global health crisis that, in addition to an enormous human toll, is leading to the deepest global recession since the Second World War" (Global Economic Prospects).

Year 2021, with the advent of vaccines, ushers in new hope that with global collaboration, this dire forecast will be turned around and instead mark another victory for mankind.

How can we, as members of the members of the Philippine Society for Quality (PSQ) and Global Benchmarking Network (GBN) from more than 26 countries, rise above these challenges and continue to build and use this network to discover life-saving innovations that can help the world shape a new, post-pandemic generation of resilience?



As I chronicle my recollections for this journal, I struggle to release the thoughts overwhelming my mind in order to make sense of this seemingly surreal reality we are in now.

"As we all know, the onset of our Covid-19 pandemic era several months ago has given each of us as "citizens of the world" a major crisis to lead and manage, on perhaps several levels: the individual, the organization, the nation, and for our planet as a whole." Dale Weeks, GBN Board Member, September 2020

This is quoted from Dale Weeks, one of the GBN board members, who at the height of the pandemic in May 2020 sounded a call for action to all the members of the network to submit "COVID 19 World Wide Best Practices Benchmarking Initiative projects."

And here in Manila, PSQ heeded this call by sharing some of our best practices from the Philippines, such as how we in The Medical City, one of the leading tertiary hospitals in the country, together with the other frontliners, discovered and implemented agile innovative solutions to battle an unseen enemy, and struggled to save lives, even at the cost of our own.

How can we ignite the power of storytelling in order to connect with you?

I remember the start of our zoom meetings with two of our GBN board members, Dale Weeks and Dawn Ringrose, and PSQ President, Dr. Rey Fremista, as we conceptualized the possibility of launching the “**1st World Innovation and Benchmarking Summit**” which was held last November 24, 2020. This summit aimed to bring together the meeting of minds of all those willing to share the best practices of their countries.

Together with the Trustees of the **Philippine Society of Quality**, we agreed that the summit’s topics should address the current COVID challenges, their psychological impact, and insights on future challenges on innovation and how to prepare for the next generation of viruses.

Our call for speakers across the globe to share their stories was overwhelmingly supported by innovation experts, scientists, business leaders and doctors from the US, Canada, Germany, New Zealand, Ecuador, United Arab Emirates and the Philippines.

Our keynote speaker, **Peter Merrill** from **Canada**, Chief Executive of one of the leading Design Brands in Europe, shared his wealth of experience on “innovation skills, and how collaboration, creativity and critical thinking mesh together.” He also shared his insights on how innovation can help us prepare for the fourth Industrial Revolution and at the same time propel us to address the challenge of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Rick Britt from the United States, the Vice President of CallMiner, Intelligence and Interaction Analytics and **Kirsten Stallings**, a Data Scientist, CallMiner, USA talked about innovations in Artificial Intelligence and Interaction Analytics.



**Ma. Teresa U.
Bagaman**

“OUR CALL FOR SPEAKERS ACROSS THE GLOBE TO SHARE THEIR STORIES WAS OVERWHELMINGLY SUPPORTED BY INNOVATION EXPERTS, SCIENTISTS, BUSINESS LEADERS AND DOCTORS FROM THE US, CANADA, GERMANY, NEW ZEALAND, ECUADOR, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES AND THE PHILIPPINES.”

Dale Weeks from the US, who is also the President of Global Leadership and Benchmarking Associates, shared the results of his global best practices initiative as part of his lifelong commitment to attain global performance excellence amidst the pandemic.

Dawn Ringrose from Canada, who is also Principal of Organizational Excellence Specialists, Inc. highlighted the best adaptation by Canada in addressing COVID challenges.

Faran Niaz from United Arab Emirates, CEO and Founder of the CX Future shared the approaches adapted by UAE government and institutions in addressing COVID challenges.

Robby Thommy from United Arab Emirates, Managing Director of Al Jezerra International Catering, shared some COVID best practices from the service industry.

Dr. Raul Ramboyong from the Philippines, director of International Patient Services and Cardiovascular Institute, CPR Center of the Medical City shared how the healthcare workers, who were suffering emotional fatigue, organized several sessions aimed at spreading optimism to address COVID Challenges across the organization.

Mr. Wayne Burroughs, from the New Zealand, who held senior organizational leadership roles in a range of government and private organizations, discussed how he managed the COVID Challenges through his experience in organizational governance, strategy development and deployment, and business improvement.

Dr. Raul Destura from the Philippines, one of the "Asian Scientist 100" and Deputy Executive Director of the National Institute of Health of the University of the Philippines, focused on "Driving Innovation to Prepare for the Next Big One". He shared his insights on how the world can prepare for the next global challenges.

As Vice President, Center for Innovation and Lifelong Learning of The Medical City, I was given the opportunity to share the COVID best practices of the Philippines and how we re-imagined The Medical City to rise above the pandemic challenges through innovative solutions in caring for our patient partners who cannot or are afraid to go to the hospitals and clinics.

The panel discussions among some of the speakers, which were facilitated by Dale, identified specific calls for action which we hope can trigger more benchmarking and sharing of innovative solutions as we continue to fight and defeat an enemy which radically changed our lives. Dale's call for action is how can GBN and other performance excellence organizations continue to share the best practices to the rest of the world?

We wish to commend all those speakers who agreed to still be part of our summit despite having their hands full battling the virus in their respective countries.

We especially wish to thank GBN through Dr. Robin Mann (GBN Chairman), Dr. Holger Kohl (GBN Board Adviser) & Florian Kidschun (GBN Secretary General) for answering our call for support, together with Dale Weeks and Dawn Ringrose.

As I end this recollection, allow me to leave you with these thoughts:

Has COVID 19 radically reshaped our priorities in life? Has it opened new avenues that really matter? Could the invisible infections of fake news derail us from finding the truth? How can the challenges of these pandemic positively transform our lives and lead us to new directions?

PANEL PRESENTATION: GLOBAL INSIGHTS & PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE SOLUTIONS



DALE WEEKS
President
GLOBAL LEADERSHIP & BENCHMARKING ASSOCIATES



DAWN RINGROSE
Principal & Author
ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE SPECIALISTS, INC.



FARAN NIAZ
CEO & Founder
CX FUTURE



DR. RAUL RAMBOYONG
Director, Int'l Patient Services & Head, Staff Engagement, Cardio Institute
THE MEDICAL CITY



MA. TERESA BAGAMAN
Vice President, Center for Innovation & Lifelong Learning
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CRAVING FOR CERTAINTY IN UNCERTAIN WORLD STRATEGIES FOR SECURING FUTURE FOR ORGANIZATIONS

Sunil Thawani, UAE

**"When you become comfortable with uncertainty,
infinite possibilities open up in your life."**

- Eckhart Tolle

Craving for Certainty - Unknowns Are More Than Knowns

Uncertainties of the future occupy our minds all the time. Thirty-six years back, Aniruddha Guha and I realized our vision for travelling around the World on Motorcycle¹ covering a distance of 48100 kms. on road through 23 nations across four continents on a tight shoe string budget of USD 10 a day. In absence of internet, emails, GPS and with no ready access to telephones, we were struggling for information. Planning for world tour was a real challenge – which routes to take? Will we be able to drive in snow? What if we run out of money? What surprises await us at country border crossings? Will we get spare parts for motorcycle and many more such questions? Unknowns were more than the knowns.

Yet we did it. Did it with determination, adaptability, enthusiasm, belief and tremendous help and support of family, friends and strangers we met on the way.



Even in normal times, organizations face lot of uncertainties and deal with them with established policies, processes, governance and organization structures. Current ongoing covid-19 crises is forcing leaders to search for newer ways and means of surviving the crisis and securing the future.

Organizations Are Searching for Answers to Key Questions

For decades organizations having been using “Forecast-Plan-Sell-Earn-Reinvest-Grow”

model. Like every year most organizations begin their next year annual business planning and budgeting cycle in July – September period. But this year is very different. Due to Covid-19 pandemic, most businesses like aviation, hospitality, MSMEs are experiencing huge drop in business. Customer needs have changed. Newer regulations are frequently been introduced. Uncertainties for now and into the future remain. Business leaders are finding it really difficult to plan for year 2021. As a result,

reliance on our business as usual “Forecast-Plan-Sell-Earn - Reinvest-Grow” model is at risk.

Given this scenario, like many of us, I have also been asking myself:

1. How do we get more certainty in this uncharted world?
2. How do we secure future of businesses?
3. What are new emerging customer needs and expectations?
4. Will existing knowledge, management techniques and frameworks be still relevant for use for securing the future of organizations?
5. What new strategies, operating models and techniques will we need for the future?



Sunil Thawani

Strategies for Securing the Future in Ever Increasing Uncertain & Complex World

Based on my experience of working with my customers from diverse industries, government entities, interactions with business leaders, I am listing below key strategies organizations can consider for securing their future. These are listed under following four broad categories:

- A. **Customers** (Understand what customers need & why?)
- B. **Understand External Business Environment** (Make sense of continuing changes, Strategic Partnerships, Regulations, and Competition etc.)
- C. **People and Organization Culture** (People capabilities for future, Tolerance for Uncertainty etc.) and
- D. **Operational Excellence** (Survive current state, Organize on How to deliver What Customers Want - Processes, Digitization, Agility, Identify Emerging Risks etc.)

*1. HOW DO WE GET MORE CERTAINTY IN THIS UNCHARTERED WORLD?
2. WHAT ARE THE NEW EMERGING CUSTOMER NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS?
3. IN POST PANDEMIC WORLD WILL EXISTING KNOWLEDGE, MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES AND FRAMEWORKS BE STILL RELEVANT FOR SECURING THE FUTURE OF ORGANIZATIONS?*

Strategies for Securing the Future in Ever Increasing Uncertain & Complex World	
1 Customer Focus Understand what customers want & why 1. Go back & Listen to your Customers 2. Redesign products/ service offerings 3. Revisit customer experience	2 Understand External Business Environment 1. Anticipate Changes /Connect the dots 2. Comply applicable regulations value chain. 3. Scenario planning 4. Connect & Collaborate globally.
3 People and Organization Culture 1. Encourage Dissent and Tolerance for Ambiguity 2. Build people capabilities for future	4 Operational Excellence 1. Manage with Agility & Speed 2. Go Digital / Accelerate digitization 3. Innovate & Redefine Industry 4. Identify Emerging Risks

Note: Initiatives detailed above not in any particular order or priority. There are strong linkages among them and are interconnected.



**Sunil
Thawani**

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Initiatives detailed below are not listed in any particular order or priority as there are strong linkages among them, e.g. changes in external business environment can impact types of strategic partnerships needed for delivering customer experience leading to review of business processes, metrics and technology. Also it is not a complete list. It can vary depending on the external business context in which organization is operating, maturity of its management systems, people capabilities, resources etc. Having said that I strongly believe listed strategies are generic and are quite relevant and appropriate for most organizations in the world.

1. Go Back & Listen to Your Customers: The most important and logical starting point, for any organization, is to go back to their customers & listen to them. With so many changes in the business environment, customer needs & expectations have changed such as integrating health & safety controls in service delivery as needed. Organizations need to understand:

- a. What “job” their customers are trying to accomplish in the given circumstances?
- b. What “problem” their customers are trying to solve in the given circumstances?
- c. What causes their customers to buy their products and services in the given circumstances?
- d. What are the major drivers of customer satisfaction and customer experience?

Understand customer’s challenges, their aspirations and may be even help them articulate their needs and expectations is absolutely essential.

For above, organizations can use many currently available useful tools such as “Jobs to Be done”² theory developed by Prof. Clayton M. Christensen, Harvard Business School (HBS), Kano Model³ a Theory for Product Development and Customer Satisfaction” developed by Professor Noriaki Kano, Japan.

2. Revisit Products/ Service Offerings, Customer Experience and Competitive Positioning: With the changes in customer needs and delivery channels,

it is but obvious for organizations to review their current product/ service offerings and redesign them. This includes reviewing and improving/ innovating delivery methods, channels, customer experiences, customer journeys etc. e.g. Telemedicine by health care service providers, or Design of offices spaces, integrating health & safety protocols in routine business e.g. DULOG, one of UAE's leading & reliable movers has integrated strict health & safety protocols in packing, moving and unpacking of personal effects. Some of the tool's organizations can use are mapping "new" Customer Journeys, Kano Model³ Error! Reference source not found. and "Quality Function Deployment" tool developed by Dr. Yoji Akao and Shigeru Mizuno and other commonly used techniques like Market Research.

3. Anticipate Changes /Connect the Dots in the External Business Environment: External business environment has a direct and significant impact on internal operations of any organization. With rapid changes in external environment, organizations need to have robust management systems of continually engaging with its Regulators and all other external strategic partners/ stakeholders. Plus they also need to continually research the macro business environment, competitive forces and "Connect the relevant Dots" and use the insights for charting its strategic direction and evaluating its ability to achieve key outcomes. E.g. regulations for "social distancing", e-learning in schools and safety of children at school are impacting the design of future school buildings. Major changes "sensed" in environment need to be shared with relevant functions, customers, strategic partners, Boards etc. International management systems standards like ISO: 31000 (Risk Mgt.), 9001 (Quality Mgt.), Excellence models like EFQM, require organizations to establish a system for understanding the external business

environment and are good to refer by organizations.

4. Use Scenario Planning: Covid-19 pandemic gave us a wakeup call challenging the status quo of our socio, economic and environmental life. With the current increasing volatility in external business environment, 2020 annual business plans, based on forecasts made in 2019, have become unattainable for most organizations. For some, these plans are no longer relevant. e.g. With falling sales revenue, plans for expansions/ new investments are being reviewed/ put on hold by many organizations.

"Instead of relying on business-as-usual forecasts, organizations can consider developing multiple alternate scenarios such as "Pessimist, Normal and Optimist business scenario."

Instead of relying on business-as-usual forecasts, organizations can consider using Scenario Planning using "Knowns and imagine Uncertainties in the future". Organizations can develop multiple alternate scenarios such as "Pessimist, Normal and Optimist business scenario. These to be based on extensive research, reliable data, imagining different business scenarios, gut feel etc. Each different scenario will require setting targets, developing detailed plans, allocating resources and building agility into the operations. Dynamic changes in external environment will require businesses to quickly adapt to alternate scenario using different business plans and resources. Scenario planning is widely used by Military, Oil & Gas sector etc. Seminal book "The Art of Longview" by Mr. Peter Schwartz, American Futurist who used scenario planning successfully at Shell, oil & gas major is good to refer.

5. Manage with Agility & Speed: EFQM 2013⁴ model has explained Agility as “ an organization’s ability to identify and respond effectively and efficiently to changes to opportunities and threats”; “ use mechanisms to identify changes in their external environment and translate these into potential future scenarios for the organization etc.” Though concept of agility has been around for some time now, but covid-19 crises has created an urgent need and importance of building agility into processes, structures, budgeting, strategy planning, decentralize decision making etc. enabling organization to be flexible, adaptable and speed up decision making, innovate and embrace change. E.g. to treat Covid – 19 patients, China built working hospital in 10 days (unthinkable), brick & mortar retailers quickly adapted to ecommerce model, schools started e-learning etc. Apart from organizations, employees and customers also quickly learnt / adapted to use digital technologies in their day-to-day life.

"Covid-19 crises has created sense of urgency and importance of building agility into processes, structures, strategy planning, forecasting, budgeting, decentralize decision making etc."

As per McKinsey & Co.⁵, agile companies achieve greater customer centricity, faster time to market, higher revenue growth, lower costs and greater engaged workforce.

Since business forecasting for year 2021 is going to be difficult, we shall see lot of Agility in action. Depending upon actual business performance in 2021, to minimize risks and to seize new business opportunities, organizations

6. Compliance to Increasing Regulations: Industries such as health care, aviation, finance, pharma etc. are highly regulated. To control spread of covid-19 virus, governments globally have been issuing lots of regulations for other industries also, which were not that much regulated e.g. tourism, public transportation, retail etc. Organizations are now required to understand and implement newly issued regulations at short notice not only for them but across the value chain including their customers. This requires organizations to not only to be agile but must have excellent communication protocols with rigorous compliance verification and reporting system in place. Regulations will continue to be there in near foreseeable future. Organizations need to have systems in place and proactively engage with their Regulators. This will help them plan and implement forthcoming regulations well in time.

7. Go Digital / Accelerate digitization: With proven benefits of speed, customer experience, improved processes, less cost, need for analytics, business transformation; reduced environment footprint etc. going digital is not a choice for most organizations anymore. It is a question of how soon to go digital. Earlier going digital gave competitive advantage to organizations that started sooner than their competitors. For the countries who have established Information Communication and Technology (ICT) infrastructure , organizations need to catch up and go digital to produce their products, services and serve customers.

8. Connect & Collaborate in an Interconnected Borderless World: For decades organizations have established strategic partnerships around the world to solve global problems, access and share expertise, provide value to their customers, develop new products, reduce costs etc.

SIX SIGMA BELT GURU



YOUR PARTNER IN ACHIEVING BUSINESS EXCELLENCE

Most recent great example of collaborative working is of developing vaccine for Covid-19 – Research labs, Pharma companies, Donors, NGOs, Volunteers; Governments etc. are working together, across continents, to beat this pandemic at the earliest with an effective, safe and affordable vaccine. With continuous emergence of newer technologies, innovations etc., connections and collaborations are critical to success. Organizations need to identify key strategic suppliers in line with its purpose, values, and objectives and develop, maintain and enhance mutually beneficial strategic partnerships. As building and maintaining trustworthy long-term partnerships is not easy, some of the key factors to consider are:

- a. Ensure alignment of strategic objectives between collaborators;
- b. Establish communication protocols between collaborators and within each collaborating company;
- c. Clearly define roles and responsibilities of all collaborators;
- d. Establish meaningful measures of performance measures (KPIs).

Organizations can consider adopting ISO: 44001 - Collaborative Business Relationship Management Systems Standards for developing and managing strategic partnerships.

not be necessary for both of us to be in this company. It is precisely because you and I have different ideas that this company will run a smaller risk of making mistakes". To embrace change and ambiguity, creative ideas and active collaboration among people from different functions and levels will be needed more than ever and it is but natural there will be dissent during ambiguity and change. It's for leaders to create a culture of "free speaking" - "It's Ok to disagree with boss". Only then richer and better decisions will be made and there will be no fear in the organization.

"Sir, if you and I had exactly the same ideas on all subjects, it would not be necessary for both of us to be in this company. It is precisely because you and I have different ideas that this company will run a smaller risk of making mistakes."

Akio Morita, ex Chairman, Sony, Corporation, Japan.

9. Encourage Dissent and Tolerance for Ambiguity Among Employees: I am reminded of an interesting episode shared by Mr. Akio Morita, ex Chairman, Sony Corporation in his book "Made in Japan". "Mr. Akio Morita, as Dy. President of Sony Corporation, usually had a clash with Mr. Michiji Tajima, Chairman of the Board of Sony Corporation on differing ideas. One day Mr. Michiji told him "Morita, you and I have different ideas. I don't want to stay in company like yours where you don't have the same ideas that I have and we are sometimes in conflict". Morita said "Sir, if you and I had exactly the same ideas on all subjects, it would

10. Build People Competencies for Future: Some of the important people skills and competencies needed for managing business now and in future are critical thinking, creative thinking, collaborative working, self learning, problem solving, data analytics, writing algorithms, business continuity, scanning and sensing external environments, etc. Leaders have a responsibility to invest and develop their people for future so as to remain competitive and succeed - now and for future.

11. Innovate & Redefine Industry (Disruptive Innovation):

Professor Clayton M. Christensen of HBS explains disruptive innovation as a “phenomenon by which an innovation transforms an existing market or sector by introducing simplicity, convenience, accessibility and affordability where complication and high cost have become the status quo – eventually completely redefining the industry”. e.g. Computer industry innovated from big expensive mainframe computers afforded only by Governments and large corporations to mini frames to desk tops to laptops & now smart mobile phones which millions can afford now and are very easy to use. Similarly in automobiles, within few years of launch of Ford Model T car, Ford reduced its price from USD 850 to USD 300 so that millions can afford and use. Harnessing the creativity of employees, strategic partners, and community, to redefine the industry, improve product, services and operating model etc. are critical to have a successful and sustainable innovation program for securing the future for organizations.

12. Establish Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) System:

More than ever, it is now essential for organizations to establish a robust and an effective ERM system to identify emerging risks and implement effective plans to mitigate risks. Managers, Leaders and Boards should regularly monitor emerging risks and implementation of mitigation plans. Based on my experience of conducting ERM exercises with organizations, some of common major shortfalls in ERM are:

- a. Lack of true leadership commitment to ERM. It ends becoming a “tick box” exercise;
- b. Lack of integrated and comprehensive ERM within the organization. Different functions within same organization have their own risk management system e.g. Infmn. Security management, Finance has their own RM frameworks which are neither aligned nor integrated with enterprise RM.
- c. ERM framework deployed is not holistic. e.g. ERM does not include risks involved in strategic supply chains which are so critical in today’s borderless world.



**Sunil
Thawani**

“ MORE THAN EVER, IT IS NOW ESSENTIAL FOR ORGANIZATIONS TO ESTABLISH A ROBUST AND AN EFFECTIVE ERM SYSTEM TO IDENTIFY EMERGING RISKS AND IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVE PLANS TO MITIGATE RISKS. ”

Adopting ISO 31000, Risk management – Guidelines provides guidelines, principles and process for managing risks by any organization regardless of its size, activity or sector.

Concluding Thoughts: Uncertainty and complexity is here to stay. To manage, succeed and sustain in times of uncertainties leadership needs to ensure organizations are well prepared for the future, is agile to quickly adapt to changes in the internal and external business environment, is continuously learning and remain fully committed to serve and support its customers. Organization must establish robust management systems to anticipate and understand changes in external business environment well in advance. More the organizations are prepared for uncertainties the better they can deal with it.

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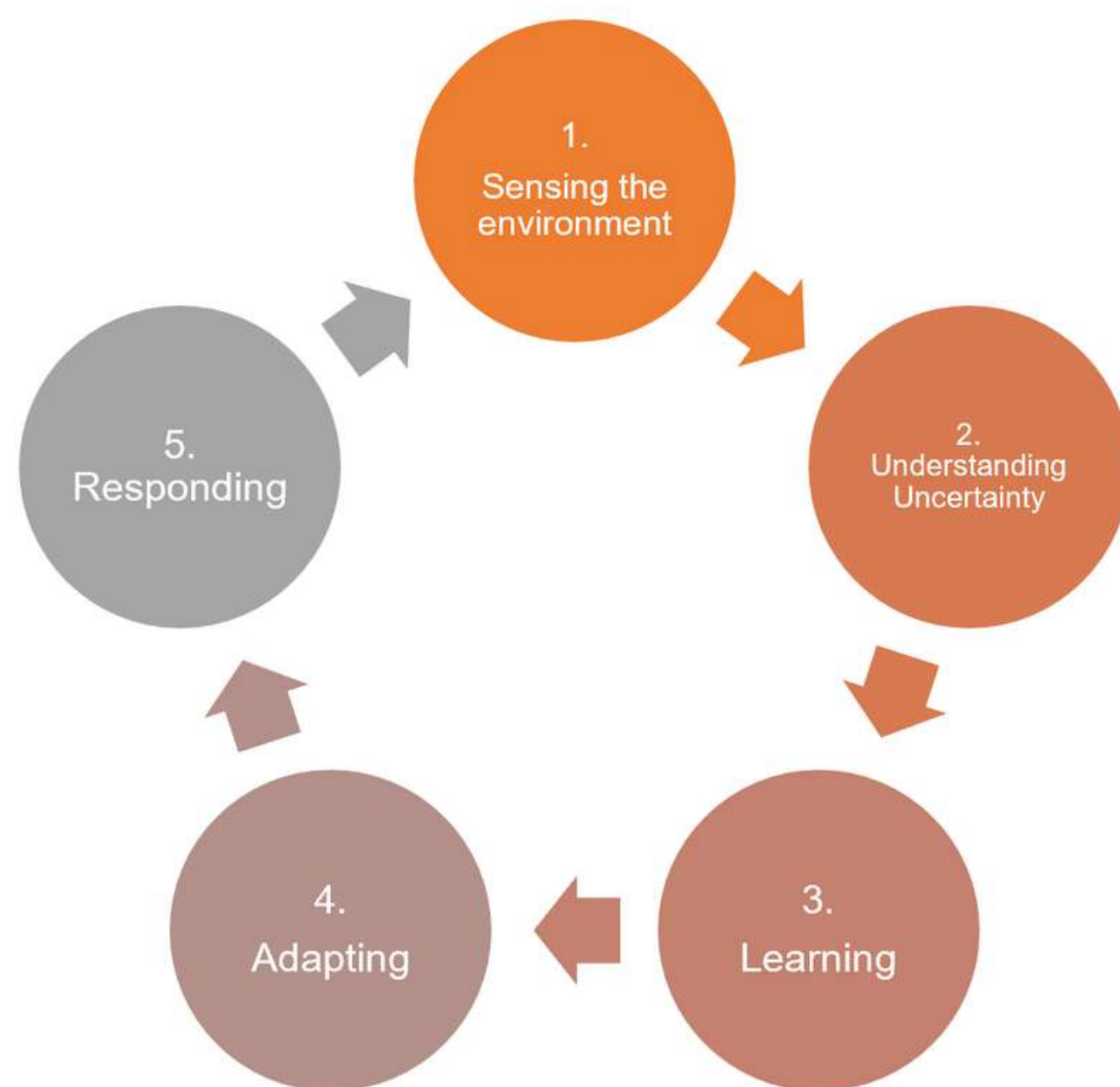
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"More the organizations are prepared for uncertainties the better they can deal with it."

Process of Managing Uncertainty





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STAYING RELEVANT TO OUR CUSTOMERS THROUGH THE USE OF PROVEN QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORKS

Angelica C. Friginal, Philippines

"Different challenges in today's environment have prompted many leaders, to re-assess their own purpose and make themselves continue to be relevant to their customers and other stakeholders in the new normal."

Top Management needs to stay relevant to their customers to sustain the existence of their organizations. Effectiveness needs to be regularly monitored to ensure that all personnel commit to consistent implementation of these quality initiatives and continue to make it as a way of life in the organization. Testimonials from different organizations adopting the Quality and Performance Excellence Frameworks are proof that these helped them in their improvement journey.



Different challenges in today's environment have prompted many leaders, to re-assess their own purpose and make themselves continue to be relevant to their customers and other stakeholders in the new normal. There are proven Quality tools and frameworks that are continuously enhanced and updated which can help organizations address strategic advantages and challenges in the new normal. They provide a structured way to think and become a foundation for action. The different quality and productivity tools can help in addressing crisis and challenges, so organization can continue to realize its mission and vision.

For example, the Criteria for Business Excellence, which is regularly updated to address the changing environment, is a proven framework to help an organization continuously improve. The framework helps an organization manage the crisis and continue to be relevant by looking at the different areas: organizational profile to revisit the purpose and relevance of the organization; visionary leadership through the crisis; having a relevant strategy; thinking about customers; use of measurement, analysis, and knowledge management; caring for the people; having a robust operation; and achieving results.

All organizations adopting management system aim to go beyond just getting the certification but to make the management system as a way of life. This entails ensuring “internalization” at all levels in the organization. Senior leaders face challenges when implementing management systems, which includes commitment from members of top management. Lack of commitment is a factor for a successful implementation and improvement of a management system. Clear understanding and support from employees are crucial in the internalization.

Thus, there is a need for the organization to have an effective and systematic approaches in the following phases of management system, namely: 1) Planning and Preparation Phase; 2) Development Phase; 3) Implementation Phase; 4) Monitoring Phase; and 5) Sustenance and Improvement Phase.

Planning and preparation phase involves ensuring that there is a buy-in and a clear understanding of the objective through an effective appreciation session, supported by top management. A clear working knowledge of quality frameworks and implementation is critical. Development phase consists of properly

"Commitment from top management and line personnel leads to an effective internalization and a culture of improvement. "

determining, designing, and developing the structure, policies, and operations.

This includes a working, systematic and effective documented information system. Implementation needs to ensure that the documented information system be deployed and internalized at all levels in the organization.

Commitment from top management and line personnel leads to an effective internalization and a culture of improvement. All of these initiatives may help in improving the overall quality of life of the customers and stakeholders of an organization.

About the Author



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Alsons Power to help bring about recovery and revival amidst the Pandemic

The Alsons Power Group, Mindanao's first private-sector power generator has vowed to play an active part in the country's economic recovery amidst the recession brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Alsons Power Executive Vice President Tirso G. Santillan, Jr. said, "In these difficult times for our people and the rest of world, our company will carry its share of the burden in order to help bring about recovery and revival."

Aid to host communities at the height of the Pandemic

From the beginning of the pandemic up to today, Alsons Power continues to make sure that residents and front-liners in its host communities in Mindanao had access to food and other essentials. Alsons Power plant and project personnel distributed several hundred sacks of rice, other food items, bottled water, patient beds and PPE's to front-liners and residents in Zamboanga City, Iligan, General Santos, and the Provinces of Sarangani and Zamboanga del Norte. The group currently has a portfolio of four power facilities providing electricity to over eight million people in 14 cities and 11 provinces including key urban centers such as Cagayan de Oro, General Santos, Iligan, and Zamboanga City.

In Iligan City in Northern Mindanao staff from the group's Mapalad Power Corporation (MPC) diesel power plant delivered several 25-kilogram sacks of rice for the residents of Barangay Dalipuga- the plant's host barangay. MPC likewise donated around 280 bottles of mineral water for frontline medical staff at the E&R Hospital in Iligan City. MPC also provided the E&R Hospital emergency room with mobile phone units for the collective use of emergency room front-liners.



In South Central Mindanao, employees of Alsons Power's Sarangani Energy Corporation (SEC) baseload coal-fired power plant and staff of the Siguil River Hydro project delivered food items, patient beds, and PPE's to residents and front-liners in General Santos City and Sarangani Province. In addition, SEC also donated 2,776 reams of bond paper to five public schools in Maasim, Sarangani Province, for the printing of over 400,000 learning modules as the schools gear up for classes in the "new normal."

In Zamboanga City in Western Mindanao personnel from the group's Western Mindanao Power Corporation (WMPC) diesel power plant and staff from the project team of Alsons Power's prospective San Ramon Power, Inc. (SRPI) baseload coal-fired power plant distributed 750 relief packs and sacks of rice to residents and front-liners five key barangays in the city. Beneficiaries included habal-habal drivers, fishermen, PWDs and senior citizens.

Also, in Western Mindanao, the development team of the Siayan Hydro project in Zamboanga del Norte turned over rice and canned goods to over 70 returning residents of the municipality of Siayan who had been stranded due to the pandemic.

"Alsons Power companies will continue to be an active and responsible member of the communities where we operate," said Mr. Santillan.



Funding for the LGUs

Alsons Power has reaffirmed its support to the Local Government Units in the areas where it operates. The group's Western Mindanao Power Corporation (WMPC) turned over P1.8 million to Zamboanga City for the

purchase of testing kits be used in the fight against COVID-19. In another part of Mindanao, Alsons Power's Sarangani Energy Corporation (SEC) remitted around P7.9 million to its host Municipality of Maasim, Sarangani Province representing the host municipality's share in the earnings of SEC's 210 MW baseload coal-fired power plant for the 4th quarter of 2019. Alsons Power EVP Tirso G. Santillan affirmed, "Our people continue to actively support the lgu's in our respective host communities."

Continuing Pursuit of Power Projects to help revive the economy



The company's various power projects remain on-track to begin commercial operations as scheduled due to the quick recovery of Mindanao from the COVID Pandemic. Mr Santillan stated, "We view our continuing pursuit of these upcoming projects, as our company's contribution to the economic recovery of our country by helping create new jobs and stimulate the local economies in the areas where we operate."

Alsons Power's projects in the pipeline are the P4.5 billion 14.5 MW Siguil Hydro run of river hydroelectric power plant in Maasim, Sarangani Province and the 105 MW San Ramon Power, Inc. (SRPI) baseload coal-fired power plant in Zamboanga City. Construction for the Siguil Hydro plant – the group's first foray into renewable energy, is currently in full-swing and the plant will be ready to start operating in 2022 as scheduled to provide power to Sarangani Province, General Santos City and key municipalities of South Cotabato. The SRPI plant is expected to begin construction in early 2021. The P16 billion SRPI plant is slated to begin operating in early 2024 to deliver baseload power to Zamboanga City and nearby areas.

For the long-term the company is slated to focus on renewables with seven more run of river hydroelectric plants in various stages of development. The next two hydro facilities in the pipeline are the 22 MW Siayan (Sindangan) Hydro plant in Zamboanga del Norte and the 42 MW Bago Hydro plant in Negros Occidental.

Steadfast Under the New Normal



Mr. Santillan noted, "Even as Mindanao has been less severely affected by the COVID Outbreak, we assume that the current situation will prevail for the next year or so." He continued, "We at Alsons Power remain steadfast in our commitment to provide safe, reliable and affordable power to the people of Mindanao and the rest of the country and to continue to be a responsible and active part of the local communities where we operate."





QUALITY AS ROCKET BOOSTER IN COLLABORATION TAKE-OFF

Dr. Narro R. Navarro, Philippines

"Quality is a management perspective that enables each organization to achieve competitive advantage. Quality as an input provides industrial understanding that gives organizational impact in the day-to-day activity."

A verified question in the practice of quality is to what extent and the fundamental focus each organization is involved. Quality has been adopted in many ways in an organization; at different levels and at different capacities. In some context, quality exhibited a duality in purpose, control structure and learning development.

Quality is a management perspective that enables each organization to achieve competitive advantage. Quality as an input provides industrial understanding that gives organizational impact in the day-to-day activity. But this has been confined in a single firm for the longest time and many practitioners have advocated to form synergies between quality and other focus areas and eventually for embedding quality in strategic collaborations.



Since quality perspective starts at the top management level, practicing quality in an intra-organizational level will be a promising initiative. Drivers of this initiative have to develop a bird's eye view of the dynamics and evolution to be able to turn the practice into an inter-organizational level of collaboration. The Philippine Society for Quality (PSQ) is an illustration of an organization constantly doing its part as the melting pot to catalyze collaboration at an organizational level. PSQ serves as a guiding light to its members;

it can be synonymous to a light that gleams through the fog.

Arguing on the difference in approach in the intra-organizational and inter-organizational perspectives, drivers have to understand the level of analysis that has to be deployed. Intra-organizational collaboration practitioners can look on the organizational level of analysis while inter-organizational drivers can use the network of collaboration as an element of analysis.

It is understood that at an intra-organizational level, the company's top management is the ultimate architect of decisions. On the other hand, for the intra-organizational level, the group ascendancy and the established structure govern. Referring to the individual perspectives, each organization may adopt new practices that do not necessarily provide growth for them. But the organization can assure that their stability will be reinforced in the intra-organizational level. Each company decision can be based on the quality initiative within their mission. The full understanding and dynamics of this mission will be realized as the company moves toward collaboration.

Differentiating viewpoints may argue as to how company doing collaboration in an inter-organizational level relishes competitive advantage. This is the exquisiteness of quality in collaboration. The resource-based view theory (RBV) explains that the high performance is the outcome of the proficiencies to amass scarce resources. In this case, RBV sees collaboration in an inter-organizational level as the element of analysis.

Interactive view of competitive advantage can claim that embedding quality in an inter-organizational level can be a source of competitive advantage. It can be embedded as well in the inter-organizational resource management and activities.

Several research outputs suggested that quality fuels collaboration that enhances organizational performance and productivity. Since inter-organizational collaboration is purely voluntary, the sharing of resources, co-developing of prototypes, and exploration of new technologies, has to be done in a formal undertaking in an independently initiated cooperative agreement. Partnership is not new in every organization as stipulated by trade union practices. However, the homogeneity of this collaboration can be completed by quality. Collaboration should let quality boost and direct between organization the strategic and long-term thinking to achieve common goal.

Going back to the perspective of utilizing collaboration network as an element of analysis, let us start with expenditures analysis. Collaboration to be maintained requires expenditures at different levels. Collaboration



**Dr. Narro R.
Navarro**

“ SINCE INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL COLLABORATION IS PURELY VOLUNTARY, THE SHARING OF RESOURCES, CO-DEVELOPING OF PROTOTYPES, AND EXPLORATION OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES, HAS TO BE DONE IN A FORMAL UNDERTAKING IN AN INDEPENDENTLY INITIATED COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT. ”

with quality perspectives can maintain inter-organizational expenses in the shore. It increases the level of confidence of the collaborating organizations with each other since they deploy same quality standards. Confidence can

increase operational mechanism between organizations while keeping the expenditures at the minimum.

On the social network aspect, the main impetuses to forge a collaboration will be decreased cost, inspiration for organization's members cultural change as a form of competitive strategy and continuous learning. As discussed above, reservations can erode collaboration efforts, quality at this point will be a great tool to reinforce trust and confidence between companies.

Crucial mechanisms in collaboration are learning, adaptability, and knowledge creation. These mechanisms will provide the competitive advantage for the organization. By focusing in these mechanisms, the influence of quality will be higher and will address rapid evolution and uncertain business environments. Collaboration with quality perspectives will also address the enhancement of learning capability, identifying resources and organizational skills sets to be developed, the exploratory methodologies and the learning experience in the exploration phase.

The inter-organizational collaboration is surely an administrative upgrade for collaborating companies. It is a process at institutional level that awaits system effects. The merging of quality will broaden this approach and will give emphasis to the continuous improvement, customer satisfaction, data-driven processes, employee delegation and empowerment, and problem-solving skills. It can now be assumed

"Crucial mechanisms in collaboration are learning, adaptability, and knowledge creation."

that quality is an ion-dipole force that will symbiotically improve the performance of collaborating organizations. The adoption of quality principles will affect each organization to re-structure their own organization and lean towards collaboration. This will boost their aptitude to develop compatible practices with new settings for a sustainable form of collaboration.

Learning and development on the other hand can serve as a bridge between networks of organization to develop strategic collaboration. As pointed out in many research on quality, there will be no continuous improvement without a learning environment. Correlation of quality and collaboration creates knowledge which then creates organizational learning and eventually give rise to higher performance. Truly a goal with quality.

PSQ in many ways have always demonstrated its capability to support organizational collaboration that shape, nurture and inspire many companies to go beyond profit and join forces to develop singularity for the benefit of sustainability. Today, PSQ is a world-renowned quality organization that is dynamic, agile, and truly a catalyst for nation building. Mabuhay PSQ Nation!

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COMPETENCIES OF SERVICE PROVIDERS: A PRECURSOR OF CREATING A CULTURE OF QUALITY IN THE SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM (SSS)

Dr. Medardo B. Bombita, Philippines

"The success of any service institution lies on the quality of service provided to its clients which are given by the service provider's staff. One of the factors considered in quality service provided is the competencies of the service providers."

Abstract

Typical Filipino family, either privately employed or self-employed, without enough investment which can be their source of financial stability in their old age and in times of financial difficulties, considers security institutions such as Social Security System (SSS) as their source of hope for financial help. This comes especially at times of old age and death of family members.

Discourses in this paper can serve as a basis in improving the services that can help lessen the causes of delay of transaction in these services. The success of any service institution lies on the quality of service provided to its clients which are given by the service provider's staff. One of the factors considered in quality service provided is the competencies of the service providers. In this essay, competencies of social service providers particularly pertain to the ability of the service providers to build trusts among clients, collaborate with co-workers, performing functional knowledge and skills and to show customer focus.

Keywords: SSS, Quality Service Culture, QSC



Prelude

Social Security is defined as any program of social protection established by legislation, or any mandatory arrangement, that provides individuals with a degree of income security when faced with the contingencies of old age, survivorship, incapacity, disability,

unemployment, or rearing children; may offer access to curative or preventive medical care (Loanzon, 2016). The establishment of SSS is derived from the Republic Act 8282, Section 2. Social Security System is guided with the mission to manage a sound and viable social security system that promotes social justice and provides meaningful protection to their

members and their families against the event of disability, sickness, maternity, old age, death and other contingencies that leads to the consequence of loss of income or financial burden, and it is also rooted to its vision to be a viable social security institution providing universal and equitable social protection through world-class service (www.sss.gov.ph, 1997).

As mentioned by Manasan (2009), Social Security System like social security system in other countries, presents income support to employees of private sector and their families in times of unforeseen events like old age, death, sickness and disabilities that happened from work and financed out of the payment of members and their employees.

As cited in Republic Act No. 8282, amending Republic Act No. 1161, otherwise known as the Social Security Law, Section 4 (b) No. 4 it states that, “The Social Security System shall have the power and duties to enter into an agreement or contracts for such service and aid, as may be needed for the proper, efficient and stable administration of the Social Security System”. The law justifies and supports that Social Security System has the obligation to provide, through its employees, efficient services to satisfy its clientele. Thus, the agency has the obligation to provide, adequate, timely and satisfying services to its clients. Private sector workers in the Philippines are compulsorily sheltered by a defined benefit social insurance plan managed by the Social Security System established in 1957. It provides pension, healthcare insurance, maternity benefits, and death benefits for employees in the formal sector and their immediate families or dependents. The scheme is financially supported by a total contribution of 11 percent of the employee’s monthly salary, with 7.37 percent contributed by the employer and 3.63 percent contributed by the employee since 2014. The income ceiling for calculating contribution and benefits is PHP16,000 since 2014 (Cantos-Hamper, 2012).

Social Security System pension remunerations are significantly evolving. They are probable to replace 78 percent of total income for someone on an average salary, 120 percent for someone on 25 per cent of regular salary, and 49 per cent for someone on 300 per cent of average



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“ CLIENTS EXPECT QUALITY, TIMELY AND EFFICIENT SERVICES FROM THE SERVICE INSTITUTION. QUALITY OF SERVICE GIVEN BY THE SERVICE PROVIDER IS A BASIS OF THE SATISFACTION OF THE CLIENTS/ CUSTOMERS THAT PROMOTES LOYALTY IN THE PART OF THE CLIENT AND CONTINUOUS PATRONAGE OF ITS MEMBER AND ITS FUTURE MEMBER. ”

salary (Reyes, 2012). The average monthly Social Security System pension was PHP3, 109 in 2008, with PHP1, 000 as the lowest pension amount and PHP23, 588 as the highest (Cantos-Hamper, 2012).

Most of the Filipinos do not have investments that they can use in the future when they retire and solely rely on government-funds insurance systems such as Social Security System in times of needs such as death of family, retirement and disability situations. At times of need where the family is weak and financially incapable such as the family members' death and family members' retirement from work, it is such a relief to receive the expected financial support to sustain family's immediate needs in time. There are number of complains gathered from the comments of clients that the services provided to claimants of SSS retirement, death and funeral claims takes a long time to be processed. Importance providing timely service is supported by the report of Panti (2013) who mentioned that the institutions' profitability cannot be the only template of Social Security System' performance while obviously not considering the best concern of its members. Performance should be considered in terms of member-satisfaction and high level of satisfaction of consumer service seen through received availed loans or pensions on time.

It is expected that Social Security System, as provider of social security especially to its retiring clients and their family, provide adequate services especially to the retirees who have been giving contribution to Social Security System for such a long time. Clients expect quality, timely and efficient services from the service institution. Quality of service given by the service provider is a basis of the satisfaction of the clients/customers that promotes loyalty in the part of the client and continuous patronage of its member and its future member.

Various concerns are provided by clients that lead to the delayed processing of claims. In fact, one of the concerns placed by Social Security System clients in the suggestion box in the first quarter of the year of 2018 and up to 3rd quarter of 2019 include long waiting time to process the claims in the retirement, death and funeral services Social

Security System in most of its branches; unmet time to process claims as posted in the Citizen's Charter; and insufficient information on the required documents needed to process claims.

In order to deal well with the clients, the service provider requires a culture of quality that carries within the needed competencies that can contribute to better and more efficient services of its service providers in delivering retirement, death and funeral services.

Efficiency of the services provided by Social Security System to customers especially in the retirement, death and funeral claim service, is one of the concerns of the customers/clients reflected in recorded number of complaints written in the suggestion box provided.

Identifying the competencies of the service providers in these fields may help understand the possible solution in efficiency-related problems raised by customers.

In the Social Security System Citizen's Charter, the disability claim application and retirement claim application, starting from the receipt of claim to check date, 10 working days is the allocated time while in the funeral claim, from the receipt of the claim to check date, 5 working days is allocated. This is supported by the results of the study on the comparison between the social protection in Indonesia and the Philippines, countries with same economic structure. Ramesh (2014) concluded that imperative gaps remain in the social protection systems between Philippines and Indonesia. The most noticeable inadequacies are the nonexistence of unconditional cash transfer program for the underprivileged (especially the aged poor) and available public works for the unemployed. Both countries focused on healthcare, but Indonesia is more improved than the Philippines in this area despite its delayed start. The difficulty of the persons of age from the informal sector is discriminating in both countries, although all private sector workers in Indonesia find themselves in a

similarly unstable position.

Inefficiency of the services provided by Social Security System especially in the retirement and death and funeral services maybe due to various reasons which may include lack of knowledge of customers in the needed documents in processing their claims.

"In order to deal well with the clients, the service provider requires a culture of quality that carries within the needed competencies..."

Another possible reason for the delayed service is on the transaction process itself. The processing of papers needed to finish transactions to Social Security System is done through various steps and processed by different personnel. Other personnel may have completed the task as required earlier but other personnel with different task may have been the cause of delay. This is beyond the knowledge of the clients that is why the front desk personnel are the ones blamed by the client for the delayed transaction. Thus, identifying the lacking competencies of the service providers that may be causing the delay of the transaction should be identified so immediate recommendations and solutions may be posted.

As one of the public administration practitioners and consultants of various government agencies in policy formulation, implementation and evaluation, the author of this paper observed in social media, summary reports of 8888 or the government's Customers' *Sumbungan ng Bayan* (CSB) clients complaining something about their claims. Oftentimes, although SSS itself was not responsible for the delay/denial of their claims, the agency consistently serve as the shock absorber of their situations situation. This requires the service providers in SSS be patient with the clients. This is the reason why the writer, in line with the objective of the institution

to improve its management, opts to discuss in this paper the required competencies of the Social Security System to create a quality culture service, especially in the delivery of the retirement, death and funeral claim services.

As cited in the website of Philippine Civil Service Commission (CSC) (2016), competency is described as a set of knowledge, attitude and vital skills that can be measured and observed that are converted capabilities of employees deemed necessary for organizational success. To attain the objective of CSC to incorporate human resource systems' competencies of government agencies, starting with recruitment, Competency-Based Recruitment and Qualification Standards (CBRQS) was made. With this, the CSC distinguishes that hiring and preserving the best employees will rest the basis for developing civil servants that are competent, high performing, and credible. As reported by Brillantes and Fernandez (2011), that the key to the restoration of public trust is responsive governance. It is added that a government blemished with corruption, inefficiency and ineffectiveness, restoring trust is elementary.

"The ability of an employee to assure its clients on the efficiency of work delivered is a way on how service providers build trust among clients."

Other definition of competency is given by Martinez (2015) who defined competency standard as specifications of the industry setting of the knowledge, skills and attitude an individual must have in order to effectively operate in a specific work environment. It also speaks of the extent of competency that determines how an individual may perform in a particular job. In his framework he presented that competency which comprise attitude, skill and knowledge produce observable behavior, and when combined leads to job performance.

The importance of developing competencies among Filipino workers is supported by the writings of Salazar (2014) who cited that there should be change in the state of mind of businesses and managers in the Philippine by considering at ASEAN as remaining United States, Europe and China as exports market and that domestic market will only take place if integration of Philippine business, government and the academe will not only bring about change of mindset but also enhance the competencies and skills of human resources of the Philippines so the country can have better and complete period of ASEAN integration.

With respect to the models made to evaluate employees' competencies, Tan, Oriande and Fallon (2014) cited that Nordic model divides service quality into two dimensions: technical quality and functional quality. It further mentioned that the majority of service quality evaluations are focused on the aspects physical environment, personal interaction and core service or product.

Building trust among clients

The ability of an employee to assure its clients on the efficiency of work delivered is a way on how service providers build trust among clients. Being true to one's client on the status of a client's application and giving assurance that the services will be promptly delivered builds confidence of its clients to the institution.

Building trust as a core competency is important especially in creating quality output among its employees. Martinez (2015) discussed that in a company, the moment work is repeatedly done or redone, the cost of creating quality-assured goods and services rises, cost of lack of communicating skills resulting to incorrect/inappropriate communication, cost of reworking or redoing public goods, cost reexamination of good's sub-assemblies or major outputs, items or services is the cost of lack of skill to Bureaucracy. Whenever mistakes happen due to lack of skills,

institutional embarrassment is created, the cost of damage to an institution's integrity increases, the loss of people's confidence and trust and created people's notion of created fraud and anomalies, unnecessary delay and overrun cost happen.

Effective Communication

Communication skills particularly effective communication skills is one of the skills employers now-a-days are looking for in an employee. The skill to effectively convey the message to the clients and coworkers is necessary to efficiently provide the services needed by clients in an institution. The right choice of words and the correct way on how to convey messages is a must among employees.

Collaboration with coworkers

Teamwork among working institutions promotes more efficient job fulfillment among members of institutions and promoted professional development among members. The ability of a service provider to collaborate with its coworkers will lead to a better job performance and satisfaction of the clients. Collaboration of teamwork among members of the institution also shows the unity of its members to achieve its mission and vision as an institution.

Caraballo and Panti (2013) that four of ten fresh graduates and young jobseekers are not hired because they lack initiatives according to the People Management Association of the Philippines (PMAP) at a job fair in Makati. Herrera (2014) cited that there are various studies made to determine the importance of working environment in an individual's productivity. Supportive environment alone does not influence trainees' use of trained skills.

Functional Knowledge and Skills

To achieve quality service, every member of an institution is expected to be knowledgeable in all aspects of his/her job. Employees' knowledge and skills in his/her position determines the efficiency in doing the task since he/she requires limited guidance to finish the task. Independence of an employee to perform task assigned to him/her results to a more effective service rendered to the clients.

The need to develop initiative or being able to not wait to be told what to do which is also nearly similar to leadership ability is emphasized to be one of the soft qualities lacking among our fresh graduates to get hired, as mentioned by PMAP director for academe-industry, Gigi Alcasid. She further mentioned that 40% of our fresh graduates are not getting hired because of not having acquired these qualities, (Rosero, 2012).

While Herrera (2014) mentioned that if learning is an internal behavior and performance is an external behavior, then training outputs should emphasize performance, not just learning.

Customer Focus

Institutions that provide services to its clients required to obtain skills pertaining to how to focus on customers and provide their needed services. The intrapersonal skills of every employee to determine clients' needs and deal with them properly is one of the competencies of a good employee. In institutions that provide services such as that of Social Security System need to have this competency among its employees.

Service focus as one of the core competencies of the University of California Career Compass Core Competencies model (2010) is defined as values

Its behavioral indicators includes the ability to understand business needs of an organization, customer's needs, respond and be at service to customer needs, recommend solutions and alternatives to customers' needs and be responsible of shared accountability to improve the service delivery to customers.

Epilogue

Finally, trust, communication, teamwork, knowledge and skills, and customer focus are vital competencies for service providers should attain to provide quality service among customers of service-related institutions like SSS. Continuous professional development anchored to the core competencies and to the needs of employees is important to provide quality service and create a culture of excellence in service delivery that the public deserves. SSS as a service-related institution should invest on communication and customer-related skills development program of its employees.

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