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Chapter 1

Introduction

The notion of Process Management has been evolving over a number of decades but has gained real momentum during the 1990's through a number of fashions and trends including "business re-engineering", "the business as a system" and "process mapping". The introduction of national quality awards such as the Malcolm Baldrige Award in the US (MBNQA), European Quality Award, UK Business Excellence Award and many others across the world has also brought in the notion of Process Management. All of the 'excellence' models are based upon a number of common, underlying principles, namely Leadership including organisational culture, Planning including strategy, policies, stakeholder expectation, resources, Process and Knowledge Management including innovation and problem solving, and finally Performance Results covering all stakeholder expectations. Pivotal to organisational success is effective and efficient process management. The EFQM Excellence Model® below clearly illustrates these principles and the importance of processes as an enabler of results.

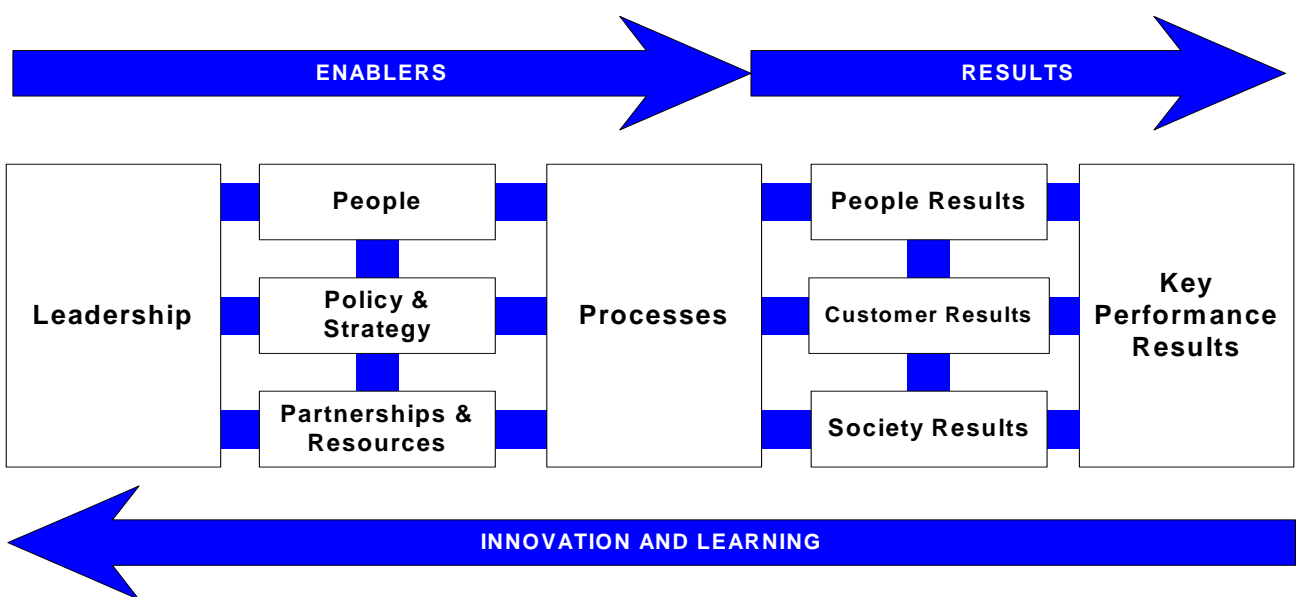


Figure 1 EFQM Excellence model®

However, on first encounter, the EFQM Excellence Model® appears to suggest that processes are separate from Leadership, People, Policy and Strategy, Partnerships and Resources because Processes are placed in a box with these factors shown as 'inputs'. This also suggests that the processes are more concerned with the 'engine room' than the 'boardroom'. In reality, there are processes in the boardroom as well as the engine room. Clearly there must be strategic planning processes, policy-making processes, resource management processes, processes for building and maintaining partnerships and above all processes for leading the organization towards its goals. The model therefore must be viewed as representing an organisation as a system with each of the factors continually interacting with each other to achieve the goals. Whatever an organization desires to do, it does it through a system of processes. However, we must not forget that fundamentally the EFQM Excellence Model® is an assessment tool. It was not intended to be a design tool. Also it was designed as a diagnostic tool although it can be a helpful input to a diagnosis. It is used in assessing an organizations commitment to the excellence principles and to allow comparison of such commitment and performance between organisations.

This publication sets out to examine different perspectives of processes and presents an overview of an approach that can be used as a design tool to assist organizations develop their business processes and manage them effectively.