

Deputy Commander for Support Performance Excellence

The US Army Medical Materiel Agency (USAMMA) advances performance excellence as part of its Core Competency 4 using a variety of quality management approaches, methods, techniques, and tools. The Agency performance excellence framework supports the overarching Total Army Quality Management program, an integrated strategic management methodology practiced at strategic, functional, and tactical levels. Strategic refers to higher-level transformation and major organizational change, functional relates to quality at business areas or certain disciplines, and tactical means day-to-day operations and individual techniques.

The USAMMA performance excellence framework has at its foundation a combination of the Army Performance Improvement Criteria and Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award tenets (APIC/Baldrige). In addition, performance excellence embodies several complementary and supporting approaches such as the Balanced Scorecard (BSC), ISO 9000 Quality Management System, Lean Six Sigma (LSS) and DoD continuous process improvement (CPI), benchmarking, and activity based costing (ABC).

The APIC/Baldrige begins with an organizational profile that covers three general areas: (1) organizational description, (2) organizational relationships, and (3) organizational challenges. The organizational profile is a snapshot of the Agency, especially the key factors about how we operate, and the major challenges we face collectively. The organizational profile identifies potential gaps in key information and focuses on our key performance requirements and results. Subsequently, the organizational self-assessment evaluates how well we perform collectively across seven interrelated and interdependent categories: leadership; strategic planning; customer focus; measurement, analysis, and knowledge management; workforce focus; process management; and results.

The BSC is a strategic change, performance measurement, and communication system. Using visual strategy maps (visual representation of cause and effect hypotheses) and scorecards (measures of success through project-like initiatives), the BSC enable leaders and the workforce to assess deployment of the Agency strategic plan towards desired long-term objectives. Balance relates to consideration of several perspectives such as resources, learning and growth, processes, and customer and stakeholder. Linkages exist with other BSCs (up, down, across, and personal scorecards) and with LSS opportunities.

Lean Six Sigma (LSS) is a melding of lean manufacturing and Six Sigma. Lean manufacturing creates value by eliminating waste throughout the organization. Six Sigma is a method for measuring the performance of a process based on customer requirements. In addition to reducing the variation of existing processes, the design for Lean Six Sigma (DFLSS) builds lean and focused new processes. The DoD CPI involves tools and techniques for continuously improving processes, including using

LSS. Process mapping endeavors at USAMMA give the leadership and workforce knowledge about the activities and procedures used to generate products/services.

The ISO 9000 Quality Management System comprises five international standards that provide guidance for the development and implementation of quality products and services. The USAMMA Medical Maintenance Management Directorate maintenance operations (depots) are ISO 9001:2008 registered demonstrating these organizational elements are capable of effective and efficient practices that satisfy stakeholder regulatory requirements and customer needs. Essentially, ISO 9001:2008 certification means the organization element staffs say what they do, do what they say, they prove it, and continually improve it.

Benchmarking is comparing products, processes, and the organization as a whole against high-performing organizations to identify strengths and gaps. ABC is an approach to trace first the indirect and support costs against the activities performed, and then assigning the activity costs to products/services and customers. Assigning the activity costs based on the quantity of each organizational activity consumed provides managers with knowledge about the consumption of resources throughout the value creation process.

In summary, performance excellence seeks to attain positive results through the linkage and optimization of all organizational strategic objectives, processes improvements, and standardized procedures that deliver quality products or services required by stakeholders and customers with a minimal expenditure of resources. Instead of a single quality approach, the Agency interweaves several organizational quality and performance management systems with strategic, functional, and tactical purposes. No one size of quality approach fits all.