

The APPA Facilities Management Evaluation Program (FMEP), initiated in 1989-90, represents a compelling leadership tool designed to serve organizations looking for a proven and successful approach to performance management and improvement. It is made to order for the facilities management profession.



system that must be integrated in order to optimize organizational performance. This integrated system embraces the central idea that "it is not possible to achieve excellence by only doing some of the things that are easy and ignoring the rest."

- The FMEP criteria and the criteria that are utilized to evaluate institutions that apply for the APPA Award for Excellence are the same.
- Embedded within the seven criteria are a number of interrelated core values and concepts that are taken from beliefs, practices, and behaviors found in high-performing organizations and adopted directly from the Baldrige National Quality Program. Each of these core values listed below are described in detail in the Baldrige National Quality Program publication, "Criteria for Performance Excellence," available at www.baldrige.nist.gov.
- Visionary leadership

Getting Started with the Facilities Management Evaluation Program

by Jack Hug

Patterned after the Baldrige National Quality Program Criteria for Performance Excellence, the FMEP criteria provide a framework for continuous improvement. Here are a few aspects that set the FMEP criteria apart from other assessment programs:

- FMEP criteria are regularly reviewed by the APPA Professional Affairs Committee to determine if anything needs to be changed or added. This review ensures that the criteria are at the leading edge of validated facility management practices. The criteria are designed to help facility management organizations use a comprehensive and integrated approach to organizational performance management. In other words; its scope covers all critical aspects of facilities management and connects the dots so that we can see a picture of the organizations performance all in one place.
- The FMEP takes a system approach whereby the seven-section criteria and its 57-subsections are all part of a

- Customer-driven excellence
- Organizational and personal learning
- Valuing employees and partners
- Agility
- Focus on the future
- Managing for innovation
- Management by fact
- Social responsibility
- Focus on results and creating value
- Systems perspective

Now how can we dispute with these core values? It seems to me that these values describe the organizational environment that we must create today and they are comprehensive enough to cover all aspects of leading and managing in the facilities management profession.

The Self-Evaluation

On first glance at the FMEP criteria, the seven major categories and its 57 subsections can seem quite daunting. However, if the FMEP is going to add sufficient value and serve the facilities management organization in the most advantageous way, then preparing a high-quality self-evaluation is the critical and essential first step. Its sensible use and consistent application can help employees at all levels assess their

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individual department and their entire facilities management organizations overall readiness to meet today's requirements. In times of increasing complexity, more demanding customers, endless challenge, and chaotic change, achieving readiness, and being positioned for overall effectiveness and productivity is not easy.

Getting started with the Self-Evaluation

You do not have to wait until you are ready to do a FMEP to begin using the criteria. In fact, many organizations begin using the criteria for annual self-assessments and for developing action plans based on the results.

The Organizational Profile

The first step and a prerequisite for the use of the FMEP

campus work environment and organizational work relationships.

Answer these questions about the organization's description and characteristics

1) Main Products and Services

What are our organization's main products and services? What is the delivery mechanisms used to provide our products and services to our customers? **If you think that you are simply a service organization and that the term products doesn't apply, then think again.** Take a look at the APPA *Facilities Manager* of September/October 1997. In his article, "Product Based Management," Bill Daigneau² writes:



criteria, whether performing a self-assessment or going for a full-scale FMEP, is the preparation of an Organization Profile. One of the most overlooked and a frequently short-changed component of an FMEP Self-Evaluation is the Organizational Profile. The Organizational Profile is a snapshot of our organization, the key influences on how we operate, and the key challenges we face.

Our Organizational Profile is critically important because it is the most appropriate starting point for self-assessment; it helps us identify potential gaps in key information and lack of organizational focus on key performance requirements and results; it is used by the review team members to understand the organization and what we consider important; and it can be used by itself as an initial self-assessment to help us get started on the full bodied self-evaluation.

The Organizational Profile contains two major parts; organizational description and organizational challenges.¹

I. Organizational Description

The Organizational Description asks the question; what are our key organizational characteristics? Within our response we should include answers to several questions relating to the

Like most of us in the facilities management business, I had been brought up through the ranks believing that we were a service organization, providing essential support services to our universities and colleges. The service industry, unlike manufacturing or construction, is different in that we don't deliver tangible products like autos or buildings. This difference affects how we manage people, processes, and finances, and how we treat our customers.

Services by their nature, we are taught, are intangible, variable, perishable, and produce only "memories." Products, however, are tangible, measurable, time specific, and are in the physical world. So, in the practice of managing services, how do we bridge this gulf between services and products? How do we apply management practices that seem to work so reasonably well in the manufacturing business to the service industry?

All it requires is that you readjust your focus, from the world of intangible services to the world of real, measurable products. Once that readjustment is accomplished,

you will be able to use all of the tools and techniques employed by successful businesses, covering all aspects of production management, finance, marketing, and productivity improvement.

2) Organizational Culture

What is our organizational culture? What are our stated mission, values, and vision?

3) Employee Profile

What is our employee demographic profile? What are our categories and types of employees? What are their educational levels? What are our organization's workforce diversity and job diversity, organized bargaining units, use of contract employees, and special health and safety requirements?

4) Major Technologies

What are our major technologies: equipment, software, and facilities?

5) Regulatory Requirement

What is the regulatory environment under which our organization operates? What are the applicable occupational health and safety regulations; accreditation, certification, or registration requirements; relevant industry standards; and environmental, financial, and product regulations?

6) Reporting Relationships

What is our organizational structure and governance system? What are the reporting relationships among senior leaders and throughout the facilities management organization?

7) Key Customers and Stakeholders

Who are our key customers and stakeholders? What are their requirements and expectations of our services and products? What are the major differences in the requirements among the various customer and stakeholder groups?

8) Partners, Suppliers, and Distributors

What are our most important types of Partners, Suppliers, and Distributors? What contracts for services do we have that help us deliver services, innovate, and create value? What forms of communication do we have with them?

II. Organizational Challenges:

What are our Key Organizational Challenges?

In the Organizational Challenges section of the Organizational Profile we should describe the institutional environment, the institution and the facilities management department's strategic challenges, and performance improvement processes that we may have in progress. Answer these questions about organizational challenges:

1) Institutional Position

What is our institution position, i.e., Research top 50; top 10; or other? What is our relative size in the education market and how do we measure it? Who are our peer institutions that senior administrators typically use as comparisons? Is there collaboration with other institutions that might be considered competitors?

2) Success Factors

What are the principal factors that determine our success as an organization? What are the key changes taking place that affect our situation?

3) Comparative Data

What are the key available sources of comparative data for facilities management that are most relevant to our situation? What are our organizations strategic initiatives? What are the organizations methods of continuous improvement? How do we maintain overall organizational learning? How do we achieve process improvement?

The Organizational Profile should be limited to three to five pages.

The next step in preparing a self-evaluation is to recognize that the work required to prepare a self-evaluation is not an individual task. The best method is to involve a team or teams of people who have an interest in better understanding and in using the FMEP criteria as a template for improving the organization. A team should consist of from three-to-five members who represent employees from different levels throughout the organization.

The team composition will vary depending on the particular criteria category. For example, in a large organization the criteria category 1.0 Leadership, the team composition could be: Senior Facilities Officer, Director of O&M, Director of Design and Construction, and the Director of Campus Physical Planning. Other unit managers/supervisors can be added along with frontline staff.

Another example for the criteria category 5.0 Development and Management of Human Resources, the team might consist of the facilities department human resources person, various directors, managers, supervisors, and frontline staff. For this category, supervisory staffs are typically key participants.

If this sounds like too much for the smaller institution, a single assessment team can be assembled in smaller organizations to assess all seven FMEP criteria categories.

Strategic and operational planning consist of the planning process, the identification of goals and actions necessary to achieve success, and the deployment of those actions to align the work of the organization.

The Self-Evaluation Criteria

1.0 Leadership

The facilities organization's senior leaders should set direction and establish customer focus, clear and visible values, and high expectations in line with campus mission, vision, and core values. Leaders inspire the people in the organization and create an environment that stimulates personal growth. They encourage involvement, development and learning, innovation and creativity.

Bottom-line lessons learned:

The failure of an organization to achieve high levels of performance, more often than not, is a result of a failure in leadership. In successfully addressing this criteria category, we should be able to say, Our leadership team uses our organization's values to guide the organization and employee behaviors, creates a work environment that helps employees do their jobs, shares information about the organization, encourages learning that will help all employees advance, lets employees know what they think is most important, and regularly asks employees what they think. Employees know the organizational mission, values, and vision statements.

2.0 Strategic and Operational Planning

Strategic and operational planning consist of the planning process, the identification of goals and actions necessary to achieve success, and the deployment of those actions to align the work of the organization. The facilities organization should anticipate many factors in its strategic planning efforts: changing customer expectations, business and partnering opportunities, technological developments, evolving regulatory requirements, and societal expectations, to name a few.

Bottom-line lessons learned:

Strategy development and strategy deployment are two key areas of focus for this criteria category. Anyone who had ever developed a strategic plan knows how difficult it is. The voice of experience has taught us that even though developing strategy is difficult, the execution or deployment of the strategy is at least three times as difficult.

A successful response to this criteria will include a description of the active participation by the management team and by employees in planning for the future; department leaders

ask employees for their ideas; employees and managers know the parts of the plan that will affect them and their work; and how to tell if they are making progress on their part of the plan.

3.0 Customer Focus

Customer focus is a key component of effective facilities management. Various stakeholders (faculty, students, staff and other administrative departments) must feel their needs are heard, understood, and acted upon. Various tools must be in place to assure customer communication, assess and assimilate what is said, and implement procedures to act on expressed needs.

Bottom-line lessons learned:

Customer service is a contact sport. If your department is delivering lousy service, and if you are a facilities manager, then it's your fault! This criteria category is all about the customer and about the employees. A successful response to these criteria will have real examples that clearly demonstrate that employees know who their most important customers are; employees keep in touch with customers; customers have no reservation about telling employees what they need and require; employees are allowed to make decisions to solve problems for their customers. This criterion also requires managers to spend time with front-line employees discussing customer needs and requirements and for managers to spend face-time with customers to ensure that there is an understanding of customer needs and requirements.

4.0 Information and Analysis

Information and analysis are used to evaluate performance and drive future performance improvements. Of interest are the types of tools used (for example, peer comparative data clarified and validated through benchmarking), and how the tools are used to enhance organizational performance. Various aspects of information include facilities inspections/audits, financial/expenditure reports, utility data, and other relevant measures and indicators.

Bottom-line lessons learned:

The first rule of quality management and for achieving performance excellence is "Manage from fact!" We are asked about how the organization utilizes the technology to capture relevant information and how employees utilize this information to support decisions and to provide the organization an indication on how it is doing. An organization that has achieved success with these criteria will have employees who know how to measure the quality of their work; will know how to analyze (review) their work to see if changes are needed; use analysis to make decisions; and are able to get the important information they need to do their work.

5.0 Development and Management of Human Resources

An organization's success depends increasingly on the knowledge, skills, innovative creativity, and motivation of its employees and partners. This criterion addresses the ways in which the facilities organization ensures continuing learning environment through communication, policies, recognition, training, professional development opportunities, and other methods.

Bottom-line lessons learned:

This criterion is considered the most important by many facility management professionals. It certainly ranks right up there alongside 1.0 Leadership. Time and time again, FMEP review teams are heard to comment about the positive difference which the quality of people make in a facilities management department. There is no doubt that having the right people, in the right jobs, provided with the right training, skills, and genuine organizational appreciation do make a recognizable difference. As facility managers we must always remember—"it's people who do the work". Just like there is no such thing as a free lunch, there is no such thing as a free worker who's been properly trained to do a great job. This criterion stress the importance for employees to cooperate and work together; to develop their job skills; to be recognized for their work and to work in a safe and healthy work environment where managers care about people.

6.0 Process Management

Effective process management addresses how the facilities organization manages key product and service design and delivery processes. Process management includes various systems such as work management, performance standards, estimating systems, planning and design of new facilities, and other key processes that affect facilities functions.

Bottom-line lessons learned:

Today, managing a campus facilities department means managing the processes. Core business processes are the focus here. There is probably no area within the broad scope of facility management that has greater potential for improvement than that of facility process management. There are so many processes to choose from and so many different ways to do things that a genuine focus on processes will keep the organization on a continuous improvement continuum. A high performance work environment will have good processes for doing the work, and give employees a sense that they have control over their work processes.

7.0 Performance Results

The facility organization's performance can be assessed through campus appearance, employee satisfaction and motivation, effectiveness of systems operations, customer satisfaction, financial results, and supplier/business partner results. Where feasible, it is helpful to have measurement tools in place to assess performance in these areas.

Bottom-line lessons learned:

The organizations performance criterion highlights the importance of the facilities management organizations ability to carry out its mission. It reaffirms the importance of campus infrastructure reliability and condition of facilities, customer satisfaction, managing the financial resources, process management and the ability of the organization to remove things that get in the way of progress, and how well the organization is positioned to keep current and abreast of cutting edge developments. Standards, ethics, campus community involvement and job satisfaction are all included in this section.

8.0 Other Considerations

This category is intended for the institution to use to list any special requirements or areas of focus that the institution would like to include in the FMEP. Generally this would consist of topics that are not generally covered by the seven major criteria.

Conclusion

The seven criteria incorporate a set of 57 performance-oriented requirements. An FMEP assessment thus provides a profile of strengths and opportunities for improvement relative to the 57 performance oriented requirements. The criteria have progressed over time toward a comprehensive, integrated system perspective of overall organizational management. The FMEP is truly a relevant tool to help facilities professionals connect the dots to achieve a clear picture of organizational performance.

The criteria are non-prescriptive and adaptable. In other words they are: broad rather than narrow; flexible rather than rigid, unbending or regulatory; and they are more lenient than strict, authoritarian, or dogmatic. The criteria do not prescribe: how your organization should be structured; that your organization should or should not have departments for service quality, planning, or other functions; or that different units in your organization should be managed in the same way. These factors differ among organizations, and they are likely to change as needs and strategies change.

It is a tendency of FMEP review team members to look at another facilities organization in comparison with their own respective institution. For example, it is often heard during a review that "at our university we do it this way." This message is frequently received by the recipient as "this is the way we do it at my place and therefore this is the way you should be doing this."

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Nothing could be farther from the truth. In the majority of instances, the right thing to do depends upon the circumstances of the institution. The specific and particular circumstances can be and usually are substantially different. The institutional context, culture, and work environment, and the major issues needing to be addressed are some of the things that must be considered in making recommendations.

The proper conduct of an FMEP is not a “slam-dunk” or a “one size fits all” approach. The challenge to be objective is

substantial. Institutions vary wildly in size, form, and age, and it is risky to presume that a proven “cure” developed in one place will be effective elsewhere.

The focus of the criterion is on results, not on procedures, tools, or organizational structure. Organizations are encouraged to develop and demonstrate creative, adaptive, and flexible approaches for meeting service requirements.

The management of current organizational performance is a delicate balancing act, even while simultaneously innovating for the future. This demands a new level of management competence on the part of facility managers. Faced with

major change initiatives and organizational transformations, facility managers must make the right decisions—at the right levels—at the right times.

APPA can help. Visit the APPA website and review the FMEP criterion and other materials. Invite a representative to speak to your team, attend the APPA Leadership Academy, and become an FMEP review team member. 🏰

Endnotes:

1. Baldrige National Quality Program 2006, Criteria for Performance Excellence.
2. Bill Daigneau is vice president and chief facilities officer at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, Texas. He is a cochair of APPA's Leadership Academy. Daigneau received the 1998 Rex Dillow Award for Outstanding Article for this article.

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