



Utilisation of business excellence models: Australian and international experience

Utilisation of BE models

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to examine the international use of business excellence (BE) models and the practices used by BE framework (BEF) custodians to encourage use.

Design/methodology/approach – A literature review, three surveys, a series of focus groups and key informant interviews were conducted. The study involved input from 16 countries and was part of a larger study of how BEFs are designed, reviewed, promoted and deployed within and across nations.

Findings – Only two of 16 BEF custodians had a formal measurement system in place to objectively measure the use of BEF by organisations over time. The use of the Australian BEF was lower than previously estimated at 1.3 percent and global use between 4 and 15 percent of organisations. The three most effective practices for assisting organisations in applying BE were tours of best or good practice organisations, publications on BE, and on-line service/database of BE information.

Research limitations/implications – While the primary focus was on the Australian context, the findings draw upon a range of international sources and hence are of relevance to all BEF custodians.

Practical implications – The findings from the project were used to redesign the ABEF, and are expected to help inform national BE strategies worldwide.

Originality/value – The paper updates the current situation regarding the utilisation of BE in 16 countries, with a focus on Australia.

Keywords Business excellence, Quality management, Quality awards, Australia

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Many nations have established their own business excellence frameworks (BEFs) to help raise the performance of participating organisations within their country. BEFs provide a structured approach for organisations to assess their performance and benchmark this against an internationally recognised score. They are administered by national organisations (custodians) who are responsible for: framework design; on-going development and redesign; promotion of BE within that nation's business community; and provision of services to increase framework use. Custodians also administer and promote the National Quality Award (NQA) programmes that recognise achievement against the frameworks. Note that the use of the terms BEF/Award and NQA varies between countries, although both refer to a set of criteria for assessing performance, and an award programme based on those criteria.

Although there have been studies to determine which BEF and associated award programme custodians have adopted; and comparisons made of the structure, content and validity of national BEFs, there has been little comparative research on the level of BE use achieved within nations, or the effectiveness of the practices that custodians



have implemented for encouraging use. In this paper, we present the findings of a survey of 16 BEF custodians on the use of BE in their countries, and what the BEF custodians in these nations perceived were important and effective practices to encourage the utilisation of BE by organisations. In addition, we report the findings of surveys conducted in Australia to collect data that could enhance the structure and use of the Australian business excellence framework (ABEF), and associated BE services offered by SAI Global, the present custodian of the ABEF.

Background: ABEF and SAI global

Custodians face various challenges in promoting use of frameworks and providing relevant BE services to organisations. In 2005, SAI Global commissioned a research project with the aim of addressing these challenges and helping to achieve higher levels of engagement of BE in Australia. This paper is one of a series of reporting the results of the project. Other articles in the series have provided an overview of: the research and a summary of the key findings (Grigg and Mann, 2008a); and practices to increase awareness of business excellence models (Grigg and Mann, 2008b).

As discussed in Grigg and Mann (2008a), The ABEF was developed independently in 1987 for Australia. It was administered by the Australian Quality Council until 2001, at which time custodianship passed to SAI Global (formerly Standards Australia). As at 2005, SAI Global is the only private and for-profit organisation operating a BEF. Not having corporate membership, sponsors or direct government support means SAI Global are in a unique position as a custodian. Tan (2002) argues that a strong commitment from government is necessary in order to ensure the successful implementation of a NQA, and a priority for any body wishing to establish an NQA. For example, the Baldrige and the Argentinean QA were both established by law, and the administering organisation for the Aruba QA is supported entirely by government funds (Tan, 2002). Some BE models are explicitly linked to governmental offices, for example, the Prime Minister's QA in Malaysia.

In 2005, the ABEF was based upon 12 core principles and 7 category groupings, containing a total of 22 separate scoring items. Additionally, an organisation's performance against each of the 22 items of the framework was assessed against four "dimensions" (approach, deployment, results and improvement), whereby the items were evaluated by exploring how the organisation puts plans and structures into place; deploys those plans and structures; measures and analyses the outcomes; and learns from its experience.

Utilisation of excellence models

Researchers have investigated which BEFs and NQAs are used at a national level (Tan *et al.*, 2003). Most NQA models are based on the Malcolm Baldrige NQA and European Quality Award (EQA), while a few countries, including Australia, have developed unique programmes (Tan *et al.*, 2003; Prajogo and Sohal, 2004). A 2005 internet search for the current study identified that at least 82 countries currently administer a national BE award program (Grigg and Mann, 2008b). In Europe, the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) believes that at least 30,000 organisations across 25 countries are using the European Excellence model (EFQM, 2007).

International comparative studies focusing on BEFs, NQAs and quality management practices have been conducted by a number of researchers. Parast *et al.* (2006) compared quality management practices in the USA and Mexico based on the Baldrige BEF.

Khoo and Tan (2002) compared the structure and content of nine NQAs, and Chuan and Soon (2000) compared the structure and content of 17 NQAs. Khoo and Tan (2003) compared the differences and overlapping concepts between the USA and Japanese approach to quality management, comparing the Baldrige BEF, the Japan NQA and the Deming Prize. Kumar (2007) compared the changes in the Baldrige BEF and the Deming Prize from 1992 to 2005 in the USA and Japan. Schniederjans *et al.* (2006) surveyed the use and value of the Baldrige BEF in India, Mexico and the USA. Tan *et al.* (2003) compiled differences in the modeling of 53 NQAs. Tari *et al.* (2007) found support for direct and indirect effects of quality management on performance in Spain compared to previous studies carried out in the USA and Korea.

A number of researchers have investigated the use of BEFs and NQAs to advance quality management practices in individual nations. Boys *et al.* (2005) found the use of BE programmes by Canadian organisations to be related to the size and location of the organisation. Lagrosen and Lagrosen (2005) compared the use of the Swedish Quality Award, the EQA and ISO 9000 in Sweden, and Eriksson (2003, 2004) investigated the organisational value of participating in the Swedish quality award process. Lee *et al.* (2003) studied the impact of Baldrige BEF on organisational quality performance in Korea, and Lee *et al.* (2006) investigated the evolving role of the Baldrige BEF and quality management in the US. Miguel *et al.* (2004) examined the criteria for the Brazilian NQA. Su and Li (2003) found the Taiwan NQA model represented an excellent model of business performance, while Saunders and Mann (2005) and Saunders *et al.* (2007) reported the benefits of sharing BEF best practices and self-assessment experiences in New Zealand organisations.

Methodology

The methodology for the present study comprised three stages as fully discussed in Grigg and Mann (2008a):

- (1) A review was conducted of international published research on worldwide trends in BE, performance improvement, profitability, and long-term sustainability; and gathering information from the websites of BEF custodians. Literature was reviewed from 2000 forward and comprised: academic journal articles presenting comparative studies of excellence models; published guidelines of major award custodians for 2004/2005; and Australian context research on the drivers of excellence and improved performance.
- (2) Six focus groups, each comprising experts with in-depth knowledge of at least one development or deployment process, were held in Adelaide, Melbourne, and Sydney. Participants were asked to identify strengths, opportunities, and solutions/recommendations in relation to framework development, design, promotion, application, and the award recognition process.
- (3) Three surveys were conducted. The first was a telephone-based national “awareness and use survey” intended to reliably assess the current awareness and use of the ABEF throughout Australian businesses (the sampling methodology is fully discussed in Grigg and Mann, 2008b). The second survey or “User survey”, was mailed to and completed by Australian BE evaluators. The purpose was to obtain in-depth, experience-based feedback on how to enhance the ABEF and SAI Global’s BE services. About 46 questionnaires were completed from a sampling frame consisting of around 100 BE evaluators in

Australia. The third survey or “BEF custodian survey”, was designed to identify better or best practices in how BEF custodians develop and deploy BEFs. Follow-up telephone interviews clarified and extended the information on those practices that were rated as innovative or a better/best practice by custodians. About 16 international custodians took part, representing Australia, Brazil, Canada, Czech Republic, Europe, India, Ireland, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Scotland, Singapore, Sweden, Turkey, UK, and the USA.

Findings

Analysis of the custodian survey data revealed the level of use of BE criteria as measured or estimated by 16 custodians, and what the custodians perceived as the most effective and important practices to encourage use of business excellence. For Australia additional results were obtained from the ABEF user survey. This showed how Australian organisations used and applied the ABEF, their reasons for using the ABEF, and methods for encouraging use of the framework throughout Australia.

Level of use of BE criteria

Considering that a custodian’s role is typically to increase BE awareness and use levels, surprisingly few BEF custodians had a formal measurement system in place to objectively measure use levels over time. Only two custodians, Japan and Turkey, reported that they formally measured the use of BE by organisations, both using survey questionnaires. Nine custodians considered that the use of BE had increased over the past three years, Brazil reporting it had increased substantially. Four, including Australia, believed there had been no change in the level of use, in Sweden it decreased slightly and in Ireland it decreased substantially. The substantial increase in BE use in Brazil was explained by the custodian as a result of the creation of 49 state awards processes, all of them aligned to the BE model and supported by evaluator training and workshops.

Figure 1 shows the percentage of organisations within each country reportedly using BE. Note that these results should be treated with caution as in most cases they are estimates provided by the custodian. In Australia’s case the predicted level of use estimated by the custodian was almost four times greater than found through their telephone-based national “awareness and use survey”. Nevertheless, the data is of interest and indicates that use is highest in Brazil (70 percent use by organisations) followed by Canada, India, Singapore and the USA (all 30 percent use). Globally, across all countries, the median average use of BE was at 15 percent. However, if a similar level of prediction error to Australia occurred across all countries a more realistic figure would be 4 percent use. Therefore, the author’s recommend, when discussing global use that a use level of 4-15 percent is realistic to report.

Stratified by organisational size, all custodians except Brazil indicated that less than 10 percent of organisations with fewer than 20 employees used BE. Brazil believed as many as 81-100 percent of micro enterprises used BE. In organisations with up to 100 employees, less than 10 percent used BE except for Czech Republic and Singapore (11-20 percent thought to use BE) and Brazil (61-80 percent use BE). For organisations with more than 100 employees there was more extensive BE use reported by all custodians, typically up to 40 percent. Again, however, these findings should be treated with caution.

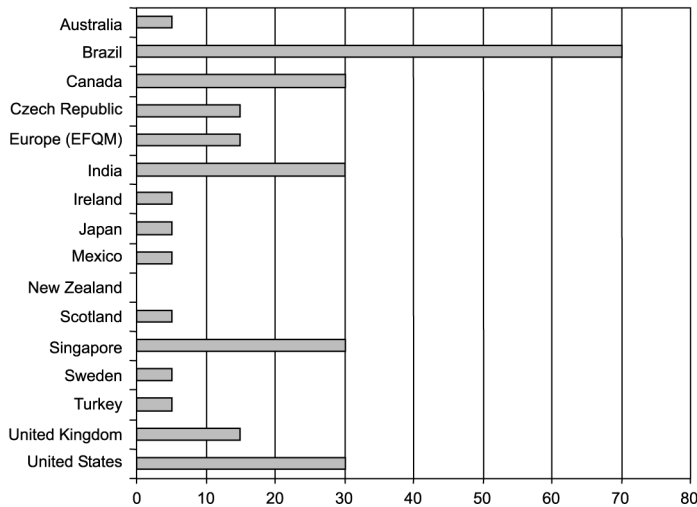


Figure 1.
Percentage of organisations using BE by nation, median average across all organisation sizes

ABEF use within Australian organisations

Data from the telephone survey of 305 randomly selected organisations within Australia indicated that 1.3 percent of organisations actually used the ABEF and 9.5 percent were aware of the ABEF. Not surprisingly for those completing the user survey (consisting of SAI Global clients and evaluators) a much higher level of use was recorded with 75 percent indicating that the ABEF had been used to improve their organisation’s performance over the last five years. 11 percent had used the ABEF for over ten years, while 36 percent had used it for 3 years or less.

Reasons for using ABEF

Respondents to the user survey were asked to rate various reasons for using the ABEF from “not important” (1) to “essential” (5). Table I shows the resulting distribution of rating responses for each “reason”. A weighted mean score was obtained for each reason based upon multiplying the cell frequency by a weighting value from 1 to 5, and dividing the total-by-total frequency. Ranking the responses in descending order according to weighted mean score revealed the results shown in column 2 of Table I.

Modes of use of the ABEF

Users indicated from four options (plus one open option to be specified) how their organisation used the ABEF. The largest percentage (54 percent) used the ABEF as an assessment framework to identify key strengths and opportunities for improvement. 52 percent used the ABEF as an educational tool so that staff could learn about the characteristics of successful organisations; and 39 percent used it as a reference framework when developing their organisation’s business excellence/improvement approach, or else extend its use to identify strengths and weaknesses by then linking this information directly into the organisation’s strategic planning process. About 6.5 percent were in the “other” category, with the following uses: as a motivational tool through the awards process; used for an award application only;

Rank order	Why does your organisation use the ABEF?	Not important count	Marginally important count	Somewhat important count	Very important count	Essential count	N	Mean
1	It provides a rigorous and sensible approach to identifying strengths and opportunities	0	1	7	12	13	33	4.1
2	To guide our organisation's continuous improvement effort	0	1	6	17	9	33	4.0
3	We needed a holistic business framework to co-ordinate a range of initiatives	2	1	5	17	8	33	3.8
4	To provide an external measure of performance	2	1	9	14	7	33	3.7
5	To educate staff on the characteristics of successful organisations	1	3	8	16	4	32	3.6
6	To become "world class"	4	1	8	12	7	32	3.5
7	Research shows that using the ABEF improves performance	2	5	12	11	3	33	3.2
8	To benchmark our ABEF scores within and across industries	7	4	12	6	4	33	2.9

Table I.
Reasons for using the ABEF

Notes: Mean score key: 1, Not important; 2, Marginally important; 3, Somewhat important; 4, Very important; and 5, Essential

as a working reference for good organisational and management practices; and as a metaphor for the challenges faced by successful organisations.

Methods of encouraging use

The custodian survey asked custodians to rate their perception of the impact of 21 BE application services. The eleven highest ranked services by custodians are shown in Table II. The findings from the custodian survey for each of these services, with examples of good practices, are given next, together with the results from the Australia user survey for each service.

1. *Tours of best or good practice organisations.* Custodians ($n = 13$ of 14) rated "tours of best practice organisations" as having either "high" or "very high" impact. In Australia tours were not an activity engaged in by SAI. Most custodians typically offer site visits. In India for example, two-day domestic site visits are held every three months and are focussed on a specific best practice, while ten-day international site

Based on your experience what degree of impact does each of the listed services have on assisting organisations in applying BE?

Rank	Application services	Very low to no impact	Low impact	Moderate impact	High impact	Very high impact	Number	Mean score
1	Tours of best or good practice organisations				7	6	13	4.46
2 =	Publications on BE				9	5	14	4.36
2 =	On-line service/database of BE information			2	5	7	14	4.36
4	Provision of workshops/training in BE			3	5	6	14	4.21
5	Provision of seminars/conferences in BE			2	8	4	14	4.14
6	Benchmarking services and consulting (activities to learn from best practices)			3	6	3	12	4.00
7	Networking meetings for BE users			4	7	3	14	3.93
8	Provision of tailored BE guides/criteria to meet the needs of specific sectors		1	2	9	2	14	3.86
9	BE award service (having an awards process)		2	2	5	4	13	3.85
10 =	Provision of BE self-assessment tools (on-line)	1		2	9	2	14	3.79
10 =	Provision of an external BE assessment service (e.g. conducted/facilitated by consultants)		1	3	8	2	14	3.79

Notes: Mean score key: 1, very low to no impact; 2, low impact; 3, moderate impact; 4, high impact; and 5, very high impact

Table II.
Ranking of BE application services by 16 custodians

visits have been made to China, Japan and Europe. Visits are usually to award winners. Not only do the participants learn from the best practice organisations but also the visits provide an opportunity for the participants to network and learn from each other.

2. *Publications on BE.* The provision of publications on BE had a “high” to “very high” impact on BE use as perceived by custodians globally. Publications included best practice case studies, examples of BE applications, the types of BE assessments, benchmarks, and descriptions of business improvement tools and techniques. Provision of case studies highlighting the practices of successful organisations was valuable and important to users. The provision of a publication describing the type of assessments available and their pros and cons was of lesser importance to users.

In the ABEF users data the performance SAI Global in “the provision of case studies highlighting the practices of successful organisations” was not rated highly by users, ranked equal 6 in terms of perceived effectiveness, only 30 percent of respondents considered it “good” or “excellent”. This activity ranked equal 4 in terms of perceived importance for SAI Global to concentrate upon over the next few years identifying it as a top five priority area to address.

2. *(equal) On-line service/database of BE information.* The USA, UK, Europe and India rated as either “good” or “excellent” their provision of an on-line information resource that provides case studies, best practice and benchmarks from award winners and leading organisations. For example, the UK custodian provides members free access to BPIR.com, a resource containing benchmarks and best practices. It can be used as an input into the action planning process as information within the resource has been categorised by the EFQM model. The EFQM model is also the basis for Excellence One, an interactive online learning platform for EFQM members. It gives access to learning sets, best management practices, and networking opportunities allowing individuals to build networks with their peers.

In Australia an on-line information resource such as these examples was not offered by SAI Global. Establishing such a resource was the most important activity for SAI Global to implement, as indicated by 33 percent of user survey respondents.

4 and 5. *Business excellence seminars/workshops/conferences.* Both questions on this topic received a high importance rating from custodians. “Provision of workshops/training in BE” was ranked 4, “provision of seminars and conferences on BE” was ranked 5. Virtually all custodians rated themselves as either “good” or “excellent”. The “excellent” custodians were Canada, Japan, Brazil, the USA and India. In Japan, for example, the custodian’s training courses for self-assessors cover assessment techniques and also all aspects of business management from a systems perspective, a service offered by very few organisations in Japan. Content of the courses are revised every year. Australia was one of only two custodians that rated themselves as “average” with respect to these activities.

In the ABEF users survey data, “the provision of BE training and conferences” was ranked equal 3 in terms of perceived effectiveness. While users did not identify this service as a priority area for SAI Global to address, the provision of BE seminars and workshops has a “high” to “very high” impact on BE use as perceived by custodians globally, and SAI Global could learn from the practices of the “excellent” custodians.

6. *Benchmarking services and consulting (activities to learn from best practices).* Four custodians, Brazil, Sweden, India and UK, rated their performance “good”. Ireland rated their performance “excellent”. In the ABEF users survey the provision of benchmarking services and consulting ranked equal 4 in terms of perceived effectiveness.

27 percent of respondents currently consider it “good” or “excellent”. This activity was ranked equal 7 in terms of perceived importance for SAI Global to concentrate upon over the next few years. The gap between perceived importance and effectiveness was small, indicating that this service was adequately provided.

7. *Networking meetings for business excellence users.* This question examined the perceived importance of holding networking meetings for BE users. Seven custodians rated themselves “good”: USA, Brazil, NZ, Singapore, Turkey, Europe, and UK. India rated themselves “excellent”. As an example of the role custodians play, the Singapore Quality Council organise sharing sessions for certified companies to network and share practices and experiences.

The ABEF users data showed the provision of networking meetings for business excellence users ranked 9 in terms of perceived effectiveness. About 28 percent of respondents considered it “good” or “excellent”. This activity was ranked equal 7 in terms of perceived importance for SAI to focus on over the medium term.

8. *Tailored BE guides to meet the needs of specific sectors.* This question examined the use of tailored BE guides to meet the needs of specific sectors, for example, in the US criteria are provided for businesses, health care and education. In Canada frameworks and criteria for excellence now include: BEF for the Public Sector, Education K-12, Healthy Workplace criteria, Small Business Quality criteria, Small Organisations Healthy Workplace criteria, and criteria for Progressive Aboriginal Relations. All framework criteria have been developed in consultation with subject matter experts and interest groups.

The ABEF users data ranked “the provision of tailored BE guides” the lowest (11) in terms of perceived effectiveness. Only 17 percent of respondents currently considered it “good” or “excellent”. This activity was ranked 6 in terms of perceived importance for SAI Global to focus on over the medium term.

9. *Provision of BE award service.* All but three custodians rated themselves as “good” or “excellent” in providing an awards process. Rated as “excellent” were Canada, Japan, Sweden, Turkey, Ireland and the USA. Sweden provides an award that is open for users of three BE models, EFQM, Baldrige and the SIQ model. SIQ, the Swedish custodian, explained that having three models increased the choice for SIQ’s clients. This was considered to be very important as many Swedish organisations are international with head offices in other countries.

Most ABEF user/client respondents rated the Australian awards as only “satisfactory”, but would like it viewed as the premier business award across all states. About 65 percent of users considered that the awards process represented “good” or “excellent” value for the time and resource investment of organisations, only 11 percent rated it “poor” or “very poor”. 55 percent considered that the awards process represented “good” or “excellent” value for the time and resource investment of evaluators, only 5 percent rated it “poor”. About 37 percent considered that the current awards process should remain as it is, while 51 percent considered that it should remain as it is but other alternatives should be considered. About 11 percent considered it should be changed as soon as possible.

10. *Provision of external BE assessments.* None of the custodians rated themselves “excellent”, however six custodians rated themselves “good”: Canada, Sweden, NZ, India, Singapore and Scotland. As an example, Singapore have developed a free self-assessment instrument to help organisations assess their own level of business

performance based on the BE framework. Organisations that score themselves over 400 points can apply to have their score validated by an external assessment team through a site visit. Once validated they are invited to join the Singapore Quality Class network.

In the ABEF users data the provision of external BE assessments was ranked first in terms of perceived effectiveness. 38 percent of respondents considered it “good” or “excellent”. This activity was ranked equal 12 in terms of perceived importance.

10. (*equal*) *Provision of BE self-assessment tools (on-line)*. Canada, USA, India, and Scotland rated themselves “good”, Sweden “excellent”. In Sweden users can undertake a web-based self-assessment using either the Baldrige, EFQM, or SIQ model. Organisations are encouraged to get all staff to complete the self-assessment. Item and category scores are generated, and the data can be segmented by team and department. Whilst organisations do not complete the self-assessment via a consensus approach there is the potential for organisations to use it that way. The process had been validated through site visits at a number of organisations.

In the ABEF users data the provision of a range of BE self-assessment tools ranked equal 4 in terms of perceived effectiveness. 34 percent of respondents considered it “good” or “excellent”. This activity was ranked equal 12 in terms of perceived importance for SAI Global to concentrate on in the medium term. SAI Global offered an on-line ABEF self-assessment, the Business Excellence Indicator, designed to educate people on the criteria and identify strengths and opportunities. A different scoring system was used to discourage organisations from comparing scores from the self-assessment with those obtained from the awards process.

There were ten other application services in addition to those listed above that were items in the custodian survey. In order of ranking by respondents they were: provision of BE submission/application documents from award winners (12th =); additional BE frameworks, guides and awards that focus on specific topics (12th =); provision of off-line BE self-assessment tools (14th); BE consulting via endorsed consultants (15th); BE consulting via your staff (16th); BE mentoring and advice (17th); evaluator training courses (18th); networking meetings for CEOs/senior managers of BE users (19th); provision of formal qualifications in business excellence (20th); on-line BE forums/discussions (21st).

Discussion

While all 16 custodians administered a national BE award, use of BE by organisations was estimated to be on average 15 percent but this varied considerably between nations. Some custodians reported that use was increasing, notably Brazil, although SAI Global was one of six custodians who perceived that BE use was flat or declining. This was confirmed by our user survey in Australia, where we found lower levels of BE use than had been indicated in previous studies, continuing a trend reported by Van der Wiele and Brown (2002). Across all countries it was notable that only a few used an objective method for measuring the awareness and use of BE. The authors after considering the difference between the custodian’s estimate of BE use in Australia and their findings through a telephone-based national “awareness and use survey” estimate that global use of BE to be between 4 and 15 percent.

While there were multiple reasons for low levels of use of the ABEF, users identified a number of services that SAI Global should maintain, improve or initiate in order to satisfy and grow BE use in Australian organisations. First, users rated the provision of external BE assessments, evaluator training courses, BE seminars, benchmarking

services and self-assessment tools as the five most effective services offered by SAI Global, indicating these should be maintained.

Second, a number of gaps in provision of ABEF services were identified from the data. Comparing the data from custodians and ABEF users (Table III), the two largest gaps in provision were the lack of tours of best practice organisations and provision of an on-line information resource. With tours of leading practice organisations ranked by custodians as having the highest impact on BE use, and an on-line information resource ranked 2 = , we concluded that these were two activities that SAI Global should consider providing.

Third, the ABEF user data also showed the importance rating of activities for SAI Global to provide as future services. In addition to the provision of an information resource already identified above as a priority, the next four highest ranked services were: BE mentoring, for example, access to ABEF evaluators/experts for advice; a programme to assist organisations in integrating tools such as six sigma, knowledge management, quality systems, balanced scorecard, benchmarking and management standards within a BE approach; case studies highlighting the practices of organisations that have scored highly against the ABEF; and networking meetings for CEO's/senior managers of BE users.

Concluding remarks

A surprising result was that only two of 16 BEF custodians had a formal measurement system in place to objectively measure the use of BEF by organisations over time. While custodians know how many organisations apply annually for a BE-based assessment, this is typically a small number and not a reliable indicator of the number of organisations using BEF as a management tool nationally. BEF custodians could be expected to employ a core concept of BEFs, the measurement and analysis of performance, and measure BEF use by organisations in their countries. The method of measurement such as the awareness and use survey employed by the author's could be replicated by custodians on a regular basis, at least every two years. This would allow trend data to be obtained and the impact of custodians' BE strategies to be assessed.

A number of specific recommendations were made to SAI Global on the basis of the research findings, supported by a level of priority for each. It was concluded that substantially more must be done in order to increase use of the ABEF throughout Australia. High priority recommendations around the use of BE included: conducting awareness and use surveys; improving the website; providing low-cost guides and literature on the framework and its use; and providing sufficient tools and training to

Custodians' ranking	ABEF user ranking	
	Effectiveness	Importance
1 Tours of leading practice organisations	Service not provided	Not surveyed
2 = Publications on BE	6 =	4 =
2 = On-line service/database of BE information	Service not provided	1
4 Provision of workshops and training in BE		
5 Provision of seminars and conferences in BE	3 =	12 =

Table III.
Top five ranked BE services by custodians and their ranking by ABEF users

help organisations to improve once they have identified strengths and opportunities through using the ABEF.

Organisations that use the ABEF have indicated significant improvements in systems and performance. It was recommended this finding should be widely communicated and follow-up research conducted to verify it and to find out how users have applied the ABEF. There was also an opportunity for SAI Global to learn from those custodians who have substantially increased use levels in recent years, notably Brazil and Canada, and those that indicated generally high levels of use such as Brazil, Canada, India, Singapore and the USA. This may include SAI Global changing to a membership-based model. The provision of an integrated approach to take organisations forward from “awareness” to “use” to “advanced/world-class performance” is probably the most important learning to take from those countries that are achieving high levels of use of business excellence.

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