

Corporate Business Excellence Bringing out the best in Manufacturing



The Aditya Birla Group has adopted Corporate Business Excellence (CBE) in its quest to become global and achieve a common language of excellence.

The recently conducted recruitment drive by the Aditya Birla Group for its third Global Manufacturing Leadership Program, received an incredible response. Some of the best minds in the manufacturing industry signed up for this illustrious program in a bid to gain expertise on a global scale. This landmark endeavour also sees manufacturing professionals embrace the best practices that the Group has undertaken in the last two decades. What started out as World Class Manufacturing (WCM) in 1995, based on the Japanese Quality model, Total Productive Maintenance (TPM) blossomed into Corporate Business Excellence (CBE) in 2010. According to Jagdish Ramaswamy, President, Corporate Business Excellence - Aditya Birla Group, "The aim was to become global and achieve a common language of excellence."

The shift was natural. WCM was restricted to the manufacturing units only, whereas CBE looked at giving a more holistic approach to the framework by including the services businesses as well. The Corporate Business Excellence Cell incorporates best practices from renowned international business excellence/quality models such as the **Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA)**, the **EFQM (formerly known as European Foundation for Quality Management) Excellence Model** and the **Deming Prize**. It was the idea to go global, that pushed the Group to charter their

own excellence framework. "Deming was valid for Japan, MBQNA for US and EQFM for Europe. We extracted best practices from each of these and customised them to our needs and functions so that they could be easily adapted by our units and businesses," says Ramaswamy,

When the WCM framework was formulated in 1995, the biggest challenge was how the units would implement TPM and what their assessment parameters would be. Hence, an extensive training program was organised. It comprised of a 'WCM Kick-off' where a WCM Road-Map was discussed and each unit was given guidelines and a charter to follow. It also required forming of cross-functional sub-committees within the unit that helped check the quality of manufacturing from time to time. After the new framework was formed in 2010, CBE started following a similar orientation process for its employees.

The goals, though, had changed. Assessment was at the business level rather than on an operation level. The CEO of the business would chair the steering committee. It had several smaller groups such as the Customer Focus Group, People Focus Group, Operations and Finance, Projects Finance and Strategic Finance to measure the parameters of excellence. The scenario had changed over the years with changing demands of the consumers. The Corporate Business Excellence Cell was set up to cover the end to end processes of every business. As

Ramaswamy aptly puts it, 'It wasn't about customer satisfaction any more. It was about customer experience.'

An excellence framework pushes for commitment and a drive to perform better. What transpires in the attempt to achieve this feat is an enormous commitment to quality. Birla Cellulose, Aditya Birla Insulators, Thai Acrylic Fibre, Essel Mining and Novelis are a few notable examples who keep the flag of CBE flying high by implementing the best manufacturing practices in their daily functions.

The VSF quality parameters at Birla Cellulose are measured on a daily and hourly basis. Besides conducting internal quality checks, they are constantly compared to international benchmarks such as Critical to Quality (CTQ) and Statistical Process Control (SPC). As a result, Birla Cellulose has been recognised for its efforts. The coveted Deming Quality Control Award in 2003 was awarded to the Kharach unit and it continues to weave magic years later.

Novelis' 'One' approach philosophy is practiced internally. Novelis is the world's largest recycler of aluminum beverage cans and recycles approximately 40 billion cans annually which are critical to its operations with recycling being the core element of their manufacturing process. Its rolled aluminium manufacturing process focuses on excellence and sustainability. The commitment is not just an environmental mandate, according to Novelis, "it strikes the very heart of the Group's corporate philosophy."

The CBE Cell constantly looks at innovating according to the shift in the manufacturing scene by regularly attending seminars, talks and staying updated. Every two years the guidelines are upgraded and in doing so, pushing the businesses to raise the bar.

While the excellence model forms a guideline for the businesses, there are other key initiatives that the Group as a whole undertakes to promote the use of best practices.

Knowledge Acquisition Process or KAP: It is one of the several mediums where best practices by units are captured. To be judged as a possible best practice the teams need to go through a rigorous process. A set of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) scrutinise the entries and only after major consultation do they give their verdict. Every detail is shared on the KAP portal so that other units can implement as per their requirements. Currently, there are 160 best practices in the Group. When asked about which businesses stand out in contribution, promptly comes the reply from Ramaswamy: "Idea and UltraTech."

Idea's Quality Check for Signage Flex is a practice that was well-received. The problem was that the flex that was being procured for Idea branding for its outdoor banners was as per pre-decided specifications and was not up to the mark. There was no way of checking the same beforehand. Idea came up with the solution of having the quality check done at the flex manufacturers, which involved no additional cost and also ensured 100 percent quality check before installation.

Group Wide Team Competition (GWTC): GWTC is an initiative where units form teams to tackle their manufacturing

and business problems. A particular business is asked to submit its top 10 priority areas and problems. Thereafter, teams are formed. These teams are asked to choose one problem and solve it by using any quality model. Simultaneously they make presentations with step by step detailed analysis of the problem solving process.

Every year 80 submissions are received, of which 15 are selected and present their case studies to the Chairman and finally are selected as winners. They are judged on the problem selected, composition of their team, quality of data analysis, logically analysing the cause, quality of analysis, and the solution reached through a particular practice/quality model. It is also important that they implement it for a minimum of three months and make it a part of their daily practice. Novelis Pindamonhangaba was awarded for stabilising their aluminium sheet rolling process in the fastest possible time.

A Model Plant: In order to motivate the plants to accelerate their journey towards world class, the Corporate Business Excellence team started the Model Plant initiative. A Model plant under this scheme has the basics of WCM well embedded and integrated into the operations (BCE Green), the WCM practices should be a part of the daily process and its operational excellence projects should be aligned to the top 10 issues of the plant. They should also be able to justify that they have two best practices in the



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Aditya Birla Group and two performance areas that are their best. Kotputli Cement Works, Star Cement Dubai, Birla Carbon Patalganga, Madura Lifestyle and Fashion - Bangalore, and Hindalco Taloja have been adjudged as Model Plants. The aim for 2016 is to have at least 10 more model plants.

Business Excellence Awards: In order to rate and reward and set new benchmarks, the Business Excellence Awards take place every two years. The businesses are rated for their implementation and their adherence to the framework while innovating in their own spheres of work by an eminent jury comprising of experts in their respective fields. During gap years businesses themselves check their progress and make amendments accordingly.

Corporate Business Excellence looks critically at the various businesses and encourages them to give their best while they make an impact with their manufacturing practices and as a result the Aditya Birla Group has been repeatedly honoured for its quality and efficiency.