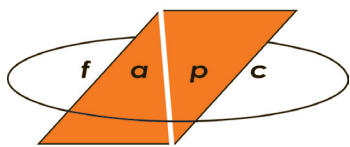


Food & Agricultural Products Center



FLASH!!



Nov. 30, 2006

Quality award promotes performance excellence

STILLWATER, Okla. – Oklahoma food companies have the opportunity to apply for the Oklahoma Quality Award through the Oklahoma Quality Award Foundation Inc.

The Oklahoma Quality Award promotes awareness of performance excellence as an increasingly important element in competitiveness and information sharing of successful performance strategies and the benefits derived from using these strategies.

“The award and application process provides a means to measure an organization against credible, proven business standards,” said Mike Strong, executive director for the Oklahoma Quality Award Foundation Inc. “In going through the process, an organization will see the tremendous growth and improvement potential that is possible for their operation. So, while not every company will receive an award, there are definite benefits for participating in the process.”

The performance excellence core values and concepts are embodied into the award’s seven categories of leadership; strategic planning; customer and market focus; measurement, analysis and knowledge management; human resource focus; process management; and results.

The mission of the Oklahoma Quality Award is to help Oklahoma organizations improve results and be more competitive through performance excellence.

The foundation focuses on performance excellence by administering a yearly award process that highlights

and gives feedback to Oklahoma organizations that aspire to excellence, by providing training and education opportunities in performance excellence and related topics and by promoting awareness and understanding of performance excellence throughout Oklahoma.

The foundation’s board of directors and examiners, who consist of individuals from private businesses and organizations, develop the Oklahoma Quality Award criteria, the application and evaluation process.

Each year, volunteers from organizations from around the state are trained and certified as members of the board of examiners.

“Being an examiner for the Oklahoma Quality Award was a valuable experience for me,” said Jason Young, quality management specialist for the Food & Agricultural Products Center. “The examiner experience gave me a deeper understanding of the Oklahoma Quality Award criteria and allowed me to review how award applicants implement processes and systems to meet the criteria.”

The Oklahoma Quality Award Foundation is an organization’s resource for finding information, training and experience in the use of performance excellence practices in Oklahoma.

“The organizations that apply for the Oklahoma Quality Award are not doing this to satisfy a set of customer driven requirements,” Young said. “These organizations are truly looking to not only improve the quality of their product, but also they are look-

ing for performance excellence by improving value to stakeholders and customers, overall organizational effectiveness and capabilities, and organizational and personal learning.”

Key benefits of applying for the Oklahoma Quality Award include accelerating improvement efforts, energizing employees, gaining an outside perspective, learning from the feedback process, focusing on results and receiving public recognition for efforts and achievements.

The award program consists of three levels: commitment, achievement and excellence. During the commitment level, the applicant conducts a self-assessment, followed by an on-site evaluation and review by senior examiners.

During the achievement and excellence level, applicants submit a written application, which is reviewed by trained examiners who will verify and clarify issues at a site visit and then prepare written feedback.

The Oklahoma Quality Award may be awarded to the role model applicants at the commitment, achievement and excellence levels.

For more information about the Oklahoma Quality Award, call Strong at (405) 815-5295 or visit www.OklahomaQuality.com.

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