

4th Quality Conference

for Public Administrations in the EU

TQM with CAF and BSC as sustaining systems

Introduction During the 3rd Quality Conference for Public Administrations in Belgium, the City of Ghent received the *Best Practices Award* by the international jury for their presentation: “Total Quality Management with CAF and BSC as sustaining systems”. As a result of this recognition, the Ghent Office for Quality Care will represent Belgium at the 4th Quality conference for Public Administrations within the European Union. In preparation to this conference, this document gives a detailed description of the integration process of Total Quality Management into the municipal organisation. The workshop is entitled: ”TQM with CAF and BSC as sustaining systems”.

Contents

Introduction	1
Contents	1
General Description	2
The city	2
The administration	2
TQM.....	2
Case	4
Contents	4
Reasons	4
Actors	Virhe. Kirjanmerkkiä ei ole määritetty.
Process	6
Results.....	7
Obstacles	7
Sources of inspiration	7
Lessons learned.....	7

General Description

The city The city of Ghent has 4.843 staff members (excluding the Departments of Education and Local Police) and is one of the key employers in the region. The organisation wishes **“to provide citizens with a high-quality service, with satisfied employees, through efficient procedures and processes with the means available”**. This objective can only be pursued owing to the daily customer-oriented, efficient and result-oriented efforts of all the employees.

On a national and international level, Ghent wants to present itself as a city of knowledge and culture, accessible to everyone. This ambition is based on three major assets: an extensive - specifically higher - education network, a largely diversified cultural offer and open-mindedness for every aspect of diversity, colouring and enriching our society.

Some statistical data:

Overall surface:	15.643 ha
Population number:	232.961 (on January 1st, 2006)
Overall employment:	151.017 jobs

The administration The provision of services is focused on various policies, clustered into 13 departments. Every department endeavours proper objectives and has proper expertise to achieve the social goals stipulated by the city.

The following departments are involved: Department of Population and Welfare, Department of Culture; Department of the Environment, Parks & Gardens and Health; Department of Environmental Planning, Mobility and Public Domain; Department of Employment and Economy, Department of City Promotion and Sports; Department of Education and Training, Department of Staff Services, Fire Department; Local Police Force; Department of Finance, Department of Facility Management and the Department of Human Resources and Organisation.

The last three, so-called “internal” departments, are destined to support our employees and other municipal services. Based on their objectives, external departments focus on citizen/customer relations. The Department of Staff Services regroups a series of policy transcending functions.

TQM To pursue a quality policy on a city level, we need a supporting structure, taking into consideration the complexity of services and the diversity of various departments. The following description illustrates the contrast between the political leadership and the managerial role of the managing staff.

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General Description, Continued

TQM (continued) the policy level, the City Council determines the basic principles and policy guidelines. Priority is given to determine the vision, mission, strategic and operational objectives within the departments. The results are currently consolidated on a city level.

the strategic level, Total Quality Management is stimulated, co-ordinated and supported by the Office for Quality Care. The overall task, the mission statement is described as follows: *'To supply the required systems and techniques, allowing every department to obtain first-class results in order to satisfy the citizens/customers and the social partners as well as the proper staff members, on the most efficient way.'*

the operational level, a significant role is assigned to the 14 quality co-ordinators within the City of Ghent, performing an individual task within their specific department or service. The overall task of the quality co-ordinators is to support the heads of department as regards the application of Total Quality Management in their department. They usually are part of the department staff and report directly to the head of department.

In consultation with their management team, the heads of department determine the implementation process of Total Quality Management within their respective departments and they also define the priorities.

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Case

Contents This approach should make sure that Total Quality Management is integrated, followed up and co-ordinated into the entire organisation. The key guidelines of the city quality policy as well as the concrete approach and the intended results were formalized in the policy document Quality Care 2003 – 2006 of Deputy Mayor Geert Versnick. The key guidelines will be extensively highlighted during our presentation. In this document we limit ourselves to the main criteria in our case.

One aspect, **Total Quality Management (TQM)**, particularly implies that every department, every municipal office pays attention to the quality of its service. These efforts are not limited to the final result, but during the entire service process. Quality care should be integrated into the daily service function.

Another significant element, the **common assessment framework for public services (CAF)**, is the reference framework in which quality projects and initiatives are situated. The CAF model is not only used as an instrument of self assessment, but also as a framework.

The **Balanced Scorecard** is used as an instrument to assess the objectives within a **strategic planning cycle**.

The role of the Office for Quality Care is **to coach**, to give advice and to provide support.

Reasons (motivation)

The City of Ghent was not entirely unfamiliar with Total Quality Management. Already in 1982, the former Co-ordination Office instructed a programme entitled “public contacts”, pursuing the enhancement of the quality of service as a major objective. By 1991, this Office had already arranged various additional education courses and also initiated the training programme “Efficiency of service and internal organisation”, explaining Total Quality Management (TQM) principles and methods. Irrespective of these training programmes, improvement actions were also taken by other offices.

Concrete examples are the customer-oriented website (www.gent.be), awarded on repeated occasions and GENTINFO, a central information centre for citizens.

A permanent dialogue was initiated between the Office for Quality Care and the competent Deputy Mayor in preparation of the policy document Total Quality Management 2003-2006.

Ultimately, in April 2003, when a central Office for Quality Care was officially created, we wanted to avoid putting a new top-down pressure on our colleagues. Taking into account the complexity and diversity of the municipal administration, each department was allowed to take proper initiatives and determine individual priorities.

The Office for Quality Care only wants to stimulate, co-ordinate and support, considering the other departments as internal customers.

However, we take the lead in the co-ordination of the strategic planning process, which was originally initiated as a bottom-up project. It should currently be consolidated on a city level and fine-tuned with the policy decisions.

Case, Continued

**Reasons
(motivation)**
(continued)

In the beginning of 2003, when the policy document was formulated, inspiration was found in a population survey, questioning the inhabitants' perception and interpretation of the notions 'quality' and 'service'. The main purpose of this inquiry was to provide useful information which could help to develop the city quality policy.

First and foremost, the formal support of the politicians was required. To this effect, the policy document for quality care 2003 - 2006 was approved by the City Council in April 2003.

The Office for Quality Care is responsible for the implementation of the total quality care policy document 2003-2006 and consequently bears the complete responsibility for the support of the quality co-ordinators in stimulating, preparing and following up the improvement initiatives.

Within the City, there are **14 quality co-ordinators**, each performing an individual task within their specific department or service. Each quality co-ordinator gives a proper application to his/her role, bearing in mind the culture of the involved entity. They are the direct contact of the Office for Quality Care, which is informed of the required support by means of their annual quality action plan.

Since the Office for Quality Care approaches the entire organisation in a logical way as a client, it does not have a threatening image. It is considered as a supporting service, helping other departments to achieve their own objectives.

In order to exchange experiences and acquire ideas, the Office for Quality Care has set up a number of internal **task forces** with respect to e.g. CAF, BSC and enquiries. Likewise, external **networking** with identical objectives and similar meetings are set up with different public services.

If the Office for Quality Care has acquired sufficient expertise, and when the staff can make time for the assignment, an external consultancy bureau will not be called in. If not, the matter will be discussed and considered with the quality co-ordinator.

As a matter of fact, we appealed to an external consultancy bureau for guidance during the first CAF self-evaluations and for support during the preparation of the first Balanced Scorecards.

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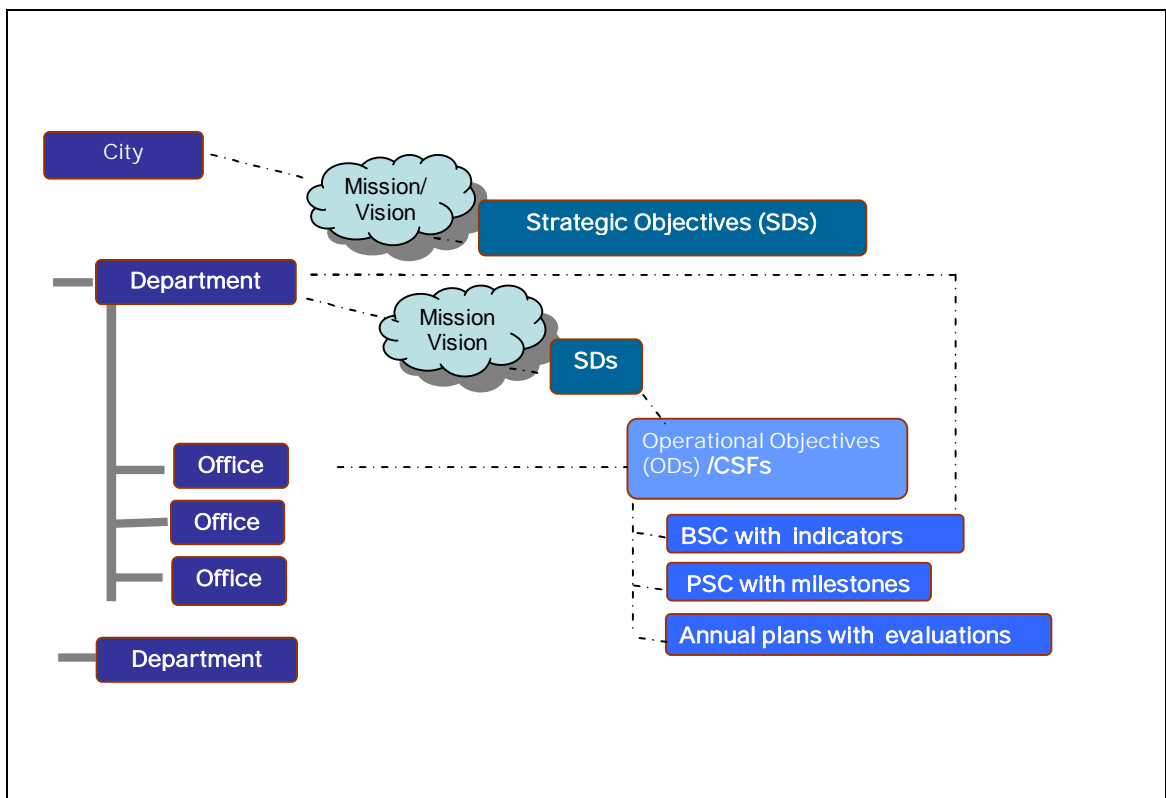
Case, Continued

Process As mentioned before, the policy document for Total Quality Management 2003-2006 is essential for the results achieved. Consequently, a similar memorandum will be prepared for the next policy period 2007-2012.

Other critical successful factors for the implementation of Total Quality Management were:

- Training with respect to quality care on every level of the organisation
- Annual drafting and follow up of quality action plans
- Constant learning process, using the expertise of external consultants and networks. Afterwards, it will be possible to coach the internal quality projects on an independent way.

By means of quality action plans, the quality care issue will be embedded in the corporate planning process. Consequently, the entire organisation will pay attention to quality care. The diagram below illustrates the relation between the different levels of the organisation and the strategic planning process.



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Case, Continued

Results

The results can be visualised by means of the strategy card of the Office for Quality Care. When looking at the strategic objective “development of a knowledge centre for creating and unlocking instruments, expertise and information to coordinate and assess the municipal policy”, we immediately find the related operational objectives, CSF’s, indicators and target values.

Similar steering charts will be further implemented in the entire organisation.

Some examples of the coaching by the Office for Quality Care:

- All departments expressed their substantial contribution with respect to the follow up of the objectives, formulated in a proper mission, vision and strategic objectives. They function as a substantial guideline for the operational actions of the services.
 - 2 departments and 4 services have assessed themselves by means of the Common Assessment Framework. They were able to focus their actions on the high priority points of improvement.
 - 4 departments and 2 services have accepted the challenge to develop a Balanced Scorecard in order to manage their objectives in a systematic way and to make their most important activities measurable.
 - 5 services have conducted a survey, destined to assess employee satisfaction.
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Obstacles

The action should always be suited to the word: we have to recognise the importance of quality, but need to allocate sufficient means and most importantly, make time.

People are not always easily convinced that the gains exceed the efforts.

We conclude that working with external consultants is a real challenge to translate the well-intentioned advises towards the internal culture.

Sources of inspiration

Before 2003, the Office for Quality Care was called Office for Change Management and is not entirely unknown within the organisation. On the contrary, an appeal could and can be made to the significant expertise of the change management.

In participating at various network meetings, there is a continuous knowledge exchange with other organisations.

We are working according to the principles of the learning organisation. In other words: by keeping an open mind for renewal and improvement, we make sure that we do not stick to one sanctifying system. We use a mixture of instruments, adapted to the needs of the internal client.

Lessons learned

Respect (in the largest meaning of the word) for the other departments of your organisation. Do not act as a “godfather”, who enforces the execution of his decisions. Consider the rest of the organisation consistently as your internal client.