



SELF-ASSESSMENT

Self-assessment is the critical evaluation of an activity, process, or program performed by the individual or organization accountable for the work. Self-assessment capability is an essential element of quality organizations and is a basic expectation for well-managed businesses. For companies in trouble, all too often one finds that self-assessment and corrective action were not effective. Thus, self-assessment is one of the cornerstones of successful companies. Through a strong and effective self-assessment program, one can demonstrate a focus on the company's mission.

The objective of a self-assessment plan is to help achieve continuous improvement of the processes and work activities. This can be accomplished by proactively reinforcing good practices, identifying opportunities for improvement, implementing corrective actions to accomplish desired changes, and evaluating the effectiveness of results achieved. Successful outcomes will both improve operations, thereby reducing cost and helping resolve concerns.



Learning organizations use self-evaluation activities to compare actual performance with management's expectations and industry standards to identify areas needing improvement. Corrective actions are then implemented that result in improved performance.

Self-evaluation activities include, but are not limited to: self-assessments, management monitoring observations, event investigations, root cause analyses, benchmarking, use of operating experience, self-checking, peer checking, and problem reporting systems. Audits, surveillances, and inspections done by quality assurance departments or external organizations are generally not considered to be self-evaluations.

For many organizations, important first steps to enhance self-assessment activities are to prepare a written self-assessment plan and to appoint a Self-Assessment Coordinator. To further strengthen the self-assessment focus, larger organizations may also wish to departmental self-assessment coordinators. That core team of self-assessment coordinators will improve self-assessment effectiveness by concentrating our resources on the most significant issues and implementing appropriate opportunities for improvement.

Effective self-assessment can be the driving force that yields performance improvement through accountability and early identification of potential problems, and through verification that problems have been adequately resolved. Failure to identify potential problems early almost always leads to poor performance.

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