

WHAT IS QUALITY?

It is both a means and an end; both a “how” and a “what.”

As an “end,” quality has two major components:

1. The pursuit of process excellence, which produces reliability, reduces costs and prevents problems.
2. The pursuit of new customer value via new product or service features, new combinations, new convenience and the like.

Both dimensions are characteristics of great organizations.

As a “means,” the disciplined pursuit of quality has nearly unlimited combinations of tools and methods, from the simple to the deeply complex. The keys to successful application are diagnosis and leadership; diagnosis to get it right and leadership to persevere.

As the “game” of quality is played at high levels of organizational performance, it is invariably nurtured in a culture of “Core Concepts and Values” documented by the Quality Awards Office of the National Institute of Standards and Technology, executors of the “Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Awards.”

ROLE OF QUALITY IN “SMART GRID”

The Galvin Electricity Initiative believes that successful “smart grid” and related advancements will have three essential components:

1. Modern technologies to facilitate electricity systems information and interactions. These shall reach from the grid down through an entire physical system and into the minds and the controls of end-using consumers.
2. Policies and regulations, which facilitate transparency, consumer choice and open markets, to the extent possible.
3. Leadership from all elements of the community (producers, distributors, employees, consumers, suppliers, and elected and appointed officials). Such leadership shall be educated, inspired and informed with the principles and methods of quality.

Thus the role of quality is to be the primary aim of the system, as well as the core knowledge that will facilitate the development, maintenance and improvement of the system.

We should plan on taking advantage of the professionalism provided by the American Society for Quality, as well as the validated best practices documented by the Baldrige Awards office of the National Institute of Standards and Technology.