



HPCE used self-assessment as it formed an integral part of the management framework. This leadership and management framework applies the well-known Deming Plan, Do, Check, Act cycle. Implemented at the outset, it creates a learning and improvement ethos across the organization and has the objective of supporting sustainable profitable growth.

A key element of the framework is the use of annual self-assessment, which has the objective of reviewing the progress from the previous year, not just from a financial point of view but also in a holistic way. It reviews both the enablers and the results across a number of stakeholders.

The framework is applied in all the business units as well as at the HPCE board level. The other types of business units are:

- Categories – which are the units that manage the various ranges of products across Europe.
- Local companies – which are the representatives in each of the countries that HPCE trades in across Europe.
- Processes – such as supply chain, product development, IT and HR management.

The way that the self-assessments have been conducted has evolved over the years, as has the way that the outputs from the self-assessments have been used. The purpose of this case study is to explore this evolution together with some of the support needs and cultural aspects.

## ■ The start of self-assessment in HPCE

HPCE started to use the EFQM Excellence Model from the end of 1995 and carried out the first round of self-assessment in 1996. The intention to conduct self-assessments was announced during the first annual OBJ!\* to the top 150 managers.

It was decided to carry out the assessments at country level, category level, factory level as well as at HPCE board level. Each unit nominated a facilitator and a first 'Business Excellence Conference' was held attended by the excellence manager from Texas Instruments, award winner in 1995. The conference was organized with the support of the Birds Eye Wall's business excellence manager, who was a highly experienced award assessor. During the conference, syndicate groups were used to select the key results at the country, category and factory levels.

It was decided to use the simplified Unilever checklist developed three years before by representatives from three UK companies, Birds Eye Wall's, Van Den Bergh Foods and Elida Fabergé. The simplified checklist provided a way for areas to commence self-assessment that was easy for everyone to relate to, which was especially important for the top team in order to gain their commitment. Much of the management understanding of the longer-term self-assessment process was gained at this stage.

Board members were not trained in the detail behind the EFQM Excellence Model, but only in the concepts of excellence and in the use of the Unilever checklist and process. The main

\* OBJ! is a Unilever wide annual communication event. OBJ! stands for 'Oh be Joyful!'

idea behind this was to demonstrate that self-assessment was simple, not time consuming and that it is worth doing.

John Sharpe insisted on the fact that the top team should perform the self-assessment:

The shared understanding and commitment gained by the top team from doing the Self Assessment themselves is an essential ingredient for real understanding of the process and its benefits. The commitment gained from 'doing it oneself' greatly increases the chance of long term success.

The simple checklist approach consists of a number of questions that have to be answered. Ten questions were identified for each enabler criterion part of the model. For each question there is a need to record some evidence. A typical question would be 'Do the leaders act as role models? Give three examples'.

A score out of ten points is given for each question and the total for all ten questions calculated. A weighting is then applied to the total for all the questions to give the criterion score.

For the results a list of measures is given together for each criterion with a simple scoring system. For each result listed, if there is no data, then the score will be 0. If a result shows a positive trend over a three-year period, plus a target and external comparison, then the score will be 10. For each result criterion the average score is calculated across the measures, and in a similar fashion to the enablers, a weighting is applied to arrive at the number of points.

As a simple scoring system is used there is only limited alignment between the self-assessment score achieved and that which would be obtained through an external assessment. In addition to the score, the self-assessment leads to lists of strengths and areas for improvement (AFIs) being identified for each criterion part, plus the top three Strengths and AFIs overall. An improvement plan is generated from the analysis.

The HPCE board assessment was conducted by consolidating the output from the unit assessments and agreeing a score, plus strengths and AFIs. The first opportunities for improvement were quite major and included both enabler and results issues.

On the enabler side the need for a policy deployment approach was identified and so 'Strategy into Action' was introduced. This was based on an approach used in Unilever Australia and the transfer of the approach to HPCE is an early example of 'external' learning. At the same time, although not as a direct consequence of self-assessment, a new strategy formulation approach based on the 'Hax methodology' was introduced. The timely introduction of this approach enhanced the benefit from self-assessment over the following years, as it provided direction and reinforced the value of self-assessment.

In 1996 Unilever already had many soundly based practices in place. Examples included the 'Integrated Approach', which combines objective setting, development planning and remuneration, and the approach to product development, which has been benchmarked on several occasions. However, many of the major strategic improvements for HPCE stemmed from the first self-assessment. Improvements were identified in the areas of communication, process management and goal deployment, which led to the 'Strategy into Action' approach being deployed. Self-assessment also identified gaps in the results areas such as employee

satisfaction, with limited measurement systems and, with the exception of the financial area, there were few targets and external comparisons.

An early improvement action was to install such measurement systems and in 1996 the first HPCE-wide employee survey was carried out. Customer surveys measuring the satisfaction of the retail outlets where HPCE products are sold had been introduced in 1994 but the real value of these surveys was brought home during the first self-assessments. Measuring customer satisfaction in a systematic way was a first step towards managing customers at a time when consolidation of retailers and the growth retail chains, such as Tesco, were leading to the customers having more power and influence.

Marketing conducted consumer research on a regular basis, as part of the need to develop products that grow or maintain market share, but consumer awareness was not particularly high in other units of HPCE. One of the early benefits from self-assessment was the increase in consumer awareness, as the need to 'reconnect to the consumer' was realized.

The declaration that HPCE would be world class had the effect of putting self-assessment onto the agenda. HPCE was to go through a major change as it moved from a country-based organization to a regional organization. Self-assessment became an agent of change to facilitate this transition.

Despite this point it took time before the full benefits of the activity were accepted. As units commenced self-assessment the focus was on improvement but there was a competing interest in the score. The objectives were often seen to be conducting the self-assessment itself and/or getting a score to show how well the unit was performing. It must be remembered that this was at a time when there were limited measures, other than financial measures.

A key activity contributing to the success during this start-up period was the support given by the central business excellence function to the facilitators. A number of guideline documents were produced and each year new facilitators were trained and experienced facilitators 'refreshed'.

Although many units did demonstrate commitment, there were others that saw the need to conduct an annual self-assessment as an unnecessary distraction from normal business activities. But as time progressed and the understanding of the benefits increased the level of deployment steadily increased throughout all parts of the organization. Scores were on the increase and many units were returning scores that would put HPCE in the upper quartile in business excellence terms. It was at this point that the need to change the way that self-assessments were conducted was recognized, as HPCE moved into the next stage of its journey.

## ■ Two years into the journey

The value of the simple questionnaire route into self-assessment should not be understated. Without such an approach an organization increases the difficulty to take the decision to experiment with or start the process. They get the impression that very soon in the process

they will have to put in place a complex support system and the self-assessment becomes too heavy a process. This need not be the case.

It is not a difficult decision to start in a simple way and much can be gained from it. The later decision to have a more advanced self-assessment system can be taken later if there is a need, as in the case of HPCE. As HPCE moved into the third round of self-assessment it faced several issues. These included:

- The deployment of self-assessment had grown and there were units that had differing needs. Some were just getting going whereas others were making more progress trying to implement the improvement actions.
- Despite the increased deployment, the main benefits had been cultural and there was only limited evidence that self-assessment had led to the achievement of the business objectives.
- The improvement plan was the main output of the self-assessment process and not the score. There was a need, however, to bring the self-assessment activity and business planning activity into closer alignment. For this to happen the focus of the potential improvement actions had to evolve from 'compliance to the model' type actions to more business-focused action.
- Despite the point above regarding the score, as is natural in any organization, some units set themselves the task of increasing the score in a competitive way. The score was an overall measure of progress but HPCE were trying to improve the business and its results and not the score. For a considerable period HPCE resisted any idea of an overall points target but it was agreed that companies could make an estimate of the overall points outcome. This might have been seen as a target but this was not the intention. The result was that in some areas, due to a lack of people with external experience, this led to a concern that the scores were unrealistic. This was especially true when the limitations of the simple checklist approach, which were well known to the experienced practitioners, were taken into account.

There was also the need to review the first two years' experience and improve the self-assessment approach. Hence, the central team established a strategy for Business Excellence in HPCE. The mission was:

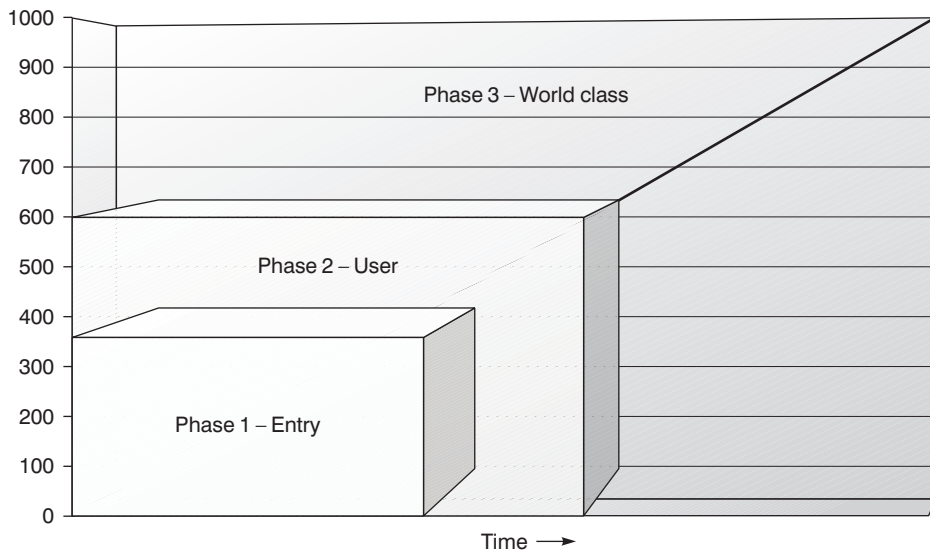
- To provide the philosophy, the structure and the means for continuous improvement so that the organization can realize its goals.

There was also a set of aims:

- Create an understanding of the process of business improvement.
- Create cross-functional working based around key business processes.
- Establish self-assessment as the performance measure within the integrating business frameworks.

It was also recognized that the various units of HPCE were at potentially different levels of maturity, which led to the definition of the maturity model shown in Figure C7.1. The phases have the features outlined in Table C7.1.

As feedback from the business units indicated that there was the requirement to maintain the way that the self-assessments were conducted, only four changes were made to the 1998



■ **Figure C7.1** Self-assessment maturity model

■ **Table C7.1** Features of the maturity grid phases

### Entry

- Introduces awareness of the self-assessment process, which is facilitated by the use of a simple ‘What’ checklist
- Introduces top team to the complete management agenda, which must be covered
- Limited data collection (a benefit at this stage)
- Identifies strategic areas for improvement
- Limited operational improvement activity
- Works well for the first 2–3 years
- Covers self-assessment scores up to 350 points, using an external scale

### User

- Recognized benefit of self-assessment
- Data will be readily available
- Improvement actions will be well supported by allocation of appropriate resource
- Early self-assessments will take advantage of simplified ‘How’ checklists
- More rigorous self-assessment in later stages
- Fundamental building blocks of business excellence put into place
- Typical score 350 to 600 points, using an external scale

### World class

- Understanding of business excellence fully developed
- Business unit is a ‘learning organization’ reviewing and refining its approaches
- Performance will be ‘best in class’ in several areas
- ‘Award style’ self-assessment
- Typical self-assessment score between 600 and 750 points, using an external scale

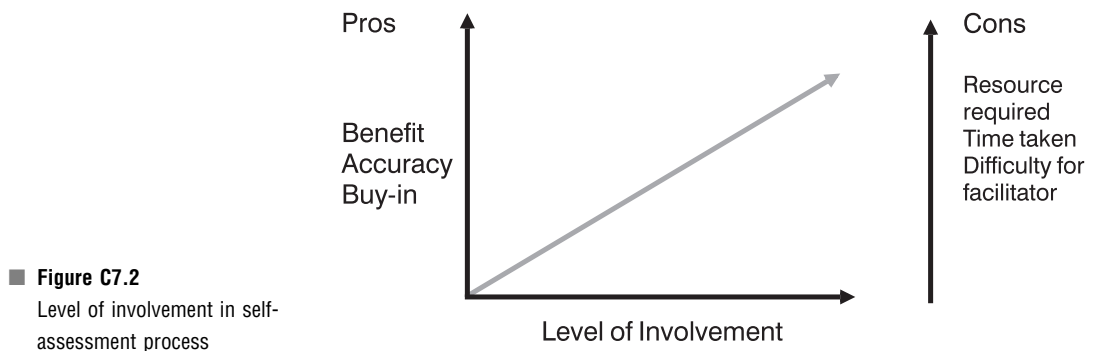
self-assessment approach. The first change, which was small but extremely significant, was a change to the way that the enabler questions were presented. In the simple checklist most of the questions were phrased 'What do you . . .?' and this was changed to 'How do you . . .?'. Answering 'How' questions tends to be much more probing than answering 'What' questions.

The second change was to the checklist format and the inclusion of a question relating to review and improvement for each enabler. This made the checklist more rigorous and closer to an external assessment approach.

The third change related to scoring was that some facilitators were exposed to the external scoring or EFQM 'Blue Card' technique, based on assessing a number of factors. This approach had not been used in the past as the view was held that training was required before the technique could be used properly. However, with limited training use of the Blue Card led to more valuable feedback.

The final change was the introduction of improved support materials to aid planning and improvement activity. Improvement activity will be covered below and here we focus on the advice given regarding planning.

During the planning phase facilitators were advised to consider the level of involvement of staff in the process. This is shown in Figure C7.2.



The way that the consensus meeting was managed was seen as being critical to the way that the self-assessment was conducted. Two options were proposed for consideration and these are described in Table C7.2.

The view from the central business excellence team was that most units were still at the 'Entry' level but the units considered themselves to be 'Users'. The central team had this view as most units were still concerned about the investment in resource required to conduct the self-assessment and the feedback suggested that the units wanted limited changes, as opposed to seeking the opportunity to improve the approach.

■ **Table C7.2** Consensus Meeting Options

Type	Type 1 – Show and go	Type 2 – Share and go
<b>Features</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The team arrives with all the evidence and data, each part of the model is discussed, and then the consensus is reached.</li> <li>■ There is little preparation for the consensus meeting but it takes time to reach the consensus.</li> <li>■ This could be a necessary step if many new people are involved.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The team circulates their evidence and data. This allows the team members to prepare for discussion.</li> <li>■ This process requires more preparation but consequently requires less time for the consensus meeting.</li> </ul>
<b>Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ This approach helps the team to understand the model and also acts as training.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ This is a good approach when people have a good understanding of the model.</li> <li>■ This allows a better overview of the data and an appreciation of the balance between the criteria</li> </ul>

The main benefit from the introduction of this maturity model was that it opened a discussion on the use of the output of the self-assessment. It was stated that a unit in the Entry phase would:

- Be using self-assessment to increase awareness.
- Be selling the need to change.
- Focus on high-level areas for improvement.

Most units agreed that they meet all these requirements but acknowledged that they did not meet all the User phase requirements, which were defined as all the above plus:

- Have an improvement plan detailing specific actions to be taken.
- Will know that the improvement activity is linked to business need.
- Will be actively seeking best practice from external organizations.

To help with improvement planning two options were tabled. These were either to have a separate improvement plan or to integrate the output of the self-assessment with business planning activities. It was suggested that with a separate improvement plan approach there was a need to have:

- SMART objectives.
- Actionable steps breaking the improvement action down.
- Responsibilities assigned to specific people.
- Achievement date set.

For units that chose to integrate their improvement planning with their business planning, advice was given to screen each of their areas of improvement with the following questions:



- Will it:
  - Deliver a measurable benefit to the business?
  - Support the achievement of one or more KPIs on the unit's scorecard?
  - Close a significant gap in performance, where the unit's performance is compared with an external benchmark?

To address the concern over the realism of the score and to promote the exchange of good practice, a special project was established, known as the Calibration Project, in which five high scoring units were selected covering all types of unit. These were site visited by a team of experienced assessors and a total of 44 good practices was identified.

The assessment team also looked at the accuracy of the checklist, as an instrument for giving a self-assessment score that was representative of an external award assessment. As feared, it was concluded that the checklist was not reliable, especially with high scoring units, and that more rigorous self-assessment approaches would be appropriate for these units.

Based on their experience of assessing organizations for quality awards, the team examined the progress that HPCE had made over the previous two years. It was concluded that HPCE would be placed in the band of organizations that may have achieved a site visit, but would not have been short-listed for an award. The main improvement opportunities identified were:

- Consistent deployment of HPCE-wide approaches.
- Provision of positive four-year trend data.
- Availability of appropriate external comparisons.

The report concluded by making three recommendations:

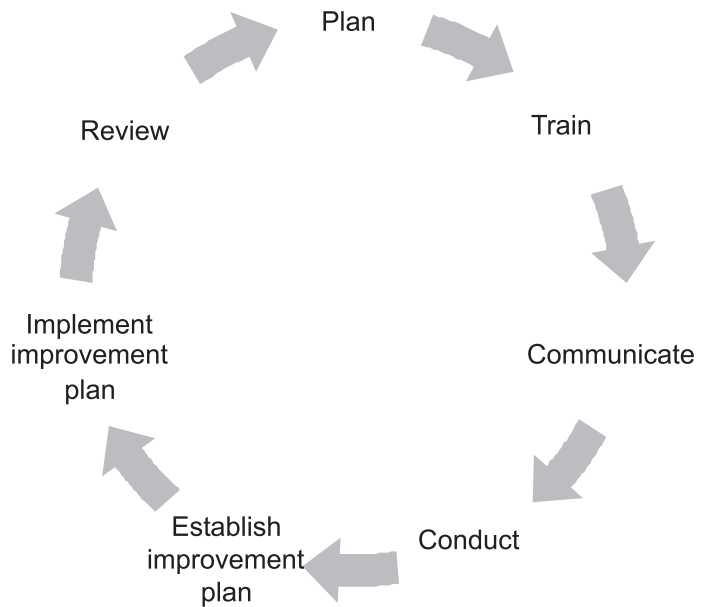
- 1 Continuation of the work following the 1999 self-assessment round to collect additional good practices from other units.
- 2 Proactive promotion of the use of the good practice information
- 3 Make progress towards using more challenging approaches to self-assessment.

These recommendations were carried forward into the next stage of the journey.

## ■ Towards the new millennium

The calibration project described above concluded that the approach to self-assessment needed to evolve to meet current unit needs. The evolution of the EFQM Excellence Model in 1999 presented an opportunity to make this change.

Under the cover of 'the new model', pro forma-based assessment was introduced, together with the more rigorous RADAR assessment scoring approach. At the annual conference facilitators were trained in the new approach in preparation for the 2000 self-assessment round.



■ **Figure C7.3**  
EFQM seven-step self-assessment cycle

Figure C7.3 shows the self-assessment cycle expressed in terms of the EFQM seven-step approach to self-assessment. The approach is discussed in this way so comparisons may be made with other organizations. Each step will be discussed and in particular it will be noted that under the 'Conduct' step there is a four-stage activity program.

## Plan

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The self-assessment is performed in the first part of the year after having all the consolidated results from the previous year. The average score resulting from the scores of all units from the previous year is published and this average score is part of the annual target. This annual target appears on the HPCE, category, country and process level scorecards.

Nobody has an individual target on the score of their unit but it is a team target and is part of the teamwork plan.

## Train

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To support the self-assessment there is a trained facilitator in each unit. Every year an annual training workshop is held for the new facilitators and a refresher day for the previous facilitators. The training has always been delivered using internal trainers and in 2001 the training workshop was a two-day event.

The training of the facilitators covers:

- HPCE management framework.
- HPCE journey to excellence.
- Eight fundamental concepts of excellence.
- The EFQM Excellence Model.

- Syndicates on elements of the model.
- Syndicates on scoring enablers and results.
- Guidelines on process:
  - whom to involve;
  - how much time;
  - role of the board;
  - four main stages of the self-assessment;
  - timetable.
- Self-assessment results database.
- Implementation plan with good practices and excellence into action.

## Communication

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HPCE uses a variety of different media for Communications. These include:

- E-mail.
- HPCE.net, the local intranet facility.
- Local magazines
- OBJ! annual business group cascade meetings.
- Board, Management team meetings and minutes.

All these channels are used to communicate the objective, the process, the timetable and the results of the self-assessments. New managers receive an awareness session on both the objective and the process. To measure Intranet traffic, some hits per page and detailed statistics are available.

## Conduct

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The self-assessment is carried out by the management team, supported by criterion teams. It has four main stages:

- 1 Launch.
- 2 Data collection and analysis.
- 3 Consensus meeting.
- 4 Definition and implementation of the Improvement Plan.

For units the process starts in March and finishes in May, and for the HPCE board the process starts in May and finishes in July. It is a mandatory process that is applicable to all units. Table C7.3 outlines the timing and the various areas of responsibility.

It is felt that the involvement of the management team demonstrates commitment to the process.

## Establish improvement plan

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It is recommended that the Improvement Plan be agreed some time after the consensus meeting. This gives time to reflect on the process and conclusions, and to look at best practice benchmarking opportunities. It is also advised that the plan must:

■ **Table C7.3** Stage timing and activities

Stage	Timing	Responsibilities	Typical activities
Launch	0.5 day	Management team and facilitator.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Facilitator explains the process, EFQM model and learning from previous rounds</li> <li>■ Facilitator explains the objectives and scope</li> <li>■ Team agrees plan including approach for consensus meeting (show and go or share and go)</li> <li>■ Team agrees responsibilities: each part of the model is assigned to a member of the team as ‘champion’</li> <li>■ Agree timetable for data collection, review, consensus meeting and improvement plan</li> </ul>
Data collection and analysis	2–4 weeks	Criterion sponsors and criterion teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Collect the evidence and data</li> <li>■ Propose a score per criterion</li> </ul>
Consensus meeting	1 day	Management team and facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Understand the strengths and the weaknesses in approaches and results</li> <li>■ Evaluate outcomes of previous year’s improvement plan</li> <li>■ Agree on key areas for improvement – prioritized</li> <li>■ Agree a score for the unit.</li> </ul>
Action plan implementation	10–12 months	Management team and implementation teams as part of Annual Plan	Conducted as part of next stage in the process.

- Deliver a measurable benefit to the business.
- Support the achievement of one or more targets on the scorecard.
- Close a significant gap in performance – when the unit’s performance is compared with ‘best in class’.

In the latest self-assessment cycle, units have been aligning their improvement activities with the organization’s strategic thrusts.

The best way to ensure that the plan is implemented has been found to include the activities in the unit’s Annual Plan activities and above all to ‘Keep it simple’. The President, John Sharpe, in his ‘Rule of three’, also gave some additional advice:

At the end of the assessment the top team should take a step back from all the detail and ask itself the question ‘What are the three things that would have the most significant effect on improving business performance in the next year?’

By defining three main themes and broad action plans, management is more able to build the improvement goals into the ongoing planning process and achieve more in the end.

The outputs from all the unit self-assessments and the HPCE level self-assessments are recorded in a database accessible via HPCE.net. The two key themes from the assessment at the HPCE level were addressing several people issues plus improving the quality of the measures.

## Implement Improvement Plan \_\_\_\_\_

The output of the self-assessment is an Improvement Plan, which is best integrated into the Annual Plan and then cascaded through scorecards, team work plans and personal objectives.

The board and management team members are responsible for their action(s), supported by project or process team(s). The facilitator has a specific role to be sure that resources are allocated and that the Improvement Plan actions are progressed. To help the facilitators in this task of follow-up, formal half-year reviews, at board level, have been implemented from 1999.

For the HPCE key objectives, targets are included in the next scorecards, team activity plans and individual objectives. To support the units in their Improvement Plans, three major initiatives are in place:

- Good practice: site visits, database, award.
- Excellence into action: booklet, website, dedicated training sessions.
- Benchmarking studies, factory awards.

## Review \_\_\_\_\_

At the end of each self-assessment cycle a formal review is conducted and improvement action implemented.

## ■ Reflecting over the years

Table C7.4 summarizes the main changes that have been made since the introduction of self-assessment in 1996. This provides a useful summary of the details in the previous sections and it shows how HPCE has moved from 'Entry' through to 'World class' level of the model.

From Table C7.4 it may be seen that in recent years many new initiatives have been introduced to support the process. In Yr 4 HPCE undertook its first external self-assessment by writing a 75-page 'award style' submission report and submitting this to a team of external assessors. Using the European Award process, these assessors assessed the submission and conducted a site visit to clarify and verify their assessment. This resulted in a detailed feedback report at the HPCE level that not only confirmed the progress that HPCE had made, but was used as part of the improvement planning process. The submission

■ **Table C7.4** Improvements to the self-assessment process – first six years

<b>Cycle</b>	<b>Improvements</b>	<b>Level</b>
Yr 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Unilever simplified checklist</li> <li>■ Performed at top team level</li> <li>■ Confidential unit scores</li> </ul>	<b>Entry</b>
Yr 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ First Lotus Notes database password protected</li> <li>■ Process further deployed with involvement of direct reports</li> </ul>	<b>Entry</b>
Yr 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Revision of the checklist to focus more on 'How' than on 'What'</li> <li>■ Revision of the measures</li> <li>■ Process further deployed with involvement of team (until 70% of unit people were involved)</li> <li>■ New Lotus Notes database with transparency of scores at unit level</li> </ul>	<b>Entry/User</b>
Yr 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ New process for the HPCE SA</li> <li>■ First external submission with six EFQM/BQF assessors</li> <li>■ Database with web interface not password protected</li> <li>■ HPCE benchmarking data available</li> <li>■ Good practice site visits</li> </ul>	<b>User</b>
Yr 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ New EFQM Excellence Model</li> <li>■ New SA process in line with EFQM process</li> <li>■ Second external submission with eight EFQM/BQF assessors</li> <li>■ New database just available through HPCE.net</li> </ul>	<b>User</b>
Yr 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ New process for the HPCE SA</li> <li>■ Review of the training package</li> <li>■ Analysis of the links between the enablers and results</li> <li>■ Review of the measures</li> </ul>	<b>User/ World class</b>

document itself was a valuable tool in promoting HPCE's achievements both within HPCE and to other Unilever business groups.

The external assessment exercise was repeated in Yrs 5 and 6 to monitor progression. The process for generating the submission report has also been improved and has become a diagnostic activity in itself, for example by examining the enabler/results linkages and defining an extended set of measures for HPCE.

The good practice collection has continued and in Yr 5 an award was given for the unit that had contributed good practices and was considered to be a role model for the generation of good practices. A revision in Yr 6 was that the award was given for the adoption and not the donation of the practices as a driver to promote learning.

As the transfer of knowledge gains more importance, the involvement in networking has increased and HPCE has had an active involvement in several external benchmarking initiatives.

## ■ Delivering the business objectives

The performance of HPCE since its formation has been outstanding and it is accepted that business excellence has contributed to this success. Here some of the performance measures are reviewed by results criteria showing that positive results have been obtained for every stakeholder group.

### Consumers \_\_\_\_\_

All but one of eight categories are number one or number two in the markets across Europe. There has been a significant increase in market share of 2.5 percent, which represents a growth of 18 percent. This is particularly impressive given the competitive market in which HPCE competes.

### Customers \_\_\_\_\_

Growth of the top 15 customers has been in double digits over the period, with some growing up to 16 percent in a one-year period. HPCE is now considered to be number one in the European markets against its competitors. As an example of an improvement in a performance measure, there has been an increase in product delivery on time of 2 percent from 97 percent on time to 99 percent on time. There have also been many customer awards, such as the one given to the Dutch company by the trade in 2000.

### People \_\_\_\_\_

People satisfaction has improved in the three surveys that have been conducted. As the survey contains over 100 questions it is not appropriate to reproduce this data here. One example of the excellent people results is the decreasing frequency of recordable accidents, which is a key people measure as it relates to employee safety.

### Society \_\_\_\_\_

HPCE factories and the design of the products have an impact on the environment. There has been a continuing improvement in all the key performance measures, which include total chemical oxygen demand, total waste and recycled waste, energy consumption and water consumption. The impact of the products on the environment has also been steadily reducing.

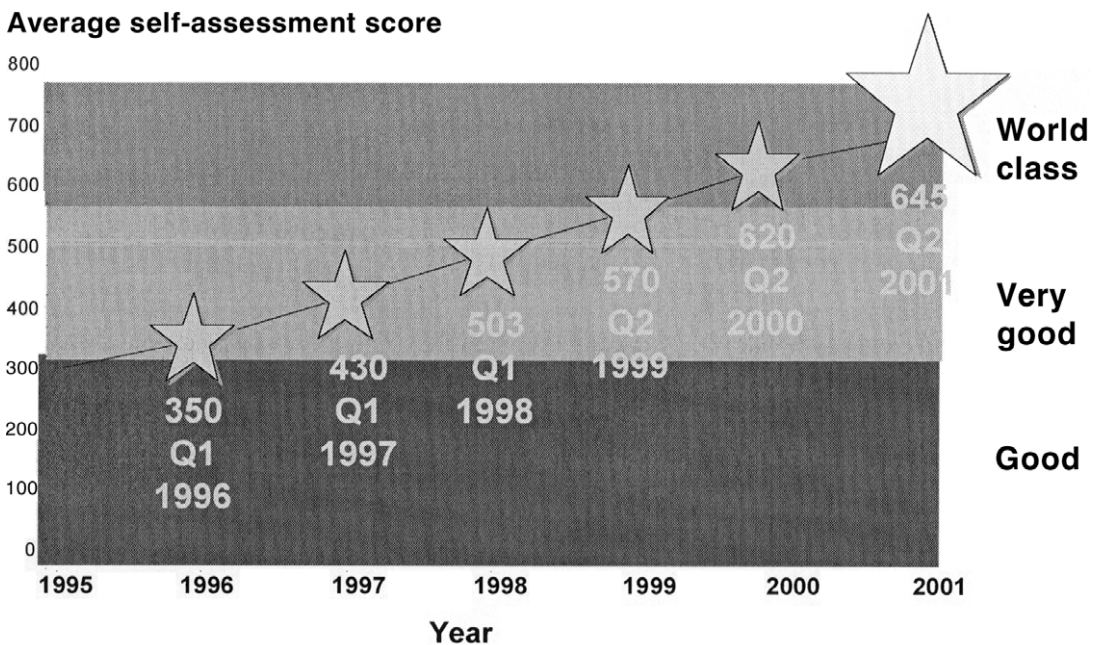
### Key performance results \_\_\_\_\_

Perhaps the most significant results for a private organization are the growth in turnover, trading profit and trading margin. The indexed results for these key measures have shown a minimum 20 percent improvement over 6–7 years in each of these areas.

Revenue from the core brands has also been a significant result as this has grown from 73 percent to 91 percent. This result is important as it reflects HPCE's strategic objective of investing the organization's resources into the growth of the core brands in an industry where there is high product complexity.

## Progress of the scoring over time \_\_\_\_\_

The previous section gave a sample of the business results that were achieved over the period. Improvement in the assessment of both the business enablers and the results has been reflected in steady progress towards reaching world class overall scores. The trend in self-assessment scores is shown in Figure C7.4.



■ **Figure C7.4** HPCE's progress towards world class

## ■ Going forward

This case study has examined the activities of Unilever HPCE over a six-year period. Self-assessment is still considered valuable to the organization today and the practice is spreading from HPCE to parts of Unilever throughout the world.

Unilever itself is engaged in pushing forward the frontiers of knowledge on business excellence. The organization is currently researching how the model may be used in a more informative way to provide a diagnostic tool that predicts future performance as opposed to reflecting on past performance.