

Crossfit Inc. Quality Plan

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Abstract

CrossFit Inc. a well-known intense fitness program was examined in multiple areas such as product offering, training programs, and organizational programs to gain insight on their quality plan or there lack of. With the 1,000's of boxes in the United States alone, CrossFit's quality plan is established to give the company a competitive edge. The weakest link in the current CrossFit Inc. quality plan is the instructor's technique and the service quality are ambiguous. While developing an improved quality plan using the Baldrige Excellence Frame Work as an example, multiple areas are examined such as inputs, techniques, analysis, tools in which will aid in the implementation techniques and lastly the findings along with suggestions.

Chapter I

Introduction

CrossFit Inc. focuses on strength and endurance training. The program founded by Greg Glassman in 2000 encompasses high intensity training involving plyometrics, weight training, and calisthenics to name a few. CrossFit differs from almost every other athletic training program due to the daily ever-changing workouts which are not only unpredictable but also varied and emphasize short bursts at maximum effort. Currently, CrossFit does not have an established quality plan in place to ensure all customers at all gyms are receiving the best possible results and instruction from the program. This plan identifies the set of standards, practices, reviews, checkpoints and other quality improvement methods to be implemented in each CrossFit facility across the nation; the plan will apply to all CrossFit establishments. With over 11,000 CrossFit gyms and over 100,000 Level 1 trainers, the ability to measure the quality delivered to the consumers is a challenge (CrossFit Inc., n.d.). How are these goals measured amongst the thousands of gyms around the country?

Quality Plan Criteria Inputs

The implementation of quality has to be strategically carried out not only to ensure CrossFit Inc. is providing current service of good quality, but to secure their future with the consumers. CrossFit Inc. quality plan will examine:

- To what standards are the Level 1 Trainers held?
- What programs are available to the customers?
- What criterion is used to measure an athlete's performance level?
- How is safety and health requirements implemented to avoid injury?

Chapter II

Description

Quality Standards Techniques

During the first few years of starting an affiliated CrossFit gym, standards will be put into place along with practices, reviews and checkpoints to ensure compliance with the quality standard set forth by CrossFit, Inc.

- All trainers need to meet Level 1 ANSI Accredited Certification Courses
- Re-certification required every 5 years
- Annual training on safety and health regulations
- 12 customers per 1 instructor
- All “Boxes” (affiliated CrossFit Gym) will have the same programs

Chapter III

Analysis

Organizational Profile

Utilizing the Baldrige Excellence Framework pdf, a systematic approach to developing the criteria for a Quality Plan for CrossFit Inc. has been identified. Following the suggested approach for new quality organizations titled “If you are just learning about the Baldrige Framework...,” we begin by review questions regarding the Organizational Profile.

“The Organizational profile is a snapshot of [the] organization, the Key influences on how it operates and [the] competitive environment” (Criteria for Performance Excellence, 2012) The Organizational Description section answer the questions what are the key organizational characteristics. These are identified in the following table. (Table 1)

Table 1 Organizational Profile

Identification

Questions

Organizational Environment

Product Offering	What is the main product being offered? What is the relative importance for each to company success? What mechanism is used to deliver the product?
Mission, Vision, and Values	What is the Mission, the Vision and Values, the Core Competencies? What are their relationships to the mission?
Workforce Profile	What is your Workforce Profile, what recent changes have been experienced in workforce composition or needs; what are the workforce or employee groups and segments; what are the educational requirements for different employee groups and segments; what the key drivers that engage the workforce to achieve your mission and visions; What are the effective bargaining units; what are the specific health and safety requirements?
Assets	What are the major facilities, technologies and equipment?
Regulatory Requirements	What is the regulatory environment for CrossFit; what are the key occupational and safety regulations, accreditations, registration requirements? What are the industry standards? What are the environmental, financial, and product regulations requirements?

Organizational Relationships

Organizational Structure	What are the organizational structure and governance systems? What are the reporting relationships among your governance board, senior leadership and parent organization?
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Customers and Stakeholders	<p>What are key market segments, customers groups and stakeholders?</p> <p>What are the stakeholders key requirements and expectations with regards to products customer support, services and operations? What are the differences between these requirements and market, customer group and other stakeholders?</p>
Suppliers and Partners	<p>What are your key types of suppliers, partners and collaborators?</p> <p>What role do they play in the work systems and enhancing your competitiveness? What are your key mechanism for two-way communication with suppliers, partner and collaborators? What role do these organizations play in contributing and implementing innovations in your organization? What are your key supply chain requirements?</p>

Note, Adapted from Organizational Profile found in 2011-2012 Criteria for Performance

Excellence. (2012). *Baldrige Performance Excellence Program*, p. 4-7.

Organizational Environment

Product offering. CrossFit offers a wide variety of workout and performance products, Web based support, exercise training and courses, schedules, trainer accreditations and affiliate support. Education, licensing and annual affiliation fees are the main source of income for the organization. “The company gets a trickle of royalties from Reebok, which started selling CrossFit-branded gear in 2010, and some more from tickets and registration fees to its annual

CrossFit Games tournament”(Helm, 2013). The exercise support apparatus, web based journals and support tools are free for all to use.

Mission, Vision, and Values. “CrossFit... is an Internet-based, grassroots movement started by CrossFitter’s who wanted their own local CrossFit-equipped gyms, trainers, and communities” (About Affiliation). CrossFit doesn’t have a set Mission or Vision Statement; instead they are built on a cooperative style business model. Affiliates apply to utilize the organizations brand, web based tools, to build and operate their own exercise gym. In essence CrossFit is a business based on support for local enthusiasts who wish to profit from their own passion for exercise. The organizational values are to provide training, certification, licenses, and a brand name, supported by its Reebok clothing line, for intense workout regiments and allow affiliates to expand their businesses into what every supplies, supplements or equipment they choose.

Workforce Profile. CrossFit doesn’t have many employees; however they have over 12,000 independent affiliates, which own more than 6,000 gyms known as “boxes.” Each is required to pay an annual fee to utilize the brand name. CrossFit also provides training and certifications, for a tuition fee, to coaches at these gyms so they can be considered CrossFit instructors.. The beauty of CrossFit “...is that it requires scant capital. No inventory or large staff. Just some IT, good lawyers (to keep people from illegally using the CrossFit name) and sweat equity on this balance sheet” (Ozanian, 2015). Recently, CrossFit added a clothing line with the CrossFit brand name in partnership with Reebok. Due to each Box existing individually and independently owned and managed, CrossFit’s workforce profile is unique. It basically provides a brand name, some training, a forum for cooperative fitness learning and a great clothing line, while allowing each unit to do their own thing including inventive workout routines.

Assets. With no capital the CrossFit brand name is its greatest asset. Affiliates operating under the name contribute to training videos, seminars, Work Out of the Day (WOD) suggestions and certifications testing. The web site is the other invaluable asset. It is the link for all the affiliates to communicate, document unique workouts and find out about upcoming seminars and events.

Regulatory Requirements. CrossFit Inc, is an online business that does not have franchisees. Each Box is its own entity which requires the affiliate to comply with local business, zoning and safety requirements. CrossFit does require their affiliate boxes be:

- Certified under their own American National Standards Institute (ANSI) accreditation
- Certified CrossFit Trainer (CCFT)
- Certified and current in The American Red Cross Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and Automated External Defibrillator (AED)
- Meet a predetermined number of Continuing Education Units (CEU) and a number of hours of actual CrossFit training activities every three years.
- Achieve the highest levels of trainer certification, and a corporate performance based evaluation is conducted by another affiliate with that highest level of certification

Organizational Relationships

Organizational Structure. CrossFit's Organizational Structure is a big secret; they are a private company and don't posts financial reports as a public company would. The hierarchy within the company appears to be based on the highest level of trainer certification, as well as organizational involvement and participate in seminar. Other than the CEO and CFO positions held by Greg and Lauren Glassman, the company lawyers who are not named, and IT personnel, the only other references are to affiliates. Some more prominently mentioned than others; for

example Dave Castro and Nicole Carrol co-directors of training are prominently featured in Journal articles. “Greg Glassman’s company doesn’t adhere to traditional business methods” (Cej, 2009).

Customers and Stakeholders. The Customers and Stakeholders in the company are the affiliates who gain use of the brand name, certifications, and training; all to grow their own businesses. In essence, although the CrossFit brand is owned by the Glassmans, the organization is owned in part by each customer (affiliate) that utilizes the web based products they provide to further their own business aspirations. If an affiliate fails, the company merely loses a customer who will soon be replaced by another, as evidenced by CrossFit’s tremendous growth.

Suppliers and Partners. CrossFit has partnered with Reebok to provide CrossFit labeled brand name clothing, shoes and accessories. A positive partnership for both companies, Reebok now has permission to use CrossFit’s logo to sell products and CrossFit gains advertising and royalties. The remaining suppliers are the affiliates who participate online, in training, in seminars, and certifications renewals.

Quality Tools

Although CrossFit is a unique organization, there are some specific quality tools that could be developed to maximize the growth and online credibility or reputation. The ideas incorporated in Deming’s view of quality, “that business should not exist simply for profit; they are social entities whose basic purpose is to serve their customers,” are somewhat inherent in CrossFit’s processes (Evans & Lindsay, 2014, p.51). Therefore, though the business model is unorthodox, they have a leg up on quality. Applying the following tools would help them to continue on a quality path.

- Training for all licensed trainers on quality principles via software as part of the CEU’s.

- Printable e-manuals with detailed information on proper exercise technique, products and services available
- Different pricing packages for families, veterans, students, firefighters, and nurses for training and certifications
- 4 week class for beginners to work on form and technique
- Web based tools put into place for customer to track individual progress
- Yearly audits of facilities to ensure all programs are being properly implemented
- Questionnaires sent out to customers in order to track performance and identify room for improvement/suggestions for Boxes to act on results
- Implement ISO 9004:2008 & ISO 9004:2009

Chapter IV

Findings

As a result of a dedicated implementation of the Quality Plan outlined in the previous chapters, CrossFit Inc. is capable of increasing its marketplace success by diminishing its largest weakness. The pervasive critique of CrossFit workout programs has been a lack of quality control in the professionalism, or rather competency, of instructors as affiliated gyms across the world. With a surge of popularity, and a rapid growth in the number of affiliated gyms, uneducated consumers have at times been instructed by poorly informed coaches, leading to numerous high profile injuries (see YouTube for numerous examples). Although the concept behind CrossFit is sound, the lack quality control protocols at a few gyms have tainted the brand name, its most important asset. Raising the quality at all gyms, and annually ensuring quality is maintained, can act as a guard against future quality control criticisms.

Requiring affiliated gyms to improve the base level of training standards for all instructors with a regimented initial training and routinely implemented continuing education, will aid in decreasing the possibility of injury and increase the legitimacy of the CrossFit training regimen. The minimum requirement to establish an affiliated gym is attending the CrossFit Level 1 Trainer Course. The course is intended to teach attendees the basics of the CrossFit program and how to teach them to customers.

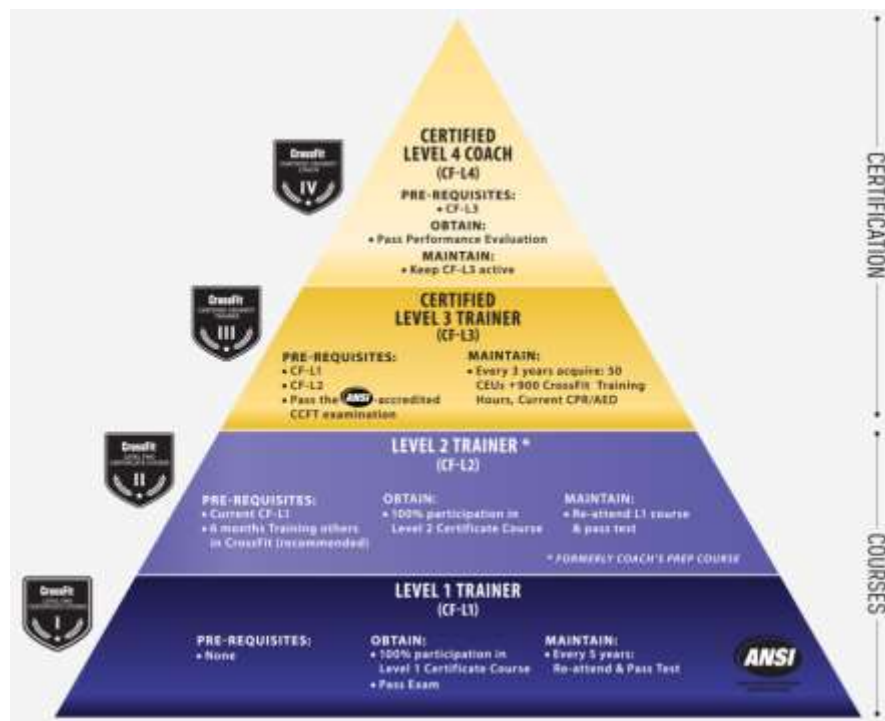


Figure 1: Certification Requirements

Combining the better educated gym staff with customer questionnaires will also increase the quality of each gym by offering a 360 degree review of the gym's performance. Allowing both open-ended and closed-ended questions and responses from the people actually receiving training from the CrossFit gym, will highlight to the gym staff the weaknesses of their training programs, where they need more education and concerns of the customers. The training staff

and gym owners may not realize the deficiencies they have until they implement the questionnaire and, after doing so, they are then capable of improving their own quality.

The lack of training required to open up a gym has resulted in a tainted image of the CrossFit organization. The low standards to establish an affiliated gym has resulted in many new businesses with uneducated CrossFit coaches with little or no experience. The ideology of many CrossFit organizations is to focus on repetition rather than proper weightlifting form. This has led to an increased amount of injuries sustained during training and could be a result of inexperienced coaches. The Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research, performed a study that found 73.5% participants had sustained an injury that had prevented them from working, training or competing. Although the injury rate is similar to Olympic weightlifting, powerlifting and gymnastics the CrossFit culture of deplete, endure, repeat has led to other serious injuries. One of the most concerning issues with CrossFit safety is the excessive workouts with little rest. Medical professionals argue that some of these exercises are being misused under CrossFit's emphasis on doing as many reps as possible and/or racing the clock. This culture has resulted in serious injuries to their customers such as the development of rhabdomyolysis due to extreme muscle strain, especially in someone who is an untrained athlete. The final issue with the easy requirements to establish a CrossFit affiliate is the price ranges at each location. As popularity for CrossFit continues to grow, many new gyms are being established, at lower rates than more reputable gyms with qualified trainers. The new organizations decrease the value of the brand name and could be a contributing factor to the improper forms and injury rates sustained during CrossFit training.

Finally, the application of web based tools for customers, CrossFitters, to track their progress and educate themselves, as well as implementation of ISO 9004:2008 & ISO 9004:2009 allows

both the consumer and supplier (CrossFit) the capability to self-review to ensure quality. If CrossFit wants sustained quality, they will need to periodically review their standards and methods to ensure they are not slowly regressing into previous business practices that have created the need for this Quality Plan in the first place. Additionally, CrossFit should make every effort to ensure the customer is always responsible for the quality of the training they are receiving. Allowing customers to get more educated will increase the effect customer questionnaires have for affiliated gyms. If the educated customer base does not accept lesser quality, they will, in effect, become another check on quality and become a quality control measure themselves.

Quality Assurance Required documentation

- Organizational process (conformance requirements)
- Quality checklist
- Quality audits
- Involvement of managers

Chapter V

Recommendations

CrossFit is an organization that provides enormous benefits and value to its partners and customers. CrossFit has matured as a business within an independent environment, allowing entrepreneurial partners the opportunity to operate their own business, while enjoying the structure that CrossFit offers in terms of process guidance and support.

As with all businesses, there are growing pains, and each is faced with the opportunity to take stock of their current position, improving their products and services to provide even greater value to customers. This research has pointed out some minor systemic failures that must be

recognized and evaluated in order that process focus and results raise the business model to the next level.

It is fortunate that the Baldrige Excellence Framework was developed to help growing businesses determine how well they are performing, how to measure success, and how the business can improve. CrossFit will benefit greatly from this structure in integrating a quality plan based on leadership, strategy, customers, workforce, and operations yielding exceptional results.

- **LEADERSHIP** – CrossFit will develop a corporate vision, statement of values and mission. Leadership structure will be specifically defined, providing governance for constituents through organized management structure, human resource management, efficient communications, clear expectations, accountability and transparency. CrossFit will operate in a legal and ethical manner, observing all applicable rules and regulations, all while respecting their obligation to follow their societal responsibility as a quality organization.
- **STRATEGY** – CrossFit will base its strategic planning process on a firm foundation of safety, service and financial performance. A common set of standards will ensure a best-in-industry training program, certifying trainers to a minimum of Level 1 standards, while encouraging continuous training to maintain currency and advancement of skills to Level 4 standards. CrossFit will improve work systems and focus on the core competencies of the organization, while continually innovating its processes to improve customer safety and service. Short and long term action plans will be developed, allocating resources for projects designed to accelerate measurable business performance.

- **CUSTOMERS** – CrossFit will delight current and potential customers through service and safety. The company will measure customer satisfaction through survey methods and questionnaires in order to improve process, while avoiding dissatisfaction and defection. Listening to the voice of the customer will allow CrossFit to improve product offerings, customer support, and improve customer relationships by delighting consumers with outstanding service and quickly rectifying failures. An initial 4 week training criteria program will ensure that customers are assessed according to their abilities in order that they avoid potential injuries. Program advancement will be according to common guidelines mandated by CrossFit through its certified trainers.
- **MEASUREMENT, ANALYSIS, and KNOWLEDGE MANAGAMENT** – Continuous and meaningful data will be accumulated through customer contact and via survey to determine performance relative to strategic benchmarks and the competition. Customer inputs, as well as fiscal and performance data, are critical to determining current and future business vectoring. Proper analysis of data will help CrossFit respond rapidly to changing market conditions, positioning the company for competitive success. Focus will be placed on observing and developing best practices to encourage and protect customers, trainers and the company. An annual auditing process will be implemented to ensure compliance with expectations. Continuous improvement through performance and innovation will be standard operating procedure.
- **WORKFORCE** – CrossFit is largely comprised of an expanding pool of independent entrepreneurs. This adds to the high levels of core competency that the company enjoys. In this case, minimal investment yields great return. It is critical that CrossFit develop an outstanding training and support package to assist trainers to advance within corporate

guidelines. This includes improvement in training and monitoring processes for trainers through organized training curricula and issuance of approved training materials. Most importantly, a feedback mechanism will be developed in order to keep trainers engaged in the implementation and advancement of the CrossFit brand. Leaders must be developed from within and there must be provision for career progression, effectiveness, and increased performance.

- **OPERATIONS** – Key work and design processes will be implemented to assure quality and control. Safety and certification are key to CrossFit's success and will be comprised of the aforementioned best-in-industry practices as well as incorporation of the American National Standards Institutes (ANSI) accreditation, Certified CrossFit Trainer (CCFT), American Red Cross CPR and AED training, Continuing Education Units (CEU), specific CrossFit training every three years, as well as a standardized trainer qualification program. Proper implementation of these processes will be measured and recorded for compliance and utilized as a means for improvement and further innovation. As CrossFit continues to expand, improved process performance and reduction in variability will be accomplished through implementation of a Lean Enterprise System, Six Sigma methodology, and/or ISO quality system standards.
- **RESULTS** – CrossFit will focus on its performance and improvement within and external to these confines. Emerging wisdom of improved process within the areas of the customer, workforce, leadership, governance, financial and market improvement must be incorporated into the culture of the company. Particular care must be taken in facilitating customer satisfaction and engagement. The workforce must operate in a climate conducive to capability, capacity, development and engagement. Corporate leadership

must originate through proper top-down governance complying with legal, ethical and societal demands. Above all, CrossFit must ensure that financial and market performance successfully propels the company to success and security (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2015).

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