

Cereal Probe Case Study



Greencore Malt

Greencore Malt is primarily involved in the malting of barley products and the supply of products to the brewing, distilling and food industries. Peter Nallen is Business Development Director for Greencore Malt and along with 7 other members of his team undertook PROBE benchmarking workshops in May and November 2005.

Why PROBE?

The PROBE process provides an opportunity to assess the company's performance and practice objectively away from routine daily operations. The identified strengths and weaknesses

can then be acted upon decisively to drive business improvement.

"Greencore were keen to use the Cereals PROBE tool to identify areas of improvement in our

business and implement actions based on these areas in order to improve the way the business is run."

- David Wilkes, MD



David Wilkes, MD

How it worked for Greencore

Cereals PROBE allows users to assess their comparative positions with all other users of the tools and to assess their comparative positions with selected sectors. For users with multiple sites, Cereals PROBE can be used to deliver internal comparisons which can help to create learning organisations by providing a common framework and language.

Greencore Malt received scores on performance and practice that showed that current business performance led business practice by a small margin.

Performance led scores are not unusual for many food industry companies and indicate that a number of key individuals in the business are responsible for components of the business success. London Business School and Cereals PROBE benchmarking theory suggests that a wide variance (>5 points) in these indices would leave the company vulnerable with any departure of key staff.

"Feedback from the Cereals PROBE exercise reinforced some of the existing beliefs within the company and enabled us to drive improvement in some of these key areas. The fact that these issues now exist as hard

facts and have been verified by an independent facilitator and via the Cereals PROBE model has enabled us to move forward with purpose and action plan on many issues.

We are involved in the 'Investors In People' (IIP) programme as just one facet of the way in which we have addressed internal communications within the company as a key action point."

- David Wilkes, MD

Cereals PROBE assesses a range of key business issues in the

facilitated self assessment workshops including Organisation and Culture, Service Concept and Processes, Service Delivery, Service Value and Measurement, Logistics and Supply Chain, Material Processing (if applicable) and New Product Development (if applicable).

The Cereals PROBE exercise is split into two parts, a team based benchmarking workshop in which facilitated discussion allows the collection of benchmarking data and a subsequent action planning sessions where the strengths and weaknesses identified in the benchmarking workshop are worked into actions, responsibilities and deadlines.

Action Planning – Turning benchmarking theory into real improvements

Subsequent to the Action Planning session Greencore Malting group has introduced a number of measures aimed at improving key aspects of company practice relating to internal communications and training of employees to meet future company needs.

"Starting with management in early 2006 and expanding to include all employees by the end of the year, we have implemented a system of employee appraisal that includes 360 degree reviews from peers, subordinates and supervisors. This is linked to a training plan designed to ensure that the skill set of all

employees reflects both the current and future requirements of the company.

We have also developed a series of business briefings carried out by the CEO and senior management team on a regular basis at all of our sites. These are given on the basis of a variety of performance measures including customer satisfaction rates, customer feedback and employee satisfaction. They serve to help employees' understanding of the importance of the different aspects of business performance beyond just company finances."

The company were successful in completing the manufacturing and new product developments aspects of the questionnaire and found a few key areas to address in these areas of the business.

"As a result of best practice manufacturing introduced to us by the Cereals PROBE exercise, we have reviewed our approach to the concept of Overall Equipment Effectiveness and its application to our batch by batch production system. This has enabled us to easily identify where efficiency problems exist in production and respond in a more timely fashion to overcome these issues."

Greencore Malt scored highly on quality performance in the marketplace and meeting customer delivery commitments. Maintenance of these strengths will be a strong underlying factor in the ongoing success of the business.

"We are committed to further building on our strengths in Greencore and have also introduced a programme whereby the customer is treated as a genuine asset in the customer service design procedure. Customers' feedback is actively sought to provide focus into the way in which the services and products are delivered. In addition this allows employees to better understand the reasons behind why certain standards are expected and what an important difference maintaining and sustaining these standards makes to customer satisfaction."

- David Wilkes, MD

What is PROBE?

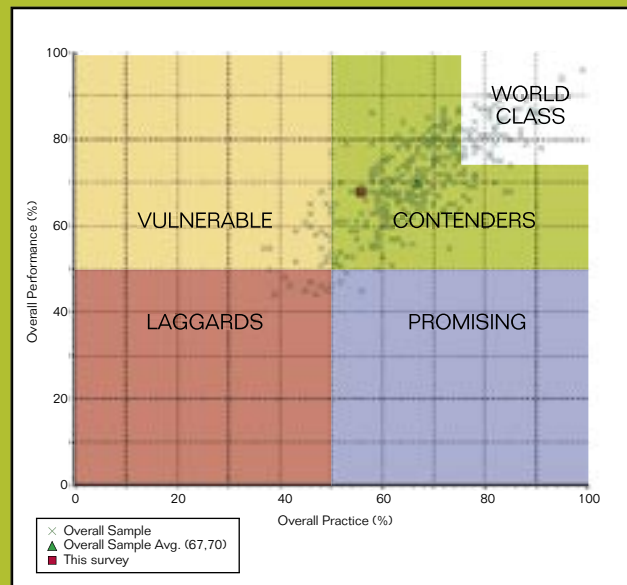
Cereals PROBE methodology has its roots in research on world-class manufacturing and service quality, led by IBM Consulting Ltd (UK) and London Business School. The PROBE database contains over 6000 individual site benchmarks from 32 countries across a wide range of sectors.

Cereals PROBE is based on a generic model of 'best practice', which is presented to the team in the form of a questionnaire. Comparison against the generic model and those companies on our database are shown in practice and performance terms. An example of the practice performance competitive positioning chart is shown here. All data is kept strictly confidential and the graph represents an anonymous example.

Strengths and opportunities for improvement are identified across a spectrum of the organisation's activities. Every aspect of the business is covered:

- from understanding the needs of service users, to measuring their satisfaction
- from service design to the operational processes of day-to-day service delivery
- from leadership styles and strategy development to people development and the measurement of staff satisfaction
- Material Processing in the Cereals Industry
- New Product Development in the Cereals Industry.

Test. UK. 14/03/2006
Overall Practice vs Overall Performance: (56,68)
(relative to overall sample)



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