EOQ Press Release

Pieter de Kroon, the Award Winner of EOQ European Quality Leader 2013

The European Organization for Quality (EOQ) has celebrated the winner of the European Quality Leader Award 2013 at the 58th EOQ Congress, in Gothenburg/Sweden on June 11th, 2014. The European Quality Leader (EQL) Award is yearly granted by EOQ. An EQL ‘Quality Leader’ is a leader in an organization having succeeded in moving the organization to success for the different stakeholders through his leadership and through the change and Quality improvement processes, in its broadest sense, he has implemented directly through his team.

The EQL Award winner for 2013 is Mr. Pieter de Kroon from Netherlands, till the beginning of 2014 the CEO of the company Vanboeijen/Assen in the Netherlands, intramural institution for people with a disability and now organisational advisor. Mr. Pieter de Kroon was selected the winner of EQL award because of his significant and exceptional achievements in the field of health care for people with disabilities, sound national and international recognition and especially for developing a cooperative way of working and an organization structure, via the change process “Regie op Locatie” (Focus on Location: FOL).

After having acquired a long experience in working in healthcare organizations destined to people with University Amsterdam/change management education disabilities (like G.I.M.D. L’warden, D.A.G.Friesland) and continuously strengthening his specific education, in the year 2000 Pieter de Kroon became the CEO of Vanboeijen, an organization which was at that time on the verge of bankruptcy; in addition there were great difficulties concerning employees’ absences and implementing care for the customers. But he saw the improvement opportunities and started to work step by step on the problems. First of all he focused on solving the financial problem by implementing his “Learning and Remediation” concept which became very successful: from 2001 onwards, Vanboeijen solely achieved positive yield financially and furthermore the content of care was highly improved. Clients who had been regularly separated for years, found their supported homes in the community. Though accompanied, some took their first holidays abroad. Illness-related absence went down and the employees’ contentment increased.

But it seemed as though they didn’t match with the core of the employees and (the representatives of) the clients, even though they had implemented a widely accepted new mission. It was time for a breakthrough. It started in 2009 with the project “Focus on Location”, having as core principles: good life for the people with a severe mental handicap, great place to work for the employees and financial health for the organization. Considering Lean, Theory U and the Manfred Kets de Vries’ vision the implementation process started; during this process the whole team experienced how difficult it is to let go of your views as a manager/board member, but to look through the eyes of clients and employees. Referring to lessons learned in this project and to the change process, Pieter de Kroon quotes: “It asks for leaders who leave space for the change agents within the organization, who allow experiments and change, who let in exterior knowledge and views, but above all, leaders who want to be humble, serve others, are connected with their own feelings and longings and who are always willing to reflect. This leads to further social innovation, more diversity, more creativity, more durability and above all, more humanity”

Under the passionate and committed leadership of Pieter de Kroon, Vanboeijen was, when he left, a strong organization with 900 clients, 1550 employees and a budget of € 82 million (healthcare) with a bright and specific future 2018 vision. Since February 2014 he supports with his FOL-team 8 other organisations with in total over 15.000 employees with the implementation of FOL.

Apart from the company’s high accomplishments reached under his leadership, Pieter de Kroon was awarded the Business Improvement Manager of the Year 2013 in the Netherlands and nominated for the European Business Improvement Manager of the Year 2014. He is also member of several professional advisory boards (like the University Amsterdam/change management education) and until 2013 he was the vice-president of V.G.N. (branch organization for organizations in care for the disabled) and chairman of the advisory board of the Rabo-bank.

The EOQ President, Mr. Niyazi Akdas, handed over to the winner the European Quality Leader Trophy and Certificate during the Gala Dinner of the EOQ 58th EOQ Congress in Gothenburg/Sweden on June 11th, 2014.

The European Quality Leader Award is granted in recognition of outstanding individuals, who devote their time, energy and knowledge in sharing their beliefs to the benefit of the European Society. The European Organization for Quality (EOQ) associates more than 70,000 members and 500,000 companies within its member and partner organizations in Europe and worldwide. EOQ is the European interdisciplinary organization striving for effective improvement in the sphere of quality management as the coordinating body and catalyst of its Member Organizations aiming to improve European society through the promotion of Quality in its broadest sense.

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