



A Trusted Brand is Not Always Enough

EQTM: The European quality mark connects the characteristics of the product with quality-managed processes in the company

In the field of quality, there are many recognitions, awards and certificates issued by professional institutions, accreditation houses, certification organizations and professional associations. When they are issued by national and/or internationally recognized bodies, credibility is high.

By Zoran Lekic

There are thousands of different labels, stamps, stickers, or rather “decorations”, with which companies want to promote their products and services. They are usually accompanied by some text such as “most trusted brand”, “best value for money”, “most innovative and quality product”,

“trusted brand” and the like. The credibility of such labels is low or non-existent.

If we limit ourselves to the first group of authentic statements, we find that they are focused on quality in the strict sense of the word. Some of them also take into account

Quality

different areas of business processes that are responsible for quality. However, none of the areas cover a wide range of conditions that would ensure high-quality and long-term stable fulfilment of all agreed obligations to the company’s business partners and/or end consumers.

However, a much broader aspect is offered by the European Quality Trademark (EQTM). This quality mark can be obtained by companies that demonstrate compliance with all quality characteristics of the product or family of products and demonstrate the most important business indicators that ensure long-term quality in accordance with the agreed conditions and expectations of partners or customers.

The issuer is a recognized organization

The EQTM award is issued by the European Organization for Quality (EOQ), the most respected and recognized quality organization in Europe. It was founded in 1956 and strives for effective improvements in the field of quality management. Through its network, EOQ includes national quality associations and other partner organizations from 30 countries, which have

access to 70,000 members and 500,000 companies.

EOQ has become recognized worldwide through annual quality congresses. Those events have regularly attracted more than a thousand participants in which the world’s leading experts and quality gurus (Juran, Kano, Feigenbaum, Taguchi, etc.) have participated. They laid the foundations for the establishment of quality as an indispensable function in the management of production and business processes. A great need for the lack of knowledge in this area quickly became apparent. At EOQ, they were the first to recognize this, and so they established the EOQ Harmonized Personnel Registration Scheme for quality managers and other essential personnel involved in quality management. The very first group of quality managers was certified in 1992. Up to now, EOQ has approved Competence Certificate Agents in 14 European countries and beyond. They have together issued over 115,000 Competence Certificates.

Product promotion and protection at the same time

The European Organization for Quality designed, accomplished and launched this

new quality acknowledgement. Its intention is to inaugurate and protect European products presented on markets in Europe and around the world.

Perhaps the most important criterion is that the European quality recognition is awarded to products of European origin. We often buy (even in Europe) a sub-standard product of unknown quality made anywhere in the world, in inhumane conditions, with environmentally inappropriate procedures, untested materials and semi-finished products, and unregulated copyrights. European origin is only one of the ten requirements that must be fulfilled for the successful approval and issuance of EQTM recognition (five requirements relate to the product and five to the company).

The process runs online

The EQTM acquisition process is professionally managed and controlled by EOQ. The entire process – registration,

review, approval and issuance of recognition is done online. All information related to obtaining the European Quality Award is published on the EOQ website (www.eoq.org).

Interested candidates must submit an application with proof of meeting all ten criteria. This is not a new project that requires any organizational or business changes or additions to the existing situation. Completing the application is therefore not a complicated process; it only requires the collection and editing of data that companies already have. The expected level of suitability must be clearly demonstrated with examples and evidence of fulfilment of the required conditions.

The recognition is valid for three years. For the second and third years, the recipient must report that all conditions met have been maintained as demonstrated in the initial assessment. By obtaining recognition, the company acquires the

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right to promote the awarded products using the EQTM logo and toolkit in electronic and printed form, and also the right to promote the product and the company on the EOQ website, in various printed publications and at professional events.

Adapting to new trends

At EOQ, we believe that EQTM recognition will become one of the most important elements in the promotion and protection of European products on the European and global market. In doing so, we are aware that the conditions for obtaining European quality recognition will need to be adapted to development trends that affect the risk factors of business entities.

Often it also concerns external influences that we all recognize such as the energy crisis or climate change. At the moment,

the acquisition of a sustainable credit rating is relevant and is something we intend to include in the conditions. We intend to keep the number of conditions and place additional requirements among the existing ones.

We are aware that some conditions are exclusionary, so not all products or companies are even considered for evaluation or the possibility of applying. All applicants will be required to demonstrate and document that they fully meet all requirements. Only in this way will we maintain the reputation and credibility of the European Quality Award.

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