



**Louis Schweitzer**

Former Chairman  
and CEO  
Renault (1992-2005)  
Former President  
EFQM (1992-1994)



I was asked in 1992 to become the President of EFQM, in the footsteps of Raymond Levy whom I had replaced at the helm of Renault. I was delighted to accept the role and chaired the Board of EFQM for the following three years. These were exciting years for me.

Raymond Levy was one of 14 CEOs of leading European companies who, alongside European Commission President Jacques Delors, took on the challenge in 1988 to create conditions to drastically improve the competitiveness of the European industry. Japan had a significant lead with the Deming Prize. And the Malcolm Baldrige Award had recently been launched in the USA. Something had to happen in Europe so as to keep up in the global race.

We are now celebrating EFQM's 25th anniversary. When it was created, the idea was to bring Total Quality Management (TQM) to as many companies as possible in order to drive performance improvement. EFQM had a significant role to play in promoting TQM in Europe. I remember the first European Quality Award (now EFQM Excellence Award) presented by King Juan Carlos I of Spain to Xerox in 1992. This Award was – and remains – a significant source of motivation for others, and provided public awareness

on the benefits of deploying TQM. This still holds true today.

The EFQM Excellence Model was launched during my tenure, based on the analysis of the best performing organisations. This Model has not changed drastically since, which proves its robustness. Its 9 criteria continue to create the framework for describing and assessing how organisations operate. Yet one of these 9 criteria was unique at the time: "Impact on Society". Whereas it was then perceived as somewhat peculiar, no one today would consider excellence without a keen focus on Society.

Self-assessment, the essential starting point for any value-adding continuous improvement process, were established. A number of other activities were created to help organisations deploy the Model and engage on a journey to improve their performance. They were mostly founded on the simple principles of learning, sharing and networking which still prevail at EFQM today.

Whereas neither the Excellence Model nor EFQM's Mission have changed much over the years, the beneficiaries of the Model have. EFQM's circle of influence is much larger today than initially envisaged. European business values, which are embedded in the EFQM Excellence

Model, have generated interest in the public sector as well as outside Europe. This proves the universality of the Model and that of its supporting philosophy. The Model is relevant for any organisations, and brings benefits as long as the top management is fully engaged.

We deployed the EFQM Excellence Model in a number of units at Renault. It led to two engine plants applying to the EFQM Excellence Award; a Spanish and a French unit finished as Finalists respectively in 1999 and in 2002. The Model brought structure in devising, deploying and assessing our strategic initiatives just as I had anticipated when I started working closely with EFQM in 1992.

I wish a happy anniversary to EFQM and a successful deployment of the EFQM Excellence Model for 25 more years for the sustainable benefit of our economies.

## Louis Schweitzer

Born in 1942, Mr Schweitzer started his career holding office in the French administration, eventually as head of Prime Minister's Cabinet from 1984 to 1986.

He then joined Renault where he became Chairman and CEO in 1992. He held this position until 2005, then was Chairman of the Board until 2009.

Mr. Schweitzer remains honorary Chairman of Renault. He is also vice Chairman of the Board of Veolia Environment and a director of L'Oreal.

Mr. Schweitzer was the President of EFQM from 1992 to 1994, as Renault was one of EFQM's 14 founding members. He remains engaged in initiatives linked to investment and entrepreneurship in France, chairing or sitting on the board of several organisations.