

5th IFQM CEO/CXO Learning Mission at Biocon – Visit Report

Summary of Learnings & Reflections for IFQM and Personal Development

Welcome & Context

Biocon Group welcomed IFQM Delegates to Bengaluru—the birthplace of Biocon and a hub of biotechnology and IT innovation. This vibrant city, with its blend of modern science and cultural heritage, set the perfect stage for the **5th IFQM CEO/CXO Learning Mission**. Biocon Group Chairperson, Dr. Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, in her keynote address, emphasized staying rooted in core principles such as ethics, governance, and quality. She highlighted Biocon's aspiration to win the prestigious Deming Prize through agility and continuous improvement for consistent Right First Time (RFT) outcomes. The learning mission objective was to 1) **Share** Biocon's best practices in Research & Innovation, quality by design and Enterprise Excellence with a People-centric culture; 2) **Unite** and foster collaboration among leaders across industries and within the Biocon Group; 3) **Learn** from the delegates and promote IFQM's nation-first agenda for quality and excellence.

Program Highlights

The two-day event included:

1. Visit to Biocon Experience Center and Drug Lifecycle Showcase
2. Opening address by Head, Biocon Group Center of Excellence, Dr. Parthasarathy Sampathkumar, about the evolution of Biocon Group's indigenous Enterprise excellence framework and their Deming journey
3. Keynotes by Dr. Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw and Mr. Soumitra Bhattacharya
4. Address by Biocon CEOs
5. Theatrical presentations illustrating improvement projects
6. Plant tours covering Biologics Drug Substance & Finished Drug Product mfg., Small Molecules, Utility, R&D & QC Labs
7. Presentations on EHS, CSR, Biocon Academy, IT, Quality and People Practices
8. Networking dinner at Dr. Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw's residence
9. Final reflections, key takeaways, and closing remarks

Overview

CEO/CXO Learning Mission, the 5th in the series, this time at Biocon, showcased continuous improvement and received overwhelming positive feedback. The event combined formal learning with innovative communication approaches, including theatrical experience, technology, and strong volunteer engagement. Participants gained actionable insights to drive improvements in their respective organizations and personal leadership growth.

Key Learnings

1. Innovative Communication & Engagement

- Use of skits/theatre effectively conveyed lessons around:

- Customer-focused behavior to respond to sudden demand,
- Continuous improvement culture to reduce Operational cycle time,
- Multi-skilling & productivity for cost efficiency,
- Change management in shorter lead times,
- Process Quality through consistency across batches, and
- Shared accountability mindset in an engaging, emotional way.

- Digital displays (menu-driven thematic screens, holography, 3D storytelling) created immersive learning experiences along with digital tools, and real-time dashboards
- Labelling of work areas and responsible people enhanced transparency and clarity.

2. Execution & Operational Excellence

- Agility and simplicity in event execution enabled smooth handling of last-minute changes.
- Volunteers delivered exceptional hospitality with care and professionalism.
- Strong alignment of goals across levels fostered ownership.
- Share monthly RAG status updates of plans, like best practices seen

3. Continuous Improvement & Quality Focus

- Emphasis on Quality by design, stakeholder impact awareness, and fast feedback loops.
- Adoption of daily/hourly PDCA tracking to drive efficiency and reduce stress.

4. Leadership Alignment & Culture

- Leadership demonstrated humility, emotional connection, and clarity of purpose.
- Focus on diversity, inclusion, and fostering creative, high-performance environments.

5. Indigenous Business Excellence Framework

- 'John Shaw Excellence Model', a contextualized Business Excellence framework drawing inputs from Malcolm Baldrige, EFQM, Shingo, TPM & TQM frameworks was presented
- Journey of Group COE to drive Enterprise excellence started with Problem solving competency improvement, to developing an in-house Business excellence model (JSEM)
- Currently, baseline assessments are done for SBU-level, and leadership. Function-level JSEM assessments are underway for covering entire Organization in the upcoming cycle
- Group COE is committed to constantly refining JSEM model based on external assessments including but not limited to RBNQA (Indian version of Malcolm Baldrige) & EFQM in the next 2 years, which will set the pathway to challenge the Deming prize for best performing SBUs.

6. Sharing of best practices

- Best practices booklet 'Reflections on our Quest for Excellence' and 'Digital transformation case study' as part of 'Souvenir' for delegates in addition to 'Myth Breaker', biography of Biocon Group Chairperson Dr. Kiran Mazumdar Shaw
- Best practices booklet covers:
 - JSEM framework & Operating model
 - GRADER assessment tool (unique rubric for evaluation)

- Quality excellence through Innovation & Differentiation
- Leadership engagement in Enterprise Excellence
- Utkarsh Leadership talk series 'Elevating Excellence'
- Daily Work Management through 'MyEQuITY' approach
- Fostering Problem-solving mindset through Lean Six Sigma
- Enhancing Workplace efficiency with 5S implementation
- Cultivating Continuous Improvement Culture
- Learning through External Benchmarking

IFQM's Reflections

Leadership & Growth

- Emphasis on humility, clarity in delegation, persistence, and continuous learning.
- Practice of focusing on vital priorities and finishing commitments with care.

Mindset & Problem Solving

- Shifting mindset to embrace challenges and build problem-solving skills.
- R&D culture and emotional connection with purpose were key takeaways.

Participant Reactions for – “Your Feeling at the Moment”

Participants shared overwhelmingly positive emotions. Themes included:

- Inspiration & Motivation: Uplifted by energy, passion, and purpose.
- Pride & Gratitude: Honored to witness Biocon's excellence and hospitality.
- Excellence & Quality: Admired Biocon's world-class systems and culture.
- Learning & Innovation: Strong planning, digital leadership, and people practice.
- Atmosphere & Hospitality: Commended the care, warmth, and coordination.

Practices from Biocon That Participants Want to Adopt

- Quality & Compliance: Passion for quality, uniform standards, and regulatory discipline.
- Digitalization & Innovation: Full-scale digitization, data analytics, and LIMS adoption.
- People Practices: Diversity, return-to-work policies, and employee-first mindset.
- Continuous Improvement: 5S, Kaizen, DWM, and disciplined R&D approaches.
- Strategic Vision: Affordable innovation
- Sustainability & CSR: Water/energy conservation and infrastructure benchmarking.

Highlights from Participants – What They Liked Most at Biocon

- People, Passion & Culture: Pride, enthusiasm, and clarity in communication from teams.
- Quality & Excellence: Cleanliness, automation, digitization, & culture of relentless improvement.
- Infrastructure & R&D: State-of-the-art facilities and long-term investment in innovation.
- Leadership & Vision: From humble beginnings to a globally respected brand.
- Hospitality & Experience: Seamless event management and warm interactions.

Dr. Kiran Mazumdar Shaw's message on IFQM Mission

We are here on a collective mission to create a Quality label for our country. This mission is very important for all of us. We are "divided by the various kinds of Sectors we all come from, but united by Quality". Quality must grow in concentric circles; we start small, and it is our responsibility to continually expand the family further, building the nation on the platform of Quality. Concept of Shared Learning, Shared Values will build the Quality label for India further. I hope to see many more join this IFQM's mission.

Summary of address by other IFQM GC Members

Mr. K N Radhakrishnan, Director and CEO of TVS Motor Company, recognized the building of Biocon brand over time, its capability to cater to global markets, energy level of employees & innovation culture. He emphasized the importance of 'Skill + Will' for performance achievement. He appreciated Daily Work Management efforts, re-iterated importance of achieving results consistently starting from 1st hour of Monday every week and taking every function to higher levels of maturity. He said, a strong measurement system of customer satisfaction of key products and markets will support the Deming journey. He covered the importance of Kaizen participation by everyone including managers & supervisors which will have a compounding effect for the organization.

Mr. Salil Gupte, President, Boeing India, said, "Life depends on quality, and it has to be absorbed by each and every single person in the organization and it starts with the founder that we clearly see in Biocon". While visiting the facility and reviewing the projects, he shared, about one common question he had asked to all project leaders, "How did you set the target?" and the predominant response he received was, "our own absolute best performance, we ourselves raise the bar and we will do it again". Mr. Salil also conveyed that, "Most of the workforce in most companies now consists of Millennials and Gen-Z, and they want to see the meaning behind the work they do. I see a lot of clarity of purpose in Biocon."

Mr. T.V. Narendran, CEO and Managing Director, Tata Steel, shared his learning from the visit to Biocon, noting the importance of cross-industry knowledge sharing. He found the experience humbling and insightful, particularly as Tata Steel itself has adopted best practices from other sectors. His remarks underscored the idea that valuable quality practices can emerge from unfamiliar domains.

Mr. Vivek Chaand Sehgal, Chairman, Motherson Group, said, he is happy to contribute and be part of IFQM to build Brand India. Mr. Pankaj Mital, COO at Motherson, shared the flavour of Quality and Customer centricity of Motherson to Biocon leadership in the Utkarsh event.

Mr. J D Patil, Advisor (Defence & Smart Technologies) to the Chairman & Managing Director at L&T, shared his inspiring experience at Biocon, pointing out, if one stretches their mind to the level of imagination, they could achieve what is supposed to be achieved.

IFQM Website: <http://ifqm.org.in>

Biocon event microsite: <https://events.ifqm.org.in/5thCEOCXOLearningMissionatBiocon>

Few Pictures at a glance:



