

Organization Websites

Reporting Organization Website Information in the CMMI® Appraisal System

A website can be an invaluable tool when seeking insight into an organization. How a company positions itself in the marketplace and presents itself to potential customers helps speak to its maturity and legitimacy.

Accordingly, the CMMI Appraisal System (CAS) contains a reporting location for the appraised organization's URL in the "Organizational Info" tab. During appraisal reviews, Quality Management's request for accurate reporting has caused some Lead Appraisers (LAs) to question the value of this requirement. This month's Quality Tip aims to clarify the reason for and discuss common issues with reporting organizations' websites accurately in CAS.

Background and Purpose

When creating planning requirements for CMMI appraisals, the amount of thorough preparation performed by LAs for SCAMPI V1.3 appraisals was a highlighted area of concern. Input from the Appraisal Working Group and review of a sampling of submitted appraisal plans brought to light a need for CMMI appraisal plans to be robust. Additionally, because a standardized planning tool would be used across all appraisal deliveries, CMMI Institute was tasked with designing one appraisal plan that thoroughly encapsulated the data reported in a wide assortment of plans used by the LA community. A common data point provided in SCAMPI V1.3 plans was the appraised organization's web address. Therefore, this was incorporated into the development of the Microsoft Excel template used during manual appraisal reviews in 2019, and then later into the development of the new appraisal system.

Quality Management often does not have direct insight into an appraised organization; one way of attaining this information is through the organization's website. A website provides validity and legitimacy to the information entered in CAS. While it is not an MDD requirement for an organization to have a website, during appraisal planning, LAs should be ascertaining how the appraised organization markets its products or services and how it interacts with customers to understand the organizational context.

Commonly Encountered Issues and Scenarios with Reporting Web Information

LAs frequently report that appraised organizations do not have websites. While this is possible, it is highly unlikely that a mature organization would not have a web interface to interact with customers. If the organization truly does not have a website, detailed clarification should be provided in the appraisal plan describing how the organization interacts with its customers and markets its products and services in lieu of a website. Additionally, many LAs have indicated that the appraised organization does not have a website, but its parent company does. In this case, the parent company URL and a clarification in CAS should be included. Furthermore, many

organizations that do not have a traditional website could use alternative marketing and customer interaction platforms such as WeChat. If this is the case, the page name or link should be included, and the platform should be specified with a clarification in CAS.

In response to quality review flags highlighting the lack of website information, some organizations have created makeshift websites that lack details or are simply landing pages. This can be perceived as a potential attempt to bypass quality review and defeats the purpose of CMMI Institute's request for accurate reporting; this tactic should be questioned by the LA. Some organizations have also been reluctant to provide this information even though it is in the public domain. The website information listed in CAS does not appear on the Published Appraisal Results Site (PARS) and will not lead to any increase in web traffic; Quality Management simply uses the website to help understand the organizational context for the appraisal and to verify the authenticity of the data entered in CAS.

Questions regarding this Quality Tip can be sent to quality@cmmiinstitute.com.