

Want to excel in your business? Consider the Baldrige way!

Are you looking for proven methods to increase your business performance? Are you focusing on those key parts of your business needed for success? Do all employees understand your business and share a common focus?

If you seek success, desire a proven approach, and don't want to spend time re-inventing the wheel, let me recommend your serious consideration of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence as a vehicle to guide your strategies and actions.

The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award was created by Public Law on August 20, 1987. The award is named for Malcolm Baldrige, who served as U.S. Secretary of Commerce from 1981 until his tragic death in a rodeo accident in 1987. His managerial excellence contributed to long-term improvements in efficiency and effectiveness at the Commerce Department.

The Baldrige Criteria was initially developed to help U.S. businesses compete globally with respect to the quality of their products. Quickly, it evolved into a public/private partnership. In the years since its inception and in the obvious spirit of continuous improvement, **Baldrige has been transformed from a quality award into what I believe is a results-based business model for organizations that want to stay in business and excel!**

Businesses no longer have to wait and apply for an award to gain benefits from the Baldrige business model. Any size or type of business or organization can use the model to conduct an assessment as a source of information to determine strategies and actions. The benefits of assessment can be many:

- Solidify leadership focus and direction
- Improve communication and company-wide sharing
- Jump start change initiatives
- Energize improvement initiatives
- Focus people on common goals
- Make more informed decisions/choices about strategies
- Drive strategic plan development and/or implementation

Baldrige focuses on business results in five areas: **Customer; Financial and Market; Human Resource; Supplier and Partner; and overall Organization Effectiveness**. Baldrige does not prescribe procedures, tools or organization structure, it guides you to use a composite of indicators and measures intended to ensure your strategies are balanced among your important customers, stakeholders and employees for both short and long-term goals. Baldrige is based on the following set of interrelated values and concepts:

- Visionary leadership
- Customer-driven excellence
- Organization and personal learning
- Valuing employees and partners
- Agility
- Focus on the future
- Managing for innovation
- Management by fact
- Public responsibility and citizenship
- Focus on results and creating value
- Systems perspective

If you want to lead a great business, then learn more about the Baldrige business model by contacting the Governor's SC Quality Forum about an assessment for your business. Or, contact them if you are interested in being trained and certified to conduct assessments yourself as an Examiner, a great professional development strategy. To find out more, visit the web site at www.scquality.com. What have you got to lose?

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