



JOURNAL OF PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE

2021-2022

**BALDRIGE:
America's Best Investment!**





The Year in Review

by Al Faber
President and CEO, Baldrige Foundation

“An important part of the Foundation’s mission is promoting performance excellence in the United States and throughout the world. In furthering that mission over this past year, we strengthened several of our strategic partnerships and created new ones.”

As President and CEO of the Foundation for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, it is an honor to present this year’s *Journal of Performance Excellence*®.

This past year continued to challenge us in so many ways. With the Omicron variant infecting more Americans at a faster pace, organizations have been forced to re-think everything from supply chains and manufacturing through delivery systems and customer satisfaction. All the while, negotiating workforce and stakeholder stability, health, safety, and welfare in new ways. Yet, we are starting to lift mask mandates as more of the population becomes vaccinated and additional treatments become available. We have endured what is hopefully the worst and begun the process of recovery as we learn to live with COVID-19.

To all the dedicated volunteers, examiners, judges, state program leaders and their Boards, as well as the Baldrige Program Staff, thank you for another successful year filled with achievement and progress in pursuit of performance excellence. And to those in the greater Baldrige community—consultants, members of ASQ, and other Baldrige-based organizations like the American Health Care Association—thanks for your continued support and collaboration.

Continuing to adapt to the challenges of a virtual environment, the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (BPEP) had another successful year in FY2021. The Program well-managed

the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award process to include virtual site visits, delivering exceptional training experiences like virtual national examiner training, and the Executive Fellows program which the Foundation financially supported.

This year, numerous high-performing organizations applied for the nation’s highest honor for performance excellence and the only award for quality that carries the seal of the President of the United States. After a demanding and thorough analysis, three organizations emerged as national role-models and this year’s Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Winners:

- MidwayUSA, Columbia, MO. (service; also won in 2009 & 2015)
- Charter School of San Diego, San Diego, CA. (education; also won in 2015)
- Mid-America Transplant Services, St. Louis, MO. (nonprofit; also won in 2015)

Congratulations to each of these outstanding organizations!

ADVOCACY

Throughout FY2021, the Foundation continued to advance the Baldrige Program, State-based Programs, and Communities of Excellence 2026 (COE2026) with leaders at the national, state, and local levels. We are always looking for new opportunities to strengthen our relationships with members of the Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Subcommittees and their staffs in



Al Faber, Foundation President and CEO (right), delivers the Award for Leadership Excellence in Government to Chad Kreikemeier, Chief of Staff for U.S. Senator Jeanne Shaheen. During the COVID-19 Pandemic Senators mostly worked remotely from home.

both the House and the Senate. We provide members and their staffs with important updates and developments on the many benefits of Baldrige throughout the nation and across every sector of the economy and impress upon them the excitement behind Communities of Excellence 2026, Cybersecurity, and our continuing work in Rural Health Care. The Baldrige approach to workforce development in all sectors of the economy has resonated with political leaders at every level, reinforcing our contribution to a stronger and more resilient America. We continued our work with COE2026 and BPEP to coordinate support for “Community” to become the 7th Baldrige Awards Category through the NIST reauthorization language. In early February 2022, the House passed H.R. 4521, the America COMPETES Act of 2022 which contained language supporting “Community” becoming the 7th Category of Baldrige Awards. Now we will continue working with the U.S. Senate for matching language.

On Thursday, September 30, 2021, the Department of Commerce

launched the Job Quality Initiative. *“The Department of Commerce, along with White House and Labor Department, are trying to build a national dialogue about job quality to help guide federal spending—and to help businesses attract and retain workers,”* said Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo. *“The Department of Commerce brings some job quality expertise to the table through the Baldrige Performance Excellence program... Our goal is to leverage the Baldrige program’s expertise in developing high-performing organizations—and your knowledge—to create a Job Quality Framework and deploy it in a way that helps businesses assess and improve their own performance evaluations.”*

The Foundation looks forward to supporting the Baldrige Program and this new initiative in the coming year as it develops a practical Job Quality Framework for all sectors.

We continue to enjoy strong bipartisan support in the Senate from both Jeanne Shaheen as the Chair, and

Senator Jerry Moran, the ranking member of the CJS Subcommittee on Appropriations. Most notably, the entire subcommittee continues to support our efforts. This year, we had the honor of presenting the Baldrige Foundation Awards for Leadership Excellence in Government to Senators Shaheen and Moran, which had been delayed due to COVID-19 restrictions. Their leadership in rural health care, cybersecurity, veterans' issues, education, labor, and numerous other areas have made them two of the nation's most respected senators.

This year, we will be recognizing Dr. Walt Copan, former Under Secretary of Commerce for Standards and Technology; and Director, National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), with the 2022 Award for Leadership Excellence in Government. Walt was a true ambassador for the Baldrige program, using the Baldrige Framework with his senior leadership team at NIST, supporting the Baldrige Program in the federal budget, and raising the visibility of Baldrige within the federal government and across the United

States. Walt attended every Quest for Excellence® Conference, Board of Overseers Meetings, and Foundation Board Meetings each November. He supported Communities of Excellence 2026 becoming the 7th Baldrige Awards Category and championed performance excellence at every opportunity by showcasing the Baldrige Framework and Program.

As part of the Foundation's advocacy outreach, we track each state-based program's highest award recipients, send a letter of congratulations to each of them, and encourage them to apply at the national level. Additionally, we send letters of congratulations to both U.S. Senators, and their Congressional Representative so they are aware of these award-winning organizations. We also do this for national award recipients as well.

FUNDRAISING

Thanks to all our individual and organizational donors, sponsors, and partners over the past year who have helped us continue our mission to support the Baldrige Program and performance excellence in all sectors of the economy.



From right, Al Faber, Foundation President and CEO, delivers the Award for Leadership Excellence in Government to James Kelly, Chief of Staff and Judd Gardner, Legislative Director, for U.S. Senator Jerry Moran.



This year's giving campaigns, our *End-of-Year Campaign, Giving Tuesday, Planned Giving*, and growing membership in the *Mac Baldrige Society*, were extraordinarily successful and significantly exceeded our fiscal year goals for the second year in a row during this global pandemic.

No gift is too small, from individual gifts through online donations resulting from social media outreach to transformational gifts as we grow membership in the Mac Baldrige Society, collectively, we are all working to advance the Baldrige Framework and grow its use across the America and beyond. We are proud to showcase our FY2021-2022 donors on page 110 of this year's *Journal*.

On June 1, 2020, we established the Baldrige Foundation Institute for Performance Excellence. The Institute undertakes research projects, host conferences and other activities, and conducts executive-level and online skills training. It publishes and distributes a wide variety of educational materials including white papers and the *Chronicle of Leadership and Management* to help organizations and individuals improve their leadership and management skills.

The Institute also makes available exclusive curated and original content along with training and educational opportunities through online and classroom instruction. We have a best practice sharing online library and many other helpful resources, including instructional videos and webinars. The exclusive networking opportunities and sharing of best practices alone can provide organizations and their employees with invaluable assistance in pursuing their performance excellence goals.

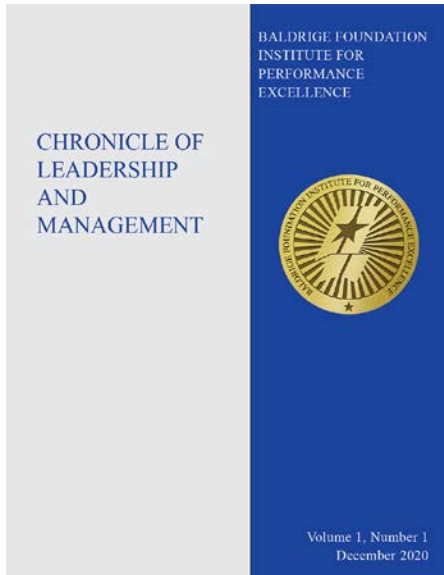
The Institute is helping the Foundation move boldly into the next era of Baldrige with great confidence in our

future, thanks to the support of our Institute Trustees who comprise the Mac Baldrige Society®. The Mac Baldrige Society is our campaign to establish the Institute with the generous support of the first twenty major donors who also serve as the Institute's Trustees. The first Institute Trustees are; the Baldrige Family, Adventist Health, MidwayUSA, and Stellar Solutions. Our newest members in 2021-2022 are ABOUT HealthCare and Freese and Nichols.

As Brian Coltharp, President and CEO of Freese and Nichols said in their press release "Our continuous improvement journey and our relationship with Baldrige began in the 1990s and since then has helped elevate our level of service to our clients, our employees, and our communities." According to Coltharp, "The Baldrige focus on building and maintaining long-term client relationships, ethical and fiscal accountability, disciplined strategic planning, as well as operational efficiency, aligns perfectly with our firm's values and culture. Those same practices also bring superior results to our clients and communities. Because of our first-hand knowledge of the benefits of the Baldrige Excellence Framework, we are proud to become a founding member of the Mac Baldrige Society."

Freese and Nichols Chairman Bob Pence was CEO when the firm won the Baldrige Award and later served on the Baldrige Board of Overseers. He noted, "We began weaving the Baldrige best practices into our operations and sales because we wanted to be a better, higher performing engineering firm for our clients and employees. As a result, we are able to provide innovative solutions to our customers, offer meaningful work for our staff, and help make our communities a better place to live. We have reaped tremendous rewards and growth by implementing those continuous improvement tenets in all that we do."

The Institute Trustees are making a commitment to preserve and promote the Baldrige Framework and to help ensure that Baldrige remains relevant for future generations of organizations across all sectors of the economy. My sincerest thanks to each of these organizations for their leadership, and we look for others to join them in the coming months to help us continue in our mission.



In addition to the many resources available through the Institute, we released its flagship publication, the *Chronicle of Leadership and Management*[®]. The second edition will be published later in this fiscal year. I would like to thank Dr. James Evans for volunteering to serve as the *Chronicle's* editor-in-chief. I also want to thank our editorial board for reviewing the numerous submissions we received. Dr. Evans has gathered a diverse group of Baldrige experts to assist him in determining the best articles to showcase in the *Chronicle*.

If Baldrige is to remain relevant and expand its reach, additional thought leadership in the domains of leadership and management will be required to inspire its

Our 2021 Individual Award Recipients are:

E. David Spong Lifetime Achievement Award

- Tommy Gonzalez, City Manager of the City of El Paso, Texas

Harry S. Hertz Leadership Award

- John B. Chessare, MD, MPH, FACHE, President and CEO, GBMC HealthCare in Baltimore, Maryland

2022 Award for Leadership Excellence recipients are:

- Bret Arsenault, Corporate Vice President and Chief Information Security Officer, Microsoft, in the Cybersecurity sector
- Robert Barnett, Executive Vice President (retired), Motorola, in the Business sector
- Honorable Walter G. Copan, Ph.D., Former Under Secretary of Commerce for Standards and Technology, and NIST Director; Currently Vice President for Research and Technology Transfer, Colorado School of Mines, in the Government sector
- Barbara Jenkins, Ed.D., Superintendent of Orange County Public Schools, in the Education sector
- John Kueven, FACHE, MSHA, MBA, RN; Senior Vice President and Hospital President at Wellstar Paulding and Wellstar Cobb Hospital, in the Health Care sector
- David L. Ramsey, President and CEO, Charleston Area Medical Center Health System, in the Health Care sector
- Grant Schneider, Senior Director of Cybersecurity Services, Venable LLP, in the Cybersecurity sector

- Susan Stuart, President and CEO of the Center for Organ Recovery & Education (CORE), in the Nonprofit sector
- Gregory J. Touhill, Director, the CERT Division, Software Engineering Institute, Carnegie Mellon University, in the Cybersecurity sector
- Jerry D. Weast, Ed.D., Founder and CEO, Partnership for Deliberate Excellence, LLC; Former Superintendent, Montgomery County (Maryland) Public Schools, in the Education sector
- Carol C. Wilson, M.Ed., Co-Founder & Executive Director of Alaska EXCEL, in the Education sector

Dr. Curt Reimann Baldrige Scholars are:

- Lauren Browning, Director of Training and Administration, South Charleston, Ohio
- Dr. Juan A. Delduarte, DBA - Global Supply Chain Management, Petersburg, Virginia



application in every sector of the economy. The Baldrige Foundation's Institute for Performance Excellence was created to serve as a platform for innovation, creative thought leadership, and to provide individual and organizational resources to support transformative adult learning and help elevate organization performance excellence. This philosophy guides the Foundation's staff and drives us to create opportunities for investment in our future as we work tirelessly to strengthen America's competitiveness in the global economy.

2021-2022 virtual training. The scholarship was created to recognize and honor the important role played by examiners in the Baldrige Award process.



**Role Model
Breaking the Mold**

"Michael is a role-model leader who has consistently over the years applied the principles of the Baldrige Framework to his leadership approach."
- Al Faber, President, Baldrige Foundation

Congratulations to Michael Ugwueke, our President and CEO, on receiving the Harry S. Hertz Leadership Award from the Baldrige Foundation. Thank you for being a steward of visionary leadership and unwavering commitment to our mission.



In 2021, Dr. Michael Ugwueke became the ninth recipient of the Harry S. Hertz Leadership Award. Since the Hertz award was established, we have grown our popular individual awards program which includes the E. David Spong Lifetime Achievement Award, the Foundation Awards for Leadership Excellence, and the Dr. Curt Reimann Baldrige Scholarship. The Baldrige Foundation Awards for Leadership Excellence recognize leaders in the Business (Manufacturing, Service, Small Business), Nonprofit, Government, Health Care, Education, and Cybersecurity sectors. The award recognizes leaders who provide exceptionally outstanding support to Baldrige and the Foundation's mission. The Dr. Curt Reimann Baldrige Scholarship provides recipients an opportunity to attend the Baldrige Examiner Training Experience, held each spring at NIST in Gaithersburg, MD, and in

PROMOTING PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE

An important part of the Foundation's mission is promoting performance excellence in the United States and throughout the world. In furthering that mission over this past year, we strengthened several of our strategic partnerships and created new ones.

Our partnerships with international organizations continue to grow through mutual support and engagement in a number of ways. I had the opportunity to serve as a guest speaker and panelist during several international conferences, and for the first time, we conducted skills training and certification for international stakeholders via Zoom.



On October 20, 2021, ABOUT Healthcare and the Baldrige Foundation's Institute for Performance Excellence announced a new initiative called LeaderDialogue, a collaborative partnership to support health care leaders with cutting-edge information and leading strategies to help them overcome the executive management challenges facing their organizations. ABOUT provides solutions for orchestrating patient access across the care continuum. Working with the Foundation, together we will provide Podcasts, Webinars, CEO Roundtable events both virtually and in-person, and CEO Innovation Council meetings. The LeaderDialogue program offers interactive forums for health care executives to discuss the challenges they face together, so they can share best practices and consider innovative approaches. ABOUT is a Mac Baldrige Society Member and Trustee of the Foundation's Institute for Performance Excellence.

As a member of the Board of Directors for the Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education (CAHME), I have the opportunity to network with health care professionals in higher education across the nation. In this role, we promote the Baldrige Framework with hundreds

of graduate programs and their students who are currently pursuing an advanced degree. As a judge for the Seton Hall University Case Competition this year, I witnessed first-hand how Master of Healthcare Administration programs across the United States are developing the future health care leaders of tomorrow. Exposing them to the Baldrige Framework now is an investment that will pay great dividends down the road.

In 2021, I was asked to facilitate a board strategy session at the National Center for Healthcare Leadership (NCHL). NCHL is a Chicago-based, 501(c)(3) nonprofit that "promotes evidence-based leadership and organizational best practices within the health care space. It is dedicated to advancing health care leadership and organizational excellence by building diverse, inclusive, and collaborative relationships in the United States and abroad." NCHL and CAHME are both Baldrige Health Care Criteria Sponsors for the 2020-2021 Frameworks.

The Foundation's Institute for Performance Excellence is a thought leader on performance excellence, leadership, and management. In carrying out our mission, we strive to share best practices in a variety



of ways. Special interest webinars addressing contemporary issues have grown especially popular this year given the demand for online knowledge sharing.

Our portfolio of online courses continues to grow with the addition of self-paced certification programs like:

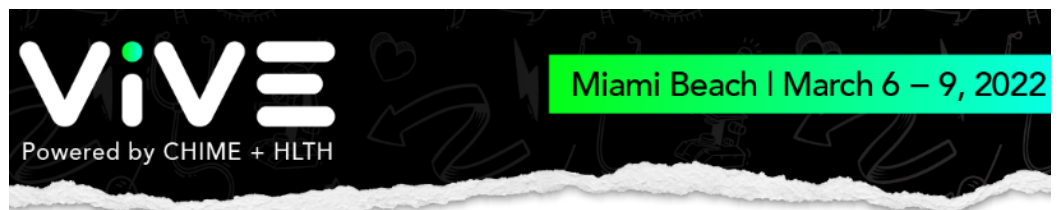
- Certified Lean Healthcare Professional
- Lean Practitioner
- Process Improvement Specialist
- Agile Professional
- Supply Chain Management

In addition to these courses, we now offer a “Mastering Strategy in Healthcare Certification Program.” This program is sponsored by the Baldrige Foundation and offered in association with the George Washington University’s Center for Excellence in Public Leadership, part of the College of Professional Studies. The program is delivered in a live-online format (via Zoom) for ten half-days by our training partners at LBL Strategies.

We celebrated a second year with our co-branded cybersecurity awards in health care along with the College of Healthcare Information Management Executives (CHIME). Digital Health Most Wired recognition is the new standard for IT recognition throughout hospitals and hospital systems across

the nation. This achievement celebrates and validates an organization’s dedication to patient and community focused Digital Health. They have proven their commitment to leading performance excellence and pioneering advancements in the health care industry. Baldrige was established to help organizations improve in a meaningful and structured way. This is why the Baldrige Foundation is partnering with CHIME on the Digital Health Most Wired program. Together, we have worked to transform the entire survey, results, and recognition program to mirror the Baldrige program’s improvement Framework. More than 30,000 organizations were surveyed, benchmarked, and ranked, resulting in 65 organizations setting themselves apart on their excellence journey to achieve the highest-level of recognition.

The Foundation was also proud to sponsor ViVE, a conference that merges the leadership of CHIME and the digital marketplace of HLTH to create a technology event focused on the business of transformation in health care—bringing together C-suite executives, senior digital health leaders and buyers, health startups and investors, government and solution providers. ViVE creates an immersive environment for interactive learning, idea generation and collaboration for the digital health community to come together to advance health care.



SPONSOR

**WE'RE EXCITED
TO SPONSOR
#ViVE2022!**

We continue to support Communities of Excellence 2026 and its great work across the nation in its pilot communities. If we have learned anything over the past two years, it is the value of community solutions to help solve the most complex challenges, and the need for leaders from every sector to come together and develop strategies to continuously improve their communities by leveraging their unique strengths. Based on what we have learned, we are working tirelessly to get Congressional approval for "Community" to become the seventh category of the Baldrige Awards.



We welcomed a new Foundation Board member this year, Karen Morrison. Karen serves as President, External Affairs and Senior Vice President of OhioHealth in Columbus, Ohio. She has been with OhioHealth for over thirty years serving as a health care executive, attorney and lobbyist currently leading the enterprise strategy for external relations including community relations, corporate reinvestment, community health and wellness, and government affairs. She manages the local, state, and federal advocacy strategy for the enterprise

and is an experienced leader in health care public policy. In her role as the OhioHealth Foundation president, Ms. Morrison provides executive fundraising leadership to advance the philanthropic mission of the enterprise and she oversees all aspects of the Foundation's strategic operations. We look forward to Karen's leadership on our Board.

In summary, fiscal year 2021 proved to be another challenging, yet successful year for the Baldrige Program, Foundation, and State-Based Programs. With a strong commitment to our mission and strategy, we continue to grow fundraising opportunities and strengthen the Baldrige brand. The Foundation's operational costs remained under budget, demonstrating our responsible stewardship of the Foundation's endowment and commitment to sustainability. Together, along with the Foundation's Board of Directors, we navigated another tumultuous year dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure a bright future for the Foundation, and the Institute for Performance Excellence.

On behalf of the Foundation's Board of Directors and staff, I wish to once again thank all the dedicated men and women across America who volunteer and support this great program. The Baldrige Excellence Framework continues to keep our nation on the leading edge of validated management best practices, and competitive in the global economy, returning enormous benefit to all U.S. citizens.

After three decades, Baldrige continues to be America's Best Investment!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Al Faber". The signature is fluid and cursive.





CONTENTS

The Year in Review	1
Baldrige Insights from the Foundation Board Chair	12
Thank You to Our 2021 Quest Sponsors	15

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2020 MALCOLM BALDRIGE NATIONAL QUALITY AWARDS RECIPIENTS

Overview	16
AARP	18
Elevations Credit Union	20
GBMC HealthCare	22
MESA	24
Wellstar Paulding Hospital	26
Mac Baldrige Society	30
Institute for Performance Excellence	40
Call for Papers	41
Communities of Excellence 2026	48
The Alliance for Performance Excellence	58
Baldrige History	62

BALDRIGE FOUNDATION AWARDS

Overview	70
The E. David Spong Lifetime Achievement Award	73
The Harry S. Hertz Leadership Award	74
Foundation Awards for Leadership Excellence	76
The Dr. Curt Reimann Baldrige Scholarship	82
Baldrige Performance Excellence Program	85
Economic Impact	90
Small Business Impact	92
Health Care Impact	98
Education Impact	104
2021 Donor and Supporter Honor Roll	110



3

MEET THE NEW BOARD MEMBER

- John Raffoul 28
- Karen Morrison 32

INSIGHTS FROM BALDRIGE LEADERS

- Gerry Agnes 34
- John B. Chessare 38
- Jo Ann Jenkins 46
- John Kueven 56
- Terry May 60



50



71



72



73



74

The Foundation would like thank the staff at the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program for their assistance in creating and curating much of the content of this collection. Thanks to the Alliance for Performance Excellence and Communities of Excellence 2026 for their important contributions to this work. We also want to acknowledge Mark Hamilton and Hamilton Studios for many of the images used here. Thanks also to Rebecca McQuigg of Encompass Media Group for her great skill and vision that guided the design and layout of the Journal.

Editor: Mark Wayda

BLOGRIGE POSTS

- Agile May Be Fragile; Resilience Is the Goal 36
- Governance Boards' 2021 Challenges and Focus 42
- Experienced Baldrige Examiners Share Learning with "Younger Selves" 53
- Nurses Continue to Show Up—and Aspire to Excellence 67
- Hertz Has a Better Razor 83
- Truly and Virtually Inspiring: The First Virtual Quest for Excellence Conference 95
- A Time for G*R*A*C*E 101
- Six Cybersecurity Tips to Protect Your Business 107



Leading into the New Future

by Kathryn K. Eggleston, Ph.D.
President, Dallas College Richland Campus

“The Institute continues to expand its training offerings and partner services through a variety of formats. Its programs are accessible through webinars and podcasts, in CEO roundtables, and in programs for industry-recognized certifications, through which the Institute is helping to build future institutional capacity and capability for all.”

We have much to celebrate as we gather in-person to honor three years of Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award recipients at the Quest for Excellence Awards Ceremony. Congratulations to these exemplary organizations!

The Baldrige Foundation will also honor thirteen individuals during the Foundation’s Awards Program for their leadership excellence. Each of these individuals has demonstrated a significant and lasting impact through service and leadership in advancing the Foundation’s mission, the sustainability of Baldrige, and performance excellence practices in their respective sectors of the U.S. economy.

The Foundation will also name two recipients of the Dr. Curt Reimann Scholarship program. Their participation in Baldrige Examiner Training will help build next generation Baldrige leaders.

For more than 30 years, Baldrige continues to create value through research and deployment of cutting-edge management practices. Our successes and challenges continue to inspire our mission.

The Mac Baldrige Society Institute Trustees

The Baldrige Foundation is pleased to welcome Freese and Nichols (Texas) as the newest Mac Baldrige Society Institute Trustee. Freese and Nichols will now join with ABOUT HealthCare, Adventist Health, the

Baldrige Family, MidwayUSA, and Stellar Solutions in contributing at the highest levels of donor support.

The Foundation directors thank each of these exceptional organizations for their continuing support as transformational-level donors. Their financial support of the Baldrige Foundation makes it possible to deepen our promotion of performance excellence in all sectors of the economy.

The Mac Baldrige Trustees represent years of dedicated association with Baldrige or with other leadership organizations that bring added value and success synergy to the Baldrige



Dr. Eggleston celebrating the recipients of the 2017 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Awards, April 10, 2018.

enterprise. Can we inspire you to join them? The Foundation has a goal to secure twenty Trustee members over the next two years. Help us achieve this goal by becoming a Trustee member, and through your expressions of appreciation to the trustee organizations for their exceptional donor engagement and support.

The Institute for Performance Excellence

The Institute for Performance Excellence was created by the Baldrige Foundation to serve as a platform for communication, education, and innovation, with a focus on the continuously evolving work settings in which practitioners and educators engage. Growth of the Foundation's Institute for Performance Excellence is a strategic priority goal.

The Institute continues to expand its training offerings and partner services through a variety of formats. Its programs are accessible through webinars and podcasts, in CEO roundtables, and in programs for industry-recognized certifications, through which the Institute is helping to build future institutional capacity and capability for all.

We invite your organization to join in becoming an Institute partner. Employees of partner organizations receive access to significant benefits to strengthen their individual professional development. Plan to take advantage of the Institute's high quality and cutting-edge programs, certification courses, and the latest thought-leader perspectives published in its *Chronicle of Leadership and Management*.



Foundation Chair Dr. Kay Eggleston, Ph.D., with Bob Fangmeyer, Director of the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, at the Baldrige Foundation Leadership Awards luncheon, April 9, 2019.

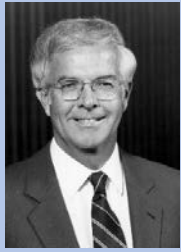
Enduring Strength through Baldrige

We are excited to invite all of you to join with us in advocacy for building enduring strength through Baldrige as we lead into the new future. Leaders who personify and inspire the value of the Baldrige Excellence Framework will become the newest class of role-model organizations and exemplars of inspired leadership, through their ability to navigate uncertainty with bold direction, take decisive actions, anticipate course corrections, and achieve high levels of successful outcomes over time, in their organizations, and beyond.

Thank you for your continued support of this pivotal work ahead!



**THE FOUNDATION FOR THE MALCOLM BALDRIGE NATIONAL QUALITY AWARD, INC.
BOARD OF DIRECTORS PRESIDENTS & CHAIRPERSONS**



1988
Sanford McDonnell
Chairman Emeritus
McDonnell Douglas
Corporation



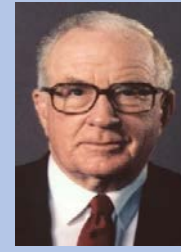
1989
John J. Hudiburg
Chairman
Florida Power and
Light Company



1990
John A. Young
President & CEO
Hewlett-Packard
Company



1991
John C. Marous, Jr.
Chairman & CEO
Westinghouse



1992
Roger Milliken
Chairman & CEO
Milliken & Company



1993
James R. Houghton
Chairman & CEO
Corning Incorporated



1994
Paul A. Allaire
Chairman & CEO
Xerox Corporation



1995
Robert E. Allen
Chairman & CEO
AT&T



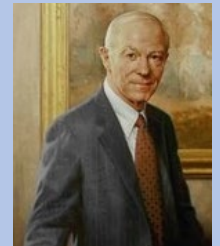
1996
Jerry Junkins
President & CEO
Texas Instruments,
Incorporated



1996-1997
**Earnest W.
Deavenport**
Chairman & CEO
Eastman Chemical
Company



1998-1999
Roger G. Ackerman
President & CEO
Corning



1999-2000
James L. Broadhead
CEO
Florida Power & Light



2000-2001
Dr. Michael B. Wood
CEO
Mayo Foundation



2001-2002
Richard Norling
President & CEO
Premier, Inc.



2002-2003
Richard K. Davidson
President
Union Pacific
Corporation



2003-2004
John A. White, Ph.D.
Chancellor
University of Arkansas



2004-2006
Dale Crownover
President
Texas Nameplate



2006-2008
E. David Spong, Sc.D.
President, Aerospace &
IDS Support (Ret)
The Boeing Company



2009-2010
Joe Alexander, Ph.D.
Associate Dean & Sr
Prof Performance
Excellence
Belmont University



2011-2012
Debbie Collard
Director, Business Ops
& Business Programs
The Boeing Company



2013-2019
P. George Benson, Ph.D.
President (former)
College of Charleston



2020-Present
Kathryn Eggleston, Ph.D.
President
Richland College





THANK YOU TO OUR 2021 QUEST SPONSORS

The 32nd Quest for Excellence[®] Conference, originally scheduled for March 24-27, 2020, was postponed until 2021 due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Because the pandemic had failed to abate significantly in the ensuing year, the decision was made to hold the postponed conference virtually. Dawn Bailey of the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program wrote in the Blogrige entry of March 11, 2021:

“A silver lining of 2020 is that organizations had to not just explore technology and virtual options but to go all-in for meetings and conferences to ensure continuous education and connections. The Baldrige Program has been no different, especially given the portion of its mission to provide global leadership in the learning and sharing of successful strategies and performance practices, principles, and methodologies.”

“For the first time in 33 years, the Baldrige Quest for Excellence Conference[®] is going virtual to keep that sharing going. An all-virtual conference—April 12–15, 2021—offers unique benefits for attendees, speakers, and participants, such as more time to access the presentations and cost savings for many attendees. The conference even includes the bonus of introducing two years of new recipients.”

The Foundation would like to add its thanks for the generosity and understanding of the 2021 Quest sponsors which braved the new virtual world to continue to support the premier showcase of current and former Baldrige Award recipients. In alphabetical order, we recognize the 2021 Quest sponsors!

Adventist Health



Alamo Colleges District



The Baldrige Family



Baldrige Institute for Performance Excellence



Charleston Area Medical Center



Dallas College – Richland College



Donor Alliance



Elevations Credit Union



Lulu Process Design Group



Mid-America Transplant



MidwayUSA



Stellar Solutions, Inc.



Tri County Tech



Walden University



Wellstar Paulding Hospital



Yuma Regional Medical Center



The next Quest for Excellence[®] conference is scheduled for April 2-5, 2023, in National Harbor, Maryland. To demonstrate your support for performance excellence as a Quest sponsor, please contact Josh Racette at 614-785-0214 or jracette@baldrigefoundation.org.



2020 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Recipients

COVID-19 was once again the story of the National Quality Award ceremony in 2020 as the 32nd Quest for Excellence[®] conference, which is typically opened by the ceremony presenting the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Awards, was held virtually. The five role-model organizations recognized in 2020, along with the six award recipients from 2019, attended virtually and shared their best practices over the course of several days. The virtual Quest, which ran from April 12-15, 2021, featured twelve former Baldrige Award recipients and included interactive sessions.

Counting the five winners in 2020, there have been a total of 134 Baldrige Awards presented over 33 years to 123 organizations (including ten two-time and one three-time repeat recipients).

Originally, Congress authorized the awards to be presented in three sectors, Manufacturing, Service, and Small Business. Eligibility for the award was expanded in 1998 to include Education and Health

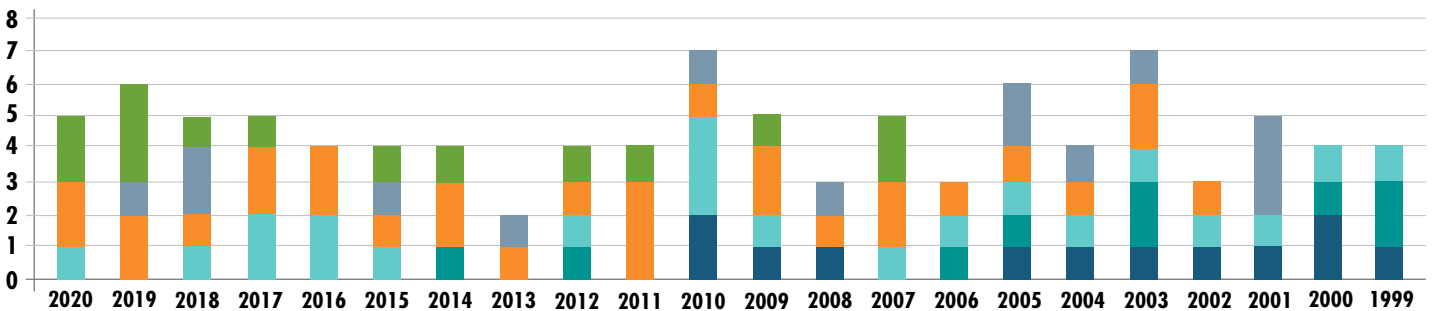
Care, and again in 2007 to include Nonprofit or Government organizations. The Manufacturing sector has the largest number of award recipients all time with over 23 percent of the awards, but since Congress added the new sectors in 1998, Health Care has dominated all recipients, with Small Business still second, edging out the Nonprofit/Government sector.

There were five recipients in 2020, one from the Small Business sector, two from the Health Care sector, and two from the Nonprofit/Government sector.

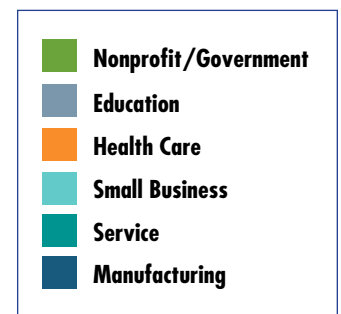
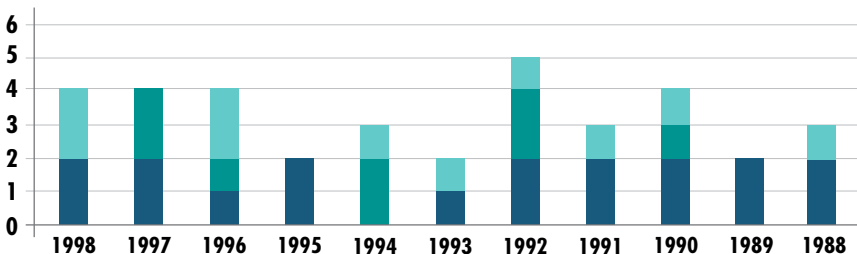
The 2020 Baldrige Award recipients are:

- AARP, Washington, D.C. (Nonprofit)
- Elevations Credit Union, Boulder, Colorado Tennessee (Nonprofit)
- GBMC HealthCare, Baltimore, Maryland (Health Care)
- MESA, Tulsa, Oklahoma (Small Business)
- Wellstar Paulding Hospital, Hiram, Georgia (Health Care)

BALDRIGE NATIONAL QUALITY AWARD RECIPIENTS BY SECTOR



CONGRESS AUTHORIZES THE HEALTH CARE AND EDUCATION SECTORS IN 1998, NONPROFIT/GOVERNMENT IN 2007



Since 1999, 29.3 percent of Baldrige Award recipients have been in the Health Care sector, and 14.1 percent have been from the Education sector. Since 2007, 22.2 percent of Baldrige Award recipients have been from the Nonprofit/Government sector.



Baldrige Foundation Board of Directors

*January 1, 2021 through
December 31, 2021*

Officers

Al Faber, President and CEO
Kathryn Eggleston, Ph.D., Chair
Rulon Stacey, Ph.D., Vice Chair
Russ Branzell, Secretary
Frank Fusco, Treasurer
P. George Benson, Ph.D., Immediate Past Chair

Directors

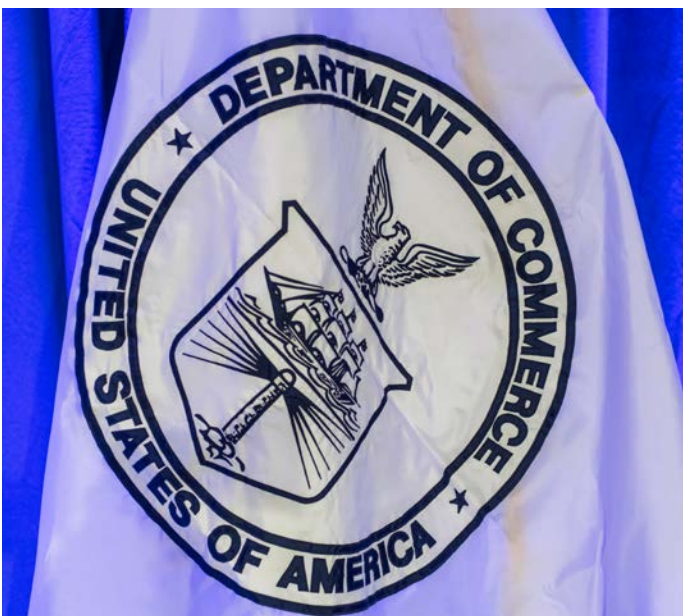
Diane Brockmeier
David Gifford, MD, MPH
Lowell C. Kruse
Scott McIntyre
Karen Morrison
John Raffoul
Tony Scott
Sunil Sinha
E. David Spong, D.Sc.

Honorary Director

Malcolm B. Hollensteiner, CMB

Ex Officio Directors

Robert Fangmeyer
Harry Hertz, Ph.D.
Brian Lassiter
Jim Templin





AARP Washington, D.C.

AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering people 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. With a nationwide presence and nearly 38 million members, AARP strengthens communities and advocates for what matters most to families: health security, financial stability, and personal fulfillment.

AARP has doubled the reach of its work to improve lives for people over age 50 and their families, from 32 million people in 2015 to more than 60 million in 2019. Since 2017, AARP has invested \$450,000 in startup companies pursuing novel products and services through its Innovation Labs. It has also been recognized as a "Top Workplace" by The Washington Post, and AARP *The Magazine* has been the most widely read publication in the nation for three years in a row according to market research firm Gfk MRI.

- In 2018, AARP established the AARP Brain Health Fund to accelerate research into cures for all types of dementia, including Alzheimer's. The fund was launched with a \$60 million investment in the Dementia Discovery Fund.
- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the organization launched AARP Community Connections, an online platform that served more than 470,000 users and helped create nearly 800 mutual aid groups in communities nationwide in its first five months of operation in 2020.
- In 2015, AARP's senior leaders initiated a transformation in the work of the Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit, which has a network of thousands of volunteers who are involved in activities coordinated by the organization's state offices. The leadership's aim was to increase AARP's impact on the lives of people age 50-plus and their families throughout the United States. Results for two key performance indicators, "Lives impacted through advocacy" and "Lives impacted through programs," indicate that AARP has succeeded so far in doubling the reach of its work to impact lives from 32 million people in 2015 to more than 60 million in 2019.
- Using integrated tools and processes, senior leaders drive strategic actions to achieve AARP's social mission: to help people over age 50 to turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, to strengthen communities, and to fight for the issues that matter most to families, such as health care, employment security, and retirement planning. For example, the Enterprise Strategy Map links the organization's purpose "to empower people to choose how they live as they age" with strategic priorities and performance objectives at every level of the organization.
- AARP created the \$40 million AARP Innovation Fund, a first-of-its-kind investment fund that provides capital to innovative companies focused on improving the lives of the 50-plus and their families. There have been nine investments since the fund was launched in 2015.
- To advance knowledge and capabilities needed by its workforce in the future, AARP leaders have guided a strategic transformation throughout the organization in recent years. This enabled the workforce to quickly, seamlessly, and securely transition to a teleworking environment in response to COVID-19.
- In 2019 and 2020, AARP was named one of the "World's Most Ethical Companies" by the Ethisphere Institute, which since 2007 has honored purpose-driven companies committed to ethical business conduct and to improving the communities they serve.
- Results for readership of AARP's publications have sustained high levels that exceed national comparisons. In contrast to other major publications' declining readership in recent years, AARP *The Magazine* has been the most widely read publication in the nation for three years in a row.





Elevations Credit Union Boulder, Colorado

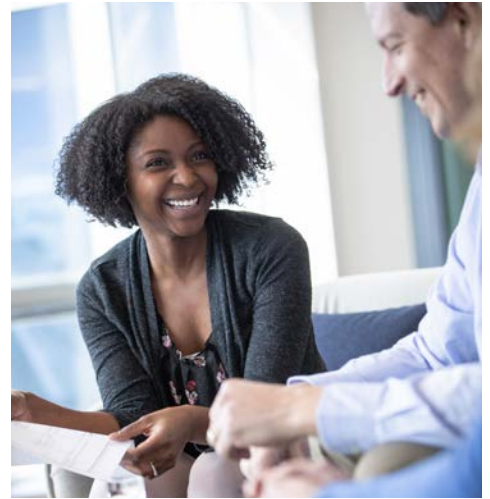
Elevations Credit Union empowers its members and the communities it serves along Colorado's Front Range with financial solutions and education. In addition to offering a broad portfolio of consumer and business banking services, Elevations is the No. 1 credit union mortgage lender in Colorado. This member-owned, nonprofit financial institution serves more than 147,000 members via 14 branches. With assets of over \$2.7 billion and more than 560 employees, it serves members in Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, Douglas, El Paso, Jefferson, Larimer, and Weld counties, Colorado.

Elevations Credit Union won a Baldrige Award in 2014 and is the first two-time winner in the nonprofit category. An assessment by the American Credit Union Mortgage Association ranked Elevations as No. 11 out of the top 300 credit unions in the nation, outpacing both its asset size, which ranks No. 127 out of 300, and its ability to lend only in Colorado versus other lenders that cross state lines. In spring 2020, Elevations ranked in the top 95 percent of U.S. organizations for overall employee engagement based on the Gallup Q12 survey.

- To measure whether it is delivering on its Member Value Proposition (building long-term relationships and deep mutual trust with members by acting in their best interest), Elevations uses Net Promoter Score (NPS), a rigorous measure of customer engagement where a score over 50 is considered excellent. In its market in 2018 and 2019, Elevations outperformed large competitors, such as Bank of the West, US Bank, Key Bank, and Chase, with scores ranging from about 60 to 80. At the end of 2019, Elevations reached the 75th percentile for NPS relative to Member Loyalty Group's national peer benchmark.
- To continue building relationships and trust during the COVID-19 pandemic, Elevations tailored its approaches to members' new needs. For example, while branches were closed due to state mandates, senior citizens could walk in without appointments. During lockdowns, branch employees called members to ask about their welfare, with some members noting that the Elevations employee was the only person they had spoken with since the beginning of the lockdown.

Elevations also offered loan, mortgage, and credit card payment deferments to members.

- Elevations stimulates innovation by identifying strategic opportunities during strategic planning, along with strategic advantages and challenges that help identify areas for innovation. These opportunities leverage the Innovation Plan, which has three avenues: (1) an Employee Innovation Forum, (2) Innovation Workshops for individuals, and (3) Test and Learn experiments.
- Elevations' pull-through rate (the percentage of loan applications carried through to funded status) has exceeded 88 percent since 2015, better than the Mortgage Bankers' Association 75th percentile. In addition, the cycle time from application to approval decreased from 35 days in 2015 to 27 days in mid-2020.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, Elevations quickly pivoted to maintaining services in the face of lockdowns, keeping its workforce and members safe, and establishing processes to serve as an intermediary for federal Paycheck Protection Program funds for businesses.
- From 2015 to 2019, Elevations doubled the number of K-12 students reached in its youth financial literacy program (to about 3,500); the number of free educational seminars offered (to about 175); and the amount of scholarships provided (to more than \$100,000). Reduction in the amount of eco-cycle materials (e.g., greenhouse gas emissions, toxic air pollutants, water pollution) also doubled over this period.
- Elevations Credit Union and its members proudly support Elevations Foundation, an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that was established in 2010. Over the last decade, Elevations Foundation has provided \$1.97 million in scholarship funds for local students, community grants for local nonprofit organizations, and emergency assistance for flood victims, wildfire victims, and community organizations. Every two years, Elevations Foundation conducts a community needs assessment to ensure that its support resources are being used wisely.

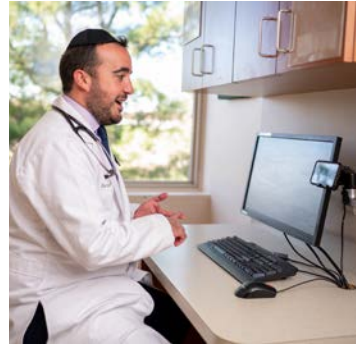




GBMC HealthCare Baltimore, Maryland

GBMC HealthCare (GBMC) provides inpatient and outpatient care through the Greater Baltimore Medical Center, an acute care community hospital, and GBMC Health Partners, which includes 43 primary and specialty care medical practices; and Gilchrist which provides advanced care, elder care, post-acute care, and in-home and facility hospice, as well as inpatient hospice in three locations. With a net patient revenue of \$581 million and a workforce of 4,388 employees and 1,140 volunteers, GBMC has a main hospital campus in Towson, MD; 32 of its GBMC Health Partners practices on the main campus and 11 in Baltimore City and county; and one inpatient hospice on the main campus, one in Baltimore City, and one in Columbia, MD.

- GBMC has achieved a 5-star rating (the highest) from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.
- GBMC demonstrates industry-leading and benchmark performance, with 100 percent of stroke patients receiving antithrombotic therapy at discharge, 100 percent of high-risk mothers receiving antenatal steroids, and 100 percent of patients receiving combination chemotherapy for breast cancer.
- The Nurse Residency Program is one of only 61 worldwide to achieve accreditation with distinction. Since 2017, first-year turnover for nurses decreased from about 27 percent to less than 15 percent, achieving performance in the top 10 percent of national hospitals.
- All members of GBMC's senior leadership team are active participants in Lean Daily Management, through which senior leaders visit all hospital units, hospices, and medical practices to have frank, two-way discussions with front-line leaders and staff regarding their performance against GBMC's Four Aims of better health, better care, least waste, and more joy. The discussions, which are aided by the use of visual display boards showing the unit's progress against the aims, move improvement to the top of the local leader's agenda.
- GBMC's rating for communication with doctors has consistently been in the top 10 percent of national hospitals, and its emergency department rating for physician took time to listen is approaching top-10 percent performance. Its hospice CAHPS rating for recommend this hospice is currently approaching the national 90 percent best, outperforming the closest competitor at under 80 percent.
- GBMC quickly responded to patient needs during the COVID-19 crisis. It capitalized on technology to offer telemedicine visits (over 10,000 so far), which continue being offered based on patient feedback. The hospital also opened a COVID-19 testing center with a centralized drive-through. It put policies in place to keep patients and families safe, including temperature checks and health screenings for visitors, requirements of masks and social distancing, and extensive cleaning of facilities. Employees use technology to enable patients to communicate with their loved ones.
- In response to COVID-19, the organization immediately addressed childcare needs, emotional and financial support, and preservation of time-off benefits. The organization minimized furloughs for its employees during the COVID-19 crisis and instead implemented an alternative workforce solution center to retrain and redeploy staff.
- In 2017, GBMC transformed its data and information systems by converting to an enterprise-wide medical record system (using a third-party product). GBMC has been awarded a 10 Gold Star Status, which places it in the top 1 percent of all the product's users in the country. GBMC was also recently honored with the Davies Award by the Health Care Information and Management Systems Society for being among national health care organizations with the highest access to information. It is the only health system in Maryland that has achieved this award and one of only 11 worldwide in 2019.
- In order to provide a safe operating environment and to ensure that the organization is prepared for disasters and emergencies, GBMC utilizes a six-step Healthcare Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). During COVID-19, the EOP was activated, resulting in staff feeling educated, safe, and supported, and having the tools they needed to do their jobs. Senior leaders appointed a command team in mid-February before the situation became a national crisis. The Federal Emergency Management Agency Hospital Incident Command System is used to manage all internal activities, action plans, resources, and education, as well as to coordinate efforts with county, state, and federal agencies.



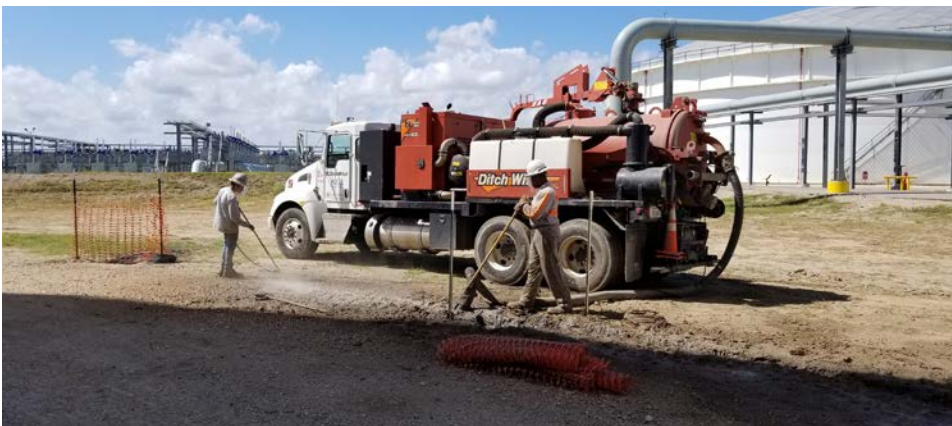
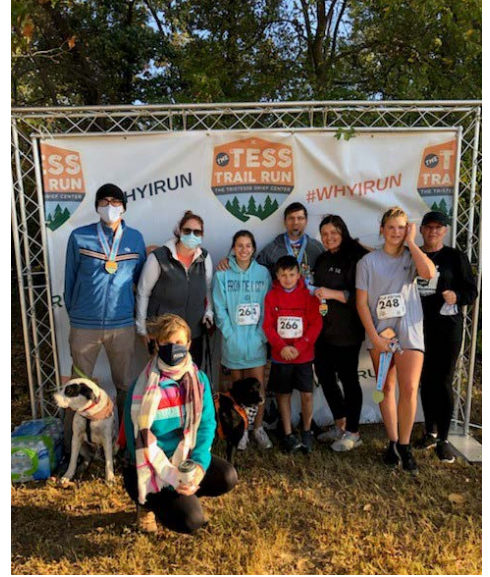


MESA Tulsa, Oklahoma

MESA provides products and services to control or prevent corrosion and/or to maintain the structural integrity of assets, which are primarily steel pipelines, storage, and processing facilities supporting the nation's energy infrastructure. Products and services are mostly related to an electrochemical form of corrosion control called cathodic protection (CP). With 2019 revenue of \$90 million and a workforce of 260 employees, MESA is headquartered in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

MESA won Baldrige Awards in 2006 and 2012 and is the first three-time winner of the award. The company's overall revenue has grown nearly \$30 million since 2015, with the company achieving a 10 percent average annual revenue growth since embarking on its Baldrige journey in 2002. MESA, which specializes in controlling corrosion in pipelines and related equipment, has retained 100 percent of key customers in its services segment since 2018 and 97 percent of key customers in its materials segment since 2017. In addition, 95 percent of employees agree that the safety culture is a top organizational priority, and 94 percent of employees consider themselves highly engaged.

- New market growth has increased from \$14 million in 2018 to \$16 million in 2019. MESA's cumulative growth relative to competitors has improved 40 percent over five years, with growth outpacing five separate competitors.
- MESA's overall revenue per employee has exceeded multiple benchmarks since 2016, improving from about \$320,000 in 2014 to \$370,000 in 2019, nearly \$100,000 more than a competitive benchmark.
- MESA has retained 100 percent of key customers in its Services segment since 2018 and 97 percent of key customers in its Materials segment from 2017 to 2019.
- MESA cultivates a family-like, community culture called ONEMESA, in which the workforce views success as a single team working closely together with integrity. That approach embodies servant-based leadership principles while focusing the organization on profitability and excellence; employees can share in the profits, and the workforce is supported in being entrepreneurial.
- Since 2017, according to Employee Engagement Survey results, more than 85 percent of the workforce feel that they are part of a team and MESA has a culture of integrity. Other survey results exceed benchmarks for "I am contributing to MESA's Purpose" and "There is a culture of respect."
- Results from the 2020 Employee Engagement Survey show that 90 percent of the workforce recognizes safety as part of MESA's culture. The objective of world-class safety is woven into the MESA culture and supports the Purpose to deliver safe, innovative solutions for the protection of people, property, and the planet. Every work process is embedded with a safety focus and a priority to protect the public and MESA's employees, and every meeting starts with a safety moment. Safety is an identified workforce, subcontractor, and customer requirement. A safety team is responsible for creating preventive programs and tracking leading indicators.
- As a strategic priority, diversity and inclusion are embedded in MESA's culture, workforce and leadership processes and policies, and actions. Cycles of learning led to Principle Moment discussions at meetings, and a diversity and inclusion (D&I) initiative led to changes in communication styles and awareness of the importance of D&I conversations to shape the desired culture.
- Reinforcing its principle of valuing people, MESA responded quickly to the COVID pandemic by offering a Pandemic Bonus, Pandemic Pay Program, and generous leave options, as well as committing to no layoffs. Senior leaders prioritized workforce safety by providing transparent communication; implementing temperature checks and mask requirements; providing guidance for safe practices; deploying personal protective equipment crew kits; and making values-based decisions while balancing the needs of the business, the workforce, customers, and communities.
- Average customer satisfaction for services has trended at more than 4.5 out of 5 since 2017. Customer satisfaction correlated with engagement for services and materials has been sustained at 100 percent from 2017 through 2019, exceeding competitor benchmarks since 2015. MESA's 2019 customer satisfaction index rating outperformed the American Customer Satisfaction Index benchmark by 15 percent.





Wellstar Paulding Hospital Hiram, Georgia

Wellstar Paulding Hospital (WPH) is a community hospital providing inpatient and outpatient care and emergency services through an acute care hospital and two connected medical office buildings. It is part of Wellstar Health System (WHS), one of the largest and most integrated health systems in Georgia. WPH has a net patient revenue of \$160 million and a workforce of 997 employees (742 clinical, 255 non-clinical/support), 400 physicians, and 105 volunteers.

Wellstar Paulding Hospital sustained top 10 percent performance for its mortality index and for its inpatient complications index within the national IBM Watson Health 100 Top Hospitals® index. It is also in the top 10 percent in the nation for a sustained pressure ulcer rate of zero. For several key measures of inpatient and outpatient engagement, WPH has achieved top 10 percent performance in the nation and rates in the top 100 of 1,800 organizations in all industries for team member engagement based on the Great Place to Work® Trust Index® survey results.

- From FY18 to FY20, outpatient performance for “doctors courteous and respectful” increased from 87 percent to 99 percent, “nurses listened carefully” from 87 percent to 92 percent, and “trust staff with care” from 87 percent to 91 percent, matching the NRC (National Research Corporation) 90th percentile benchmark.
- Within the national IBM Watson Health Top 100 Hospitals® index, WPH sustained top 10 percent performance for its mortality index (the number of actual deaths in a group of patients by the total number of patients) from 2017 through 2020 (year to date [YTD]), improving from 0.56 in 2017 to 0.44 in 2019 and increasing to only 0.63 in 2020 (YTD) despite the COVID-19 pandemic. During this time, the IBM Watson top 10 percent performance level went from approximately 0.7 in 2017 to 1.4 in 2020. The index measures the actual versus expected mortality of a patient population, with 1 indicating the expected mortality.
- WPH’s senior leaders are committed to supporting and reinforcing their Neighbors Caring for Neighbors (NCN) culture that guides the workforce to deliver “world-class health care to our neighbors.” Senior leaders actively participate in daily safety and voice-of-the-customer (VOC) huddles and visit frontline leaders and staff (i.e., leadership rounding). In addition, the hospital president personally leads WPH’s biannual town hall meetings and discusses the NCN culture and WPH’s mission, vision, and values during new employee orientation.
- WPH has achieved top 10 percent performance on several key measures of inpatient and outpatient engagement. For example, inpatient performance for “staff eased discomfort” increased from 73 percent in FY18 to 83 percent in FY20, exceeding the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services 90th percentile benchmark. Likewise, from FY18 to FY20, outpatient performance for “doctors courteous and respectful” increased from 87 percent to 99 percent, “nurses listened carefully” from 87 percent to 92 percent, and “trust staff with care” from 87 percent to 91 percent, matching the NRC (National Research Corporation) 90th percentile benchmark.
- WPH actively considers workforce capability and capacity needs in the creation of its action plans. Considerations include partnering with the health system and other business units, recruiting new team members, augmenting the training and education of team members, and reprioritizing the use of resources. As a response to the COVID pandemic, WPH reassessed its capability and capacity, reallocating staff when utilization was low and leveraging support agency staff during the rebound surge.
- WPH partners with the WHS to support and strengthen its key communities, leveraging the NCN culture and strategic advantage of strong community ties. WHS leaders identify areas of need via the system’s triennial community health needs assessment in conjunction with local boards, such as the Chamber of Commerce and Paulding County School District. Senior leaders and team members actively improve key communities through health and wellness programs, leadership in local organizations, student shadowing, donations, and sponsorships.
- In 2019, WPH conducted 35 community events and more than 1,200 school health classes. It also participated in more than 40 local outreach events, including screenings, and sponsored 24 local events.





Baldrige Hospital Champions Focus, Agility, and Process Improvement

by John G. Raffoul, DPA, FACHE

“After spending many years developing the Baldrige model of solid working relationships between cross-functional areas, our staff was prepared to respond quickly and make life-saving changes during the pandemic.”

The COVID-19 pandemic caught our hospital, our nation, and the entire world by surprise. Even though Adventist Health White Memorial (AHWM) faced many of the same pandemic-related obstacles as other hospitals and health systems—including staffing and resource shortages, capacity overflow, and falling revenue—the culture AHWM has built as part of its pursuit for performance excellence allowed the organization to navigate these challenges with success.

Beginnings of a Baldrige Journey

AHWM is a private, faith-based, nonprofit, teaching hospital dedicated to serving more than 2 million individuals near downtown Los Angeles. For more than 100 years, we have been deeply dedicated to the health and well-being of our community, and it is our mission to continue to do so for many more years to come.

As part of that mission, AHWM leadership decided in 1997 to commit to the Malcolm Baldrige Performance Excellence Program. With long-range foresight, planning, and determination, we began our journey. AHWM leaders began systematically hardwiring new quality and service processes into the organization's approaches to care delivery and business operations. We also intentionally committed time and resources to fully develop our approach to process management, knowing that the discipline learned by improving our process management approach could easily be applied to other scenarios.

All the while, we maintained focus on serving our community. Our underserved neighborhood and payor mix required us to approach excellence differently, driving us to find innovative ways to address the challenges faced by our inner-city hospital. Many may have doubted that an inner-city hospital could attain such a high recognition but, after years of hard work and dedication from the clinicians, staff, leaders, and associates, AHWM earned the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award in November 2019.

Pivoting During a Pandemic

Amid our Baldrige Award celebrations, COVID-19 cases began appearing in the United States. By February 2020, our AHWM team jumped into action in a committed, organized, and disciplined manner. We stood up daily command centers involving representatives from all areas of our organization, connected with other hospitals around the world, implemented evidence-based practices, and formed task forces to address the various challenges of the pandemic.

After spending many years developing the Baldrige model of solid working relationships between cross-functional areas, our staff was prepared to respond quickly and make life-saving changes during the pandemic.

While there are countless examples of our Baldrige culture playing out in action during the pandemic, one particular scenario comes to mind. During a surge of severe COVID-19 cases this past winter, our inpatient census soared. To expand capacity, we converted all possible areas, including outpatient units, to accommodate these patients.

One day, a physician placed an urgent call to our respiratory care department from a patient's room: "The high flow respirators aren't working!" Within minutes, a team of clinicians, technicians, and facilities leaders arrived to address the issue. Together, clinicians in full COVID Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in the patient room and our facilities people on the other side of the thick protective plastic covering the entrance, engaged in a critical troubleshooting discussion. The ensuing discussion revealed the issue was not the respirators at all; we pulled building plans for this converted unit and discovered that the oxygen lines in this older building were only capable of sustaining five high-usage respiratory machines. At the time, due to the surge, our hospital was using six times the usual daily amount of oxygen. With this new information and some quick decision-making, the patients in the annexed unit were safely moved to a new hospital tower that was fully capable of sustaining the necessary oxygen consumption.

This highly efficient collaboration and quick action would not have been possible without the years we spent on our Baldrige journey to develop trust throughout all levels and departments within AHWM.

When the COVID-19 vaccine was released earlier this year, it brought with it a ray of hope for overcoming this virus and ample opportunities to, once again, leverage our culture of continuous improvement and performance excellence to efficiently serve our patients. The vaccination roll-out created a whole new set of process challenges, but we continued to use our Baldrige teachings to guide our leadership and decision-making. We quickly pulled teams together and focused on serving the health needs of our community, setting up vaccination clinics on campus and taking mobile units out into our neighborhoods.

Using the Baldrige Framework for the Future

Throughout the pandemic, our goal was to continue to provide the exceptional clinical care and service to which our community was accustomed. Being a Baldrige organization allowed us to communicate more clearly and be more agile, creating trust, all of which are invaluable when faced with a prolonged crisis. We have become an organization that is aligned and deliberate about the actions we undertake. Process improvement is now our culture. The work that was established through Baldrige made us more resilient and set us up for success in weathering the pandemic. Looking forward, that same work will now guide us through the recovery process and position us for future success.



Adventist Health White Memorial campus in East Los Angeles



Mac Baldrige Society Expands Membership in 2021

“The Mac Baldrige Society,” said Foundation President and CEO Al Faber, “is our campaign to establish the Foundation’s Institute for Performance Excellence with the generous support of the first twenty major donors. The members are the Trustees of the Institute which, by their commitment, demonstrate they recognize the importance of the Baldrige Foundation’s mission: to promote organizational performance excellence in the United States and throughout the world by supporting the Baldrige Program.”

Through 2020, the Baldrige Family, Adventist Health, MidwayUSA, and Stellar Solutions stepped up to pledge their support as the first Institute Trustees and member of the Mac Baldrige Society. In 2021, we welcomed two new members of the Mac Baldrige Society.

The first is ABOUT HealthCare, Inc., a solutions company that empowers hospitals and health systems to operate as one connected network of care, enabling easy access for clinicians to move patients into and out of the acute care setting, getting them to the next, best care setting faster and more easily.

Angie Franks, CEO of ABOUT, noted, “Our values guided us when the need presented. We used our determination, courage, and passion to help enable one of the most complex systems of care in the country. Over 900 hospitals, health systems, and the Veterans Administration are orchestrating access to care for their patients and members. Some are managing acute patient transfers, others are coordinating care to the appropriate post-acute site, some are leveraging our intelligent transportation engine for emergent and non-emergent transport. All are impacting patient lives.”

In addition to supporting the Institute for Performance Excellence, ABOUT entered into a partnership with the Baldrige Foundation’s

LeaderDialogue™ program which provides interactive forums for health care executives to discuss the challenges facing the health care sector together, consider innovative approaches, and share best practices.

Faber noted, “America’s health care institutions are challenged by an ever-changing environment, most recently the COVID-19 pandemic. The Baldrige Performance Excellence framework enables hospitals and health care systems to leverage organizational learning with a systems approach, to create greater agility and effectively respond to these challenges. The Leader Dialogue thought leadership forums provide an important opportunity for executive leaders and boards of directors to engage and share their key insights and learnings.”

The second member announced in 2021 is Freese and Nichols, a professional consulting and engineering firm based in Fort Worth, Texas, the sixth and newest member of the Mac Baldrige Society. In 2010, Freese and Nichols became the first engineering or architecture firm to receive the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award.

“Our continuous improvement journey and our relationship with Baldrige began in the 1990s and since then has helped elevate our level of service to our clients, our employees, and our communities,” said Brian Coltharp, President and CEO of Freese and Nichols. “The Baldrige focus on building and maintaining long-term client relationships, ethical and fiscal accountability, disciplined strategic planning, as well as operational efficiency, aligns perfectly with our firm’s values and culture. Those same practices also bring superior results to our clients and communities. Because of our first-hand knowledge of the benefits of the Baldrige Excellence Framework, we are proud to become a founding member of the Mac Baldrige Society.”



Freese and Nichols Chairman Bob Pence was CEO when the firm won the Baldrige Award and later served on the Baldrige Board of Overseers. He noted, "We began weaving the Baldrige best practices into our operations and sales because we wanted to be a better, higher performing engineering firm for our clients and employees. As a result, we are able to provide innovative solutions to our customers, offer meaningful work for our staff, and help make our communities better places to live. We have reaped tremendous rewards and growth by implementing those continuous improvement tenets in all that we do."

"Baldrige helps improve organizational performance," concluded Faber, "and we are grateful for those who choose to promote that reality for other organizations as Trustees of the Institute for Performance Excellence and members of the Mac Baldrige Society."

"We continue to work to bring additional organizations into the Mac Baldrige Society," said Faber, "because it is through the Institute that the Foundation continues to look toward a future of Baldrige that is robust and growing."

The Trustees of the Institute are joining in that effort, making a commitment to preserve and promote the Baldrige Framework and to help ensure that Baldrige remains relevant for future generations of organizations, leaders, and staff across all sectors of the economy.



Through December 31, 2021



“Corporate business leaders can focus first on what they are close to: board diversity, diversity in their C-suites, and making executives and others feel included in their organizations.”

To Improve the Health of Those We Serve

by Karen Morrison
President, OhioHealth Foundation; Senior Vice President, OhioHealth

For over 30 years I have been a member of the OhioHealth community. Our mission, “To Improve the Health of Those We Serve,” is more than just an organizational statement of purpose. For many of us, myself included, it is a way of life.

I grew up in a family of health care professionals including my father who was a physician. I was attracted to health care because at its core, as I learned from them, it is a caring profession. My father embraced his relationships with his patients because it gave him the opportunity to help empower them to improve their health and minimize their risk of disease. I was likewise inspired to pursue both preventive medicine and law, the combination of which led me to health care advocacy.

Currently, I am leading the OhioHealth enterprise strategy for external relations including community relations, corporate reinvestment, community health and wellness, and government affairs. We work with multiple partners at all levels, public and private, federal, state, and local, to influence public policy and the provision of health care in a way that adds value and favorably impacts the health status of the entire community.

OhioHealth is the parent company for twelve hospitals, 200 ambulatory sites, a comprehensive home care provider, hospice, and rehabilitation services. We serve a 47-county region, representing millions of people, with a staff of over 30,000 employees and 3,500 physicians. I am particularly proud of our efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic to bring testing and vaccination opportunities to poor and vaccine-hesitant communities.

I also serve on numerous advisory and corporate boards, as well as chairing the Columbus Board of Health, the Executive Leadership Council, and The Links, Incorporated, and I was recognized by Becker’s Hospital Review as one of the “68 African American Leaders in Healthcare, 2019.” Now I also serve on the Baldrige Foundation Board of Directors.

Baldrige and Organizational Culture

My experiences have demonstrated to me that there is little more important within organizational leadership than its leadership culture. I was drawn to Baldrige because it requires a focus on the systems level. Baldrige takes a holistic approach to leadership and management, stressing first a concentration on cultural issues which then leads to strategy and execution, establishing the processes, marshalling the resources, and taking care of the people that create the organization’s results.

A major part of the Baldrige ethic is the sharing of best practices, and many of the leaders of Baldrige organizations, certainly those organizations that have received the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award over the last ten years, often talk about the critical role that organizational culture plays in developing performance excellence.

There are 11 Baldrige Core Values and Concepts at the heart of the Baldrige Criteria which are also found in many high-performing organizations. The Baldrige Program further developed a list of leadership behaviors aligned with the 11 core values and concepts. There has been a substantial amount empirical research tracking these leadership behaviors, concluding that these behaviors are critical to effective leadership in high-performing organizations.

Diversity and Inclusion

One of the core values is Visionary Leadership, and a key associated leadership behavior is creating and ensuring a supportive and collaborative environment. Another of the core values is Valuing People, with associated leadership behavior that:

- “Builds and fosters an organizational culture that focuses on engagement, development, and well-being of workforce members
- Creates an organizational environment that is safe, trusting, and cooperative
- Builds partnerships with internal and external people and organizations
- Capitalizes on the diversity of the workforce and partners.”

Diversity is strength within an organization, but true diversity can only be accomplished when the organizational culture is based on the concept of inclusion. These Baldrige leadership behaviors are very much based on inclusiveness. They are about creating a safe space in which all members of the organization can contribute, and in which leaders are encouraged to seek out and learn from the thoughts and experiences of all their members.

Corporate business leaders can focus first on what they are close to: board diversity, diversity in their C-suites, and making executives and others feel included in their organizations. They must also develop processes that encourage and facilitate listening across the organization in a way that shows employees that they and their opinions and experiences are valued. How organizations do that are some of the very important questions that a Baldrige self-assessment forces organizations to evaluate.

Baldrige asks organizations to look at themselves to understand how they are implementing these core values and concepts, and to understand where there are gaps in their implementation and execution. Only when we see ourselves for what we are can we begin to make the changes necessary to achieve inclusion, diversity, and performance excellence.



The Neuroscience Center at OhioHealth's Riverside Hospital





Three Reflections on the Road to Baldrige Recognition

by Gerry Agnes
President & CEO of Elevations Credit Union

I interviewed to be the CEO of Elevations Credit Union at one of the worst times in modern history, the Great Recession of 2008. At the time, the country was entrenched in a historic economic recession that left many financial institutions struggling to stay afloat. Elevations was looking for a leader who could carry it through this hardship.

Elevations was founded in Boulder in 1952 with 12 members and less than \$100 in assets. Since then, the community-first credit union has grown to house over \$3 billion in assets and serves more than 170,000 members in Colorado. Though designed to exist in perpetuity, Elevations was feeling the pinch of the financial crisis in 2008. It needed a transformation.

“The framework gave us the agility necessary to serve our members in the most beneficial way throughout 2008, as the country struggled during the economic downturn, and again in 2020, at the start of a global pandemic.”

I had a plan. I stood in front of the Board of Directors and shared the roadmap that I believed would lead the organization over the dip and into the future: the Baldrige Performance Excellence framework. Thankfully, the board saw the potential in the framework, and I got the job.

Today, 13 years and two Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Awards later, I am grateful to be surrounded by a team that is committed to excellence through the Baldrige framework. Throughout our Baldrige journey, we have gathered valuable insights on achieving performance excellence that continue to inspire us to embrace new challenges. Whatever part of the Baldrige journey you are on, we encourage you to seize the moment, create a safe environment

in your workspace and never underestimate the capabilities of a stellar team.

In 2008, the financial services industry was in crisis. It might have seemed crazy to adopt the Baldrige framework at that time. But looking back, I can tell you with full confidence that, when it comes to entering the Baldrige arena, there is no perfect time. The best time is now.

Applying the Baldrige framework during these times allowed us to prosper despite the difficulty of our external environment. The framework gave us the agility necessary to serve our members in the most beneficial way throughout 2008, as the country struggled during the economic downturn, and again in 2020, at the start of a global pandemic.

Working within the framework has empowered us to create a safe environment where we can challenge each other's assumptions and ask important questions. Positive organizational change comes from addressing root problems, not symptoms. To do this, we have to be brutally honest with each other at every level of the organization. When we are dishonest about our organization, we hold ourselves back from achieving excellence.

This commitment to honesty is external, too. Traditionally, credit unions look at the market around them to decide how to design their programs. Once we had a safe, respectful environment internally, we were inspired to look out to our members and ask hard questions about their needs so that we could create better systems to serve them.

Once you have started the journey and created a safe environment, I challenge leaders seeking excellence through the Baldrige program to never underestimate the capabilities of a stellar team. When I stood in front of the board in 2008 and introduced the

IN MEMORIAM



Pete Reicks

September 30, 1972 - May 18, 2021

"He will always be remembered as one of the people who made it all possible."

Baldrige framework, they decided to take a chance on me. They did not underestimate me or the team that I was coming into. They knew that we could do it.

Our team is small but extraordinary. When we received Baldrige recognition in 2014, we were the first credit union to ever receive the prestigious award. In 2020, we broke barriers again when we were named the first financial institution to ever receive the recognition twice. Elevations started with \$100 less than 70 years ago. Today, we are a leader in our industry.

I have learned much on our Baldrige journey so far, and I have even more to learn as our team evolves. When I reflect on all this knowledge, there is one thing that inspires me most: the power of people.

We could not have risen to meet the challenges set forth by the Baldrige framework were it not for our entire team. They understood that we needed to achieve performance excellence internally to best serve our members and the community. There is one person in particular whose impact will never be forgotten. He was the one who inspired us all to dream bigger. If Elevations was a football team, Pete Reicks was our star quarterback.

Reicks was pivotal in shaping our organization to be one deserving of the highest national recognition for performance excellence in the United States. When he passed away after a courageous battle with cancer on May 18, 2021, the whole Elevations team felt the loss. His legacy lives on through the Baldrige framework. He will always be remembered as one of the people who made it all possible.

As I look back on that day in 2008 when I stood in front of the board, I feel so grateful that they trusted in the possibility of the Baldrige framework. The pursuit of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award has made Elevations a stronger organization. Throughout the process, we have learned that the perfect time is now, a safe environment is essential, and our team is capable of greatness. We have received the national recognition twice, but our journey is only just beginning. Elevations continues to improve, evolve, and reach for excellence so that we can better serve our members and each other.

Agile May Be Fragile; Resilience Is the Goal

by Harry Hertz, Baldrige Performance Excellence Program
National Institute of Standards and Technology

The Baldrige Excellence Framework (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/publications/baldrige-excellence-framework>) has a set of 11 foundational beliefs and behaviors (core values) (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/core-values-and-concepts>) that underpin its systems approach to achieving organizational high performance. One of those core values is agility and resilience (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/core-values-and-concepts#agility>). While both agility and resilience are important, many of us conflate these two concepts. I believe understanding their differences and complementarity will help organizations consider all aspects of preparing for uncertain futures.

DEFINITIONS

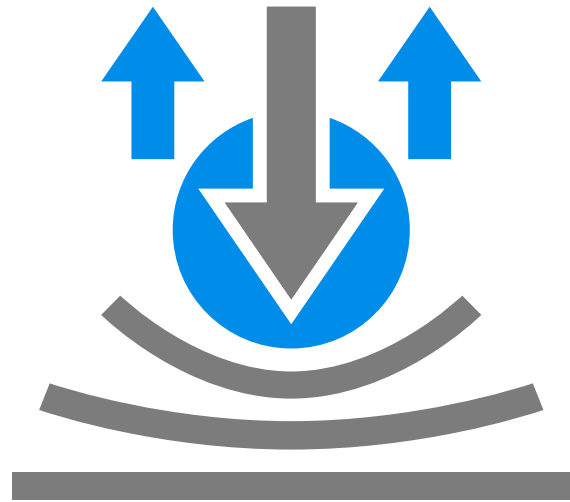
Agility refers to the ability to make rapid change and achieve flexibility in operations (1) in response to changes in the external environment, or (2) to take advantage of an immediate opportunity.

Resilience refers to the ability to (1) anticipate, prepare for, and recover from disasters, emergencies, and other disruptions, and (2) protect and enhance workforce and customer engagement, supply-network and financial performance, organizational productivity, and community well-being when disruption occurs.

THE DIFFERENCES

Resilience requires an organization to have the capacity for agility. In addition, resilience addresses the capacity for addressing unanticipated, sudden disruptions. Agility is about the organization. Resilience is about the organization, people, and communities. Resilience addresses not only the ability to make change, but also the ability to bounce back and bounce forward. Resilience is about balancing the short-term needs caused by sudden disruptions and also focusing on the long-term opportunities.

Organizational resilience is a way of being that builds agility into the organization's DNA. Organizational resilience has a short-term focus and a long-



term focus. Agility alone can hurt organizational resilience. Moving too quickly can result in change that negatively impacts the long-term. Resilience could negatively impact short-term profits or budgets because it might require building some redundancy and options into organizational work systems, an “anti-lean” approach.

Resilience is about achieving an agile organization that casts a wider net to seek potential, and otherwise unanticipated, disruptions. Resilience is not just about disruptive change, but also seeking long-term benefit for the organization and its diverse stakeholders.

In a Conference Board blog (<https://www.conference-board.org/blog/postdetail.cfm?post=1342>) based on his book, *Mastering Turbulence: The Essential Capabilities of Agile & Resilient Individuals, Teams, and Organizations*, Joseph McCann points out that the impact of agility may be a narrow path or singular approach that removes needed buffers that provide a safety net for more disruptive change. Agility alone can create unsupported exposure to

surprises and shocks — “frAgility” — according to Casey Mulqueen (https://tracom.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Agility-AND-Resilience_TRACOM_wp2018.pdf). Agility requires being comfortable with change; resiliency looks for the long-term opportunities in change.

THE PEOPLE ASPECTS

Organizations can be agile, but to be resilient they require people who are both agile and resilient. People can withstand a change with the proper training and properly developed mindset. However, to be resilient and adaptable on an ongoing basis and in a disaster-prone environment requires much greater skill and personal development. Just think of the current environment; we are over a year into the COVID-19 pandemic and think of the human strains it has caused, resulting in many organizational strains.

Many of the currently successful, resilient organizations have achieved that status because they put people first and planned for people’s needs: their employees, their customers, and their communities at large. These organizations bounced forward by looking at the larger community needs that the organizations had the potential and capabilities to address.

According to a meQuilibrium e-book on agility and resilience (<https://go.mequilibrium.com/3WaysResilienceandAgilityUnlockBusinessGrowth.html>), the World Health Organization calls stress “the health epidemic of the 21st century.” The e-book authors report that resilience is strongly associated with lowering stress. The cost of stress is nine percent higher health care costs and 20 percent higher absentee rates. Achieving the proper mindset enables employees to face the stress and shift their attention to the future. Organizational agility then allows them to contribute to change.

AN EXAMPLE: SUPPLY NETWORK AGILITY VS. RESILIENCE

Being agile in the 1990s, many companies and other large purchasers of supplies globalized their supply base to distant, less expensive economies. They reduced expenses, leaned their production systems, and enhanced or retained a competitive position in the marketplace. And this was accomplished with speed. The companies were truly agile.

In a Brookings Institution Tech Stream (<https://www.brookings.edu/techstream/how-to-build-more-secure-resilient-next-gen-u-s-supply-chains/>), Eleftherios Iakovou and Chelsea White III report that global trade jumped from 39 percent of global GDP in 1990 to 59 percent of global GDP in 2019 as supply chains moved abroad.

Over the last two years, extreme weather events, global pandemics, cyberattacks, and other disasters have resulted in severe structural problems in the delivery of goods and services to customers. Over-reliance on singular, distant supply chains has impacted national economies and global health care.

A simple focus on being agile and lean resulted in brittle production systems. In the process of improving budgets and profit margins, we lost our ability to be resilient. According to Iakovou and White, to be resilient we need supply networks that are robust and that can recover quickly to the pre-disruption state or, even, a more desirable state. To achieve this resilience requires: (1) rapid detection, response, and recovery from disruptive conditions; (2) end-to-end, data-driven supply network effectiveness. This means being able to trace a successful pathway from raw materials to finished product, from your suppliers’ suppliers to the end customer; and (3) redundancies, including emergency stockpiles and diversified sourcing of supplies, including localized sources.

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS ON RESILIENCE

Organizational resilience may have some short-term financial downsides, but it prepares the organization for long-term financial, customer, workforce, societal, and strategic success. Resilience is about taking the wider view. Resilience is about being strategic, balancing long-term and short-term success. Resilience requires agility and a focus on long-term consequences. Resilience is the goal!

Finally, a special word of thanks to Arnie Weimerskirch, a former chair of the Baldrige Panel of Judges, who sent me an email with some of his questions and thoughts about agility and resilience. His inquiry led me to further reading and cogitating about the two concepts, resulting in this blog post. Thanks Arnie!



Using the Baldrige Criteria to Move Faster Towards Our Vision

by John B. Chessare MD, MPH, FAAP, FACHE
President and Chief Executive Officer, GBMC HealthCare

The United States has the best trained physicians, nurses, and other clinicians in the world, however, they work in a system that is not well designed to generate the maximum value for the American people.

The GBMC HealthCare is a community-based, not-for-profit, true system of care. It consists of three work systems: Greater Baltimore Medical Center, our hospital; Gilchrist, our eldercare company; and GBMC HealthPartners, our multispecialty group practice.

The Board of Directors set a new vision for our organization in late 2010. They had been relying on the hard work and good intentions of the GBMC staff to maximize the health and care experience of those being served. The Board realized that the staff were working in a sub-optimal system, especially in caring for those with chronic disease. The new vision was to create the infra-structure and support for teams, led by physicians, to be held accountable for treating every patient, every time, the way they wanted their own loved ones treated. Through many conversations with staff and patients we arrived at the definition of this care: our four aims.

“GBMC’s primary stakeholders, our patients, have truly benefited from our use of the Baldrige criteria to drive higher reliability in our care.”

The four aims are: the best care outcome with the best care experience and the least waste of resources with the most joy for those providing the care.

We realized as we were adopting this new vision that we had a lot of work to do to move from a focus on individual health care services to the creation of a system that could be held accountable for managing the health of a population and delivering on our

four aims. It was this realization that moved us to begin implementing the Baldrige criteria. We needed a management structure that would drive us faster towards our vision. Since we had been relying on hard work and good intentions alone, very little of our work was systematic and highly reliable. The Baldrige criteria would help us create systems that could be deployed, studied, continually improved, and integrated with other systems to achieve our aims.

GBMC chose the patient-centered medical home as a fundamental building block of the system of care. We redesigned our existing primary care offices to be able to manage and be accountable for the health of the patients they each served. We added capabilities in palliative medicine and in-home primary care to Gilchrist, which was already an award-winning hospice.

We became students of the criteria and completed our first application for our statewide award. Looking back on our initial submission, we now realize that it takes time for even the most well-intentioned student to understand the criteria and the concept of integration. An example of this was in our first attempt at describing our leadership system. It essentially was a dissertation on the personal characteristics of good leaders rather than a description of a system that answered the question “How do your leaders lead?”

GBMC made good progress with our second local submission, and we attained the penultimate level award. Our responses were better at describing our systems and less about giving examples of good work, but we still had much design work to do.

After the closing of our local performance excellence chapter, we received permission to submit a national application. It was through this application and the feedback we received, that we truly began to understand the criteria more deeply in each of the



Innovation has become a driving force for excellence at GBMC HealthCare.

categories. By our second national submission in 2019, our leadership team understood the need to integrate systems across categories. As an example, we began to see the value in integrating our leadership system, our performance review process, and our performance management system to achieve the biggest improvement in our results. We were chosen for a site visit and on the strength of our leadership system and our strategic planning process we achieved best practice recognition in the Leadership category.

We had arrived at the conclusion that our core competency was in redesigning care. To achieve our vision, it was critical that we standardized our care around the best evidence to achieve the best possible health outcomes. Our core competency was precisely what we needed, especially on the arrival of the pandemic, when so much had to be redesigned to keep our patients safe.

We were very excited to be chosen again for a site visit in 2020 and we were dancing on air when we received the news that we had achieved the national award in performance excellence!

GBMC's primary stakeholders, our patients, have truly benefited from our use of the Baldrige criteria

to drive higher reliability in our care. An example of this is in our management of the diabetic patient. Prior to our implementation of the patient-centered medical home and the use of the Baldrige criteria, we did not even know how many diabetic patients we were caring for. Now, not only do we know how many we have (5,930), we have driven the percentage of diabetic patients with HgbA1c levels greater than nine (a measure of blood sugar control with levels greater than nine meaning good control) to a best in class 18.6 percent, when the national 90th percentile is 31.4 percent!

Our staff members have also truly benefited from our use of the Baldrige criteria. Their work has become easier with our zeal for system design. They are now much more likely than before to volunteer for a redesign initiative as they can see and feel the fruits of their labor.

We in the GBMC HealthCare System are grateful for the existence of the criteria and to those who have helped us understand them and implement them. We move towards our vision much faster by using them and we will continue to do so.



Baldrige Institute for Performance Excellence Grows with New Opportunities for Partner Organizations



The Baldrige Foundation established the Institute for Performance Excellence in 2020 as a focal point for students, scholars, leaders, and practitioners of Baldrige and performance excellence. It is providing thought leadership on performance excellence, leadership, and management.

“The mission of the Institute,” as Baldrige Foundation President and CEO Al Faber said when introducing the new enterprise, “is to amplify the influence of the Baldrige framework and to improve the practice of leadership and management in pursuit of performance excellence, broadening its impact in an ever-changing world.”

Becoming a partner of the Institute for Performance Excellence provides each organization and its people with full access to the Institute’s resources, strategy execution tools, training, professional development opportunities, conference discounts, networking, and educational opportunities.

In keeping with the mission of the Institute to be a Baldrige thought leader, 2021 saw a significant expansion of curated and original content in the Knowledge Center.

According to Josh Racette, the Foundation’s Executive Director of Corporate Development, the Foundation made other great strides in 2021 expanding the benefits available to Institute partners.

“I’m particularly proud of the discounts on degree programs available through the Institute,” said Racette. “When we launched, we had an agreement in place with Walden University to provide discounted tuition to our partners. In 2021, the University of Charleston came in, and right now we are negotiating with several other institutions of higher education to continue to expand those offerings.”

The Institute also makes available discounted training and certification for professional development. “Since



Our Programs

Online Self-Paced Courses

Strategic Planning & Management Training

Degree Programs



we launched, we have provided nearly 600 certifications in Lean Six Sigma—including some courses designed specifically for leaders in the health care sector—data analytics, scrum master training, project management, and diversity and inclusion. In 2021 we added a certification in agile leadership, and we are presently preparing to launch another half dozen certification programs, all available online and discounted for partners of the Institute.”

Another new feature first made available in 2021 are custom-branded communities within the Institute. “There were a number of standing communities organized around the various Baldrige sectors and other areas of interest,” continued Racette, “but in 2021 we made available private communities organized around specific partner organizations and interest groups.” Communities of Excellence 2026 (COE2026) was one of the first partner organizations to take advantage of this option, creating a community for COE2026 Alumni. The custom-branded community allows partners a digital space to meet, continue to foster relationships among interested parties, and share best practices.



As the Institute continues to grow, so do the opportunities for professional development and organizational performance excellence.

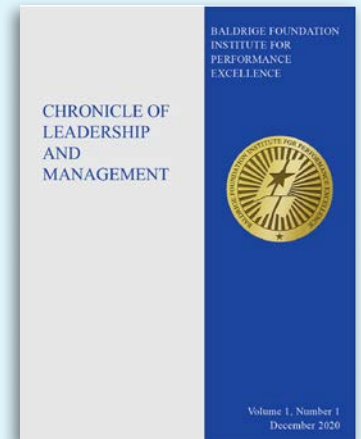
For more information about the Baldrige Institute for Performance Excellence, visit the website at <https://www.baldrigeinstitute.org>, or contact Josh Racette at 614-785-0214 or [jraccette@baldrigefoundation.org](mailto:jracette@baldrigefoundation.org).

CHRONICLE OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Call for Papers

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

The *Chronicle of Leadership and Management* is a peer-reviewed publication by the Baldrige Foundation’s Institute for Performance Excellence, edited by Dr. James Evans. The purpose of the *Chronicle* is to facilitate sharing of knowledge by providing insightful and practical perspectives for leading and managing performance excellence in business, health care, education, government, nonprofit organizations, communities, and cybersecurity applications.



We are now accepting submissions for Volume 3 of the *Chronicle of Leadership and Management*. Your original research can help shape the future of quality and performance excellence. Guidelines for authors and information about submitting your papers can be found at www.baldrigefoundation.org/clm.

WHAT READERS ARE SAYING ABOUT THE CHRONICLE

“Excellent articles from renowned Baldrige gurus! Great insights, and all topics are enlightening for the diehard disciples of the Baldrige Framework.”

“I can’t wait to read the second edition of the *Chronicle*!”

“The *Chronicle* provides great leadership and management insights for any organizational leader, regardless of sector.”

“The *Chronicle* is a great resource for in-depth discussions about using Baldrige. It fills a gap in the research literature that is often superficial or tangentially touches Baldrige’s concepts and applications.”

CONTACT

JAMES EVANS, PH.D., EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
chronicle@baldrigefoundation.org

Governance Boards' 2021 Challenges and Focus

by Harry Hertz, Baldrige Performance Excellence Program
National Institute of Standards and Technology



I believe we have reached an inflection point for governance boards (aka boards of directors) as we enter the “new normal” for organizations and society as a whole. Boards in 2021 will need to place a significant focus on ten critical areas. (I hesitate to call them the Big Ten (<https://bigten.org/sports/2018/6/6/school-bio-big10-school-bio-html.aspx>) because college sports fans will immediately think there are 14.) These ten areas are based on numerous published studies (some key ones are referenced in this blog post) and my own experiences over the last year. While this blog is focused on boards of directors, many of the critical focus areas also apply to CEOs and other senior organizational leaders.

INTRODUCTION

It is no surprise that data published by McKinsey & Company on May 4, 2021, indicate that boards increased their attention in 2020 on corporate (organizational) resilience and that every other topic dropped in attention (<https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/coronavirus-leading-through-the-crisis/charting-the-path-to-the-next-normal/survivor-2020-corporate-edition>). Attention to resilience rose from 44 percent to 60 percent, while focus on major societal trends and workforce-related topics dropped

by 13 percent and 9-10 percent, respectively. While resilience certainly continues to be important in 2021, other topics are demanding increasing attention. I have summarized my top ten topics below, recognizing that there frequently is overlap among these topics when organizations take a systems perspective to leadership and management. After sharing the ten areas, I will relate them to board responsibilities and the Baldrige framework’s core values (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/board-director-responsibilities>).

TEN CRITICAL AREAS

1. Lessons from the Past Year

This has been an unprecedented year, characterized by a pandemic, the likes of which almost all of us had never experienced before, and by the emergence of a long-overdue call for true social justice in the United States. We all reacted, personally and organizationally, to the rapidly evolving environment. Organizations with effective resiliency plans did relatively well and were role models for community resilience, as well.

One notable characteristic of the resilient organizations was their ability to rapidly shift communication mechanisms and establish two-way, remote communication with employees, customers,

and other key stakeholders virtually “overnight.” We have all learned the importance of communication and listening over the last year.

Of course, our experiences over the last year go beyond adapting to new communication modes. We have experienced and learned a lot. Now it is time to consolidate those lessons learned and make them part of our strategic, operational, and resiliency plans, rather than dive head-first into disorganized and differing perceptions of the “new normal.”

2. Risk Management

Having come through this past year, boards and senior leaders need to assess if their organizations’ crisis management plans were up to the challenges they faced. Going forward, all organizations will need to develop a (refreshed) enterprise risk-management plan. According to a McKinsey recommendation on board responsibilities, enterprise risk, culture, and strategy will need to be embedded in all board decisions and to be treated in an aligned fashion (<https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/the-boards-role-during-crisis-and-beyond>).

Risk management is about preparing for an uncertain future. Among the current uncertainties are how many of the myriad changes we have made and experienced during the past year will prove permanent and which of the changes will either revert to a former state or to a new and different state. In its discussion of the new era of board stewardship, *Deloitte Insights 2021 Directors’ Alert* states that “strong and resilient boards will have the diversity of skills and backgrounds to make reasoned assumptions about the present and the future...steering the organization through turbulent times.” (<https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/topics/leadership/directors-alert/new-era-board-stewardship.html>). According to a Harvard Law School Forum on Corporate Governance in 2021, after the pandemic, key risk considerations for the boards must be cybersecurity, data protection, and legal compliance (<https://corpgov.law.harvard.edu/2020/12/11/board-considerations-for-an-uncertain-2021/>).

There appears to be fairly unanimous agreement among a cross-section of experts that an important component of risk management for boards is related to organizational leadership. Were the senior leaders

of the organization up to the leadership challenge they faced during the past year? Are there emergency replacements who are capable of stepping in if a crisis impacts a senior leader? Abraham Lincoln cautioned against changing horses mid-stream, but he also was keenly aware of the risk of keeping an unprepared leader at the helm of an organization. One of Lincoln’s leadership principles was to keep seeking “until you find your Grant.” (https://www.google.com/books/edition/Lincoln_On_Leadership/HlyHIPbME2cC?hl=en&gbpv=1&printsec=frontcover). In other words, give every leader a chance, but if they are not up to the job they need to be replaced, even during the heat of battle. Thus, Lincoln made numerous leadership changes until he installed General Ulysses S. Grant. How well is your organization set for leadership?

The National Association of Corporate Directors (NACD) in its 2021 Governance Outlook states that boards will face heightened expectations to apply a “mission-critical” risk framework in their oversight (<https://www.nacdonline.org/analytics/survey.cfm?ItemNumber=68998>). They cite several court decisions where the mission criticality of an action or lack of action led to the court’s decisions. In an era where organizational missions and purposes are being challenged and redefined, this board oversight focus is increasingly important.

The NACD report further states that board committee charters should be reviewed annually and updated, if necessary, to reflect key areas of risk in the committee’s oversight purview. Committees (and the full board, if needed) should be charged with timely review of existing risks and should also, with organizational senior leadership guidance, address new or evolving risks.

3. Mission and Purpose

The Baldrige Excellence Framework’s glossary of key terms defines mission as your organization’s overall function (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/self-assessing/baldrige-key-terms#mission>). It answers the question, “What is your organization trying to accomplish?” Some organizations also define a larger purpose for existence. This purpose defines the fundamental reason the organization exists. It inspires the organization. *Purpose guides the setting of an organization’s values. Mission is guided by the organization’s values.*

As organizations are called on to serve a larger set of stakeholders than shareholders and customers, boards play a key role in setting and overseeing that higher purpose. Many corporations have adopted the Business Roundtable's 2019 "Statement on the Purpose of a Corporation" that calls for a shift away from shareholder primacy toward a broader view of responsibility and accountability to a wider group of stakeholders (<https://opportunity.businessroundtable.org/ourcommitment/>).

In its 2021 Governance Outlook, the NACD states that boards have a role in understanding the organization's key stakeholders, how they are identified by senior leadership, the impact of the organization on these stakeholders, and any related risks.

A clear statement of purpose that brings value to society provides a basis for leadership and board decisions and enhanced employee and customer engagement. Furthermore, a meaningful statement of purpose reinforces a strong organizational culture, allowing everyone to celebrate organizational contributions, which is especially valuable during and right after times of crises.

4. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

Both the Harvard Law School Forum on Corporate Governance and NACD's 2021 Governance Outlook call for two perspectives on DEI. The first perspective is a risk-based perspective, with growing demands for transparency and accountability regarding equity considerations within the workforce. For publicly traded and for public-benefit organizations, stockholders and contributors want numeric data to track progress on diversity and equity in the workforce, so they can decide where to invest their money and time.

The second—and, in my opinion, more important—focus, is on proactively addressing DEI opportunities for the organization. Boards should work with organizational leaders to ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion in hiring, promotion, senior leadership presence, and board membership. Boards and organizations need to consider DEI as part of strategic planning. Boards should work with their organization's leadership to assess business practices for unintentionally discriminatory processes related to the treatment of employees, customers, and communities served.

5. Societal Contributions

Organizations are increasingly measured on environmental, social, and governance (ESG) contributions. There is a growing sensitivity to these considerations in consumer spending and investor decisions, in employees' choice of where to work, and in charitable giving. And this sensitivity has been heightened during the past year. Being role-model citizens in the community that houses the organization adds value to the organization's reputation and stature.

How an organization addresses ESG is an important part of continuity planning and strategy and thus is a board-level consideration. Public disclosure of commitments is considered an important reputational issue. Therefore, boards should also ensure that an organization's ESG commitment is borne out in action.

6. Strategy

Strategy has always been a significant topic for governance boards. Deloitte in its 2021 Directors Alert states that changes in business models loom particularly large as organizations emerge from the pandemic. The nature of work and the workplace have also changed dramatically and will impact strategic planning as organizations plan for the new normal and beyond. Employee retention will be a challenge as competition for workforce members heats up. Boards need to pay attention to all aspects of workforce management, including the special attention to DEI I mentioned in #4 above.

As organizations experience the new normal in their business environment, there is an expectation that there will be new and continuing short-term pressures on organizations, including the heightened attention to cybersecurity I referenced in #2. Boards have a responsibility to balance those short-term pressures with a longer-term sustainability strategy for the organization. This means some attention to strategy will become part of every board meeting for organizations. Addressing vulnerabilities and associated strategic risks will require the varied expertise of a diverse board with differing individual insights.

7. Innovation and Strategic Opportunities

Along with new vulnerabilities, crises always present new opportunities. Boards need to ensure that such opportunities are identified and evaluated for the strategic benefit they might provide. McKinsey

highlights strategic opportunities related to all aspects of digitization and the acceleration of consumer expectations (<https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/the-boards-role-during-crisis-and-beyond>). Remote work has led to innovations that might generate strategic advantages going forward. Ideas have come from all parts of the organization during the past year. Boards need to work with senior organizational leaders to see that these ideas are captured and evaluated for strategic opportunities.

8. Support for Senior Leaders

Senior leaders (and all employees) have likely experienced the most challenging year of their tenure as leaders (or employees). Boards need to give their organizations' leaders emotional support and an attentive ear. They also need to decide what feedback to give senior executives, how to adjust their goals, and how to evaluate their performance for this challenging year. In making compensation decisions, the Harvard Law School Forum included particular mention of the board's need to balance rewarding leaders' hard work and high performance with any perception brought on by employee furloughs, layoffs, or downsizing.

Maybe it is most important—after a year in which many boards took on added roles—for boards to bear in mind the difference between the oversight role of the board and the leadership role of senior leaders and to respect the difference as the new normal emerges.

9. Team Dynamics

There are two aspects of team dynamics that need board consideration:

1. Boards, like workforce members, have learned to operate through videoconferencing and "remote work." How has that impacted board dynamics? What has changed that should be preserved? Are there new board members who have never received a proper orientation or met the other board members? Would an internal board feedback session be appropriate?
2. Team dynamics within the organization have changed. People and teams have become more empowered. Senior leaders have established changed relationships with middle managers and the empowered teams. Boards need to help senior leaders adapt to and adopt changes that should be preserved.

10. Speed of Decisions

The urgency of the past year has led to new and faster decision-making processes at all levels of the organization. It is time to look at permanently modifying processes for speed. It is also time to recalibrate decision-making processes to ensure that the need for speed has not replaced the use of data- and fact-based decision making when that is needed.

BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES AND THE BALDRIGE CORE VALUES

The *Baldrige Excellence Framework* (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/publications/baldrige-excellence-framework>) is underpinned by a set of 11 core values and concepts (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/core-values-and-concepts>). These core values have served as the basis for defining role-model attributes for boards of directors' performance (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/board-director-responsibilities>). Now is a good time to take a fresh look at these role-model characteristics as boards recalibrate themselves for "new normal" operation and want to make sure they do so with a clear picture of their role and the organizational senior leaders' role.

Let me share some thoughts on a few of the Baldrige core values, in particular, as boards recalibrate:

- *Ensuring a systems perspective*: Boards need to make sure that senior leaders are taking a holistic look at the organization and its many functions and processes. Now is a good time to reconsider the larger ecosystem (partners, suppliers, customers, communities) in which the organization operates.
- *Focus on organizational success (sustainability)*: Boards need to work with senior leaders to create a focus on short- and longer-term factors that affect the organization, its reputation, and its ongoing success. They need to focus on the "big picture," ensuring that organizational planning anticipates future marketplace, economic, and technological influences and disruptions.
- *Ensuring ethics and transparency*: Boards and senior leaders need to set the tone for ethical and transparent operation of the organization. Has the organization and the board remained true to its ethical principles over the last year? Might now be the time for an audit? Might this provide the opportunity to become the ethical role model you want the organization to be for the future?

The next board meeting is the time to set the tone for the future. What tone will your board set?



AARP's Baldrige Journey: A Quest for Excellence

by Jo Ann Jenkins
CEO, AARP

With nearly 38 million members; 2,300 staff members; 60,000 volunteers and offices in every state, Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to serving the needs and interests of people 50 and older and their families.

Since our founding in 1958, AARP has been serving our members and society as a whole by creating positive social change through advocacy, service, and information. The drive, innovation, and compassion of our founder, Dr. Ethel Percy Andrus, continue to inspire our work as we dedicate ourselves to improving lives, standing up to injustice, and transforming the marketplace, empowering people to choose how they live as they age.

The Need to Transform

When I became CEO in 2014, I inherited a highly successful organization. We were financially very strong, we had 37 million members, and our brand was iconic. On top of that, 10,000 people were turning 65 every day—a trend that would continue for the next 16 years. We also recognized, however, that technology was changing our society very rapidly, and the way people were aging was changing. So, if we were to remain relevant to our members, we would have to change, too. Put simply: Doing the things that made us successful in the past would not necessarily make us successful in the future.

We had to adapt our business model to be ready to meet our members' needs and play an indispensable role in their lives, not just today, but also in the future. And, we had to champion more sustainable, accessible, and affordable solutions for health security, financial resilience, and meaningful connections to help people 50-plus navigate their life transitions—whether it is striving to adapt to new technologies, staying employed, becoming a caregiver, or facing a chronic health condition.

Combined, four profound changes—the demographics of our aging society (particularly increased longevity), changing consumer expectations, innovations in technology, and the added health, financial, and social challenges people face as they age—were all contributing to an urgent need to transform what we do and how we do it.

I told our employees we have a choice: “We can continue down the current path and do well for the next 3 to 5 years, or we can take the necessary steps today to make that sure AARP is here in 10 years, in 30 years, in 60 years. The first has us playing not to lose—the second has us playing to win.”

“The value of the Baldrige Framework is that it is comprised of leadership and management practices that improve the performance of organizations across multiple sectors.”

We were playing to win. We were determined to accelerate our impact externally by creating more relevance, more innovation, more influence, and greater impact to achieve our purpose of empowering more people to choose how they live as they age. We turned to the Baldrige Excellence Framework to guide our transformation.

Why Baldrige

I had the good fortune of already going through the Baldrige Fellows program before I became CEO. I found the Baldrige Excellence Framework invaluable as I began to settle into my new role. And, equally, if not more important, by going through the program, I gained some valuable insights about myself and my leadership strengths and challenges that have helped me become the kind of leader I want to be and an organization like AARP needs.

My predecessor, Barry Rand, was also a Baldrige Fellow. Prior to joining AARP, he had led Xerox's effort to win the Malcolm Baldrige Quality Award in 1989 and again in 1997. In fact, he was the one who encouraged me to go through the program. At the time, I was President of AARP Foundation, and I used Baldrige to guide our transformation of AARP Foundation. Additionally, several other members of our Executive Team were Baldrige Fellows, so we could learn and apply Baldrige values and principles at AARP.

In fact, prior to applying for the Baldrige National Quality Award in 2020, we had applied much of the Baldrige Framework in designing and implementing the significant changes we have made in our structure, offerings, and operations over the previous five and a half years.

The Executive Team and I are dedicated to continually making AARP better, and we viewed applying for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award as an important part of that process. It demonstrates our ongoing commitment to performance excellence.

The value of the Baldrige Framework is that it is comprised of leadership and management practices that improve the performance of organizations across multiple sectors. As such, we believed that the seven categories of the Baldrige criteria—(1) Leadership; (2) Strategy; (3) Customers; (4) Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management; (5) Workforce; (6) Operations; and (7) Results—provide an excellent framework for guiding transformational change in a mission-driven organization like AARP.

In addition, we saw Baldrige as an opportunity for us to be evaluated against the highest standards of performance excellence, to identify our strengths, and to prepare for the challenges ahead. We also saw it as valuable tool for developing leaders and increasing employee engagement in our mission to empower people to choose how they live as they age.

The application process is not easy either to learn or to implement. In fact, it is difficult, time consuming, and requires an organization-wide commitment. But in the end, it is extremely valuable for any organization undertaking a transformation or seeking to improve their operations to achieve better results.

Impact

The changes we have made by following the Baldrige criteria to transform AARP have dramatically improved



AARP CEO Jo Ann Jenkins celebrates with staff.

our ability to address issues that our members and people 50-plus care about—those related to financial resilience, health security, social connectedness, and ageism.

For example, we made a significant investment in upgrading our IT to develop connectivity essential for collaboration, agility, and knowledge management, while giving employees the ability to work from anywhere at any time. This proved to be invaluable as we helped our members confront the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Because we started this transformation long before COVID hit, we were able to transition to a virtual work environment without missing a beat.

We also created AARP Innovation Labs at our National Office to help shape the future of aging, promote healthy aging, support family caregivers, and help older Americans build financial resilience and combat social isolation.

And, our ongoing digital business platform transformation has allowed us to create a much more robust consumer experience.

As a result of all these efforts, many of our core metrics like our First-Term Renewal Rates have risen every year since we began the transformation.

Conclusion

Organizational transformation is a process and a journey. It is not a one-and-done exercise. The Baldrige Excellence Framework gives us a model to follow for updating old processes, establishing new ones, and striving for even greater results.



communities of excellence²⁰²⁶



Communities of Excellence 2026 Excels During Pandemic Year

by Stephanie Norling, Executive Director, Communities of Excellence 2026



Stephanie Norling, Executive Director, Communities of Excellence 2026

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” It is hard to believe it has been ten years since the idea of Communities of Excellence 2026 (COE 2026) was first conceived by our co-founders, Lowell Kruse and Rick Norling, and only five years since we launched the National Learning Collaborative. We have grown tremendously

thanks in large part to our own group of thoughtful, committed citizens who volunteer their time and talent to support our organization and the communities

with which we work. They have helped us lay the foundation for this effort to show that achieving systems-level change using a Baldrige-based performance excellence framework (the Communities of Excellence Framework) is possible across sectors and across organizations in a community. In this short time, we have a lot to celebrate:

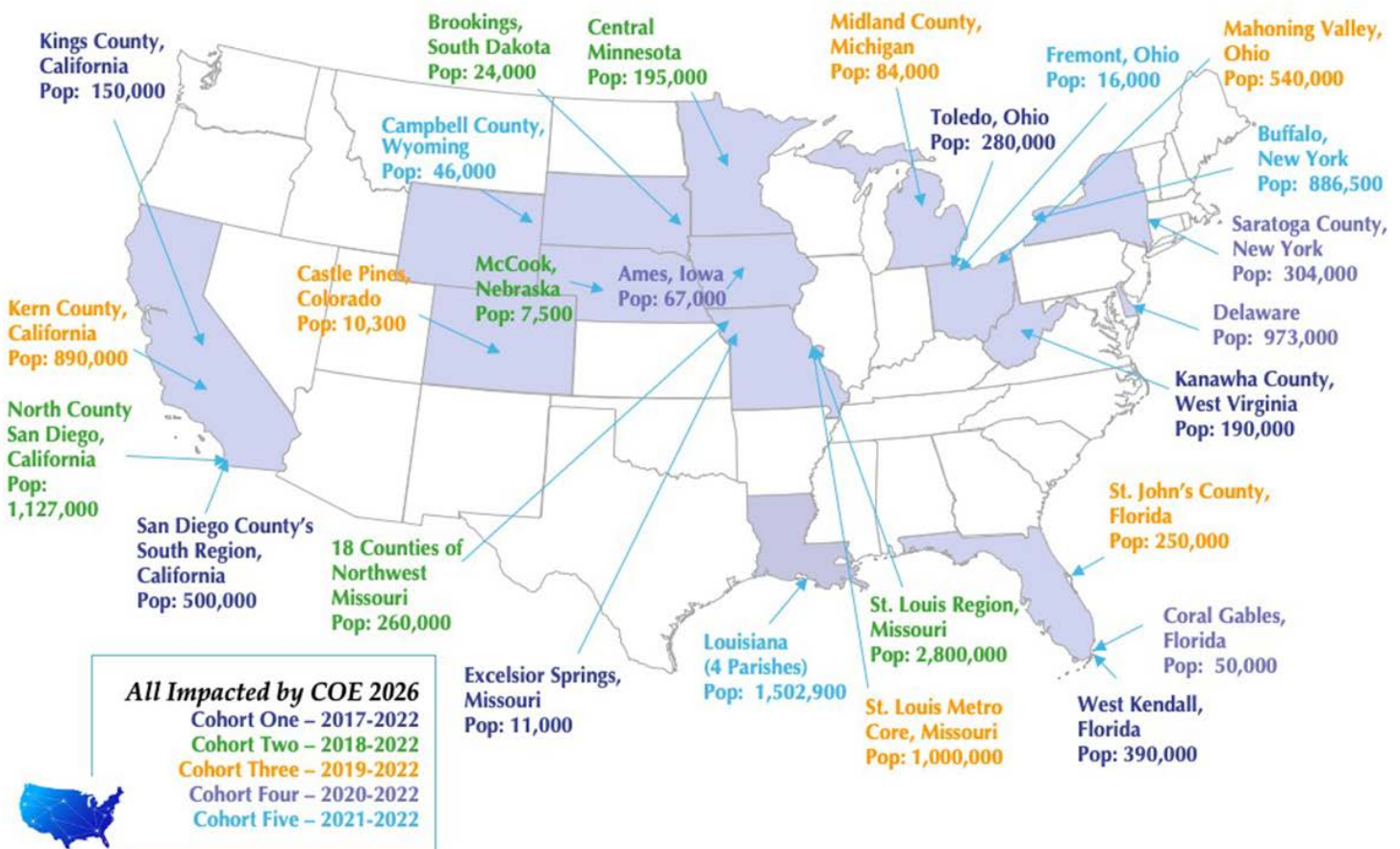
- 26 communities ranging from 7,500 to 2.8 million people representing a combined population of 12.5 million whose leaders have been involved in our three-year National Collaborative and Alumni Network. With these communities, our message has reached over 450 organizations representing all sectors of the economy.
- Our first two cohorts have graduated from this

learning cycle to enter their next level of experience and growth as COE alumni. The leaders in this group have learned and worked together for four-to-five years sharing successes, challenges, ideas, and best practices discovered on their community performance excellence journeys.

- As an advocate of performance excellence, we continue to welcome independent evaluations of our programs. The University of San Diego’s Nonprofit Institute, JUPER Communications, and other have reported evidence that participating communities increase their cross-sector inclusion, engagement, and collaboration, enabling them to:
 - ✓ Identify important key issues for their community and are developing action plans; many are starting to be implemented with success.
 - ✓ Build trust and a network of diverse relationships that did not previously exist.

“Delaware is the First State and is proud to be the first statewide Communities of Excellence 2026 community. The expertise and guidance of the national COE staff, mentors, and faculty have been instrumental in creating our statewide Delaware COE Initiative. Delaware has identified through this collaborative initiative that literacy must become a foundational priority in our state! The COE framework is guiding our efforts as we address this fundamental issue that impacts all Delawareans. We are excited about the Communities of Excellence 2026 network and its ability to help us accelerate our work. We are assured to make strong progress in the creation of a comprehensive and aligned literacy ecosystem and plan, one that will serve our state and create significant long range economic and health impacts.” – Peggy Geisler, Annie Norman, and Anne Hiller-Clark, Delaware Community of Excellence Team Members, (Learning Collaborative Year 2)

communities of excellenceTM 2026





“Our participation in the Communities of Excellence 2026 learning collaborative is helping us build community capacity in order to address issues and take advantage of opportunities, find common ground, and balance competing interests. It does not just happen. Capacity building requires both a conscious and a conscientious effort to do something (or many things) to improve the community. These intentional capacity building efforts have enabled us to create a sustainable leadership system through which we can deploy a systematic, cross-sector approach to addressing challenges in health, economic vitality, and housing. In addition, we have developed a community scorecard to measure our progress and shape future decisions. Over time, we know that this increase in collaboration and alignment of community goals and resources will result in significant gains for our community.” – Molly McGovern, City Manager for the City of Excelsior Springs, Missouri, Excelsior Springs Community of Excellence (Learning Collaborative Alumni)

- ✓ Are identifying and strengthening backbone organizations while holding partners accountable.
- ✓ Transfer learning, tools, and techniques back to their communities, thereby reaching countless others in communities through this ripple effect.
- The Assessment and Recognition Program continues to grow. In 2021, 15 communities submitted applications and for the first time, six of those applications responded to the entire Communities of Excellence Criteria, which is currently our top-level assessment opportunity. One of the six earned bronze-level recognition (West Kendall, Florida) and one received the first ever silver-level of COE recognition (Excelsior Springs, Missouri).
- Our team continues to grow. Consistent with the Baldrige culture of volunteerism, we have ten professional faculty volunteers and 15 mentors who make the National Learning Collaborative possible. This year 74 volunteer examiners reviewed applications for our Assessment and Recognition Program. Their commitment and service are invaluable.



Thrive Excelsior Steering Team celebrates their 2021 Communities of Excellence Silver-Level Recognition: (from left to right) Martha Buckman, Resident; Kristen DeHart, Excelsior Springs Hospital; Dr. Travis Hux, Excelsior Springs School District; Kim Halfhill, KH Consulting; Molly McGovern, City Manager for the City of Excelsior Springs; Mayor Sharon Powell, City of Excelsior Springs.

While the success of our organization is exciting, it is the progress that we see in the communities in our National Learning Collaborative that truly deserves the attention. Some are earlier in their journey than others, with different priorities such as broadband equity, increasing literacy rates across the lifespan, reducing infant mortality and chronic disease rates, workforce development and retention, reducing the number of organs needed for transplant, and developing a new generation of leaders ready to serve their communities. These are just some of the many efforts in place because of their COE experience. And while their priorities, their leadership structures, and the makeup of their communities may vary, all share a commitment to improving the quality of life for their residents and the belief that the COE Framework will help them reach their goals.

“West Kendall, Florida, is part of the inaugural cohort of Communities of Excellence 2026. We are now part of the Alumni class and have had the benefit of participating in this National Collaborative for FIVE years. We have created a community leadership group with formal and informal leaders, and together, created a shared vision for our community. With the support of COE, we continue to mature in our organizational skills and processes which are leading to improvements as we continue on our journey to build a Community of Excellence. We are most proud of having just finalized a Community Ethics Standard Guide which serves as a framework to ensure that we live up to our greater societal responsibility both for the organizations we represent and in our personal lives.” – Michelle Mejia, Assistant Vice President of Health Promotion and Strategic Partnerships, West Kendall Baptist Hospital, West Kendall, Florida, Community of Excellence (Learning Collaborative Alumni)

These 26 communities have served as the foundation and the inspiration that is positioning us to grow and spread our message across the country. Our vision for the future brings together the best of Communities of Excellence and the Baldrige Enterprise so that communities and the organizations within them that adopt Baldrige-based tools and practices, including the Communities of Excellence Framework, will be the top-performing in the nation.

“Communities of Excellence gives you the playbook for success in your community starting with the Voice of the Customer being prioritized into flow downs. With a better understanding of those prioritizations our efforts were better focused. Our success has been the momentum with keeping an action plan like Wellness McCook moving forward. The momentum comes from community leaders working together in ways we have not done before. In having regular meetings and discussions those action plans move forward and you can feel the energy within the group. People get excited and want to come back when they know they are impacting changes for our community. Others even ask to join the efforts, because they do not want to be left out of the fun.”
– Karen Kliment Thompson, Vice President Ancillary Services, Community Hospital, McCook, Nebraska, Community of Excellence (Learning Collaborative Alumni)

Several new projects are underway that will benefit the organizations and leaders we serve in communities across America. These include new visual tools such as a journey roadmap, a community playbook/guidebook and readiness assessment to help community leaders better understand and communicate this journey, a promising-practices resource library to capture and share successes, and a new dashboard and data literacy trainings to assist with identifying, tracking, and communicating key outcomes. We are also developing new programs to introduce new communities and new leaders to this journey.

One of the most exciting opportunities on the horizon includes adding Community as the 7th Category of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, making communities eligible for this presidential-level recognition. When this authorization occurs, it will be a significant recognition by the National Institute of Standards and Technology, the Department of Commerce, and Congress of the importance of focusing on community performance excellence to assure the continued growth and vitality of our country over its next 250 years.

We believe all these resources will help us make the community performance excellence journey more



“In Midland County, during year two we began to gather community feedback on our Communities of Excellence work. We used an appreciative inquiry model to hear resident voices. This model starts with questions about what you are doing well and looks at ways to build upon these strengths. We put together a “Meeting in a Box” kit that had all the materials needed to conduct a small group feedback session. These materials were also offered electronically. This is an iterative process that we plan to continue well into the future, adding or modifying questions as needed. The responses of our neighbors have helped to direct our work. We see the critical importance of listening and building relationships.”
– Sharon Mortensen, President and CEO, Midland Area Community Foundation, Midland, Michigan, Midland County Community of Excellence (Learning Collaborative Year 3)

accessible to any community across the country that seeks a new level of excellence and better outcomes for residents. We are looking ahead to what life can be like for our children and great-great-grandchildren and taking action today to ensure our American society of people, communities, counties, and states continue to be united and well-positioned to thrive for many years to come.

Every year I am thankful for the support we receive, from our volunteers, staff, and board, as well as the support of the Baldrige Foundation, the Baldrige Program, and the Alliance for Performance Excellence. Considering all we have been through as a nation, it feels like it is not enough to simply say thank you. Despite demands from their own organizations, the need to support families, and especially for their own self-care in these difficult times, these individuals and organizations continued to show up and share their time, their talent, and their resources with us. I am very grateful to our special group of committed, thoughtful citizens, helping us change the world one community at a time.

“The engagement of many voices from diverse perspectives has been our greatest area of focus and success. Covering 18 primarily rural counties to positively impact health, economy, education, and quality of life key performance indicators is an incredibly ambitious task. We have found it helpful to focus first on gathering and sharing new knowledge through surveys, gap analysis studies, Zoom listening sessions, and facilitating Discovery Group sessions on priority topics surfaced by residents and leaders. We have held sessions that are spurring more collaboration around high-speed broadband access, building a more connected entrepreneurial ecosystem of support for business development, local media, and tourism/recreation. All of the topics are aligned with the foundational goal of keeping and attracting innovative talent to the region to turn around longtime population decline.

In addition, we launched a public participation website as a new communication system to better connect and promote the region. We have developed a regional community development leadership training program to increase leadership capability and capacity. Our Maximize [My Community] Journey Framework™ embeds the Communities of Excellence Framework and Baldrige-adapted principles that are helping strengthen and enhance the existing work being done by community members and organizations serving the communities and counties across our region. We look forward to continuing to make progress by next focusing on creating a partner council with representatives from all sectors serving the area.” – Christel Gollnick, Maximize Northwest Missouri Navigation Team Member, Northwest Missouri Community of Excellence (Learning Collaborative Alumni)

Experienced Baldrige Examiners Share Learning with “Younger Selves”

by Christine Schaefer, Baldrige Performance Excellence Program
National Institute of Standards and Technology



Serving as a Baldrige examiner® (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/products-services/become-baldrige-examiner>) is an “honor, responsibility, and life-changing opportunity,” a learning experience like no other. Volunteers who give of their time to evaluate high-performing U.S. organizations for the Baldrige Award will be immersed in a team learning experience. The learning may extend to a site visit (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/baldrige-award/award-cycle-overview>), where examiners will see a potential role-model organization in action. After gaining in-depth practice using the Baldrige Excellence Framework® (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/publications/baldrige-excellence-framework>) (including the Criteria for Performance Excellence®)

(<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/baldrige-criteria-commentary>), examiners help drive performance excellence across the country.

With the online application (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/apply-become-baldrige-examiner>) to serve as a Baldrige examiner in 2022 now open, we recently invited the most experienced members of the current Board of Examiners (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/examiners-list>) for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award® (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/baldrige-award>) to share what they’ve learned from their experiences. In particular, we reached out to those who have progressed over several years of volunteering for the Board of

Examiners to the levels of “senior examiner” and “master examiner” (through their completion of annual assignments, including leadership roles, on the selective board).

Following are some responses from these seasoned volunteers for the benefit of those who are new to the uniquely challenging-but-fulfilling professional development experience of being a Baldrige examiner. Can you imagine what your first day as a new examiner might be like?

Remember the day you first started as a new examiner at Baldrige examiner training. If you could tell your younger self what you will learn about organizational excellence, what would you say?

RESPONSES:

Relax. Breathe. Listen. Be vulnerable.

“Relax. Breathe. Listen. Be vulnerable. You will learn about the Baldrige framework through people (fellow Baldrige examiners, the staff of the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program) and organizations (case studies of fictitious award applicant organizations as well as actual Baldrige Award recipients). The learning never stops. All teach. All learn. You will not believe how your brain becomes “rewired” over the years as a Baldrige examiner.”

—Brian R. Miller, Senior Examiner

Systematic approaches are highly transferrable.

“If I could tell my younger self what I will learn about organizational excellence, I think that would be, “Systematic approaches are highly transferrable.” I have been amazed at how much I learned from non-health-care organizations that was applicable to my own leadership in health care. Getting outside of my home sector was a bit uncomfortable at first. However, crossing over sectors removes the sense of potential competitiveness, simulates innovative thinking, and demonstrates that organizations (like people) have more in common than we sometimes realize. Exploring (and embracing) our diversity is helpful for growth in maturity.”

—Denise Haynes, Master Examiner

An honor, responsibility, and life-changing opportunity

“When I applied to become a new Baldrige examiner, I did not come from a Baldrige framework-using organization, but my employer organization was striving for excellence. I found [the team-based Baldrige Award evaluation process] challenging; we worked with an organization that won the award. What I learned from that [Baldrige Award recipient organization] was an amazing culture. It wasn’t an organization that just had gifted leaders; it also had strengths in its workforce, commitment, and involvement of partners and others in striving to deliver services to its community.

Once you are on an examiner team, you will learn to work virtually with a team of amazing professionals from all different backgrounds, all of whom are grounded in believing in the value of the Baldrige framework. You will learn to translate what an award applicant is striving to achieve so you can help provide the organization with a feedback report on its journey to excellence.

If you are lucky enough to serve on a site visit team, this will be a special gift to see Baldrige ‘live.’ It is also a time to listen and learn from the award applicant organization as the Baldrige examiner team clarifies and verifies potential strengths and opportunities for improvement (OFIs). It is an honor to represent the Baldrige Program and “family” of stakeholders, so examiners have a responsibility to be respectful and learn from the applicant.

Finally, if you’re a Baldrige examiner during a time when organizations are impacted by COVID-19, you will learn versatility. Once you gain experience, you might be selected to be a mentor to a new examiner, which will bring you full circle from where you began.

Being selected as a Baldrige examiner is an honor, responsibility, and life-changing opportunity to continue to strive for excellence in various fields. You won’t regret the time and commitment because of the [intangible] gifts you will receive.”

—Barbara Oot-Giromini, Master Examiner

Be open, listen, take the best practices

"I have been a Baldrige examiner for 30 years. Based on what I now know, I would tell my younger self, "You are going to experience and learn from the best organizations in the world! Be open, listen, take the best practices you see and hear about, and modify these for your organization to make those best practices even better!"

—Janet Johnson, Master Examiner

It is an amazing experience!

"I would tell my younger self that just as an applicant embarks on a journey when completing their first Baldrige Award application, becoming a new Baldrige examiner is also a journey. Be patient; the learning as a first-year examiner is overwhelming, but each year that you participate will bring immense value. Whether you're a first-year or a tenth-year examiner, there is much to learn from the process, and you will add value to the process, as well. It is an amazing experience!"

—Linda Martin, Senior Examiner

One of the most meaningful and rewarding adventures of your personal and professional career

"Dear Younger Self:
I know you're scared. Deal with it. Becoming a competent and reliable member of the Baldrige board of examiners will be one of the most meaningful and rewarding adventures of your personal and professional career. You already know this and that's why you're scared.

Dig in. Work hard. You don't always need to be right or be the person at your training table or on your team who has "the answer." But you need to be the team member who consistently meets/exceeds expectations for doing the work on time and in compliance with the tools, techniques, and resources provided in examiner training.

... Stay strong. Finish strong. Serving as a Baldrige examiner is your contribution to making the world a better place."

—Jan K. Garfield, Master Examiner

Most significant development experiences in my career

"As I look back on that first-year experience as a Baldrige examiner nearly 20 years ago, I remember that I wanted to learn more about organizational excellence to strengthen my ASQ certification as a manager of quality and organizational excellence. Baldrige examiner training was so much more. It was not just learning the Criteria for Performance Excellence and the meaning and application of this framework. It was (and still is) an opportunity to talk to and network with experts and practitioners in the field of quality and organizational excellence. After training, I could see (in Baldrige Award applications and site visits) how organizations promoted and attained excellence when they chose to utilize the Baldrige Criteria. Because of training, participation on examiner teams, and seeing organizations living the Criteria of Performance Excellence, I've been better able to apply organizational excellence within my organization even when senior leaders have chosen not to pursue a Baldrige Award. Baldrige training and program participation as an examiner have been the most significant development experiences in my career."

—Patrice (Pat) Griffith, Master Examiner

Achieving organizational excellence is not a destination, but an ever-changing, never-ending journey

"I would remind myself to trust the process and to realize that achieving organizational excellence is not a destination, but an ever-changing, never-ending journey."

—Renee Rieder, Senior Examiner

APPLY TO BECOME A BALDRIGE EXAMINER

Consider applying to be a Baldrige examiner for the 2022 award cycle and "making the world a better place." Don't just take the Baldrige Program's word for what an amazing experience it will be; experienced examiners offer the best advice.

SHARE YOUR COMMENTS

Current or former examiners: You're welcome to share more responses by submitting comments under this blog.



Questions Drive the Quest for Baldrige: The Real Reward is in the Process

by John Kueven, Senior Vice President, Wellstar Health System; President, Wellstar Cobb Hospital; and Interim President, Wellstar Paulding Hospital and Nichole Rydahl, Assistant Vice President of Operations, Wellstar Paulding Hospital

Think of that enlightened person in your life who motivates you to be your best. This sage rarely gives direct advice but asks all the right questions to point you toward a successful outcome. People that valuable can be hard to find, and once found, it can be challenging or impossible to engage them deeply to obtain direction and guidance. Fortunately, our team has benefitted from the performance framework of the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, a program that fosters hardwiring of systematic approaches into organizations to achieve the best performance outcomes. It is like having a very wise and experienced business excellence mentor in your court.

“The real reward is not the award. The true benefit is how all our fine-tuning through the quest for Baldrige has positively affected our patients, team members, care providers, and partners—the people at the center of everything we do.”

The Greatest Reward is Not the Award

We have participated in the Baldrige program with several health care organizations in the past, all resulting in state or national honors. Most recently, our team at Wellstar Paulding Hospital earned the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, the only presidential award for performance excellence.

While this track record indicates that a leader's committed participation in the Baldrige program can lead to prestigious awards, attention-grabbing headlines, and bolstered brand reputation, that is not why organizations should participate.

We chose to follow the Baldrige Excellence Framework to drive employee engagement, maximize performance,

and achieve safe, high-quality care for patients. All of these are core to our mission and priorities as part of a leading nonprofit health system that provides care for millions of people each year.

The real reward is not the award. The true benefit is how all our fine-tuning through the quest for Baldrige has positively affected our patients, team members, care providers, and partners—the people at the center of everything we do.

No Question Left Unasked

Remember that sage advisor who asks all the right questions? The Baldrige program helps leaders ask the right questions of ourselves, our employees and our customers. Baldrige's assessment tools and criteria include 50-100 questions in every section of the management framework. That is a lot of tough questions to help you take a closer look at your strategy, your services, your value-add, your processes, your customers, your workforce, your operations, and more.

Sometimes it can take hours to answer just one question. While that can be frustrating if you are only in for an award, the real reward is in discovering that you may not yet have all the answers. Those tough questions often illuminate the areas that most need focus and improvement.

As part of the Baldrige program, we had the benefit of being granted a site visit and receiving invaluable feedback from third-party performance experts from other organizations and industries. While not everyone who applies for an award will get a site visit, they will receive an evaluation based on their answers to the framework questions. This evaluation provides an opportunity to shed light on areas in your organization that are ripe for improvement.

Baldrige Performance & Lean Management Go Hand in Hand

Once our leadership committed to following the Baldrige framework, we deployed the Lean Management System to optimize workflows. The goal was to encourage and empower problem solvers in every area of the hospital, from respiratory therapists and nurses to people in environmental services or food and nutrition. With Lean Management, frontline workers generated countless ideas for system improvement. For example, the Emergency Department team used Lean tools to get patients to a room faster after arrival.

Because the Baldrige performance excellence program inspired us to hardwire Lean Management into our culture, we were able to increase quality, safety, performance, and patient satisfaction scores exponentially. In fact, Wellstar Paulding Hospital began performing in the top decile in nearly every category. As a result, the hospital earned an “A” safety rating by Leapfrog for more than three years, had lower than average health care industry turnover, and ranked in the top decile and quartile for patient experience. Quality and safety performance ranked among the best in the country for key metrics including mortality, complication rates, falls with injury, and pressure injury.

“In a time when we were presented with new information and challenges on an hour-by-hour basis, the systemic processes and problem solving we had incorporated into our culture through the Baldrige framework allowed us to be nimble and achieve change quickly.”

For patients, this means the hospital is one of the safest, most efficient hospitals in the country, translating to high-quality care and a positive patient experience.

Baldrige Excellence Achieved in a Pandemic

During the months leading up to receiving the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, the COVID-19 pandemic broke out. Needless to say, we had not planned on a site visit during a pandemic, which added a layer of complexity to the rigorous process!

Going through the Baldrige process during the COVID crisis helped maximize efficiency when we needed to perform at unprecedented levels. In a time when we



were presented with new information and challenges on an hour-by-hour basis, the systemic processes and problem solving we had incorporated into our culture through the Baldrige framework allowed us to be nimble and achieve change quickly.

Our teams were empowered to innovate, finding solutions for challenges ranging from making patient care tasks more efficient to sharing information about changes faster across all departments through our leadership system.

One major challenge was how to meet the need for more intensive care unit (ICU) nurses. The solution we identified was tiered staffing. Nurses from other units (such as the operating room) performed non-critical care tasks, which allowed the ICU nurses to focus more on specialized intensive care tasks. With tiered staffing, a critical care nurse could help safely care for a larger-than-typical patient load in the ICU.

Keep Asking Questions to Nurture a Culture of Excellence

While we are honored and humbled that we won the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award—during the challenging first year of a pandemic—it is not time to rest.

We must nurture a culture of self-reflection as we continue to prioritize and strive for excellence. There are many questions we must consistently ask ourselves to sustain the performance levels we have achieved. And we must use what we have learned to address new challenges, such as the importance of supporting the resiliency and mental wellness of our team members and focusing on workforce development in the midst of intensifying staffing challenges.

Wellstar encourages any organization considering embarking on the Baldrige journey to begin by asking themselves tough questions, starting with: “Am I in it for the award...or to create positive change and performance excellence?”



The Alliance for Performance Excellence

by Brian Lassiter, Chair, the Alliance for Performance Excellence



Brian Lassiter,
Chair, the Alliance
for Performance
Excellence

Interested in dramatically improving your organization’s results but don’t know where to start? Consider the Alliance for Performance Excellence, sometimes called the “front door” or the “feeder system” to the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, where most organizations start their journey to excellence!

The last couple of years have been unprecedented. Organizations are still facing challenges with the pandemic, staffing shortages, supply chain issues, shifting work environments and business models, and planning for an uncertain future. The Alliance is the 501(c)(3) nonprofit network of Baldrige-based programs and other members across the nation and world that share in the mission of growing performance excellence and is designed to provide resources and support to organizations and communities desiring to improve.

Today, the Alliance represents 29 Baldrige-based programs covering all 50 states and U.S. Territories plus four supporting members who support performance excellence throughout the nation and world. In 2021, Alliance member programs evaluated nearly 700 award applications, trained over 1,100 examiners, served over 600 members, hosted 11 conferences that had over 3,300 combined attendees, and convened dozens of workshops and other events that attracted over 3,600 attendees. The Alliance has over 700 non-examiner volunteers, nearly 40 paid staff, and a combined budget of nearly \$9 million.

In addition to conducting Baldrige-based assessments and recognizing performance through awards, many Alliance member programs also conduct training, provide coaching, and host a variety of learning and

networking events—breakfasts, webinars, workshops, roundtables, fellows programs, and conferences—to help leaders in all sizes and types of organizations explore best practices in performance excellence. In many ways, Alliance member programs are “developmental” in nature, helping organizations begin or accelerate their journeys to excellence.



Continuing to Shift, Remaining Agile, Resilient

As with all organizations, 2021 required the Alliance and our members to continue to shift in response to the global pandemic. Alliance members now host most of their programs online (with a few now moving toward hybrid formats), which means examiner training, learning workshops, conferences, and even the Baldrige-based assessments were all virtual or in blended formats. While these changes were executed out of necessity, some of the new business models are likely to stick. For example, many to most Alliance member programs are gearing up for hybrid Baldrige assessment site visits, with some of the discovery taking place online and some in-person. The Baldrige Fall Conference, hosted every year by the Alliance and our partners (which the last two years was online only), is being designed as a hybrid event for this October, providing an in-person as well as online option for those who prefer that flexibility.



Speaking of the Baldrige Fall Conference, the 2021 event, with the theme of Navigating Forward, Destination Excellence, drew well over 300 attendees from all over the country. The 2022 conference will be hosted by two Alliance members (the California Council for Excellence and Communities of Excellence 2026), hosted in San Diego, October 19-20. More information will be shared soon at www.baldrigeconference.org.

Other Activities

The Alliance has also been active with several other mission-related initiatives which benefit our members and organizations across the United States on the journey to excellence:

- In partnership with the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, the Alliance sponsored research led by Walden University to understand organizational resilience and how those organizations using Baldrige weathered pandemic-related challenges better than those who did not. The white paper, *Using the Baldrige Excellence Framework to Improve Organizational Resilience and Sustainability*, was published earlier this year and features 16 insights—common themes or best practices—that higher performing organizations embraced to navigate today’s challenges. To download a free

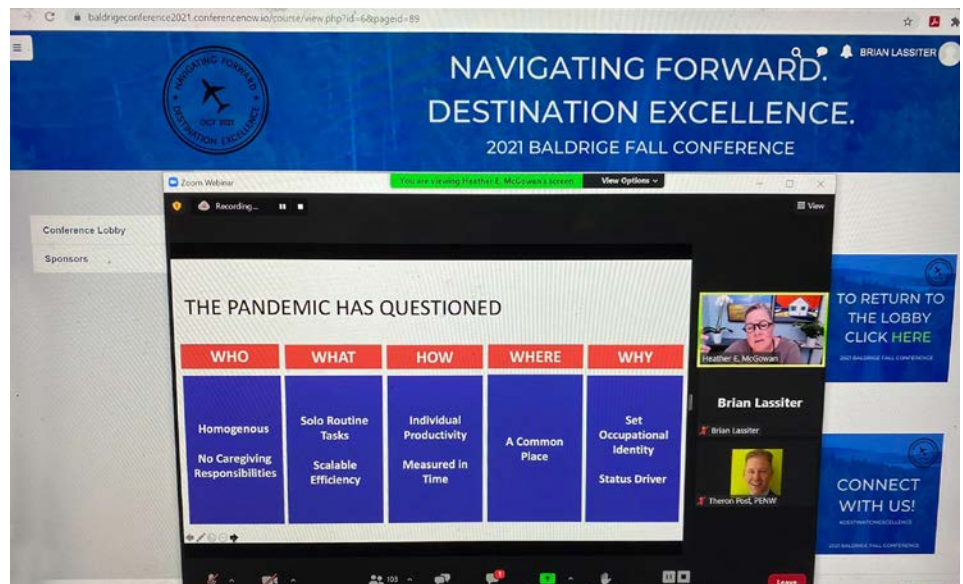
copy of the white paper, visit the Baldrige Institute for Performance Excellence (<https://www.baldrigeinstitute.org/research/white-papers>).

- While the Alliance has 29 program members that serve all 50 states and U.S. Territories, we continue to add other members that are interested in gaining access to Alliance products and services designed to grow performance excellence across the United States and the globe.
- The Alliance continues to partner with Communities of Excellence 2026 COE 206), another part of the Baldrige Enterprise, in supporting community-based excellence using the Baldrige Framework. Alliance members are now conducting Baldrige-based community assessments on behalf of COE 2026, and Alliance members continue to increase access to its training, coaching, and conferences in support of teaching and sharing

the principles of excellence to community leaders. As COE 2026 continues to grow, the Alliance is eager to deepen the partnership to accelerate the impact of Baldrige in communities across our country.

- The Alliance also continues to partner with the Baldrige Program, the Baldrige Foundation, COE 2026, and ASQ to grow and sustain the Baldrige Enterprise. Deeper collaboration across all parts of the Baldrige community will increase the impact of this Framework, helping organizations and communities of all sizes and types improve outcomes and reach higher levels of performance.

These efforts are in pursuit of the Alliance mission: “Enhancing Our Members’ Ability to Grow Baldrige-based Performance Excellence.” To learn more about the Alliance and its members or to find a local program near you visit, www.baldrigealliance.org.



Presenting virtually at the 2021 Baldrige Fall Conference is keynote speaker Heather E. McGowan, Future of Work Strategist and 2017 Global LinkedIn Top Voice for Education. McGowan helps leaders prepare their people and organizations for the Fourth Industrial Revolution.



Leadership and Baldrige

by Terry May
Founder and CEO, MESA

My organization first applied for the Baldrige Award in 2002. I did that in a very naïve and misguided attempt to convince myself of how good we were. Following my return to reality after reading our first feedback report, MESA embarked on a twenty-year improvement journey. We became the first organization to receive three Baldrige Awards and there is still no destination in sight.

One of the major reasons that the Baldrige Criteria appealed so much to me was the organization of the categories. Those seven categories aligned very closely to our philosophy about business. As an engineer, it just seemed logical and made sense. As it turns out, I had no concept of the difficulty and challenges we would face in the years ahead. And as the leader of our organization, I had to learn and grow personally in order to guide us through this journey. And through that journey, I learned a little about leadership.

It is no coincidence that the first Baldrige category is leadership. Leaders set the direction and guide the organization. Unless the leadership of an organization is solid, stable, and committed; it would be almost impossible for an organization to enjoy long-term success.

So how do you define leadership? I have read just about every book on leadership that has ever been

written. Of course that is not true, but I have read a lot of them. And you can find all the definitions you want.

- Peter Drucker: “The only definition of a leader is someone who has followers.”
- Warren Bennis: “Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality.”
- John Maxwell: “Leadership is influence—nothing more, nothing less.”

So are leaders born or are leaders made? I cannot answer that question, but I can assure you that leaders are human and make mistakes. And most of the leaders I have known have worked very hard to learn and improve their leadership abilities.

Here is a great quote from John Brandt about leaders: “Great leaders...use what they’ve learned from books for the first 10 percent and what they’ve learned from mentors for the next 40 percent. Everything else is improvisation and theft.”

All the books I have read about leadership give great advice. The hard part is putting that advice into practice. So I am going to add my own personal advice about leadership, and it is really pretty simple: Be generous.

This piece of advice goes well beyond your career. As you

navigate your life, putting yourself first will not put you ahead. The secret to success is generosity. This is a key concept in virtually every major religion and faith: it is better to give than receive.

And studies highlight the benefits of generosity on both our physical and mental health.

- Nothing will make you happier than giving.
- Influencing someone’s life in a positive way is indescribably satisfying and fulfilling.
- This is important at any point in your career but especially for those of us who are approaching the end of it. We have been blessed—so pass it on and give back.

“Giving is like building a muscle. It requires practice and persistence. Once it becomes habitual, you will emerge as a stronger leader.”

Generous people share information readily, share credit often, and give of their time and expertise easily. Leaders and managers who are generous engender trust, respect, and goodwill from their colleagues and employees. Take some inspiration from Walt Whitman’s words, “The habit of giving enhances the desire to give.” Giving is like building a muscle. It

requires practice and persistence. Once it becomes habitual, you will emerge as a stronger leader.

So I would like to get a little more specific about how to accomplish this with these bullet points.

1. Give people a sense of importance and purpose and encouragement

Consider what small actions you could take intentionally today to make people feel that the work they do is important, and that they themselves, as people, are important to your team. Pick someone who needs encouragement and resolve to give them that.

2. Share credit easily

People love to be told they are doing a great job. Recognize your team regularly for a job well done. It does not cost anything. 78 percent of employees say it is “extremely important” to be recognized by their managers for good work. Consider as well that people like to know that their boss’s boss knows the great contributions they made to a project, or about their effort in accomplishing a project. I will say it again, it does not cost anything, and it will build loyalty and engagement.

3. Give anonymously

Real generosity of spirit is doing something for someone without their knowledge. Think of one or two deserving people in your organization that you can help by planting a career-enhancing seed on their behalf—perhaps saying something positive about their work to someone in authority.



4. Know when to forgive

A characteristic of a generous person is a total lack of resentment. It is in effect being too noble, too big for that. Who do you need to forgive? What do you need to let go?

5. Give opportunity

One of the most valuable gifts we can give someone is giving them a chance. Is there someone right now to whom you could give a second chance to prove themselves? If so, what active steps can you take to create the right circumstances for them to succeed? What doors can you open for someone who is well deserving, but not well positioned to be noticed?

6. Share your knowledge and experience: teach, mentor, and influence

Be gracious with your time and your expertise and contribute to the collective learning available to those around you. Do not let all the brilliance you’ve gathered over the years go to waste. Your professional highs and lows are equally valuable to those just

starting out in the workplace. Concede your mistakes, highlight your proud moments, give feedback, and offer guidance. Resolve to become a philanthropist of know-how. What knowledge, expertise, or best practices can you share with others as a way to enrich them? I’ve had many mentors over my career who have coached me, guided me, chastised me. I’ve had positive role models and negative role models. And I learned from all of them.

I would like to close with a couple of quotes that I believe provide the best advice for anyone in their career. The first one is, “What we leave behind is far more important than how far we get ahead.”

The second is from Barbara Bush who said, “Never lose sight of the fact that the most important yardstick of your success will be how you treat other people—your family, friends, and coworkers, and even strangers you meet along the way.”

Back to the Beginning:

Establishing the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Program, March 31, 1988

by President Ronald Reagan

These past several years have seen dramatic economic progress. We've set a record for economic expansion—the longest in U.S. peacetime. That growth has created over 15.5 million new jobs—you've heard me say that before, but I can't get tired of saying it; I love to say it—and a rise in real Gross National Product of nearly 23 percent since the recovery began over five years ago. And due in no small part to the leadership of Mac Baldrige, we have also seen remarkable improvement in productivity and the quality of American goods.

We still have much to accomplish. We must continue to enhance private incentives and increase opportunities for work, investment, and entrepreneurship. We must continue efforts to bring down the federal deficit by restraining spending; we must resist protectionism and make sure that our domestic and foreign policies support industry's ability to compete in world markets.

The substantial exchange rate changes have improved significantly the price competitiveness of U.S. industries—and the early results are encouraging. So, this is a moment of opportunity.

But America's economic strength relies first and foremost on our ability to innovate—through technology, managerial commitment, and labor's

skill—and to improve productivity and quality. I can think of no better way for us to seize this opportunity for growth than a new focus on the quality of our products and services.

We have tough competition in international markets. Many of our competitors have used both U.S.-developed techniques and their own home-grown methods to make dramatic improvements. They've sold the world, and consequently their goods and services, on their achievements in quality. We need to continue to take note of their accomplishments, taking stock of our potential, and continuing a quality revolution that makes America second to none.

The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award provides us with a very visible way to do just that—to continue this revolution. The award salutes companies that improve the quality of their goods and services, thus enhancing productivity, lowering costs, and increasing profitability. Just as important, it offers a vehicle for companies, large and small, in manufacturing and in services, to examine their own approaches to quality. It offers companies a standard with which to compare their own progress to that of the country's very best.

This award means even more to me because it is a fitting way to honor



President Reagan launches the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award program at a White House ceremony on March 31, 1988. Behind the President, from left, are Vice President George Bush, Secretary of Commerce William Verity, Jr., and Congressman Sherwood L. Boehlert of New York, a chief sponsor of the legislation creating the Award.

a good friend. The economic liberty and strong competition that are indispensable to economic progress were principles that Mac Baldrige stressed, both as a successful businessman and a dynamic and effective Secretary of Commerce. The affluence this nation enjoys and the economic success that we've achieved derive from a free enterprise system that provides quality products and services. Mac helped strengthen this system. Mac's work symbolized quality in every respect, and this award honors him in a lasting and positive way.

I look forward to November when I'll have the opportunity to pay special tribute not just to those of you who are making this award possible, but to those whose quality achievements signal a new national awareness on this matter and a resurgent America.

The President's remarks appeared in Business America: The Magazine of International Trade, a publication of the U.S. Department of Commerce, May 9, 1988, Vol. 109, No. 10.

National Quality Award Brings Opportunities for Industry

by Dr. Curt W. Reimann

As we continue our exploration of the inception of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Awards, this essay may be considered the Baldrige Program's first Annual Report. It is an article written by Dr. Curt Reimann that appeared in Business America: The Magazine of International Trade, a publication of the U.S. Department of Commerce (Vol. 109, No. 10, May 9, 1988). At the time this appeared, Dr. Reimann was the Associate Director for Quality Programs at the National Bureau of Standards. In response to Congress passing and President Reagan signing the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Improvement Act of 1987, Dr. Reimann was tasked with establishing the award program. He served as the first director of the Baldrige Program until his retirement in 1995.

Quality. In the past, this term has often been viewed in a very narrow sense—how a product performs, how reliable it is, or how it conforms with specifications. Now, quality is taking on a much larger meaning. In the broader context, quality encompasses goods and services. It also covers the processes used to produce and deliver these goods and services.

Why the change? One overwhelming factor is the new era of stiff international competition for markets which has made the quality of products and services a major determinant in market share. If a company cannot offer top quality at a competitive price, there is bound to be a competitor waiting to meet the customers' demands. Perhaps just as importantly, the way a firm approaches its quality management efforts in delivering products or services may make a difference of 20 percent or more in operating costs. It is no surprise that quality improvement is becoming a popular theme—and imperative—for companies.

The new emphasis on quality is bringing changes in the traditional concept of quality control itself. In the past, quality often was equated with inspecting a product after it was made: in short, making sure that defective parts or products did not leave the factory or warehouse. Parts that did not conform to specifications were rejected or reworked. Inspection and correction costs were a significant part of the cost of doing business. In the "new" approach to quality, this vital

feature is something that is considered right from the start before a product or service is even designed. It also extends downstream to the distributor, to the marketer, and to the customer. It has a bearing on all operations. This is often called "total quality control," and the system for integrating all quality functions has been dubbed "total quality management."

The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Improvement Act of 1987 embraces this new quality approach by creating a National Quality Award for U.S. businesses



All three directors of the Baldrige Program, from left to right, Dr. Curt W. Reimann, Robert G. Fangmeyer, and Dr. Harry S. Hertz.

which excel in total quality management. Unlike most awards programs, this is not merely a recognition program for the “winners;” it is intended to promote broad national awareness about the importance of quality and the characteristics of an excellent quality system. The Award will also publicize successful quality strategies.

The awards program is designed to reflect both the large purposes of the Award and the larger meaning of quality. The law establishing this award sets certain specific requirements for the awards and for management of the program. The law requires awards to be made to companies for quality excellence as judged through detailed evaluation made by peers. Development and operating costs are to be borne by the private sector. The government’s role is limited to creating, validating, and improving the award processes and ensuring effective information transfer.

The National Bureau of Standards was selected to manage the program based upon its long history of helping industry to improve the quality of its products and processes—by supplying measurement services that assure accuracy and precision in manufacturing and by developing measurement techniques to build quality into the manufacturing process. NBS also has a reputation for serving as a catalyst and as a neutral

third-party to facilitate the exchange of ideas and technical information.

In carrying out its responsibilities to quickly make the awards program a reality, NBS has built upon the foundation of other awards which are given to recognize quality achievement and has consulted quality experts from around the country. Past efforts of the American Productivity Center were particularly helpful in launching the Baldrige Award Program. NBS also has contacted potential award “customers” to determine what characteristics should be built into the award. Working within the requirements of the legislation, the 1988 awards program has been set up with these basic features:

Categories for awards. There are three categories of awards:

- manufacturers or subsidiaries,
- service companies or subsidiaries, and
- small businesses (with 25-500 employees).

Up to two awards may be given each year in each category.

Eligibility for qualification. Applicants must apply in writing to the NBS director. They must be incorporated and located in the United States. Subsidiaries—defined as divisions or business units of larger companies—must primarily serve either the public or businesses other than the parent company.

Examination. Companies must permit rigorous evaluation of their applications, including a site visit for high scoring finalists. Applications will be reviewed by a Board of Examiners, comprised of quality experts selected from industry, professional and trade organizations, and universities. More than 100 examiners, including a panel of nine judges, all meeting the highest standards of qualification and peer recognition, have been appointed by the NBS director to evaluate the 1988 applications. Each examiner has received three days of intensive training for this job. The overall examination process will be managed by the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Consortium, Inc., in conjunction with the American Society for Quality Control and the American Productivity Center.

Criteria. The award is based upon well-defined criteria spelled out in detail in the application guidelines. Applicants need to address seven areas



Dr. Reimann with Molly Baldrige, daughter of Secretary Malcolm Baldrige, at the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award presentation, April 2, 2017.



Dr. Reimann's legacy continues to grow. Here he is talking with Suzanne Collins, a member of the inaugural class of recipients of the Dr. Curt Reimann Baldrige Scholarship, at the Quest for Excellence conference, April 10, 2018.

of their total quality management system: leadership, information and analysis, strategic quality planning, human resource utilization, quality assurance of products and services, results from quality assurance of products and services, and customer satisfaction.

The Award examination is comprehensive and results oriented. The applicants must address 62 examination items in the seven areas. They must provide factual information, data, and trends that demonstrate both continued progress and high levels of success.

Awards. While there is no monetary reward for winners, they will receive a medal bearing the inscription "Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award" and "Quest for Excellence." This award will be presented by the President. Winners may publicize and advertise their awards, if they agree to share their successful quality improvement strategies with other American organizations.

Information Transfer. Since one of the key goals of the awards program is to foster heightened awareness of ways for improving quality, the program is designed to provide specific feedback to applicants. In addition, successful quality strategies will be publicized in collaboration with ongoing private sector efforts. NBS will establish an affiliates program associated with the award. Participation in the affiliates programs will be open to professional societies, trade associations, and other organizations wishing to assign a quality liaison person.

The principal purpose of the affiliates program will be to create a vehicle to make available award findings for use in education and training programs throughout the United States. This approach is being taken because NBS does not wish to duplicate any of the many excellent programs now available. Rather, it seeks to strengthen those programs through encouraging the incorporation of the unique findings of the awards program. Cooperative workshops, symposia, and publications will be developed among affiliates according to need and opportunity.

Award program oversight and funding. The Secretary of Commerce has appointed a prestigious Board of Overseers to review award processes and to suggest improvements. The Secretary is authorized by law to encourage private funding and to impose fees upon applicants. For 1988, applicants must submit an initial \$1,500 fee to cover some of the costs of the application review. Several business leaders have joined together to establish the Foundation for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. Funds raised through the Foundation will be used to support and improve the awards program.

Timetable and Response. Initial interest in the award has been very encouraging. With an application deadline of May 20, within the short period of time since the applications became available, several thousand companies have inquired about the award. Even though relatively few companies are expected to complete the rigorous application process in the first year—between 100 and 200 companies may apply—the program already is yielding dividends. Many companies have reported that they are using the application guidelines as a tool for undertaking comprehensive reviews and for assessing their own quality systems. Whether or not these firms eventually apply for the award, the program clearly is benefiting them, and the country. Other organizations are using the Baldrige Award criteria at local or regional levels to focus upon quality requirements in public and private institutions—schools, hospitals, businesses, and local governments.

President Reagan will present the first awards in November 1988. Soon afterward, in January, applications will be available for the 1989 awards cycle. In the meantime, even those companies not competing for this year's award are encouraged to write or call for applications so that they can start down the road of improved quality now.



Back to the Beginning:

Remarks at the Presentation Ceremony for the First Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Awards, November 14, 1988

by President Ronald Reagan

Well, good morning. In nearly 2 weeks, America will celebrate Thanksgiving, a time when the Nation looks back, takes stock, and gives thanks for the personal and economic freedoms with which Americans are blessed. As a nation, we have much to be thankful for. We've continued to enjoy the longest peacetime expansion in our nation's history. Real gross national product has risen by 26 percent since the recovery started 6 years ago. American industry is again the class of world class competition.

Yes, America's future is bright. Today's ceremony reflects both the progress we've made and the promises that we have yet to keep. America's economic strength depends on industry's ability to improve productivity and quality and to remain on the cutting edge of technology. And that's why the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award is so important. The award recognizes the contribution that companies across the country are making to our economic growth—companies that make the highest quality products.

And today we salute three corporations that reflect American industry's dedication to quality. Each of them, and thousands of others, help keep America strong by making American products the best products available. They and others like them exemplify the belief that quality counts first, foremost, and always. The one trait that characterizes these winners is that they realize that quality improvement is a never-ending process, a companywide effort in which every worker plays a critical part. They realize that customer satisfaction through better quality is the goal. And they know that America's economic strength and future depend more and more upon the quality of its products.



From left to right: 1988 Baldrige Award-Winning Organization Leaders: Robert W. Galvin, Chairman of Motorola, Inc.; John C. Marous, Chairman and CEO of Westinghouse Electric Corp.; and R. Arden Sims, President and CEO of Globe Metallurgical, Inc., with President Ronald Reagan and Secretary of Commerce William Verity, Jr., November 14, 1988, in the East Room of the White House.

This award was established and carried out in the spirit of cooperation between government and the private sector. And that's the way it should be. We owe a debt of gratitude to the Foundation that helped support this award and the many private sector individuals, especially the examiners, who made the award possible through their own dedication to quality. And a word of thanks to Bill Verity and the Commerce Department's National Institute of Standards and Technology. They have worked very well with the private sector to ensure that this award truly sets a national standard.

This award has a special meaning for me because it's a fitting way to honor a good friend, Malcolm Baldrige, a dynamic businessman and a great Secretary of Commerce. Today we honor Mac with a lasting tribute to quality.

And now it's time to recognize the awardees. These awards are won by companies, but they're earned by individuals, working together in the quest for excellence. So, now I'll turn the podium over to Secretary Verity, and he will make the announcement.

Nurses Continue to Show Up—and Aspire to Excellence

by Dawn Bailey, Baldrige Performance Excellence Program
National Institute of Standards and Technology



Each day, millions of nurses report for their next shift, despite the still-high numbers of COVID-19 and other patients in need.

“They show up and give their all as they have their entire careers. Nurses chose this career intentionally, and each one brings a unique approach to care and leadership in nursing,” said Michelle Sanchez, MSN, RN, CPHQ, Beacon Program Manager at the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (AACN) (<https://www.aacn.org/>) “Nurses have met the unprecedented and unexpected challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic head-on with compassion and science to continue doing all they can for patients and their families.”

For almost 20 years, AACN has been recognizing excellence in nursing units “that distinguish themselves by improving every facet of patient care” with

the Beacon Award for Excellence®, Sanchez said. (<https://www.aacn.org/nursing-excellence/beacon-awards>) The award, partially based on the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/baldrige-award>), began in 2003 as awareness was being raised nationally about patient safety and the cost of preventable medical errors.

The Beacon Award for Excellence

The Beacon Award recognizes units with three levels of designation—gold, silver, and bronze—that represent milestones in an excellence journey. Applicant units answer questions based on criteria adapted from the Magnet Recognition Program® (<https://www.nursingworld.org/organizational-programs/magnet/>), the Baldrige Award, and the National Quality Healthcare Award (<https://www.qualityforum.org/Home.aspx>). In 2010, the Beacon

Alignment of Beacon Award for Excellence® Criteria with Other National Recognition Programs

Beacon Award for Excellence®	Leadership Structures & Systems	Appropriate Staffing & Staff Engagement	Effective Communication, Knowledge Management, Learning and Development	Evidence-based Practice & Processes	Outcome Measurement
Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Program	Leadership	Strategic Planning, Workforce Focus	Measurement, Analysis & Knowledge Management	Customer Focus, Operation Focus	Results

AACN Beacon Award for Excellence Handbook, page 22. Credit: AACN

criteria were realigned with the Baldrige Excellence Framework (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/publications/baldrige-excellence-framework>) and its Criteria (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/baldrige-criteria-commentary>).

According to Sanchez, the Baldrige Award Criteria helped to create an understanding of how to evaluate performance, provide feedback, and support a journey to excellence. “The Baldrige Award, while used in health care, is not exclusive to health care. . . . Maintaining the alignment with the Baldrige Award has helped Beacon express its value and meaning to those with a business background whose support is needed to apply for Beacon.”

Sanchez added that applying for the Beacon Award is “often a transformative experience for a nursing unit and the individuals involved. . . . When they achieve the award, individuals feel such pride in having their efforts and work recognized by AACN.”

AACN processes Beacon Award applications with volunteer reviewers, segmented by experience and role: initial, senior, and administrative. The Beacon Award review panel prepares written feedback based on information provided by the applicant. The reviewers assign a score based on the evaluation dimensions of process and results that reflect a unit’s progress on its excellence journey.

Several hospitals who use the Baldrige Criteria and apply for Baldrige and Baldrige-based awards at national and state/local levels (<https://www.baldrigealliance.org/>)

also proudly have Beacon Award-winning nursing units (<https://www.aacn.org/nursing-excellence/beacon-awards/find-a-beacon-unit>).

“In many of these organizations, there is a commitment to excellence—a widespread belief, expectation, and support for the continual cycles of evaluation and improvement,” said Sanchez. “These organizations see the value of the pursuit of excellence, and they invest the necessary resources to be the movers and shakers of their industry.”

Sanchez explained why the pursuit of and recognition for excellence in nursing is so important to health care providers today. “I think where this becomes really important is that [the pursuit of excellence] quantifies what nurses do every day. Because nurses lead with empathy and compassion, it’s not always their forte to quantify what they’re doing. . . .By participating in a performance improvement or performance excellence process, . . . you can start to put dollar signs and financial impact to nurses’ contributions. So, for institutions where the nursing workforce is the highest expense in the health care system, it starts to show why nurses are so necessary.”

Continuous Improvement Philosophy = Improved Outcomes

According to the AACN website, “Beacon awardees set the standard for excellence in patient care environments by collecting and using evidence-based information to improve patient outcomes, patient and staff satisfaction, and credibility with consumers.”

Sanchez said that excellence is “not just about your outcomes at the end of the day. It’s how did you get there and how do you make sure you get there all of the time. . . . [Striving for excellence] grounds everybody. It serves as the north star. So that when you need to pivot, there is no question . . . you know that this is the right thing. . . .”

Those organizations—whether [they are pursuing awards for] Beacon or Baldrige—are going to take all of the information that they have at the moment and keep moving forward to do the best they can. . . . There’s such a philosophical difference when you have that in an organization.”

According to an article “Value of excellence in Beacon units and Magnet® organizations” from the Critical Care Nurse journal (https://aacnjournals.org/ccnonline/search-results?page=1&q=Value%20of%20excellence%20in%20Beacon%20units%20and%20Magnet%20AE%20organizations&fl_SiteID=1000001),

- Beacon Award-winning units have nurses with higher morale and lower turnover, who express higher satisfaction with their jobs, and who experience greater collaboration between colleagues and leaders;
- the Beacon Award “provides opportunities for units to work together in a hospital to streamline processes and maximize efficiency, which can result in improved outcomes, including financial measures”;
- nurses also understand what the Beacon Award represents, thus it can be a tool to support nurse recruitment and retention, according to the AACN website, which adds, “for patients and their families, the Beacon Award signifies exceptional care through improved outcomes and greater overall satisfaction.”

Part of nursing excellence is also establishing and sustaining healthy work environments. Sanchez said, “Units that are supported in their improvement efforts often cultivate a healthy work environment. . . . When innovation and improvement are supported, anything is possible.”

Sanchez cited the use of AACN’s Healthy Work Environment Standards (<https://www.aacn.org/nursing-excellence/healthy-work-environments>), research-based standards to identify what makes a work environment healthy and leads to a better

practice environment. Six standards were identified: authentic leadership, appropriate staffing, meaningful recognition, effective decision making, true collaboration, and skilled communication. Sanchez said AACN as an organization has also adopted the standards as its expectations and has seen other industries reference them.

American Association of Critical-Care Nurses

AACN is the standard-setting organization for critical care, which is the field of nursing with a focus on the care of critically ill or unstable patients following extensive injury, surgery, or life-threatening diseases. Based on research of nursing practices, AACN offers continuing education and different certifications that can often be applied to state boards of nurses. Celebration of Beacon Award-winning nursing units happens at AACN’s annual National Teaching Institute and Critical Care Exposition.

Nurses Will Continue to Show Up

While the Beacon Award recognizes excellence in nursing units, nurses have always provided the utmost care for patients.

Said Sanchez, “There have been so many amazing things that have happened in this past year. Very quickly nurses were closely monitoring their patients to understand the course of the virus and identify commonalities in what they were seeing. There has been a lot of innovation—particularly in relation to positioning patients for optimal breathing, optimizing safety amid changing [personal protective equipment] recommendations, communicating effectively with patients while wearing a mask, and maintaining communication with families who were not allowed in the hospital.”

She added, “Every day is a step forward in this long journey to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. Nurses provide care and support to patients, families, and each other every day. . . . We still have a long road ahead of us, and nurses will continue to show up every day, regardless of the risks to their physical and emotional health; it is who we are. Everyone’s efforts to abide by the recommendations and actively participate in COVID-19 mitigation strategies will help us all reach the next normal.”

**BALDRIGE FOUNDATION
LEADERSHIP AWARDS
2021 RECIPIENTS**



APRIL 14, 2021

The Baldrige Foundation Leadership Awards and the Dr. Curt Reimann Baldrige Scholars for 2021

The Foundation presented the 2021 leadership awards in a virtual ceremony on April 14, 2021, as part of the virtual 32nd Quest for Excellence®. Because the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (BPEP) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) were forced to postpone Quest in 2020 due to the COVID pandemic, and to host the rescheduled conference virtually, the Foundation presented its leadership awards for 2020 and 2021 at a single virtual ceremony.

The COVID pandemic has not rendered leadership less important across the economy but rather, has multiplied the challenges to leadership and underscored the importance of overcoming those challenges. These leaders singled out for recognition by the Foundation have been battling at the forefront of the pandemic and have earned our gratitude and respect.

For 2021, the Foundation Awards included the ninth annual presentation of the Harry S. Hertz Leadership Award, the fifth presentation of the E. David Spong Lifetime Achievement Award, the fourth cadre of winners of the Baldrige Foundation Awards for Leadership Excellence, and the fourth class of Dr. Curt Reimann Baldrige Scholars.



“Baldrige is a leadership tool set,” said Foundation Board Chair Dr. Kay Eggleston, “and these awards encourage leaders to embody and promote the Baldrige criteria and to strengthen the DNA of leadership across the United States and beyond. All the leaders being recognized today have

been on the COVID front lines, and we recognize them for their capacity to lead, to transform, to encourage their colleagues, and to keep their organizations mission-focused and viable.”





2021 Foundation Leadership Awards Tribute Sponsors

AARP

Adventist Health

Baldrige Coach®

Beyond Feedback

Dallas College

Donor Alliance

Elevations Credit Union

LSU Foundation

LULU Process Design Group

Mary Greeley Medical Center

Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare

ProMedica

Relia Healthcare Advisors

Stellar Solutions

Tri County Tech

U.S. Chamber of Commerce

Walden University



The E. David Spong Lifetime Achievement Award

For 2021, for the first time, the Foundation Board of Directors recognized two role-model leaders as recipients of the E. David Spong Lifetime Achievement Award. Both not only built exemplar, Baldrige-based organizations that have stood the test of time, but both also helped to promote and preserve Baldrige as a set of leadership and management principles for many other organizations to employ.



Celeste Ford, Founder of Stellar Solutions, winner of the 2017 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, with the 2021 E. David Spong Lifetime Achievement Award.

Celeste Ford

Celeste Ford founded Stellar Solutions, Inc., in 1995, to provide technical expertise and management for national and international aerospace programs. Stellar Solutions supports all phases of space systems development and

operation, including for defense-related intelligence projects, international telecommunications programs, commercial imagery, and NASA's planetary and earth science missions.

"From the beginning," said Baldrige Foundation President and CEO Al Faber, "Celeste understood that empowering and supporting Stellar's employees was critical to best serving the needs of their customers."

As a result of that commitment, Stellar Solutions has been named a Great Place to Work by Fortune magazine from 2014 to 2017. Among workforce climate measures, Stellar ranks above the 95th percentile compared to Great Place to Work benchmarks for satisfaction with benefits, employee perceptions that facilities are contributing to a good working environment, and employee perceptions of feeling physically, psychologically, and emotionally healthy at work.

Baldrige has been a significant contributor to that success, culminating in Stellar Solutions winning the 2017 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. "At Stellar Solutions," according to Ms. Ford, "our customers and employees are our most important stakeholders, and the Baldrige Excellence Framework has helped us to advance our commitment to these partners as an ongoing organizational strategy."

Ford provides an impactful global presence through proven management of an international constellation of companies and numerous partnerships around the world, and has been a role-model leader, achieving multiple, significant accolades throughout her career.

"The Spong award recognizes people who have reached beyond their own organizations, changing the world by sharing best practices and encouraging other organizations to achieve performance excellence. Celeste Ford embodies those Baldrige leadership values and principles," said Faber, and has provided outstanding service to the Baldrige community and beyond."

“This honor recognizes the core vision upon which I founded Stellar—to satisfy customer critical needs while realizing employee dream jobs. The lasting impact of Baldrige on our culture and our leadership is evidenced by the continued engagement of our team as thought leaders by industry partners, government agencies, and the Baldrige community. I’m very grateful for this award and the positive impact this incredible Baldrige journey has had on our company.”



Terry May, Founder and CEO of MESA, the only three-time winner of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (2006, 2012, and 2020), with the 2021 E. David Spong Lifetime Achievement Award.

Terry May

Terry May founded MESA Products in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1979. MESA is a small business that designs, manufactures, and installs systems that control the corrosion of metal surfaces in pipelines, tanks, and other structures in underground and submerged environments. MESA is, according to the company’s website, “your one-stop shop for protecting assets from rust.”

“No discussion of Terry’s leadership acumen,” said Al Faber, President and CEO of the Baldrige Foundation, “can fail to mention that MESA is the first and only

three-time recipient of the Baldrige Award, and Terry has been the driving force behind that effort since the beginning.”

May was first introduced to Baldrige in 2002, at a time when he was voraciously consuming information on business, management, and leadership as he tried to grow his business. He has said that the Criteria seemed to encapsulate everything he had come to believe was important to growing a business. That was the beginning of MESA’s Baldrige journey.

Terry has also said that MESA could have been the “poster child for how NOT to do Baldrige.” He continued, “There’s much better ways than we did, and being here (at the Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence annual conference in 2014) is probably one of those ways. You’re here to share, you’re here to learn, and you can learn from just about anybody, any organization, big, small, it doesn’t really matter.”

“Learning from others,” Terry said, “is a key part of the Baldrige philosophy.”

“You can’t learn from others unless others are willing to share what they know. That is the real power of Baldrige,” said Faber. “Terry is known for the three S’s, his advice for how to succeed at Baldrige: Start, Share and Learn, and Sustain. It didn’t take Terry long to understand that sharing best practices is a core principle of the Baldrige approach, and he has energetically executed that principle. He and his team have demonstrated the power of Baldrige and have shared their best practices with thousands of business leaders across the country.”

“Through sharing his experience, his successes, and his failures, Terry has inspired hundreds if not thousands of others to start their own Baldrige journey. It is that type of commitment that is celebrated by the Spong Lifetime Achievement Award.

The Harry S. Hertz Leadership Award

Michael Ugwueke, DHA, MPH, FACHE, became President and Chief Executive Officer of Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare in January 2017. Prior to accepting the CEO position, Michael ascended the ranks at Methodist Le Bonheur, beginning as Senior Vice President and Chief Executive Officer at Methodist South Hospital from 2007 to 2013, SVP and CEO of Methodist North Hospital from 2009-2013, and President and COO of the Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare system from 2013 until becoming CEO in 2017.

“In 2013,” Ugwueke said, “Methodist Le Bonheur embarked on a journey to actualize our mission and vision to be a national leader in providing high quality care, cost effective patient and family centered care, to improve every life we touch.”

Ugwueke had long been a student and practitioner of Baldrige. “Michael is a role-model leader,” said Al Faber, President and CEO of the Baldrige Foundation, “who has consistently over the years applied the principles of the Baldrige Framework to his leadership approach.”

Continuing to speak of Methodist Le Bonheur’s journey, Ugwueke said, “To achieve such a stretch goal required us to think and operate differently. I was convinced that what we needed was the Baldrige Performance Excellence Framework based on my previous experience as a state examiner and my doctoral dissertation on health care organizations that have won the state quality awards that were patterned after the Baldrige Framework.”

“Michael is a serious practitioner of Baldrige,” Faber continued. “Partnering with the Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence, he not only trained and served as a Baldrige Examiner, but he encouraged dozens of the hospital’s executives and staff to also volunteer, train, and serve at the state level, the better to implement Baldrige in their own organization. At one point, they had clocked over 6,000 volunteer hours to the state program.”



Michael Ugwueke, President and CEO of Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare, with the 2021 Harry S. Hertz Leadership Award.

“He understands the power of Baldrige, and he embodies the leadership principles and values at the core of the criteria,” said Faber, and the impressive performance improvement he has facilitated at Methodist Le Bonheur, across a wide range of metrics, is testament to his leadership and commitment to the Baldrige process.”

“I knew,” Ugwueke concluded, “that the Baldrige Framework is a proven, powerful, and transformative system that has enabled organizations to achieve breakthrough performance by benchmarking against the best in class within their industry as well as providing a strategic roadmap that’s grounded in the organization’s mission and vision.”

Baldrige Foundation Awards for Leadership Excellence



The Foundation presents recipients of the Foundation Award for Leadership Excellence with a sector-specific medal that is suspended on a color silk moiré ribbon, matched to the color representing the sector. The award includes a lapel pin and framed certificate.

The Foundation Awards for Leadership Excellence recognize individuals who actively support the Baldrige Foundation and its mission to promote, grow, and fund the Baldrige Program in supporting organizational performance excellence throughout the world. Awards are presented to individuals working in each of the Baldrige Award sectors and in cybersecurity.

“There are so many people doing such important work promoting the Baldrige Framework,” said Al Faber, President and CEO of the Baldrige Foundation.

“Through their efforts to grow the Baldrige community, they help thousands of organizations across the country to improve their performance.

The 2021 recipients of the Baldrige Foundation Awards for Leadership Excellence, represent key sectors of the U.S. economy. Honorees demonstrate the finest Baldrige leadership qualities, and work to ensure the continued viability of the Baldrige Program and the Baldrige Excellence Framework.

In Their Own Words

The 2021 awardees provide their thoughts on Baldrige and how it impacts their organizations and sectors



WALTER BUMPHUS, PH.D. • EDUCATION
President and CEO, American Association of Community Colleges

"I am humbled to receive the Baldrige Foundation Award for Leadership Excellence. The strength of the nation's community colleges lies in their ability to respond effectively to local needs while advancing national efforts to provide access and foster success for nearly 12 million American annually. The Baldrige Program sets rigorous standards that model exceptional quality in strategy and operations, both of which are paramount to transforming culture and practices to continually strive for clearer pathways for student and institutional excellence. I am grateful to the Baldrige Foundation for recognizing the community colleges and their significant contributions to ensure that Americans have access to better opportunities through quality higher education."



SUZANNE P. CLARK • NONPROFIT
President and Chief Executive Officer, U.S. Chamber of Commerce

"Over the course of the past year, businesses across every sector and every state stepped up and answered our nation's call when we needed them most. At the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, we were proud to help them do it. The Baldrige Foundation has provided the framework and insights for organizations like ours to enable excellence and strengthen our impact for those we serve. I am honored to receive the Baldrige Foundation Award for Leadership Excellence, and I look forward to continuing to implement these practices as the Chamber works to develop the policy environment needed to create jobs, solve problems, and grow the economy."



SUE DUNN • NONPROFIT
Retired CEO, Donor Alliance

"Thank you, Baldrige Foundation, for the honor of receiving the 2021 Baldrige Foundation Award for Leadership Excellence in the Nonprofit sector. Since 2010, the Baldrige Excellence Framework has given Donor Alliance the ability to improve and strengthen systems to fulfill the important charge of saving lives through organ and tissue donation and transplantation. Being mission-driven and focused on relationships, it has been the highly engaged Board of Directors, executive and senior leaders, and workforce who bring an unflinching focus on improvement to their work that has made Donor Alliance one of the top-performing organ procurement organizations in the country."



**LINDEL FIELDS •
EDUCATION**
Superintendent and CEO,
Tri County Tech

“Being recognized with the Baldrige Leadership Award for Excellence is the most significant honor of my professional career. The Baldrige Excellence Framework is our playbook at Tri County Tech and has been for over 15 years. The playbook has allowed us to help thousands of students realize their hopes and dreams. It also helped transform our workplace culture. As a result, we have earned recognition as one of the top places to work in the United States five times by Fortune Magazine. Baldrige works, and I am honored to be a small part of it. Thank you, Baldrige Foundation.”



SCOTT FRISCH • NONPROFIT
EVP, Chief Operating Officer,
and Chief Financial Officer,
AARP

“Thank you for recognizing me with the 2021 Baldrige Foundation Award for Leadership Excellence in the Nonprofit sector. At AARP, we have applied much of the Baldrige Framework in designing and implementing the significant changes we have made in our structure, offerings, and operations over the past six years. The Baldrige Excellence Framework has not only helped us to improve our leadership capabilities throughout the enterprise, it has contributed significantly to our ability to learn and improve as an organization so we can better achieve our social mission to empower people to choose how they live as they age.”



**SUZETTE KENT •
CYBERSECURITY**
Business Executive and former
Federal CIO of the United
States

“I am so very grateful to be recognized by the Baldrige Foundation for Leadership Excellence in cybersecurity. This recognition gives additional voice and focus to all the people who are part of the cybersecurity efforts across the federal government, federal employees and technology partners. The support and resources from the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program provide catalysts that help drive organizational effectiveness and spur innovation. I am humbled to be a recipient of this award. I look forward to future endeavors with the Baldrige Program to continue to drive excellence in cybersecurity and government leadership in solving the critical challenges facing our nation and world.”



**KAERN KIEL-ROSSER •
HEALTH CARE**
V.P. and Quality Improvement
Officer, Mary Greeley Medical
Center

"I am honored to receive the Baldrige Foundation Award for Leadership Excellence in Health Care. Since being introduced to the criteria in 2005, I have experienced firsthand how the Baldrige Excellence Framework, when paired with an organization's mission, vision, and values, drives organizational excellence and sustainability of results. I have been fortunate throughout my career to work with organizations that are committed to the Baldrige journey. This commitment has allowed me to lead and develop high-performing teams that support their organizations' improvement journey. As a quality improvement professional, I have found the systematic nature of the Baldrige process—from annual application submission to site visit and feedback report—to be one of my most valuable quality improvement valuable tools."



**HONORABLE JERRY MORAN •
GOVERNMENT**
U.S. Senator, Kansas

From Al Faber, President and CEO of the Baldrige Foundation:
"First as Chair, now as Ranking Member, of the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations subcommittee, Senator Jerry Moran has been emblematic of the bipartisan interest in and support for the work of the National Institute of Standards and Technology and its Baldrige Performance Excellence Program. He has been a thoughtful consumer of the information we provide to members of Congress about the Baldrige Program and the broader impact Baldrige has on all sectors of the U.S. economy. Senator Moran has shown particular interest in the Baldrige efforts in cybersecurity preparedness and in the Communities of Excellence initiative. Senator Moran remembers Mac Baldrige and the impact he had as Secretary of Commerce and has proven to be a role-model leader and a forceful ambassador for the Baldrige Program."



**C. RICHARD PANICO •
BUSINESS**
President and CEO, Integrated
Project Management
Company, Inc.

"Being presented this award by the Baldrige Foundation is an honor and privilege. The recognition is even more meaningful during these challenging times. As emphasized in the Baldrige Framework, leadership sets the tone for organizational conduct and performance. The process inspired us to examine our Vision and Values and ensure alignment of strategy, performance, and conduct in a way that created greater context for our IPM family members. The journey enabled an objective, challenging, and motivating analysis of every element of our business structure and processes. It further reinforced our resolve to continue to grow the business, strengthen our values-based culture, and have a greater impact on our society and communities. Baldrige captures in model, process, and spirit what is required for us to lead responsibly and with conviction, in good and bad times. Our confidence in its value is validated through our commitment to its continued application."



PETE REICKS • BUSINESS
Chief Strategy and
Performance Officer,
Elevations Credit Union

“I am honored and humbled to be recognized as a recipient of the 2021 Baldrige Foundation Award for Leadership Excellence in Business. The opportunity to lead the deployment of the Baldrige Excellence Framework as the way we do business at Elevations Credit Union, volunteer as a national examiner, and serve on the board of our regional Baldrige program, Rocky Mountain Performance Excellence (RMPEX), has been the highlight of my career. Baldrige has helped propel Elevations’ growth while creating a highly engaged workforce committed to continuously improving member experiences. Our performance excellence journey continues as we gain insights into strengths and opportunities for improvement through each examination cycle.”



SCOTT REINER • HEALTH CARE
Chief Executive Officer,
Adventist Health

“Adventist Health’s heritage has taught us for over 150 years that personal well-being leads to longer, better lives. In alignment with our mission of living God’s love by inspiring health, wholeness, and hope, we are committed to making well-being accessible to everyone and doubling the number of people served by 2030. Our two Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award-winning hospitals have demonstrated that we can love more people better and transform more lives with the Baldrige performance excellence principles and framework. I am grateful for all we have learned through the Baldrige program and look forward to experiencing more people living their best lives.”



HONORABLE JOSÉ E. SERRANO • GOVERNMENT
Former Member of Congress,
New York

From Al Faber, President and CEO of the Baldrige Foundation:
“Congressman Serrano was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from 1990 until his retirement in 2021. Serrano, a Democrat from New York, represented a district from the South Bronx in New York City. His district was also one of the most densely populated and one of the few majority Hispanic districts in the country. As Chair of the House, Commerce, Justice, Science Subcommittee on Appropriations, he oversaw the importance of the Baldrige Program budget and the indisputable impact it has on America. He well understood that through the use of Baldrige, revenues are increased, better paying jobs are created, students demonstrate improved academic performance, and patients receive higher quality health care at a lower cost, and that organizations using the Baldrige Framework are role-models for ethical leadership, environmental stewardship, employee satisfaction, societal responsibility, and so much more.”



**CHUCK STOKES, BSN, MHA,
FACHE • HEALTH CARE**
Founding Partner, Relia
Healthcare Advisors and
Executive in Residence at
University of Alabama and
Birmingham

"I am honored and humbled to receive this recognition from the Baldrige Foundation. I have been involved with this outstanding organization for the last 15 years of my career and have used the Baldrige criteria as a responsible operating model to lead my health care systems. The Baldrige platform has resulted in the last two health care systems in which I served, North Mississippi Medical Center and The Memorial Hermann Health System, becoming nationally recognized leaders for workforce engagement, quality, safety, consumer-centric care, financial performance, and growth. It is my belief that the Baldrige platform will be a significant driver in the transformation of our health care industry over the next decade. I am grateful to my colleagues who supported me and the Baldrige journey."



**KEVIN WEBB • HEALTH
CARE**
President, Provider and
Clinical Services, ProMedica,
Toledo, Ohio

"As a young manager with responsibility for the operation of a hospital for the first time, I was looking for a systematic way to improve the performance of the organization. The Baldrige Excellence Framework was the foundation we needed as a management team to improve our management skills and realize our potential. The focus of the Baldrige criteria on management by fact and transparency is very powerful. It made management easier for me over the last 20 years."



The Dr. Curt Reimann Baldrige Scholarship

“The Foundation Board of Directors established the Dr. Curt Reimann Baldrige Scholarship because the Directors understand that the sustainment of Baldrige also requires an investment in future generations of Baldrige scholars and practitioners. The Reimann Scholars are the future,” said Foundation President and CEO Al Faber. “Through the Dr. Curt Reimann Baldrige Scholarship, by attending Baldrige Examiner training, Reimann Scholars can learn about and ultimately integrate the concepts of the Baldrige Excellence Framework throughout their various career paths.”

THE 2021 DR. CURT REIMANN BALDRIGE SCHOLARS



MICHAEL DILLARD
Claim Service Leader, Allstate Insurance Company

Michael, a retired Brigadier General of the United States Army Reserve, is currently a Claim Service Leader for Allstate Insurance Company in Birmingham, Alabama. He earned his MBA from DeVry University’s Keller Graduate of School Management, his MSS

from the United States Army War College, and recently earned his Doctor of Business Administration from Walden University. As part of Walden’s University Doctor of Business Administration Consulting Capstone program, I used the 2019-2020 Baldrige Excellence Framework to evaluate and help leaders of a Maryland nonprofit organization enhance their performance measurement system to demonstrate their organization’s efficiency and effectiveness.



KALLIE KUJAWA
Director of Quality, Patient Safety, and Medical Staff Services, Bozeman Health

Serving as the system incident commander for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic, Kallie is an experienced thought leader within the community. Currently, she is the Director of Quality, Patient Safety, and Medical Staff Services, with additional experience in emergency management and nursing professional practice. Having implemented a quality management system using ISO-9001 principles, adding Baldrige Examiner training will equip her with yet another transformative tool. Kallie earned her Master’s of

Nursing in a combined learning environment with systems and industrial engineers and she continues to use the knowledge she gained to reengineer health care as we know it today.



CHRISTOPHER E. MAYLOR
Director of Strategic Planning, Intel Corporation

As Director of strategic planning for Intel Corporation, I research and recommend capabilities and frameworks for developers, partners, and customers to use. I am passionate about ensuring business value for solutions. As a member of the Walden University Doctor of Business Administration cohort, I was able to work with the California nonprofit organization, Music Changing Lives, using the 2019-2020 Baldrige Excellence Framework for guidance. Through the framework model I was able to help the leadership team understand their programs’ operational budgets, optimize the programs to increase the student count 2-to-3 times in two years, and strategically diversify the NPO funding activities. I continue my engagement with the leadership team, despite Covid limiting in-person work.

Hertz Has a Better Razor

by Harry Hertz, Baldrige Performance Excellence Program
National Institute of Standards and Technology

Razors

This blog post was conceived when I was recently reminded of Hanlon's Razor (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanlon%27s_razor), a rule of thumb that states, "One should never attribute to malice something that is adequately explained by stupidity." The razor led me to contemplate work environments focused on punishing the employee (perpetrator) when an error is made, essentially attributing it to intent or malice. In most cases, I would contend that the cause of the error is neither malice nor stupidity. This logic led me to propose Hertz' Razor. But, I will keep you in suspense for a while...

I next wondered, why is Hanlon's Razor called a razor? A "philosophical razor" is a rule of thumb used to eliminate ("shave off") an unlikely explanation for an observed phenomenon. (<https://lifelessons.co/critical-thinking/philosophical-razors/>) There are a number of such razors that have received wide attention, starting with Occam's Razor, which states, "Entities should not be multiplied without necessity." More commonly explained, it means that the best and correct explanation is usually the one with the fewest assumptions. Occam is William of Ockham, an English friar, philosopher, and theologian who was believed to have been born in the English town of Ockham in 1285.



In doing some research, I discovered several additional razors of interest. One of particular value to this blog is Hitchens' Razor, which states, "What can be asserted without evidence can also be dismissed without evidence." I interpret this statement to mean that we should manage by fact, a Baldrige core value. (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/core-values-and-concepts>)

Hertz' Razor

I am in fundamental agreement with Hitchens' Razor (no surprise) and fundamental disagreement with Hanlon's Razor. Since it seems to be an emerging trend to have razors that begin with "H," I humbly put forth Hertz' Razor:

- *One should never attribute errors to employee malice or stupidity or any other employee intent, but instead seek process defects or lack of information/data as the likely cause.*

Employees are proud of their work and seek to make improvements, not to sabotage the work. Furthermore, they seek training, education, and developmental opportunities to further their own learning and their contributions to the organization. Indeed, the Baldrige definition of organizational performance excellence originally comprised (1) delivering ever-improving value to customers and stakeholders and (2) improving the organization's

overall effectiveness and capabilities. However, many years ago, based on our learnings from role-model organizations, the definition was expanded to include (3) learning for the organization and for people in the workforce.

Given the Baldrige definition of performance excellence, a corollary to Hertz' Razor is

- *Organizations should strive for error prevention and innovation, not error correction, as the primary means of improvement.*

Achieving Hertz' Razor

Hertz' Razor and its corollary are really a metaphor for using the Baldrige Excellence Framework (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/publications/baldrige-excellence-framework>) and its criteria for performance excellence. (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/baldrige-criteria-commentary>) Let me exemplify with a few of the key criteria components:

1. Item 1.1, Senior Leadership, asks how senior leaders participate in the development of future leaders and how they create a focus on action that will improve the organization's performance. (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/baldrige-criteria-commentary#senior>)
2. Item 2.1, Strategy Development, asks how your organization's strategy development process stimulates and incorporates innovation. (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/baldrige-criteria-commentary#strategy-development>)
3. Category 4, Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management, asks how your organization selects, gathers, analyzes, manages, and improves its data, information, and knowledge assets; how it uses review findings to improve its performance; and how it learns. (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/baldrige-criteria-commentary#measurement>)
4. Item 5.2, Workforce Engagement, asks how your learning and development system supports the personal development of workforce members and your organization's needs and how you manage career development for your workforce and your future leaders. (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/baldrige-criteria-commentary#engagement>)
5. Item 6.1, Work Processes, asks about key requirements for your work processes, how you manage and improve processes, and how you pursue opportunities for innovation. (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/baldrige-criteria-commentary#processes>)
6. Item 6.2, Operational Effectiveness, asks how you prevent defects, service errors, and rework. (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/baldrige-criteria-commentary#operational-effectiveness>)
7. Category 7, Results, asks about your organization's performance and improvement in all key areas. (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/baldrige-criteria-commentary#results>)

“Organizations should strive for error prevention and innovation, not error correction, as the primary means of improvement.”

In summary, the Baldrige Excellence Framework takes a holistic approach to organizational performance and how high performance is achieved. It recognizes that high performance is achieved through effective strategy; high-performing, motivated employees; well-structured operational processes; process improvement; and innovation.

The Baldrige Scoring Guidelines characterize organizations that have no systematic processes and that react to problems as their primary improvement mechanism as very immature. The Guidelines describe stages of maturity as organizations move toward role-model performance characterized by fully deployed, systematic processes; innovation; and the development of best practices.

Even the most immature organizations are not characterized in Baldrige as looking for employees as the cause of problems. Is your organization practicing Hertz' Razor and working on high performance through its corollary?



2021 —Finding the New Normal

by Bob Fangmeyer
Director, Baldrige Performance Excellence Program

I don't know about you, but, personally, I was hoping that 2021 would look a lot more like 2019 than 2020. Sure, we all knew that the pandemic was creating some permanent changes to how and where people work, how organizations connect with and serve their customers, how leaders enable and ensure high levels of workforce productivity and engagement, how health care is provided, how teachers teach, how students learn, how children play . . . <Sigh> how life is lived.

OK, so maybe that was wishful thinking.

But I haven't given up yet, and my new year's greeting as we began 2022 was a wish that "2022 be everything you hoped 2021 would be." And I will stick by that!

That said, there are some positives for the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (BPEP) and the Baldrige community from 2021 that are worth celebrating.

32nd Quest for Excellence Conference

For the first time ever, the Quest for Excellence[®] conference was an entirely virtual event that enabled us to celebrate with and learn from the 2019 and 2020 Baldrige Award recipients—despite the worst pandemic in 100 years. Twelve former Baldrige Award recipients and the Communities of Excellence 2026 (COE) also participated in the conference, which ran from April 12–15, 2021.

During the opening plenary session, the 2019 and 2020 recipients were recognized for receiving the Baldrige Award. Their highest-ranking officials introduced their organizations and discussed what made them unique and successful. Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo joined the conference live on day one to recognize the recipients and show her support for BPEP.

Close to 80 on-demand sessions featured current and former recipients and the COE speaking on the Baldrige Excellence Framework categories and special topics of interest. Pre-conference workshops were facilitated by Baldrige Judges Pattie Skriba and JoAnn Sterneke. The conference also featured a virtual exhibit hall.

In addition, the 2019 and 2020 Baldrige Award recipients and former recipients participated in live networking sessions organized by sector. These sessions allowed attendees to interact directly with the Baldrige Award recipients and ask questions not answered during the plenary question and answer sessions.

With over 700 participants and the largest number of plenary and concurrent sessions ever offered at Quest, the 2021 virtual Quest for Excellence conference was a great success. However, I think I speak for almost everyone when I say the Baldrige community is really looking forward to coming together in person for the 33rd Quest for Excellence conference!



“With over 700 participants and the largest number of plenary and concurrent sessions ever offered at Quest, the 2021 virtual Quest for Excellence conference was a great success.”



Meet the Secretary of Commerce

The Baldrige Performance Excellence Program is a unit of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) within the U.S. Department of Congress. President Biden named Gina M. Raimondo as Secretary of Commerce. This is the Secretary’s biography found at the Department of Commerce website: <https://www.commerce.gov/about/leadership/gina-m-raimondo>



Gina M. Raimondo, the 40th U.S. Secretary of Commerce.

Gina M. Raimondo serves as the 40th U.S. Secretary of Commerce and was sworn in by Vice President Kamala Harris on March 3, 2021. As Secretary of Commerce, she is focused on a simple but vital mission—to spur good-paying jobs, empower entrepreneurs to innovate and grow, and help American workers and businesses compete.

Secretary Raimondo was formerly the 75th Governor of Rhode Island and its first woman governor. She grew up in Smithfield in a tight-knit Italian-American family, the youngest of Joseph and Josephine Raimondo’s three children. Her family history and her childhood experiences shaped her core beliefs in hard work, opportunity for all, and the importance of financial security.

After arriving from Italy at age 14, Secretary Raimondo’s grandfather learned English studying in the Providence Public Library and later lived with her family. Her mother was a homemaker, who dedicated her life to teaching her children about the importance of hard work and determination. Her father was a World War II Navy veteran from a family of butchers and became the first in his family to attend college thanks to the GI Bill. After working for 26 years in manufacturing, Joseph lost his job along with hundreds of others when the factory moved overseas, and the Raimondo family lost their sense of financial security.

As a teenager, Secretary Raimondo rode a public bus to LaSalle Academy in Providence, where she was valedictorian of her graduating class. She went on to graduate with honors from Harvard, where she was

recognized as the top economics student in her class. She won a Rhodes Scholarship to Oxford University where she earned a doctorate and met her future husband Andy Moffit. She later graduated from Yale Law School. Secretary Raimondo clerked for U.S. District Judge Kimba Wood and served as founding employee and senior vice president at Village Ventures.

Wanting to start her own business and be close to family, she returned home to Rhode Island and founded Point Judith Capital, a venture capital firm. In November 2010, Secretary Raimondo was elected to serve as General Treasurer of Rhode Island, receiving the largest number of votes of any statewide candidate. When she took office as General Treasurer, she tackled the state’s \$7 billion unfunded pension liability. Secretary Raimondo was sworn into office as Governor in January 2015 and won a second term in 2018. She also served as chair of the Democratic Governors’ Association in 2019.

During her time as Governor, Secretary Raimondo kick-started the state’s economy and made record investments in infrastructure, education, and job training. She focused tirelessly on creating economic opportunities and good-paying jobs for all Rhode Islanders. Early in her administration, she launched an innovative workforce development program that develops business-led partnerships to address unique workforce challenges.

Secretary Raimondo is married to Andy Moffit and they have two children, Ceci and Tommy, and a rescue dog, Sparky.



Secretary Raimondo being sworn in by Vice President Kamala Harris, March 3, 2021.



Examiner Training and the Baldrige Award Process

Due to continuing restrictions and concerns resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, 2021 examiner training and site visits were virtual, utilizing lessons learned from the prior year, as well as best practices from the Alliance programs across the United States and Global Excellence Council members around the world.

In May 2021, BPEP offered small-group online training facilitated by master examiners. Sessions were one hour in length, once a week, from March 29 to May 14 (a total of six sessions). In addition, master examiners were paired with new and Baldrige Examiner Training Experience (BETE) examiners for individual coaching and feedback, and the learning management system Rise was used to deliver online content. Due to the overwhelmingly positive response to the virtual approach by examiners, this model will be largely repeated in 2022.

Most of the award process is normally conducted virtually; however, site visits with the applicant to verify and clarify

information found in the application are an important part of the award process. Although we were not able to visit with the organizations in person, we were able to conduct them virtually. Best practices learned from the 2020 site visits and from our Alliance partners were incorporated, ensuring an efficient and effective review. The site visit plan for 2022 is a hybrid approach that includes document review and some category-related interviews virtually and securely, followed by a shorter on-site visit to test deployment and conduct follow-up interviews with demonstrations, as appropriate.

Looking forward to 2022, we are thrilled to be rolling out revisions to the award process that will streamline aspects of the evaluation process, simplify the crafting of commentary for the applicants, enhance the level of engagement with the applicants, and improve the overall quality of the process and feedback provided.

Baldrige Executive Fellows

The current cohort of 17 Fellows initially started their fellowships in April 2020. When travel restrictions



2021 Baldrige Executive Fellows during their hybrid visit with Southcentral Foundation in June.



BALDRIGE PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

forced cancellations, the Fellows moved their program online. During the virtual meetings, Fellows alumni presented their completed and ongoing capstone projects and Baldrige Award-winning CEOs discussed the challenges of leadership. The Fellows also had focused discussions on cybersecurity; diversity, equity, and inclusion; communities of excellence; scorecards; employee retention/engagement; and systems thinking; among other topics.

In June 2021, the Fellows had their first face-to-face meeting of the year in Anchorage, AK, hosted by Southcentral Foundation, with guest speakers from Stellar Solutions. The hybrid meeting allowed Fellows who were unable to travel to participate through online, small-group breakout sessions, as well as through facilitated discussions and tours. Unfortunately, the conditions that enabled the face-to-face event did not last and the October trip to Fort Collins, CO, was postponed until March 2022, and the January trip to the Ritz-Carlton in Pentagon City, VA, was postponed to July.

The current cohort will officially graduate Saturday, April 2, and a new 2022 cohort will begin April 3, 2022.

Job Quality Framework

In September 2021, U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo and Deputy Secretary Don Graves hosted the convening of national government and sector experts to launch the Department of Commerce's new Job Quality Initiative, being managed by BPEP. The objective is to provide a broadly accepted definition of job quality and a nonprescriptive framework to help organizations of all kinds, particularly small and medium-sized, understand the drivers of job quality and what they can do

to improve the quality of the jobs they offer; thereby enhancing their ability to recruit, retain, and benefit from a high-performing workforce. It is also our hope that use of this framework will increase awareness of and interest in leveraging the Baldrige Excellence Framework to improve other aspects of their organizations. BPEP has continued working with the Department of Commerce, along with dozens of leading businesses, nonprofits, think tanks, and other stakeholders, including a number of Baldrige Award recipients. The project is nearing completion, and we expect to have it available by the end of March 2022.



JOB QUALITY FRAMEWORK

Strategies and actions to help you recruit and retain a high-performing workforce



Draft Cover for the Commerce Department's new Job Quality Framework, developed in collaboration with the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program.

Advanced Manufacturing/ Industry 4.0 Assessment

BPEP is participating in the development of an assessment process and tools to evaluate and provide feedback to manufacturers on their

BALDRIGE PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE PROGRAM



readiness for, performance on, and adoption of elements of Industry 4.0. Under a grant from the NIST Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP), this project is a partnership with Florida Makes (a MEP program), the (Baldrige-based) Florida Sterling Award program, and the Illinois Manufacturing Extension Center (which houses the Baldrige-based Illinois Performance Excellence program).

The objective is to provide a broadly applicable assessment that would be available to all MEP centers. Using questions pulled from the Organizational Profile and various categories, the first part is assessing the organization's readiness to adopt advanced manufacturing technologies. The second part of the assessment is finding where the manufacturers might best benefit from the adoption of such technologies. The assessment tool is currently being piloted, with the goal of 100 assessments. Following the pilots,

the tool will be revised and rolled out to other MEP centers. Success for this initiative is an ongoing assessment program that introduces businesses and other organizations to Baldrige principles and draws them into the Baldrige community.

In Closing

Despite the challenges, BPEP had much to celebrate in 2021. However, it must always be remembered that none of what we accomplish could be achieved without the incredible contributions from our volunteers, partners, and staff. Despite the difficulties and challenges posed in their own lives and organizations, 280 examiners, 12 judges, 12 overseers, dozens of award recipients, Alliance programs, and the Baldrige Foundation all gave their time and effort to enable us to foster excellence in individuals, organizations, and entire communities. Our sincere thanks and appreciation to you all!



2021 Baldrige National Quality Award Recipients

- Charter School of San Diego, San Diego, California
- Mid-America Transplant Services, St. Louis, Missouri
- MidwayUSA, Columbia, Missouri

Baldrige Economic Impact: #BaldrigeForGrowth

The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award was born of the quality crisis in American manufacturing in the 1970s and the 1980s. Manufacturers in Germany, Japan, South Korea, and others of America's competitors had gained market share due to their reputations for high-quality products. American manufacturing was slipping.

Many of America's competitors had also developed quality award systems and prizes, like the Deming Prize in Japan. Within the Mac Baldrige Department of Commerce and elsewhere, people began to consider whether such a solution could also work for American businesses.

It was widely believed that American companies needed to refocus on quality. Following the death of Secretary Baldrige in 1987, there was a new Congressional impetus behind some proposals along this line that had stalled in Congress.

The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award emerged from the broad consensus among policymakers to recognize the late Secretary and continue his work. It would be the prize that would motivate companies to undertake the Baldrige challenge and refocus on quality.

“We have always had a passion for customer satisfaction, continuous improvement, our industry, and our way of life. But Baldrige helps us serve customers better than we ever imagined. We are truly thankful for this gift of Baldrige to America.” – Matt Fleming, President, MidwayUSA

While the prize may motivate some organizations to begin their Baldrige journey, it has become apparent over more than 30 years of experience with the Baldrige Excellence Framework that the true payoff comes from the journey. The leaders of virtually every Baldrige Award recipient organization say that very same thing, that it is the improvement in performance from undertaking the Baldrige journey that is the real prize.

“The impact of the Program has been amazing. The Baldrige Award process alone generates an estimated \$1 billion a year in benefits to the applicants of the award and their customers. It does this through cost savings for companies that use the criteria, gains to U.S. customers who have access to higher quality products and services, and gains from the improved use of valuable resources.” – Wilbur Ross, U.S. Secretary of Commerce

Assessing the economic impact of the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program over 30 years means that assessing the improvements in profits, reductions in costs, enhancement of customer and employee satisfaction, higher levels of employment, and other benefits achieved by the Baldrige Award recipients. But that assessment will yield only a small percentage of the total value generated for the American economy. Such an assessment will fail to capture the gains achieved by the hundreds of organizations on the journey that have not yet, or may never, win a Baldrige Award or one of the state-level Baldrige-based awards.

The total value generated by the Baldrige Enterprise derives from three distinct sources. The first and most obvious is the actual process and performance changes of the organizations employing the Baldrige Framework. Over the years, BPEP has collected data from the Baldrige Award recipient organizations, and their gains are impressive. The Bureaus of Economic Analysis and Labor Statistics report that organizations that have twice won the Baldrige Award demonstrate a stunning 92.6 percent increase in median revenue growth in the period between winning their awards; job growth at 2.5 percent, nearly 20 times greater than matched industries; and growth in the number of business sites of 84 percent.

The second source of value is the performance excellence multiplier of the Baldrige Award. One of the commitments made by Baldrige Award recipient organizations is that they will share their best practices and serve as role models for other organizations. George Benson, then-Chair of the Baldrige Foundation

Board of Directors, explained that impact in his introduction to the Baldrige Award ceremony in 2016.

“The purpose of the awards we present today is not just to reward these top-performing organizations. From the beginning, the Baldrige Criteria and the Baldrige Awards were designed to trigger transformational chain reactions that would yield a stronger, more competitive economy and a better quality of life for the people of this country.”

“In simple terms, these organizations used the Baldrige Criteria to assess repeatedly their performance and deploy improvements until they achieved role-model status. Then we, in our own organizations, learn from them and repeatedly assess and improve our performance. That, in turn, motivates our competitors, our collaborators, our suppliers, and our customers to improve their performances, and so forth.”

“The Baldrige Criteria challenged us to become leaders by any measure, and we succeeded—seeing productivity, customer loyalty, employee engagement, and financial returns. This award sets the standard for U.S. organizations, driving innovation and economic competitiveness.” – Sam Liang, CEO and President, MEDRAD, Inc.

“A very crucial step in that chain reaction is the identification of role models, living and breathing organizations that we can relate to, can communicate with, and therefore can learn from.”

The third source of value is the vast army of highly-trained volunteers that donate thousands of hours of consulting and teaching to organizations on the Baldrige journey. These are the examiners and judges for the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program at the national level and for the state and local Baldrige-based programs. The estimate of the cash-value equivalent for management consulting by the volunteer Baldrige examiners in 2018 was more than \$37 million.

“I cannot think of a better way to verify the sustainability of a business model than using the [Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award] process to confirm that your founding business principles continue to be the foundation upon which you grow.” – Michael Luker, President, Cargill Kitchen Solutions (formerly Sunny Fresh Foods, Inc.)

“The economic environment is difficult for Cargill Corn Milling, as it is difficult for many manufacturing companies today. But the reality is that by utilizing the processes and tools that we have learned from Baldrige we are able to not only meet these challenges but actually excel in them. The Baldrige Criteria teach us how to put processes in place that allow us to actualize the things that are most important in driving our business success.” – Alan Willits, President, Cargill Corn Milling

There have been some efforts to quantify the total economic impact of the Baldrige Enterprise. U.S. Secretary of Commerce Wilber Ross said in April 2017, that the Baldrige public-private partnership generates \$1 billion each year in economic impact. In 2011, economists Albert Link of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and John Scott at Dartmouth College, calculated that the benefit to cost ratio of the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program was 820 to one—that is, each dollar invested spent to keep BPEP operational results in \$820 of economic benefit. Some of the specific company-level improvements driven by Baldrige include the following:

- Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control realized cost savings of \$225 million annually through process and performance improvement programs driven by their Baldrige assessment, and attained a leading market share and sustained growth in the four years leading to their receipt of the Baldrige Award in 2012.
- MEDRAD, a business of Bayer HealthCare, achieved revenue increases from \$120 million in 1997 to \$625 million in 2009.
- Since 1999, Sunny Fresh Foods (Now Cargill Kitchen Solutions) experienced rapid growth: three plants grew to five, revenue increased 93 percent, and Sunny Fresh became a net exporter of talent to its parent company.
- At Honeywell Federal Manufacturing & Technologies, customer satisfaction exceeded 95 percent, and customer product quality and reliability reached 99.9 percent for traditional customers, and 99 percent for non-traditional customers.
- The Bama Companies, Inc., increased sales by 72 percent and grew revenue from \$123 to \$211 from 1999 to 2004.

The evidence proves that Baldrige is America’s best investment. #BaldrigeForGrowth.



Baldrige Small Business Impact: #BaldrigeGrowsSmallBusiness



When Congress established the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award as Public Law 100-107 in 1987, the Award was available for three sectors of the economy: Manufacturing, Service, and Small Business.

“For immature organizations, Baldrige is an excellent process for establishing a model and practices that will support insightful strategy development to ensure competitiveness and controlled scalability. For mature companies that have been successful and continually evolved, it provides an opportunity to accelerate growth and competitiveness.” – C. Richard Panico, Founder, President, and CEO of Integrated Project Management Company

The first award recipients in 1988 and 1989 were American giants with names like Motorola, Westinghouse, and Xerox. One of the five recipients in those first two years was a small business called Globe Metallurgical, Inc. (now Globe Specialty Metals, Inc.). Globe Metallurgical had just 210 employees in two locations in Ohio and Alabama. With sales just under

\$100 million in 1987, serving about 300 customers, it was a quintessential American small business.

“I have always envisioned Stellar Solutions to be a company that is built to last. And if you ask how we can ensure that we are built to last, I would say the answer is Baldrige.” – Celeste Volz Ford, Founder and Board Chair, Stellar Solutions, Inc.

Through the application of the principles of quality and performance excellence, Globe experienced growth in sales, profits, customer satisfaction, and employee engagement.

- In quality audits by General Motors, Ford, Intermet, John Deere, and other customers, the firm’s scores have set records, resulting in certified supplier status for Globe. Foreign buyers also recognize Globe’s commitment to quality. When many European traders place an order for magnesium ferrosilicon alloy they specify that the material must be “Globe quality,” a standard that other suppliers must match.

Through the 2020 award cycle, 30 of the Baldrige Award recipients have been in the Small Business sector, accounting for nearly 24 percent of all awardees, proving that the *Baldrige Excellence Framework* is scalable to virtually any size organization.

That Baldrige works for small business is not inconsequential. Small businesses comprise the vast majority of the U.S. economy. U.S. Census Bureau data in 2014 showed that there was a total of 5.83 million employer firms in the United States, meaning firms that had employees in addition to a single owner-proprietor. Companies with fewer than 500 workers accounted for 99.7 percent of those businesses. If you were to narrow the definition of “small business” to mean those with fewer than 20 workers, the category still accounts for a whopping 89.4 percent of all U.S. firms.

“Baldrige is the key to winning results and world-class excellence.” – Ken Schiller, Co-Owner and Co-Founder, K&N Management

It is not just raw numbers of businesses that underscores their importance, but also the economic activity generated by American small businesses. A 2012 report from the Small Business Administration’s Office of Advocacy found that small businesses produced 46 percent of private, nonfarm Gross Domestic Product. From 1992 through 2013, small businesses generated 63.3 percent of net new jobs in the United States, and by 2015, small businesses employed almost 59 million people or 47.5 percent of the private workforce.

There have been some efforts to quantify the total economic impact of the Baldrige Enterprise. U.S. Secretary of Commerce Wilber Ross said in April 2017, that the Baldrige public-private partnership generates \$1 billion each year in economic impact. In 2011, economists Albert Link of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and John Scott at Dartmouth College, calculated that the benefit to cost ratio of the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program was 820 to one. And remember. Much of that growth is generated by small businesses on the Baldrige journey.

The evidence also shows how small businesses improve as they pursue excellence through Baldrige.

“MESA had the opportunity to make ourselves a better organization by using the Baldrige Criteria. Every person at MESA prepared by learning and working to improve the way we do business. Baldrige gave us a business management model.”
– Terry May, president, MESA Products, Inc.

Some of the specific company-level improvements driven by Baldrige include the following:

- Three-time award recipient MESA Products has experienced improvement in cumulative growth of 40 Percent over five years, better than the performance of five separate competitors.
- Integrated Project Management’s total annual revenue increased by 62 percent over the four years preceding its 2018 Baldrige Award, while the ratio of annual revenue per consultant outperformed a national comparison by 50 percent.
- As of 2017, Bristol Tennessee Essential Services offered the fastest Internet available in the United States at 10 Gigabits per second, while outperforming regional, industry, and best-in-class comparisons for service reliability as measured by outage minutes per customer.
- Stellar Solutions has seen revenue grow from a rate of 1.18 percent in 2013 to 6.81 percent in 2016. Such growth has occurred despite the constraints in government funding being identified as a key business challenge for the organization.

“We were searching for a path to improve our business, but what we discovered was so much more. It’s not about the award. It’s about how this process benefits our clients. Our improvements have strengthened our relationships with our clients and allow us to deliver better service and value. Is it worth the years of hard work and effort? Unquestionably YES. We have seen our profits increase, employee satisfaction go up, and we have achieved sustainable, managed growth.” – Robert Pence, President and CEO, Freese and Nichols Inc.

- Don Chalmers Ford’s total sales volume increased from \$109 million in 2012 to \$126 million in 2015. Total dealership gross profit increased by 13 percent during the same period, with the percentage of gross profit growth in 2015 exceeding Ford’s national benchmark level by 8.4 percent.



- Momentum Group has invested in process upgrades that have reduced sample production time by 50 percent and improved sample yield per yard by 20 percent.
- From 2006 to 2012, MESA more than doubled in size, demonstrating a growth rate during this period that exceeded that of its closest competitor by almost 40 percent.
- MESA, which also won a Baldrige Award in 2006, increased its profitability as a percentage of its revenue from 5 percent to more than 10 percent from 2006 to 2012.
- Freese and Nichols achieved revenue growth between 12 and 16 percent over the four years leading to its 2010 Baldrige Award, exceeding the industry benchmark by 10 percentage points in 2009.

“I’m a car guy [who] believes in the Baldrige framework. I speak car, not Baldrige. If we can do this, anyone can. We are a testament to the Baldrige framework capacity to provide organizational sustainability and success.” – Gary Housley, President and Dealer Principal, Don Chalmers Ford

The evidence proves that Baldrige is America’s best investment for organizations of all size. #BaldrigeGrowsSmallBusiness.

Recipients of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award in the Small Business sector

- 1988 – Globe Metallurgical, Inc.
(now *Globe Specialty Metals, Inc.*)
- 1990 – Wallace Co., Inc.
- 1991 – Marlow Industries, Inc.
- 1992 – Granite Rock Company
(now *Graniterock Company*)
- 1993 – Ames Rubber Corporation
- 1994 – Wainwright Industries, Inc.
- 1996 – Custom Research, Inc.
(now *GFK Custom Research North America, Inc.*)
- 1996 – Trident Precision Manufacturing, Inc.
- 1998 – Texas Nameplate Company, Inc.
- 1999 – Sunny Fresh Foods, Inc.
(now *Cargill Kitchen Solutions*)
- 2000 – Los Alamos National Bank
- 2001 – Pal’s Sudden Service
- 2002 – Branch-Smith Printing Division
- 2003 – Stoner, Inc.
- 2004 – Texas Nameplate Company, Inc.
- 2005 – Park Place Lexus
- 2006 – MESA Products, Inc.
- 2007 – PRO-TEC Coating Company
- 2009 – MidwayUSA
- 2010 – Freese and Nichols Inc.
- 2010 – K&N Management
- 2010 – Studer Group
- 2012 – MESA
- 2015 – MidwayUSA
- 2016 – Don Chalmers Ford
(now *Chalmers Ford*)
- 2016 – Momentum Group
- 2017 – Bristol Tennessee Essential Services
- 2017 – Stellar Solutions
- 2018 – Integrated Project Management Company, Inc.
- 2020 – MESA

Truly and Virtually Inspiring: The First Virtual Quest for Excellence Conference

by Harry Hertz, Baldrige Performance Excellence Program
National Institute of Standards and Technology

April 12-15, 2021

32ND Quest for Excellence[®] Conference

#BaldrigeQuest #ExcellenceInspired

- Quest Lobby
- Monday, April 12
- Tuesday, April 13
- Wednesday, April 14
- Thursday, April 15
- On-Demand
- Recipients
- Speakers
- Networking
- Sponsors
- Exhibitor Hall
- Conference Evaluation

32ND Virtual Quest for Excellence[®] Conference WELCOME

Enter the Conference

Dear Attendees,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the 32nd Quest for Excellence[®] Conference! We are excited to be able to offer you this virtual learning experience and bring together leaders of organizations across the U.S. and the globe who are passionate about excellence and about sharing strategies to achieve world-class results.

This year's conference celebrates and highlights the 11 Baldrige Award recipients from 2019 and 2020. These organizations and their leaders are role models both within and outside their industries. I encourage you to make the most of the opportunity presented by this virtual conference and engage with the presenters and other attendees during the Q&A and networking sessions.

The conference will begin Tuesday with a plenary session featuring the senior leaders of the 2019 and 2020 recipients. Two live Q&A sessions will give attendees the opportunity to ask questions of these leaders.

Wednesday will feature several networking sessions to help you learn from and connect with Award recipients and attendees. You can also check out more than 70 on-demand sessions by current and former Award recipients from all sectors sharing their proven performance management practices and real-world insights. These sessions also include a presentation from [Communities of Excellence 2026](#).

On Thursday, the plenary keynote speaker will be [Cheryl Cran](#), Founder, NextMapping™/ NextMapping.com, CEO of Synthesis at

Robert G. Fangmeyer
Director
Baldrige Performance
Excellence Program

Welcome screen for the 32nd Quest for Excellence[®] Conference, held virtually for the first time due to the COVID-19 pandemic, April 12-15, 2021.

Each year after the Quest for Excellence Conference (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/qe>), I sift through my notes and try to identify themes I have heard in the presentations of the new Baldrige Award recipients (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/award-recipients>). The most recent summary (<https://www.nist.gov/blogs/blogrige/culture-and-strategy-eat-all-three-meals-when-leaders-set-menu>) was after the 2019 conference (the 2021 conference included recipients from the last two years).

With 11 award recipients, 11 former recipients, plenary sessions, sector-specific town halls, and 80 on-demand concurrent sessions, the sharing was richer than ever this April. I cannot claim to have digested all the information or even to have heard and seen all sessions. Nevertheless, I did hear nine very important messages that were shared by multiple recipients. Some are themes I have heard before and bear repeating since they are so important, others are new and worth sharing. There were also individual “tidbits” I heard that particularly resonated with me. I will share a few of them.

NINE IMPORTANT MESSAGES

- 1. Seek an engagement and performance culture:** Role-model organizations focus on people, process, and results. The people focus includes workforce and customers, as well as other key stakeholders. In role-model organizations, leaders' and employees' personal performance plans are aligned with the organization's strategic and operational plans. Every member of the organization has a line of sight to what is important to the organization.

This engagement culture has a "me and we" focus. Particularly during the challenging year we have all had, role-model organizations and their leaders focused on people first, the individual needs of workforce members and the collective needs of remote-working teams. Organizations that understood the needs and new needs of their customers, and could respond to them, thrived. Culture needed to be re-enforced in new ways. Virtual (and on-site) rounding was practiced by all managers and leaders. Active listening was an extremely more important leadership skill.

“In role-model organizations, leaders' and employees' personal performance plans are aligned with the organization's strategic and operational plans. Every member of the organization has a line of sight to what is important to the organization.”

Role-model organizations achieve high performance through a data-rich environment. But not any data, they understand which data are important to improving and sustaining performance. These data are continuously analyzed and acted upon.

- 2. Resilience:** Role-model organizations are and were prepared for the unexpected. They had systems in place to move quickly and effectively to remote work. The health care organizations were better prepared for the shift to telehealth and pandemic operation.

Role-model organizations protected and enhanced their workforce and customer interactions, recognizing that people were anxious. They focused on the needs of their communities, as well as their own people.

These organizations have clear and high-functioning leadership systems. They were able to rapidly deploy remote decision-making and communication systems. They were transparent in their operations and in sharing their challenges.

- 3. WIGs:** Role-model organizations have clearly articulated and strategic wildly important goals (WIGs). Those goals translate into strategies that are implemented throughout the organization. The goals are tied to measures that track progress on achieving the goals. The WIGs align with the organization's vision. And these organizations are agile, capable of modifying goals to deal with the unexpected.
- 4. Standard Work:** Role-model organizations have defined, repeatable processes for accomplishing their work. By having standard work processes they reduce errors, inefficiency, and risk. As part of the standard work, role-model organizations also have a process for improving those work processes.
- 5. A3 Thinking:** This Toyota-pioneered "thinking" process (<https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/toyotas-secret-the-a3-report/>) causes an organization to clearly articulate the problem it is trying to solve, analyze it, propose solutions, develop an action plan, articulate the target outcome, and assign responsibilities. It has a built-in plan-do-check-act (PDCA) cycle.

Role-model organizations do not jump to conclusions. They have an organized approach to problem-solving.

“Role-model organizations have defined, repeatable processes for accomplishing their work. By having standard work processes they reduce errors, inefficiency, and risk.”

- 6. Hire for Cultural Fit:** Role-model organizations are committed to living their core values. They design candidate interview questions to gauge the fit of potential employees with those core values. They make sure that the core values and questions foster workforce diversity and inclusion. They recognize that it is better not to hire than to hire strictly for skills, ignoring organizational values.
- 7. Use Net Promoter Scores (NPS):** As part of being data-rich, role-model organizations know how they are doing in the eyes of their customers. An effective, highly benchmarked process for customer experience management is to use the NPS (<https://www.netpromoter.com/know/>). On a scale of -100 to 100, the NPS measures the likelihood of customers to recommend your organization, product, or service. And our role-model organizations achieve high NPS scores.
- 8. Start Baldrige “Before You Are Ready”:** Role-model organizations realize you are always ready to start using the Baldrige Excellence Framework (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/publications/baldrige-excellence-framework>). The Framework meets you where you are as an organization and helps you move to the next higher level of performance. If you postpone Baldrige “until you are ready,” you will either never be ready or slow down progress that you could be making today.
- 9. Celebrate the Wins:** Role-model organizations know the importance of celebration. Even easy wins are worth celebrating. If you focus only on challenges and problems, you lose sight of the progress your organization is making. Celebrations emphasize accomplishments and strength; celebrations build organizational pride and are part of the culture of role-model organizations.

A FEW TIDBITS

- 1. Data:** While I have already mentioned the importance of using data and analysis, I heard a new twist on using data from Kate Hetherington of Howard Community College (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/howard-community-college>). Her statement was, “Look at the data, remove the drama.” This was one of the best expressions of management by fact that I have heard. Remember this statement next time decision-making in your organization becomes emotional!
- 2. Returning to the “Office”:** In looking at the “new normal” for work as we come out of pandemic restrictions, Brian Collins of the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF) (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/illinois-municipal-retirement-fund>) stated that when possible the IMRF will return fully to their shared space to give people a chance to re-establish personal relationships and IMRF’s strong culture. After that, they will look at what their long-term blended work environment should be.
- 3. Susanisms:** Susan Stuart of the Center for Organ Recovery & Education (CORE) (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/center-organ-recovery-education>) shared some of her Susanisms. These are simple practices that are part of CORE’s operating guidelines that show attention to detail and careful intentionality in everything they do. They are powerful, unspoken messages that are picked up by staff and customers. A couple of examples that were shared include always leaving conference room blinds up and fully open and pushing chairs into the conference table when a meeting ends.

WHAT NEXT?

Now that you know some of my lessons learned or re-enforced by the speakers at the Quest for Excellence Conference, think about your organization. Are you using these practices? What insights do they provide into your organization? What will you change or improve? How have you been inspired? I wish you success on your journey to performance excellence!



Baldrige Impact in Health Care: #BaldrigeSavesLives

Health care organizations became eligible for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award after Congress expanded the scope of the award in 1998. SSM Health Care, headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri, became the first health care organization to receive the award. That was in 2002.

Through the 2020 award cycle the National Quality Award has been presented to organizations in the health care sector a total of 29 times. Hundreds more health care organizations have been recognized for their role-model performance in their respective state-based programs and nationwide through a number of Baldrige-based health care quality award programs. By one estimate over 65 percent of hospitals and health care systems employ some form of Baldrige-based performance excellence management system.

Baldrige is adaptable and applicable in many different settings, including across the health care spectrum. Each hospital, hospital system, or long-term care facility has its own unique set of needs and goals, determined in part by location, demographics, and a variety of other factors. Whether an organization is involved in ambulatory service, health maintenance, long-term care, or another health care service, the Baldrige Excellence Framework is a valuable tool for measuring performance and leading organizations of all sizes and levels of complexity in an uncertain environment. The Baldrige Framework is such a powerful leadership and management tool for health care organizations that in 2017 the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology recommended that the Department of Commerce and the Department of Health and Human Services build on the Baldrige Award to help bring down the cost and improve the quality of health care across the United States.

Baldrige health care organizations also benefit from systemic alignment and an agility in leadership and decision making that have been critical to adapting to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of the leaders of Baldrige health care organizations have testified that Baldrige made a significant difference in



“The health care industry has increasingly relied on the Baldrige Criteria as a key means to improve patient care and organizational performance. As we navigate health care’s changing landscape the Baldrige Framework will continue to be a vital resource.” – Deborah J. Bowen, President and CEO, American College of Healthcare Executives

their ability to continue to provide high-quality medical care through the pandemic.

We now have nearly 20 years of experience with Baldrige in the health care sector, and there is overwhelming evidence that Baldrige makes a significant, positive impact on the provision of quality health care.

The improvements reported by the individual award-winning organizations are impressive, spanning patient morbidity and mortality outcomes to cost and

process efficiencies to medical and support staff and patient and family satisfaction. Some of the life-saving improvements in clinical outcomes include:

- GBMC HealthCare demonstrated industry-leading performance with 100 percent of stroke patients receiving antithrombotic therapy at discharge, 100 percent of high-risk mothers receiving antenatal steroids, and 100 percent of patients receiving combination chemotherapy for breast cancer.
- Memorial Hospital and Health Care Center earned 5-star ratings for overall quality of inpatient care from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) every year since the ratings were released, and its performance in CMS's Value-Based payment system ranked in the top 10 percent of health care organizations nationwide since 2017.

“We continue to look for ways to seize our opportunities for improvement. We continue these things because this journey has been more than fruitful. It's been life-saving. Though a vast majority of our patients will never realize it, the care they receive is more effective, more efficient, more empathic because of the Baldrige Framework.” – Kathy Raethel, President, Adventist Health Castle

- Memorial Hospital and Health Care Center's excellent health care outcomes include zero early elective deliveries before 39 weeks since 2015, zero pressure ulcers in its skilled caring center since 2016, zero central-line-associated blood stream infections since 2016, and zero hospital methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) infections since 2015.
- Setting national benchmarks for patient safety, Memorial Hospital and Health Care Center earned the Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade of “A” since 2016. These patient safety results include a two-year reduction in total harm issues, from 6.2 to 1.1 per 1,000 patient days from 2016 to 2018; a bedside medication verification rate of more than 97 percent, exceeding the Leapfrog benchmarks from 2013 to 2018; and a performance level in the top 10 percentile of CMS comparison data for PSI-90 patient safety composite results since 2017.
- Adventist Health Castle has met or surpassed top-quartile levels—improving its performance by 12 percent from 2014 to 2016—on composite measures of patient safety, evidence-based care, and mortality related to its clinical care processes.

“In my heart, I believe that because we applied the Baldrige Criteria, there are people alive today who would not have been had we not been so committed to the Baldrige process.” – Rulon Stacey, Former CEO, Poudre Valley Health System

- Advocate Good Samaritan Hospital's risk-adjusted mortality decreased from 0.73 in 2004 to 0.25 in 2010.
- Memorial Hermann Sugar Land ranks among the top 10 percent of hospitals nationally for its performance on measures of emergency center arrival-to-discharge time, compliance with regulations to reduce medication errors, bed turnaround times, radiology and laboratory result turnaround times, and the use of computerized physician order entry. The hospital's readmission rates for patients treated for acute myocardial infarction, congestive heart failure, and pneumonia were lower than those of hospitals nationwide, according to data from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.
- According to the Institute for Healthcare Improvement, Henry Ford Health System's evidence-based global harm campaign is a national best practice. From 2008 through 2001, the campaign led to a 31 percent reduction in harm events.
- Schneck Medical Center has maintained rates of hospital-acquired infections at or below 1 percent since 2008, and no patient has acquired ventilator-associated pneumonia since 2009.
- AtlantiCare Regional Medical Center achieved Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services top 10 percent performance in 2008 for patient care measures related to congestive heart failure, acute myocardial infarction, and pneumonia.

“The Baldrige framework helped us hardwire systematic communication that has increased transparency and built trust with our workforce.” – Kyle Bennett, President and CEO, Memorial Hospital and Health Care Center

More than the year-over-year performance improvement of health care organizations as they pursue their Baldrige journey, broader studies comparing Baldrige-based health care organizations with peer organizations that have not adopted the Baldrige Framework, show that Baldrige organizations significantly outperform their non-Baldrige peers.



“I retired at the end of 2009, after 25 years as CEO of Heartland Health, with the knowledge and belief that any organization that adopts and implements fully the Baldrige Framework as its management model will ultimately rise to levels of performance excellence exceeding all their expectations.” – Lowell Kruse, Former CEO, Heartland Health

According to Thomson Reuters, hospitals using the Baldrige criteria were six times more likely to be in the top 100 hospitals and outperformed non-Baldrige hospitals in:

- Risk-adjusted mortality index
- Risk-adjusted complications index
- Patient safety index
- CMS core measures score
- Severity-adjusted average length of stay
- Adjusted operating profit margin

“The Charleston Area Medical Center Health System is a better organization today because we made the choice to use the Baldrige Criteria as a guiding framework for quality improvement. This performance improvement framework helps us to achieve our mission of ‘striving to provide the best health care to every patient every day.’” – Dr. Glenn Crotty, Jr., Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Charleston Area Medical Center

A study by Ronald Schulingkamp and John Latham compared Baldrige Award winning hospitals with non-Baldrige hospitals across 39 Process of Care, Patient Satisfaction, and Outcomes of Care metrics, and concluded that, “Although not all measures were statistically significant, Baldrige Award recipient hospitals had higher mean values representing higher performance than non-Baldrige Award recipient hospitals in 37 of the 39 (95 percent) study measures.

Substantial data from case studies and comparative analyses shows that health care organizations improve their performance by adopting the Baldrige Excellence Framework for Health Care, and that they become significantly better performers than peer organizations that have not adopted Baldrige. The data proves that #BaldrigeSavesLives.

Recipients of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award in the Health Care sector

- 2002 – SSM Health Care
- 2003 – Saint Luke’s Health System
- 2003 – Baptist Hospital, Inc.
- 2004 – Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton
- 2005 – Bronson Methodist Hospital
- 2006 – North Mississippi Medical Center
- 2007 – Sharp HealthCare
- 2007 – Mercy Health System
(now known as MercyRockford Health System)
- 2008 – Poudre Valley Health System
(now part of University of Colorado Health)
- 2009 – Heartland Health (now Mosaic)
- 2010 – Advocate Good Samaritan Hospital
- 2011 – Southcentral Foundation
- 2011 – Schneck Medical Center
- 2011 – Henry Ford Health System
- 2012 – North Mississippi Health Services
- 2013 – Sutter Davis Hospital
- 2014 – Hill Country Memorial
- 2014 – St. David’s HealthCare
- 2015 – Charleston Area Medical Center
- 2016 – Memorial Hermann Sugar Land Hospital
- 2016 – Kindred Nursing and Rehabilitation –
Mountain Valley (now known as Mountain Valley of Cascadia)
- 2017 – Adventist Health Castle
- 2017 – Southcentral Foundation
- 2018 – Memorial Hospital and Health Care Center
- 2019 – Mary Greeley Medical Center
- 2019 – Adventist Health White Memorial
- 2020 – GBMC HealthCare
- 2020 – Wellstar Paulding Hospital

A Time for G*R*A*C*E

by Harry Hertz, Baldrige Performance Excellence Program
National Institute of Standards and Technology



I hope the recently completed holiday season was a joyous one for you. I find this season provides an annual time of reflection for me; a time to be thankful for the opportunities I have had and for the support of my family. It is for me a time of grace.

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/grace>) has multiple definitions for the word *grace*. The one I am referring to this time of year is, "disposition to or an act or instance of kindness, courtesy, or clemency." Have I exhibited grace during the past year and can I do more in the coming year?

FIVE GRACES

Apparently, similar thoughts were on the mind of Gary Burnison, the CEO of Korn Ferry (<https://www.kornferry.com/insights/special-edition/our-five-graces>). He recently wrote about his inspiration this time of year based on the five graces: *gratitude*, *resilience*, *aspiration*, *courage*, and *empathy*. As I reflected on these five graces, I began to contemplate the meaning of these graces from an organizational perspective, in addition to my personal perspective. I would like to share some thoughts from the organizational perspective.



GRATITUDE

While I am self-motivated to develop strategies, meet goals, and help my organization succeed, I have always appreciated receiving expressions of gratitude from my organization. A simple “thank you” for my idea, my output, my contribution to teamwork from teammates, supervisors, and senior leaders adds a bounce to my step and a sense of well-being as I go home to my family. How well is this simple act of gratitude practiced in your organization? I believe showing gratitude is a significant part of a senior leader’s role in creating organizational culture and an environment for success. It is emphasized in the Senior Leadership item (1.1) (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/baldrige-criteria-commentary#senior>) of the Baldrige Excellence Framework® (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/publications/baldrige-excellence-framework>) and is central to the Baldrige core value (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/core-values-and-concepts>) of *valuing people* (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/core-values-and-concepts#valuing>).



RESILIENCE

In an organizational context, *resilience* refers to the ability to (1) anticipate, prepare for, and recover from disasters, emergencies, and other disruptions; and (2) protect and *enhance* workforce and customer engagement, supply-network and financial performance, organizational productivity, and community well-being when disruption occurs. This topic was covered in a recent blog (<https://www.nist.gov/blogs/blogrige/agile-may-be-fragile-resilience-goal>).

The recent upheavals caused by the global pandemic and years of social injustice have challenged organizations’ ability to be resilient. As we consider a time of grace, it is the people aspects of organizational resilience that factored large in my thoughts. Did our disaster planning and response adequately address the needs of our organizations’ people? Are we providing the flexibility, support, and employee training/development to avoid similar significant disruptions to their well-being should future emergencies occur?

Agility and resilience is a Baldrige core value. Item 6.2c of the Baldrige Excellence Framework (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/baldrige-criteria-commentary#operational-effectiveness>) addresses resilience, including the important people aspects.



ASPIRATION

I enter each new year with a desire to be better, do more good, and achieve a more fulfilling life. We all are caught up in “new year’s resolutions,” our aspirations for the coming year.

But what about your organization? Is it taking a fresh look at its vision? Is it looking at the embodiment of that vision in strategic objectives and action plans for the coming year? Is it taking a fresh look at the drivers of employee engagement after a year or more of upheaval? What motivates your employees to stay with your organization in a volatile job market? What employee development will allow your employees to achieve their aspirations and also contribute more to the organization?

Valuing people and *visionary leadership* are Baldrige core values. Vision, strategy, and workforce engagement and well-being are addressed throughout the Baldrige Excellence Framework.

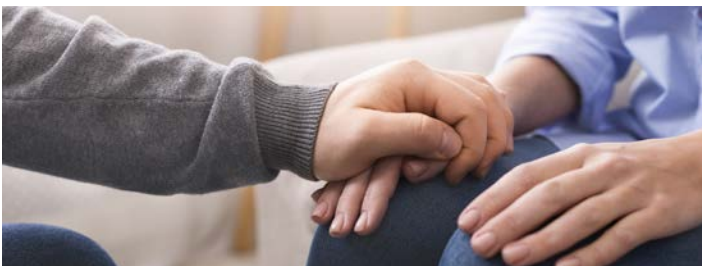


COURAGE

Everyone has needed courage to address the challenges of the last year. Families have needed courage to adapt to a new home environment that also became a schoolroom, an office for work, a confining environment in which to accept pandemic-related illness and unemployment, and a boundary to our mobility.

Organizations also needed courage. And those that displayed that courage were better prepared to survive and thrive going forward. Organizations needed courage to adapt rapidly to emergencies and disaster, to empower workforce members to make decisions, to deal with much greater flexibility in work schedules and supply-network outages, and to sacrifice aspects of lean management in favor of long-term sustainability.

And courage will continue to be necessary, because more change is ahead of us and not all of it is predictable. This change will require rapid *organizational learning*, *a systems perspective*, and *innovation*. These concepts are embodied in Baldrige core values and throughout the Baldrige Excellence Framework.



EMPATHY

According to Korn Ferry Institute, there are three aspects to empathy (<https://www.kornferry.com/insights/special-edition/our-five-graces>). *Cognitive empathy* allows us to understand others'

emotional experiences while maintaining a personal detachment. Emotional empathy allows us to feel what others are experiencing. And compassion allows us to set aside our own concerns to help others.

Organizations have had great opportunity to show empathy during this past year to their employees, their customers, their supply network, and their communities.

- **Cognitive empathy:** Has your organization considered the challenges faced by your stakeholders this past year? Have you “walked in their shoes?”
- **Emotional empathy:** Have you tried to feel the pain experienced by those stakeholders who have been most disrupted and challenged?
- **Compassion:** Have you reached out to help your affected stakeholders? Have you made efforts to help employees and their families who were impacted by the pandemic? Have you supported social change through organizational change that addresses past biases, whether conscious or unconscious? Have you made special accommodations for needy customers? Have you been active in support of your local community as it addressed the challenges of a new pandemic lifestyle and its associated needs? Have you been a contributor to equity and inclusion in your community?

Concepts related to empathy are contained throughout the Baldrige Excellence Framework and are embedded in the core values that form the foundation of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. Four of the 11 Baldrige core values are central to organizational empathy: *customer-focused excellence*; *valuing people*; *societal contributions*; and *ethics and transparency*.

A YEAR FOR GRACE

To all my Baldrige friends and colleagues, I hope you have a year of health, of safety, of peace—and also a year of *grace*.

Baldrige Impact in Education: #BaldrigeTransformsLives



Congress expanded the scope of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award in 1998 to include the education sector. In 2001, three organizations became the first to receive a National Quality Award in the education sector: the Chugach School District in Anchorage, Alaska; Pearl River School District in Pearl River, New York; and the University of Wisconsin-Stout (UW-Stout).

The data show that the benefits of improved performance associated with Baldrige begin to accrue long before an organization wins a National Quality Award, or even if they never become award recipients. Many of these organizations, like UW-Stout, continue to lead and manage by the Baldrige principles, and they continue to enjoy the benefits of performance excellence.

“We have dedicated ourselves to being systematic in the use of the Baldrige continuous improvement process, and we have seen student achievement go up in ways that we never thought imaginable. We’ve become more efficient and more effective. And these successes aren’t just figures and statistics; they do change lives. And in the process, we’ve become an innovative force in education.” – JoAnn Sternke, Superintendent, Pewaukee School District

The adaptability of the Baldrige Framework is evident in the education sector as a wide variety of organizations have used Baldrige to achieve success. Through the 2020 award cycle, a total of 14 education organizations have received the National Quality Award. Of those, eight are K-12 schools or school systems and six are in higher education, demonstrating that Baldrige can be scaled to many different-sized

organizations. The school systems are from all parts of the country and are of different sizes with widely varying student demographics. Baldrige works in all of these varied circumstances.

The true power of Baldrige for education is its focus on the systems level. Jeffrey Lucas, former Deputy Director of BPEP, makes the argument that many of the performance measurement systems used in education focus on student achievement data to the exclusion of measuring things that could truly innovate education to the betterment of students. “While the improvement of student learning must remain at the core of what education systems are about, achievement data alone are not sufficient to drive the types of performance improvements required and do not acknowledge that schools and districts are in fact complex systems.”

“The Baldrige Award has increased community awareness of the educational excellence of the Alamo Colleges District. As a result of our Baldrige win, we are sought after by other educational institutions and organizations from as far away as New Zealand as a model of how to achieve organizational excellence.”
– Mike Flores, Chancellor, Alamo Colleges District

The importance of this thinking becomes apparent when one examines the experience of Baldrige Award winning school systems. Schools, administrators, and teachers are balancing multiple, often competing factors, that leave schools with inadequate resources, teachers with not enough time, and students with difficulty focusing on learning. As a systems-level tool, Baldrige can help school systems align their processes and integrate many of those seeming conflicting factors.

With its focus on the student, teachers, staff, and families as the customers, Baldrige also helps school systems recognize where frustration may arise and satisfaction diminish. Baldrige helps schools spend their limited resources and time on the things that really make a difference, which is why the data show that Baldrige schools improve education and change the lives of their students and families, often without any increase in budgets.

- Charter School of San Diego (CSSD) serves an at-risk student population with students on average 2-3 grade levels behind their peers in language arts and



“America’s economic future—the health of our children and our grandchildren, the defense of those American values that we support—is dependent upon all kids in every neighborhood, urban or rural. We are committed to that, and Baldrige has helped us on our journey.” – Mary Searcy Bixby, Founder, President, and CEO, Charter School of San Diego

3-4 grade levels in math achievement. Yet CSSD’s dropout rate of 2.4 percent outperformed the county-wide rate of 2.7 percent in 2013 and 3.1 percent in 2014.

- CSSD maintained overall student and parent satisfaction levels of close to 100 percent for 2010-2015.
- Despite having one of the most rigorous graduation requirements in the state, Pewaukee School District achieved a 97.4 percent graduation rate in 2013 and had a higher rate in 2009-2012 than any other county district.

“By adopting the Baldrige framework, we earned a spot on Fortune’s Top Places to Work list four years in a row. Additionally, our enrollment grew from 8,000 in 2009 to over 20,000 in 2018. Our Net Promoter Score matched that of the Ritz Carlton and Costco in 2018 and 2019. Furthermore, our student retention/completion rates averaged 93 percent over five years, with an average student debt of fewer than three hundred dollars.” – Lindel Fields, Superintendent and CEO, Tri County Tech

- Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) achieved the highest graduation rate of any large school district in the nation in 2008 and 2009.
- MCPS narrowed the achievement gap between Caucasian and African American students by 13 percentage points from 2006 to 2010.
- Iredell-Statesville Schools improved its academic composite ranking from 55th to 9th in North



Carolina, increased its graduation rate from 61 percent to 81 percent (11th in the state), achieved higher average SAT scores than the average score in peer districts, the state as a whole, and for the nation, remaining 107th out of 115 school districts in North Carolina in expenditures per pupil.

- The dropout rate for Jenks Public Schools dropped from 6.3 percent in 1994 to 1.2 percent in 2004.

In higher education:

- Howard Community College outperformed its peer community colleges with a more than 100 percent growth rate for associate degrees awarded for over 10 years.
- The persistence rate, defined as the number of students who graduated, transferred, earned at least 30 credits with a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or above, or were still enrolled at Howard Community College four years after entry, has increased significantly over three fiscal years, from just over 75 percent in FY2016 to over 80 percent in FY2018, surpassing the Maryland community colleges and best state rates.

“When the global pandemic struck in March 2019, the college converted its mainly face-to-face instruction and services to primarily remote classes within two and a half weeks. Because we had been operating for well over a decade using the Baldrige framework, the shift was successfully completed.”
 – Kathleen Hetherington, President, Howard Community College

- Alamo Colleges District increased its four-year student graduation rate by 150 percent in recent years to become the best in the state of Texas. In four years, it also doubled the number of degrees and certificates it awarded, to 12,750, which is three times the state norm.
- For student completion/retention and job placement after graduation, Tri County Tech maintained rates in the top 25 percent nationally for eight fiscal years. The organization also achieved the top completion/retention rate in its state of Oklahoma for full-time students for five of seven years preceding its Baldrige Award.
- The number of students completing the core curriculum at Richland College, preparing them to transfer to a four-year institution, more than tripled from 2002 to 2005.

“It is a privilege to accept the Baldrige Award on behalf of Monfort College’s faculty, staff, students, alumni, and friends. We are here because of their continued commitment to performance excellence and investment in the approach of viewing yesterday’s performance as an opportunity for a better tomorrow.” – Joe F. Alexander, Dean, Kenneth W. Monfort College of Business

- Students performance on nationally-administered exit exams at Kenneth W. Monfort School of Business exceeded the national average and reached the top 10 percent in 2003-2004.
- From 1996 to 2001, the job placement rate for graduates of the University of Wisconsin-Stout was at or above 98 percent.

All of these colleges, schools, and school districts achieved these dramatic improvements while managing stagnant budgets and cuts in education funding. This is clear evidence that #BaldrigeTransformsLives.

Recipients of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award in the Education sector

- 2001 – University of Wisconsin, Stout
- 2001 – Pearl River School District
- 2001 – Chugach School District
- 2003 – Community Consolidated School District 15
- 2004 – Kenneth W. Monfort College of Business
- 2005 – Richland College
- 2005 – Jenks Public Schools
- 2008 – Iredell-Statesville Schools
- 2010 – Montgomery County Public Schools
- 2013 – Pewaukee School District
- 2015 – The Charter School of San Diego
- 2018 – Alamo Colleges District
- 2018 – Tri County Tech
- 2019 – Howard Community College

Six Cybersecurity Tips to Protect Your Business

by Michelle Peña, Baldrige Performance Excellence Program
National Institute of Standards and Technology



Building a cybersmart organization in today's fast-moving digital world requires a framework and system for benchmarking security efforts. Consider using the free Baldrige Cybersecurity Excellence Builder (BCEB) (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/products-services/baldrige-cybersecurity-initiative#builder>), a self-assessment tool that blends organizational assessment approaches from the Baldrige Excellence Framework® (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/publications/baldrige-excellence-framework>) with the concepts and principles of NIST's Cybersecurity Framework (<https://www.nist.gov/cyberframework>).

The BCEB's goals are to

- help organizations understand the robustness and effectiveness of cybersecurity programs and practices,
- help organizations gauge how cybersecurity efforts align to organizational strategy,
- emphasize tracking and use of performance metrics to drive decision making,
- spread effective use of NIST's Cybersecurity Framework, and
- support the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program's purpose of improving organizations' performance and sustainability/competitiveness.



HOW THE BCEB HELPS LEADERS AND MANAGERS

The BCEB is intended for use by leaders and managers who are concerned with and responsible for an organization's mission-driven, cybersecurity-related policy and operations. It is most valuable as a voluntary self-assessment of an entire organization's cybersecurity risk management program; it is also useful in assessing a subunit, multiple subunits, or parts of an organization. Ideally, suppliers and partners also should use the BCEB since they can have immediate and extensive impacts on cybersecurity risks.

The BCEB guides users toward a better understanding of the effectiveness of cybersecurity risk-management efforts and identifies improvement opportunities in the context of their overall organizational performance while illuminating key information about

- organizational and cybersecurity leaders,
- cybersecurity in the context of the organization's overall strategy,
- cybersecurity needs and expectations of internal and external customers,
- measurement of cybersecurity performance in the context of overall performance measurement,
- the overall workforce and the workforce with special cybersecurity responsibilities,
- the overall and cybersecurity-specific suppliers and partners,
- cybersecurity operations and their alignment with overall operations,

- cybersecurity risks in the context of broader enterprise risks, and
- results related to each of these areas.

The questions (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/how-baldrige-cybersecurity-excellence-builder-works>) in the BCEB lead users to manage all areas affected by cybersecurity in alignment with their organization's characteristics, environment, and strategy.

CYBERSECURITY IS EVERYONE'S JOB

It is often said that a team is only as strong as its weakest player, and the best defense is a good offense. To manage risks and ensure continuity of operations, it's imperative that leaders and managers take a direct role in motivating their workforce to remain cyber aware—especially in today's maximum telework (<https://www.nist.gov/blogs/cybersecurity-insights/telework-security-basics>) space, where so many remote workers are connecting to network services from outside their organization's boundaries.

Think of cybersecurity as a team sport, in which all players must make and implement strategic decisions about risks, policies, and operations. To that end, inspired by the Baldrige Cybersecurity Initiative (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/products-services/baldrige-cybersecurity-initiative>), following are six tips from which every business playbook can benefit to create an environment for success now and in the future.

1. Keep your assets up to date and fully patched.

Maintain an inventory of your IT assets and keep them up to date by patching. Disable unused ports and services. Implement anti-virus/anti-malware/anti-phishing technologies where feasible to prevent, detect, and mitigate malware, including ransomware.

2. Look comprehensively at your data and consider eliminating or archiving things you no longer need.

If you have not used it in years, then it may no longer be a mission-essential function to your business or a vital part of responding to a cybersecurity event. Time is of the essence when a potential incident occurs. Mean time to inventory, detect, and respond (<https://nvlpubs.nist.gov/nistpubs/SpecialPublications/NIST.SP.800-184.pdf>) are just three important metrics that can impact breach costs for your organization.

3. Put your disaster response plan to the test, and correct any parts of the process that do not go as planned.

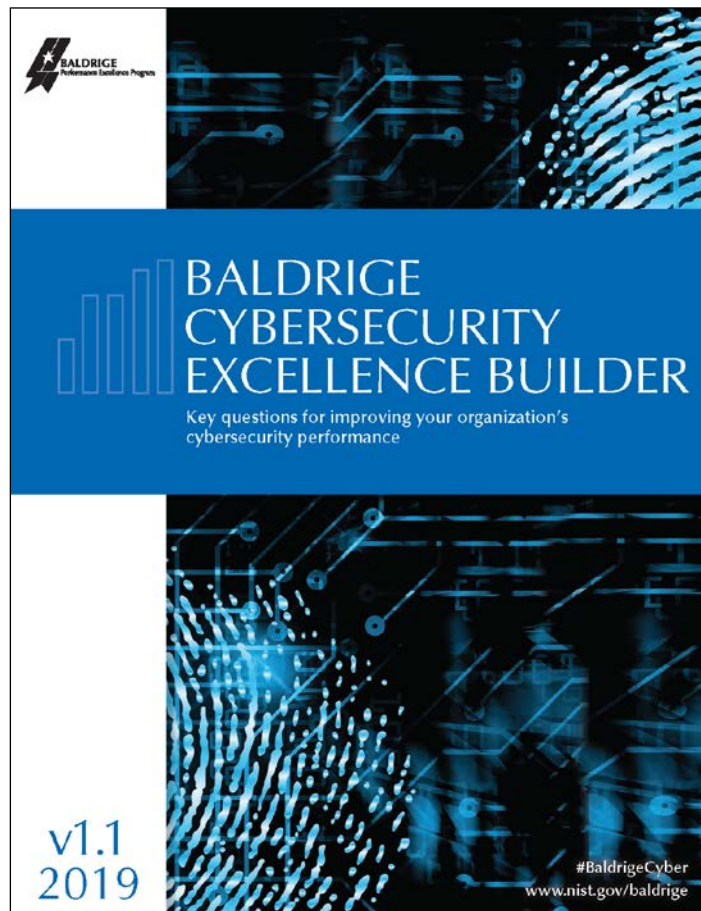
Everyone on the team should understand their roles and responsibilities for responding to a cyberattack, have emergency contact information on hand for other team members they need to communicate with, and know what the game plan is before that incident becomes a breach (https://www.ftc.gov/system/files/documents/plain-language/560a_data_breach_response_guide_for_business.pdf).

4. Build in employee cybersecurity awareness continuously through bulletins, text or email alerts, regular training, and other activities.

This will help everyone understand that vulnerabilities arise and pose a threat to the entire organization, not just one person.

5. Report social engineering incidences to your organization's security team.

Common examples include email phishing—fraudulent messages containing spam links or attachments (<https://www.nist.gov/video/introducing-phish-scale>). When an email looks suspicious, even if it “appears” to be from someone you know, it’s best to delete it. Remain cognizant of other types of phishing attacks as



well, such as vishing (scam phone calls), smishing (fraudulent SMS messages), and angler phishing (fake social media accounts).

6. Implement multi-factor authentication (MFA).

MFA (https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/NCSAM_MFAGuide_2020.pdf) adds an additional layer of security around sites containing sensitive information, or whenever enhanced security is desirable, and makes it more difficult for unauthorized people to log in as the account holder. To further increase account security, ensure that you’re also using strong passwords (<https://www.nist.gov/blogs/cybersecurity-insights/cybersecurity-awareness-month-be-cyber-smart>). NIST’s David Temoshok adds, “Since multiple long passwords are difficult to remember and manage, consider the use of a password manager for stronger, simpler password management.” For additional information on password managers, consult NIST Special Publication 800-63 (<https://pages.nist.gov/800-63-FAQ/#q-b12>).



Thank you for Your Support!

Gifts to the 2021 General Fund

Alamo Colleges District
 Amazon Smile
 Beyond Feedback
 Benjamin Brace
 Blue Mountain Hospital – Utah
 Bristol Tennessee Essential Services
 College of Healthcare Information Management Executives (CHIME)
 Combined Federal Campaign (CFC)
 Laura Cooley
 Alireza Danaie
 Daniel Edds
 Elevations Credit Union
 Al Faber
 Bob Fangmeyer
 Frank Fusco
 Christine Heflin
 Greg Hodges
 Cheryl Janoski
 Edwin Lee
 Ryan Locicero
 LuLu Process Design
 Mid-America Transplant
 PayPal Giving Fund
 Suresh Nirody
 Luke Reed

Jerry Rees
 Gail Sausser
 Southcentral Foundation
 Donald Summons
 University of Kansas Medical Center
 USF Credit Union
 Walden University
 Mark Wayda
 Wellstar Paulding
 Wise Health System
 Yuma Regional Medical Center

Gifts received for #GivingTuesday/ End-of-Year Campaign

P. George Benson Ph.D.
 Stephen Bonk
 Russell Branzell
 Diane Brockmeier
 Walter G. Copan Ph.D.
 Glenn Crotty M.D.
 Kay Eggleston Ph.D.
 Al Faber
 Eric Fletcher
 Frank Fusco
 Ellen F. Garshick
 David R. Gifford M.D.
 Harry S. Hertz Ph.D.
 Lowell C. Kruse
 Brian Lassiter

Scott R. McIntyre
 Michael McMillan
 Karen Morrison
 Suresh Nirody
 John Raffoul
 James E. Ralston
 Tony Scott
 Sunil Sinha
 E. David Spong
 Rulon F. Stacey Ph.D.
 Kelly Tomaszewski
 Henry Wixon

Quest Sponsors

Adventist Health
 Alamo Colleges District
 Baldrige Family
 Baldrige Institute for Performance Excellence
 Charleston Area Medical Center
 Dallas College – Richland College
 Donor Alliance
 Elevations Credit Union
 Lulu Process Design Group
 Mid-America Transplant
 MidwayUSA
 Stellar Solutions, Inc.
 Tri County Tech
 Walden University

Wellstar Paulding Hospital
 Yuma Regional Medical Center

Foundation Awards Tribute Sponsors

AARP
 Adventist Health
 Baldrige Coach®
 Beyond Feedback
 Dallas College
 Donor Alliance
 Elevations Credit Union
 LSU Foundation
 LULU Process Design Group
 Mary Greeley Medical Center
 Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare
 ProMedica
 Relia Healthcare Advisors
 Stellar Solutions
 Tri County Tech
 U.S. Chamber of Commerce
 Walden University

For donations of record between January 1, 2021, and December 31, 2021.

Gift Arrangements Through Planned Giving

Al Faber
 Mark Wayda

Through Your Gifts, You are Changing the World

By keeping Baldrige vibrant and growing, your donation:

- Makes hospital care safer, more widely available and less expensive
- Makes education more effective and gives opportunities to our young people
- Makes businesses more competitive and protect American jobs
- Makes digital systems more secure

- Makes communities function more effectively to address the needs of all people

For those people whose lives are longer, healthier, and more full of opportunity because of Baldrige, thank you for supporting the Baldrige Foundation.





The Foundation for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, Inc.
1717 Pennsylvania Ave, NW Suite 1025
Washington, DC 20006

Phone (202) 559-9195

baldrigefoundation.org

