

## Baldrige CEO Attitudes and Motivations

### Seven Factors that Make Them Different

What is missing from our understanding of transformational leadership? One possible answer is the scarcity of research on motivational and attitudinal patterns (MAPs) in North America and even less on leadership MAPs in particular. Additionally, unlike some assessment instruments that measure constructs like personality and intelligence that have been in place for years, there is no large national database on motivational and attitudinal patterns with which to compare a group of organizational leaders. This is the situation, despite the fact that some studies of the relationship between MAPs in the U.S. and abroad indicate that they are very powerful predictors of a significant portion of performance. Typically MAPs account for 35-55% of performance ratings for a given role in a given context (Harshman, 2009).

This white paper summarizes the key findings from an exploratory study on the MAPs of CEOs who have led organizational transformations and have been designated as role models based on their recognition as recipients of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (in business, health care, and education). The main question that drove this study is whether transformational leaders from Baldrige recipient organizations somehow differ in their motivations and attitudes from other leaders who are at the top of their organizations.



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## Baldrige CEO “Differentiating” Factors\*

This research is based on data collected through administration of the Inventory for Work Attitude and Motivation (iWAM) survey (Institute for Work Attitude and Motivation, 2009) to Baldrige CEOs. It was found that seven motivational and attitudinal patterns seem to differentiate Baldrige CEOs from the iWAM Leader Comparison Group. The seven differentiating patterns from the survey are identified below, followed by a brief description of results from in-depth interviews. The interview data was analyzed using an inductive approach supported by NVivo8 a qualitative data analysis software package (Latham, 2009). This provides a “validation” test of the iWAM results and some deeper insights into the nature of Baldrige CEOs and effective leaders in general.

Motivational and Attitudinal Pattern	Key Change Concept	Survey Findings	Interview Findings
Sole Responsibility	Organization transformation is complex and the probability of success is low. Creating sustainable excellence requires a collaborative leader and a team-based approach.	Baldrige CEOs are less likely to think that having sole responsibility is important.	<p>All of the Baldrige CEOs described situations that indicated they often were very collaborative in their approach to leading the organization.</p> <p>Most of the Baldrige CEOs demonstrated a high degree of humility through descriptions of how they handled particular situations, the credit that they gave to the team, etc.</p> <p>Most of the Baldrige CEOs identified involvement and engagement of employees as a key to organization learning and transformation.</p> <p>Teamwork was the most common organizational culture value identified by most of the Baldrige CEOs.</p>
Evolution	As one CEO put it, “While you may have to put the ‘rudder over hard,’ the ship doesn’t turn quickly. It takes time for culture change and you have to take the group along with you.”	Baldrige CEOs are more likely to want to evolve change and drive continuous improvement.	<p>The Baldrige CEOs “pushed” for both continuous improvement and breakthrough improvement, but they realized that overall organization transformation was a long-term evolutionary process.</p> <p>All of the Baldrige CEOs used four key continuous improvement processes including strategic management system, continuous improvement process (e.g., Plan-Do-Study-Act), benchmarking, and Baldrige-based assessment and improvement.</p> <p>Possibly the most important culture theme that emerged was the length of time the culture had been in place, or as this theme was labeled, how ingrained are the “habits.” System changes had to be in place for a while before they became imbedded in the culture.</p>
Past	Leading transformation requires leaders at all levels to reflect on the past and use experience to make decisions and develop strategies for achieving competitive advantage.	Baldrige CEOs concentrate on the past and use experience to make decisions.	As previously noted, all of the Baldrige CEOs used four methods to facilitate continuous learning and improvement – strategic management system, continuous improvement process, benchmarking, and Baldrige-based assessment and improvement. All four approaches involved assessments of previous performance and the results associated with changes. In other words, they all learned from performance “trends” which provided feedback on the effectiveness of previous changes.

Motivational and Attitudinal Pattern	Key Change Concept	Survey Findings	Interview Findings
Tolerance	<p>Successful organizational transformation requires follow through and accountability.</p> <p>Transformational CEOs follow through and hold people accountable for the necessary changes in behavior.</p>	<p>Baldrige CEOs have a strong tendency to want to impose their "rules" on others. That is, they are not very motivated to deal with people who have rules different than their own. [Note: low tolerance should not be confused with the extent to which an individual cares about people.]</p>	<p>Many of the Baldrige CEOs described how they had to deal with resistance to change. "And my basic belief in people is that I would rather work with you and do everything I can to help you get through denial and get on the right track and go." Or as another Baldrige CEO described it, "...we are going to try it one year, if it doesn't work we will go back to what's not working now."</p> <p>Most of the Baldrige CEOs also identified follow through and persistence as key to successful transformation.</p> <p>Many of the Baldrige CEOs identified accountability as key to getting people to actually take the actions necessary.</p> <p>Most of the Baldrige CEOs had to let go of employees that didn't change and support the transformation and new direction. While some of these employees left on their own, half of the Baldrige CEOs had to force some employees to leave.</p>
Focus on Systems	<p>In a resource constrained environment, achieving excellence requires systems thinking to identify the "leverage points" that will have the greatest impact on overall enterprise performance for the least amount of effort and expense.</p>	<p>Baldrige CEOs are strongly motivated to work with systems and processes.</p>	<p>Many of the Baldrige CEOs demonstrated an ability to understand the organization as a system. Systems thinking was demonstrated in many forms but was often focused on an understanding of the causal chain of engaged employees, quality products and services, customer satisfaction and financial success.</p> <p>Organizational learning was focused on three key elements: the systems, the people, and the culture. All of the cases used four methods to facilitate system and process redesign and improvement.</p> <p>While this is a minor theme with less than half of the Baldrige CEOs identifying alignment and integration as a key activity, the Baldrige CEOs that did talk about it, indicated that it was a key part of the transformation.</p>
Focus on Information	<p>Transformational leaders use detailed information to understand the internal and external environments and develop proactive strategies to succeed in today's complex and dynamic global environment.</p>	<p>Baldrige CEOs are strongly motivated to work with facts and knowledge (information).</p>	<p>All of the Baldrige CEOs used a comprehensive scorecard and results that included the current performance levels, trends over time, and comparisons to other high performing organizations to understand their performance and develop plans for improvement.</p> <p>All of the Baldrige CEOs used four very fact-based continuous improvement processes including strategic management system, continuous improvement process, benchmarking, and Baldrige-based assessment and improvement.</p>

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Achievement	<p>It is difficult for one to learn and leverage the talents of the group if one thinks they know everything.</p> <p>Transformational CEOs have a high degree of personal humility and use their team to learn from experience and develop comprehensive strategies and plans that address the complexities of achieving and sustaining high performance.</p>	Baldrige CEOs are less motivated by a desire to be recognized for achievements.	<p>All of the Baldrige CEOs described situations that indicated that they often were very collaborative in their approach to leading the organization.</p> <p>Most of the Baldrige CEOs demonstrated a high degree of humility through their descriptions of how they handled particular situations, the credit that they gave to the team, etc. This seems to support the behavior of collaboration.</p> <p>Most of the Baldrige CEOs also identified the involvement and engagement of employees as a key to organization learning and transformation.</p> <p>Teamwork was the most common organizational culture value identified by most Baldrige CEOs.</p>

\*Results of the study are based on a survey of 12 Baldrige CEOs who led organizations that received the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award and in-depth interviews with CEOs of 14 Baldrige recipients (representing business, health care, and education). Nine of the participants were included in both groups for a total sample of 17. The Baldrige CEOs were compared to two groups: (a) the iWAM U.S. Standard Group (n = 1921) and (b) a sample of top leaders from various organizations (n=12) - nine from business, one non-profit, one government, and one university administrator. The sample of top leaders is referred to in the study as the "Leader Comparison Group."

## Potential Applications

It seems clear from the research that several Baldrige CEO motivational and attitudinal patterns are different from other leaders'. What, then, can be concluded regarding the most effective methods to institutionalize transformational leadership development? One major difference between leader traits, such as intelligence and personality, and motivational and attitudinal patterns, is that traits tend to be fixed and stable over a variety of contexts while motivational and attitudinal patterns are both adjusted in contexts and may be altered. So, the fact that a leader does not fit a transformational profile at a given point in time, does not preclude the possibility that he or she can make pattern adjustments that result in better alignment with known performance patterns. The result is that this study begins to shed light on an element of leadership that is not only proving to be fairly powerful in predicting performance, but something that has the potential to be shaped and adjusted to fit a given context, situation, and/or relationship.

We see four potential applications for moving a leader into the role of a transformational leader:

1. Personal Development - Help leaders understand how they "fit the job" of transforming an organization.
2. Leadership Develop Programs - Inform the design and delivery of leadership development for leaders headed to the upper echelon.
3. Succession Planning - Inform the succession planning for the upper echelon.
4. Hiring - Inform the hiring process at the top or for leadership positions with high potential for advancement to the top.

## More Information

To access the full report and additional research on this topic visit the Monfort Institute website – [www.monfortinstitute.org](http://www.monfortinstitute.org).

The Monfort Institute offers leadership education based on this and other research on Baldrige CEOs. Participants learn from senior leaders who have led successful transformations at **The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company, Boeing, and Clarke American**. Research scientists and subject matter experts from the Monfort Institute facilitate the program. [Learn more](#).

## References

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