

The Top Ten Reasons Your Organization Should Not Do Baldrige

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As a consultant, I am often asked a variety of questions about the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. Is the Baldrige Criteria for everyone? Can it fit in business, health care, not for profit and even in education sectors? Can I really implement something that is so systematic?

This prompted me to come up with a presentation that I deliver across the country about Baldrige with the above title. In this article I will share some of that presentation and address questions about implementation.

Reason #10 – If you use the Baldrige Criteria you will have to build strong relationships with external suppliers, partners, stakeholders, as well as build internal relationships with your staff. Additionally, the Criteria require the organization to develop performance metrics on how to judge success with those relationships. Who needs good, solid relationships with these people anyway?

Reason #9 – If you use the Baldrige Criteria and the Quality Texas Foundation feedback, your organization will receive inexpensive consulting assistance designed to improve efficiencies. Our professional examiners will provide your organization ways to improve and maximize resources based on your application. Who would want a detailed feedback report on your organization from strangers highlighting where you can focus your efforts?

Reason #8 – If you use the criteria, you will receive weird looks from other organizations and from insiders who don't understand why the status quo isn't adequate. Your organization will work toward world class performance and out perform your competition. Who would want to improve hospital performance, educational test scores, donations to non-profits, or just increase revenue when you can relax and do nothing?

Reason #7 – On a more personal note, becoming a Texas examiner will improve your resume. If you want a personal and professional challenge, become an examiner and watch yourself grow with some of the smartest people in the state. Beware: This may cause you to look elsewhere for employment or receive a raise at work. This may also cause you to plan your personal future or own your own business. Who would want to make more money? Ridiculous!

Reason #6 – The criteria integrates and prioritizes resources and the use of resources. Money, time, energy, and talent can be better focused on what is important. This may also cause the organization to intentionally and deliberately work the strategic plan instead of placing it in a notebook on a shelf. What organization would want to prioritize resources and focus on what is really important after a strategic planning session? This could inadvertently cause organizational success.

Reason #5 – If you use the criteria, you will have to improve communications throughout the organization internally and externally. Leaders will have to meet with frontline employees to better understand the business and how it can be improved. Leaders and employees will have to be honest and open about what they can, and more importantly, cannot do. Who would want to communicate better horizontally and vertically?

Reason #4 – Using the criteria requires planning and execution of plans. The criteria will require action plans to address all goals. Some training shortfalls will be discovered and will need to be rectified. Action plans will be developed and acknowledged at all levels. Why would an organization want that much accountability and responsibility assigned in action plans?

Reason #3 – If you use the criteria, you will have to keep up with current events in your sector in a more deliberate fashion than ever before. This causes individuals at all levels to read and study sector publications, websites, books, etc. and continue to grow their professional knowledge. It may mean that you will have to benchmark those organizations that have previously been recognized as best in class. Who would want to ever think that their own organization isn't the best in the world? Why look at others?

Reason #2 – The criteria will require daily work to be based on a strategic plan and key success factors. Work will have to be evaluated continuously. Customers/patients/students will have to be consulted to understand how well you are doing to address their needs and expectations. The criteria targets work, people, and projects. Why not just continue to do what you've always done to get work done?

Reason #1 – AND THE NUMBER ONE REASON – There's too much accountability and responsibility up and down the organization. You are paid the same whether you effectively apply this world class Criteria or not. You are already tired when you leave work and you don't need a rigid set of priorities linked to your performance appraisal. Why not continue to allow your performance appraisal to be linked to whether you are liked by the boss rather than tie it to actual performance.

I once had a General (I was a career military officer) ask me about how I should be evaluated. I told him I wanted to be evaluated on my intentions – I have good intentions. That won't work with the Baldrige Criteria. Actions with measures are required to fully implement the Criteria and impact your organization.

Now, back to the questions I mentioned earlier. I have worked with the Baldrige Criteria since 1990 when the military first became involved. My doctoral dissertation was a quest to determine if this is the best business model long term. I can say without reservation that the Baldrige Criteria is ideal for any organization that wants to improve performance or financials in business, health care, not for profit, and education sectors – but only if the organization is serious about improving. If the organization isn't serious about improvement, the criteria will only provide frustration.