

Two Paths to Becoming a Baldrige Role Model (The Perspective of Texas Judges)

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NOTE: [##] are page references to the Baldrige Business-NFP Criteria for Performance Excellence, 2008.

The score you achieve on your Baldrige assessment does not by itself make you a role model. There are occasions when an applicant with a higher score than other recipients have not been recommended as Award recipients. The Panel of Judges did not recommend them to receive the Award because they were not role models. Being a role model is the sole criterion Judges use to recommend an applicant to be a recipient. Although an assessment score is very useful in helping Criteria users calibrate their level of maturity and progress and to determine their next steps for improvement, Judges recommend recipients because they are role models, not because they achieve a certain score.

Fair? You bet. It protects the integrity of the Award Process against applicants who are “one trick ponies” (have unbalanced performance with high scores in a few areas, lower scores in many others), “one shot wonders” (excellent short term results from newly implemented processes), and “one site stands” (assigned a team that scores them high, but writes “low level” feedback comments that do not support the scoring.)

Role Model = Maturity + Knowledge

The main characteristics for becoming a Baldrige role model are that you demonstrate that (1) you have achieved a high level of maturity in (1) your performance outcomes **AND** (2) the processes that produce those outcomes. That is, Baldrige role models “know” how the outcomes they achieve were produced and it is highly likely that the processes that produced them will generate similar performance over time. A Texas style definition of a role model is someone you would be willing to travel over 100 miles to visit because you know you can learn something from them that will help your organization improve.

Thus, Processes and Results are used to assess potential role model worthiness across parallel maturity scales, and the relationship between the level of maturity for Process and Results provides an indicator of the level of “knowledge” a potential Baldrige role model has acquired.

Factor #1 - Maturity

The concept of maturity is embedded in the Baldrige Scoring Guidelines in several ways. First, the **Scoring Guidelines** are organized into six scoring bands ranging from 0% to 100%. The bands are very useful to help Criteria users understand where they are and what they need to do next to achieve excellence. The scoring band you are currently in tells you where you are and the next band up tells you what you need to do next. It's that simple.

Second, each scoring band contains four statements that describe an integrated set of **Scoring Dimensions** that have proven to be very important indicators of relative maturity.

Third, the scoring dimensions are loosely organized into a progressive, overlapping hierarchy. Process scoring dimensions are Approach, Deployment, Learning, and Integration. Examiners call it "ADLI" or "Ad-Lee." Results scoring dimensions are "LeTCl" or "Let's see" which is the unofficial mnemonic for Level, Trend, Comparisons, and Integration.

It makes practical sense that you need to have an Approach before you can Deploy (implement) it, and that you need to Evaluate it after you Deploy it to see if it is working as expected, and then, after Learning (evaluating) that it works as intended, you can "trust" using (Integrate) its outputs as inputs for other related processes in your business system. This progression is what Baldrige calls "maturity."

It also seems reasonable that outcomes become more mature as applicants demonstrate high performance Levels, then positive Trends in the outcome data, then use comparative data to see how high "high" is, and then demonstrate that they know how they achieved these outcomes by linking them to specific processes (Integration). "Integration shows alignment and harmonization among processes, plans, measures, actions, and results that generate organizational effectiveness and efficiencies." [30]

Integration

It is not a coincidence that the highest level of maturity for both Processes and Results is Integration. As processes mature to a level that they become integrated, they create "cause and effect" relationships through their interconnections. The output of one process becomes the input to the next process whose output then becomes the input to the next ... and so on throughout the organizational system.

Overall organizational outcomes, like operational, strategic, customer, market, and financial performance, are also produced by interconnections in cause and effect chains. This is why the Results Category is "a composite of outcomes of multiple, interrelated processes." "The use of a balanced composite of leading and lagging performance measures ... provide a clear basis for improving results." [52]

The concept of Integration is made operational when Judges see not only the **A→D→L→I** "chains" at the Process level and **Le→T→C→I** "chains" in Results outcomes, but when Judges also see Processes → Results "chains" and Results → Results "chains" among the balanced composite of indicators in Category 7. Generally speaking, at a high level of maturity, Leadership outcomes influence Workforce outcomes, which influence the Operational outcomes that produce Product and Service outcomes that Customers evaluate against their expected outcomes which generate Market and Financial performance Results.

Many academic and consultant case studies have documented the significance of these “value chains” in “knowing” how to achieve and sustain performance excellence. Because Baldrige role models demonstrate comparable levels of maturity along both Process and Results dimensions, they are able to “know” and ultimately predict the relationships among causes (Processes) and effects (Results) and how they interact to produce the outcomes the organization seeks to produce. Very mature organizations are able to calculate the statistical correlation (Pearson’s R) among processes and between overall results.

This insightful quotation sums it up. *“You do not know what you do not know. You cannot do what you do not know. You will not know what to do until you measure. You do not measure what you do not value. You do not value what you do not measure.”* - Dr. Mikel Harry, 2000.

Factor #2 - Knowledge

Fourth, the Baldrige model separates Process scoring from Results scoring. The Baldrige Framework stubbornly insists that Processes → Results. This implies a cause and effect, lead-lag relationship. First create Processes, and then you get Results.

This cause-and-effect dynamic explains why the Baldrige model focuses on the linkage of Processes to Results and it is the logic behind the concept of Integration in the Results scoring dimensions. You have integrated Results when you can demonstrate **how** they were produced by the Processes you have in place to achieve these Results.

The lead-lag dynamic explains why Judges do not insist that Results will score in the same band as Processes be a role model. For example, this year’s Results were more than likely produced by last year’s Processes. Most measurement systems have a “one period” delay since you cannot measure outcome until they are produced. Processes in the 4th scoring band (50-65%) in this year’s application may have been in place long enough to produced the Results that still score in the 3rd scoring band (30%-45%). If the Judges see a 4th band set of processes they may be able to “give the applicant the benefit of the doubt” that these processes are capable of producing 4th band Results in the future.

Walter Shewart’s historic encapsulation of the scientific principle in the “Plan-Do-Check-Act” improvement model underlies both the “ADLI” and “LeTCI” cause-and-effect, lead-lag system dynamics as shown below.

And lastly, Baldrige does not insist on applicants scoring in the highest two scoring bands (above 70%) since very few organizations are capable of achieving this level of performance.

Two Types of Role Models

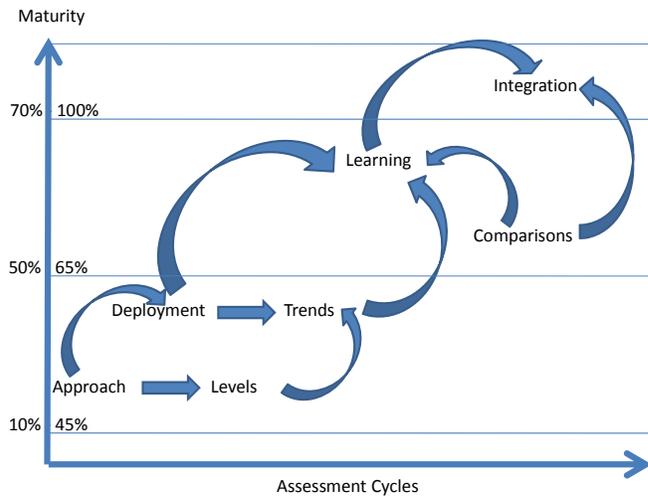
This helps us understand why there are “two types” of role models. Type A are the very few (less than 10%) of applicants whose Processes and Results both score in band 4 or higher (50% and up). Type B role models demonstrate Processes mature enough to score in Band 4, but have some Results in Band 4 and some Results in Band 3 due to a one cycle lag to capture the improvements through measures.

Look at the simple diagram below. It models the TAPE recognition opportunities. The independent

variable is the maturity of the Processes shown along the X-axis **across** the bottom of the chart. The dependent variable is the maturity of the Results shown on the Y-axis **up** the left side of the chart.

This simple chart visually displays both the “cause and effect” and “lead-lag” relationships between Processes and Results. The recognition levels of the TAPE program are designed to capture these important dynamics.

The X-axis (horizontal) is the independent variable, applicant’s total score on all Process Categories. The Y-axis (vertical) is the dependent variable, the combined score for the Results Category. Performance of the independent variable (X) drives the performance of the dependent variable (Y).



Paths to Role Model Recognition

RESULTS						
99-100					WORLD CLASS	
70-85						
50-65				A		
30-45	Progress			B		
10-25	Committed					
0-5						
PROCESS	0-5	10-25	30-45	50-65	70-85	90-100

As you can see, Type A role models are achieving Results in approximately the same maturity level as they are achieving Process maturity. This can be due to several factors. A longer tenure on their improvement journey, faster and/or wider scope of deployment, more advanced improvement methodologies, greater resources to devote to improvement, shorter improvement cycles, etc.

Type B role models are the rest of us. We see a lag between process maturity and results maturity due to the absence of the factors identified above. However Type B's are not lesser role models. In fact, since this is the rate of improvement (“slope”) the vast majority of organizations experience, most organizations can learn more from Type B role models than Type A role models. Next time you attend the TAPE Conference or any other conference, go listen to the Type B recipients. Their message is usually about perseverance, rather than results. Perseverance may be the 12th Baldrige Core Value. That will be a future article.

Mr. Johnson is President of *Knowledge Engineers*, a consulting firm, in Dallas TX. He also has donated over 10,000 hours of not-for-fee services to help organizations achieve excellence by serving over 10 years in both the Baldrige National Quality Program and the Texas Award for Performance Excellence (TAPE) program in many capacities, most recently as a member of the TAPE Panel of Judges. He also holds national certification through ASQ as a Certified Six Sigma Black Belt. He is a frequent contributor to various professional forums and makes 10 to 15 presentations each year across the United States.

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