

Keep Using The Criteria To Get Better

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A frequent question of TAPE and Baldrige recipients is, “What do you do after you receive the award?” There may be many answers but ours is simple, “Keep using the criteria to get better.”

The Clarke American Corp. business model uses the Baldrige framework and is called “First In Service.” Significant criteria revisions every two years help us keep pace with best practices in performance excellence and provide a systematic way for us to validate our business model. That fits perfectly with our PDCA approach to improvement that incorporates “Run the Business” and “Change the Business” objectives that are set annually during our goal deployment process. It also lends itself well to how we refine our processes, including the elimination of work when the cost is greater than the benefit of continuing to do an activity.

As leaders, we believe the best answers come from higher quality questions. The Baldrige criteria are a list of more than 225 better questions that challenge us to be brutally honest with ourselves and take action when opportunities for improvement are identified.

The criteria are powerful, leading us, for example, to examine our vision, mission and values (Category 1) and check our progress toward a goal – world-class performance excellence - that will never be fully reached but that, we believe, can be approached.

The criteria keep us from becoming complacent and support the pursuit of excellence in serving our customers, partners, associates (employees), suppliers and shareholders.

Now five years after receiving the TAPE and Malcolm Baldrige awards, we believe the criteria has helped us continue to improve and deliver outstanding results to our stakeholders.

Whether you choose to apply for the Texas Award for Performance Excellence or simply want a systems-based approach to assessing how you are doing against world-class benchmarks, the Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence can help you become a better organization. It is a worthwhile journey that will change you and your people in profound ways.