



Why Make the Decision to Adopt and Implement the Baldrige Criteria

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I am constantly amazed in my travels about how many senior executives and other senior leaders ask how much time adopting and implementing the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence sponsored by the Quality Texas Foundation will take. Time and profitability seem to take a front seat in organizational priorities. In order to decide about whether or not to adopt/implement the criteria, there are a number of considerations.

First, the senior leaders must see a compelling requirement to evaluate their organization against a proven set of questions/criteria for the expressed purpose of improving operations at all levels of the organization. The criterion is NOT a short term proposition and may involve a culture shift depending upon how far the organization is from conducting solid business practices on a daily basis.

Second, there must be a training component directed toward educating the workforce about the criteria. This training must be deliberate and intentional thereby directing the efforts of the people involved. Senior leaders need to attend some of the training and one senior leader should step up and be the training representative of the senior leadership team. Organizational explorers, better known as change agents, should undertake the training first to lead the way and set the high standard.

Third, the organization should identify those change agents who are not afraid of challenges or innovation caused by criteria utilization. These brave souls are the heart of organizational improvements and should be treated with great dignity to lighten their path and their burden.

Let me be very clear on this, adopting and implementing the criteria has never been and never will be an addition to your daily work – IT IS prioritization of your daily work. Organizations need to understand that using the criteria will change how you conduct business for all involved parties, customers (business), clients, patients (hospitals), suppliers, partners, students (education), and all stakeholders. For organizations looking for a quick fix with “flash in the pan results”, Baldrige is NOT the solution. But IF your organization is considering improving in a systematic manner, Baldrige is the appropriate framework.