

The Baldrige National Quality Program Criteria have been Improved *Thriving in Turbulent Times*

The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA) was created by public law in 1987. It is the highest level of national recognition, for performance excellence, that a U.S. organization can receive. The Criteria for Performance Excellence have evolved over the 22-year history of the Baldrige National Quality Program. It is a proven model for “business excellence,” and a blueprint for thriving in turbulent times.

Over these two decades, the Baldrige Criteria have become the gold standard—to becoming a strategy-driven, high-performing world-class organization. Although the year-to-year changes have been evolutionary, over the years, the changes to the Criteria have been far reaching.

Baldrige Background

The Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence is an ideal business model to apply as a template for any Performance Improvement Program. The criteria provide a consistent basis for assessing important business factors in seven categories: leadership; strategic planning; customer focus; measurement, analysis and knowledge management; workforce focus; process management; and results.

The Baldrige Criteria are a very useful first step in assessing strengths and weaknesses against a nationally recognized standard. These Criteria provide a proven framework for performance improvement—and when coupled with a Performance Improvement Program—will enable an organization to achieve breakthrough, sustained business results.

The MBNQA Criteria are used by many large U.S. organizations (for business, nonprofit, health care, government, and education). According to a report by the Conference Board, evidence suggests a long-term link between the use of the Baldrige Criteria and improved business performance. Adhering to these Criteria should be the capstone for any firm that wants to thrive in these turbulent times.

Changes From the 2008 Baldrige Criteria

Starting in 2009, the Program will move to a formal two-year revision cycle, and the 2009-2010 Baldrige Criteria is new and improved. The most significant revisions to the Criteria address three primary areas: (1) customer focus, (2) organizational core competencies, and (3) sustainability and societal responsibilities. These are linked to one or more of the seven Performance Excellence Categories.

Customer Focus—increased focus on customer (or patient/stakeholder or student/stakeholder) engagement. This category has been redesigned around “customer engagement” and the “voice of the customer.” The emphasis is on building a customer

culture (focused on customer retention and loyalty), and measuring, and using customer satisfaction data.

Organizational Core Competencies—enhanced emphasis on core competencies that stresses their importance to an organization’s mission, core values, strategy, and sustainability. There is a greater emphasis on aligning “core competencies” with their strategic significance. Simply, the term “core competencies” refers to your organization’s areas of greatest expertise.

Sustainability and Societal Responsibilities—enhanced focus on societal responsibilities and organizational sustainability. This is intended to ensure that organizations will pay increased attention to their suppliers’ actions, environmental, social, and economic systems (societal responsibilities). Sustainability refers to your organization’s ability to effectively address ever-changing business needs.

There have been some changes in all Criteria items. For more information on these improvements or to learn more about the MBNQA, visit the Baldrige National Quality Program website at www.baldrige.nist.gov.

About the Author



Stanley Cherkasky is the Managing Partner of Change Management Consulting, Inc. Founder of the firm, Stan is the principal architect of the *Performance Improvement Breakthrough*[™] methodology, and the *Six Sigma Lean Advantage*[™]—innovative and proven strategies that accelerate ROI and net income improvement, build customer loyalty, and create world-class recognition.

Stan has more than three decades of business and consulting experience, in both the private and public sectors, in the United States and abroad. Stan specializes in building high-performance teams, and working closely with senior leaders to achieve breakthrough financial, organizational, and operating improvement. He has been quoted in many business publications, including Fortune, Business Week and the Wall Street Journal.

About Change Management Consulting, Inc. (CMC)

Founded in 1993, Change Management Consulting is a global management consulting and training company, dedicated to helping organizations of all sizes improve performance, achieve goals and advance leadership capability. As a full-service organizational improvement firm, CMC focuses on organizational and leadership development, compliance management (ISO 9001 and its derivatives), strategic planning and Lean Six Sigma initiatives.

Headquartered in Wayne, NJ with offices in San Diego, Dallas and Detroit, CMC has a proven track record in helping public and private sector clients implement pragmatic

continual improvement initiatives that drive financially measurable results. CMC also has extensive experience in obtaining grants and funding assistance for its clients. Learn more at www.cmc-changemanagement.com or contact CMC at (877) 268-2440 or (973) 696-7878.