Organizational Outcome Assessment: Baldrige Health Care Criteria

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NU 508

April 05, 2010
Method

According to Harry S. Hertz, Director of the Baldrige National Quality Program, the Baldrige Health Care Criteria for Performance Excellence is important in today’s challenging health care environment because it asks “all the right questions” (Hertz, 2009, p. i). The Health Care Criteria are built on a set of interrelated core values and concepts (see Appendix) that reflect high-performing organizations and provide a foundation encompassing the entire organization with focus on the organizational outcomes (Baldrige National Quality Program at the National Institute of Standards and Technology [BNQP at NIST], 2009-2010). The core values are assessed by major categories called “Criteria”, each with a number of corresponding sub-items (BNQP at NIST, 2009-2010 and Baldrige.com website, 2007). The criteria and sub-items are:

1. Leadership: addressing (a) senior leadership, and (b) governance and societal responsibilities,
2. Strategic planning: addressing (a) strategy development, and (b) strategy deployment,
3. Customer focus: addressing (a) customer engagement, and (b) the voice of the customer,
4. Measurement, analysis and knowledge management: addressing (a) measurement, analysis and improvement of organizational performance, and (b) management of information, knowledge, and information technology.
5. Workforce focus: addressing (a) workforce engagement, and (b) workforce environment,
6. Process management: addressing (a) work systems and (b) work processes, and
7. Results: addressing (a) health care outcomes, (b) customer-focused outcomes, (c) financial and market outcomes, (d) workforce-focused outcomes, (e) process effectiveness outcomes, and (f) leadership outcomes.

Through the completion of a Baldrige assessment organizations are given a unique opportunity to think strategically, to align its processes and resources and to engage its workforce, patients and stakeholders in improving overall performance (Hertz, 2009). Even if organizations don’t expect to receive the Baldrige Award, submitting an application has the valuable benefit of receiving detailed feedback from a panel of specially trained experts (BNQP at NIST, 2009-2010).

Usefulness of the Baldrige Health Care Criteria

The usefulness of the Baldrige Health Care Criteria extends beyond its use as evaluation criteria for awarding the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, as guidelines for organizational self-assessment and as an educational tool. It plays a valuable role in strengthening competitiveness among health care organizations as it helps to improve organizational performance practices, capabilities and results and facilitate communication and sharing of information on best practices among different organizations (Baldrige.com website, 2007). The annual Quest for Excellence Conference provides an opportunity for Award recipients to present their success stories to other organizations. Grizzell (2010) states that even organizations who never submit their application to the award process, may still benefit from it. To illustrate his point, he describes the following five “added values” of the Baldrige process:

- It is a valuable accountability tool as it forces senior leaders to take responsibility and ownership of a particular Baldrige category.
• It is a valuable sustainability tool as it describes how the organization operates and promotes easy transition in the event of leadership changes.

• It is a valuable improvement tool as opportunities for improvement may be identified, prioritized and even addressed during the initial assessment.

• It is a valuable alignment tool as it helps leaders, workforce and stakeholders to optimize performance by developing a systems perspective of success.

• It is a valuable recruitment tool to help future board members, senior leaders and other key stakeholders determine if they want to associate with this organization (Grizzell, 2010).

Challenges of the Baldrige Health Care Criteria

According to Baldrige National Quality Program Director, Harry S Hertz (2009), addressing all the Baldrige Health Care Criteria is not an easy task. Also a product of the Baldrige National Quality Program the Baldrige Education Criteria are quite detailed (Leist, Gilman, Cullen, & Sklar, 2004) and the same can be said for the Health Care Criteria. However, it provides a very specific “self-study” methodology to define, measure, monitor and document fundamental organizational responsibilities and performance (Leist et al., 2004).
References


http://www.baldrige.com/baldrige/baldrige_process/5-added-values-of-the-baldrige-process/

Hertz, H. S. (2009). Why is Baldrige important for you now?. In *2009-2010 Health care criteria for performance excellence* (p. i). doi:

Appendix

Baldrige National Quality Program Core Values (BNQP at NIST, 2009-2010)

1. Visionary leadership
2. Patient-focused excellence
3. Organizational and personal learning
4. Valuing workforce members and partners
5. Agility
6. Focus on the future
7. Managing for innovation
8. Management by fact
9. Societal responsibility and community health
10. Focus on results and creating value
11. Systems perspective