Leadership of Ancillary and Support Departments Using Baldrige

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TODAY'S HEALTHCARE LEADERS find themselves in one of the world's most complex industries, at one of the most complicated times in history. Change is coming from every direction: regulatory, political, social, financial, and others. The most effective leaders seek a systematic approach to running and changing their organization—one that balances stability and agility. In their search, many healthcare leaders have found Baldrige and its Criteria for Performance Excellence useful for creating this balance and establishing a framework for the organization's approach to achieving higher quality at lower cost.

For more than thirty years, the national Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (BPEP) and its criteria-based framework have offered a systems approach to help organizations improve (and often transform) their performance. The framework helps leaders answer three questions: Is your organization doing as well as it could? How do you know? What and how should you improve or change (BPEP 2019a)? Most of the organizations pursuing Baldrige are in healthcare, but it has proven useful for other economic sectors, including business (manufacturing, service, nonprofits, government) and education.

Although awareness and use of Baldrige has increased during the 2010s, less commonly known is the revelation that Baldrige is entirely scalable and does not need to be as laborious as you may have heard or experienced. This chapter first describes three major implications for scalability and practicality that can work in a leader's favor. The remainder of the chapter then takes a deeper look at the Baldrige framework and its content, and describes how to get started. Consider this a primer for healthcare executives looking to survive and thrive in today's challenging environment.

LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT IS KEY

If a department, division, or entire organization is serious about improving, and understands the only way to get different results is to do things differently, its first question should be, "Is the top leader fully committed and willing to push forward even when it's difficult?" Notice the question is not about whether he or she is generally in favor of change, or willing to persevere through difficulty. The leader needs to be out front leading the charge, even when it is hard. But here is the good news: Scalability means the framework can be used at any or all levels of the organization. For example, the Baldrige approach has been effective for a CEO leading an entire 14-hospital system through a performance excellence journey as a way to create what he called "systemness." The healthcare system had been formed when three smaller systems merged, and each hospital had had its own unique culture, processes, and results. The CEO wanted one system with multiple locations. One culture. One set of core processes. One set of results, with all locations achieving the same high standards and contributing to the system's excellence. By contrast, other organizations apply Baldrige principles one entity at a time (e.g., by hospital or business unit). Still others take it all the way down to one division or department (e.g., Clinical Support Services) as per the focus of this book. As a result, "top leader" becomes relative, and organizations can achieve incredible outcomes at either a macro (system/hospital) or micro (division/department) level. To set your starting point, search as far up the organization as possible until you reach a key leader—in this context, the top leader for a defined level such as a system, entity, division, or department—who is not yet fully committed to the framework or the disciplined approach required for its success. If that leader is not ready or willing to be the front person for a Baldrige-based journey to excellence, the next highest leader who clearly is ready is your best choice for an initial partner. Look for the early adopters, generate early wins, and then spread the effort as additional opportunities arise.

SYSTEMATIC AND ADAPTABLE ARE NOT OPPOSITES

The second way leaders can make scalability and practicality work in their favor is by recognizing that "systematic and disciplined" is not the opposite of "adaptable and innovative." Many leaders initially perceive these as conflicting, but later appreciate them as complementary. For example, when organizations first adopt Baldrige, this seeming conflict can provoke raised eyebrows. The first and easiest way to alienate large groups of people is by allowing them to believe their local flexibility is going away. At the same time, the fastest way to sink the entire

effort is to let these same leaders believe their way of doing business will be fully independent with no consistency or accountability. As with most everything else, it is about balance, which is a both–and (not an either–or) proposition.

Scalability and practicality become relevant when thinking about creating the right balance at the right level. The reality is there will be some key processes, generally referred to as your *core processes*, that will need to be consistent. Core processes will be covered in more detail later in the chapter, but briefly, they relate to strategic planning, customer and workforce focus, operations, measurement, and improvement. There will be high-level process steps that are important for every entity, division, or department to use consistently. Using an ice cream metaphor, chocolate ice cream requires a standard set of ingredients to achieve a consistent flavor. That said, entities, divisions, and departments have unique aspects, such as the specific customer or patient segments served and their related requirements. Although the high-level "chocolate" process steps cannot be skipped, local needs can be addressed by personalizing that process—the equivalent of adding chocolate chips and calling it double chocolate, or adding marshmallows and nuts to get rocky road. This customization allows for adaptability as needed. Tracking key performance indicators also may reveal that certain ingredients work better than others, which can help refine processes and enable better or best practices to be spread across the division, entity, or system, in turn raising the performance of all. These process improvements become the new consistent standard until the next intentional incremental or transformational process change.

IT DOESN'T HAVE TO TAKE FOREVER TO GET TRACTION

In addition to selecting the right level where you have solid leadership commitment, and striking the right balance with systematic yet adaptable core processes, a third way to leverage the often overlooked scalable and practical aspects of Baldrige is to create traction by using the right criteria. If change agents are new to Baldrige, consider the level of criteria that makes the most sense as a starting place—whether that means the full award criteria (BPEP 2019a), the condensed question set in the Baldrige Excellence Builder (BPEP 2019b), or one of the other "stepping stone" levels provided by many of the state programs (e.g., the Texas program; Quality Texas Foundation 2020). Regardless of the level, they all have three components in common: an organizational profile (OP), the processes categories, and results. The OP is your starting point, and where traction begins. An OP is considered a snapshot of your organization; it describes what matters most to you and sets the context for everything that follows. Your leaders initially

may not have all the answers to the questions covered by the OP, such as organizational and competitive environment, key relationships, strategic context, and performance improvement system. Answer the questions as a leadership team, at the organizational level where you are using the Baldrige framework. For example, if you are focusing your Baldrige effort on the organization's division of ancillary and support services, the division leader and all her department leaders should develop the OP to reflect the entire division. This step alone gets everyone on the same page, so you can start moving in a single direction.

LEADING WITH BALDRIGE

The Baldrige framework is a set of criteria, in the form of questions, derived from the practices of high-performing organizations. The questions are broken down into seven categories: (1) Leadership, (2) Strategy, (3) Customers, (4) Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management, (5) Workforce, (6) Operations, and (7) Results (exhibit 2.1).

The questions are nonprescriptive in the sense that they do not dictate how to perform each of the high-performing practices (such as listening to patients and other customers to obtain actionable information, which is an area to address in Category 3: Customers). Rather, they ask how *you* now do each of the things

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Exhibit 2.1: Baldrige Excellence Framework
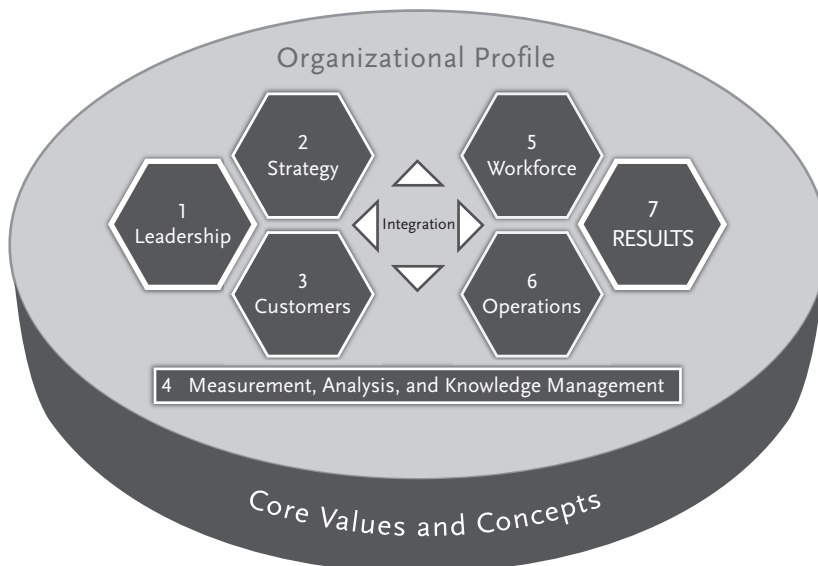
Source: BPEP (2019b).

Exhibit 2.2: Baldrige Evaluation Factors

Process Evaluation Factors (Categories 1–6)	
APPROACH	How do you accomplish your organization's work? How systematic and effective are your key approaches?
DEPLOYMENT	How consistently are your key approaches used in relevant parts of your organization?
LEARNING	How well have you evaluated and improved your key approaches? How well have improvements been shared in your organization? Has new knowledge led to innovation?
INTEGRATION	How well do your approaches reflect your current and future organizational needs? How well are processes and operations harmonized across your organization to achieve key goals?
Results Evaluation Factors (Category 7)	
LEVELS	What is your current performance on a meaningful measurement scale?
TRENDS	Are the results improving, staying the same, or getting worse?
COMPARISONS	How does your performance compare with that of competitors or with benchmarks or industry leaders?
INTEGRATION	Are you tracking results that are important to your organization? Are you using the results in decision-making?

Source: BPAP (2019b).

that high-performing organizations do. An additional component that bases the framework on criteria is that responses to all *process* questions (Categories 1–6) are evaluated against four factors: Approach, Deployment, Learning, and Integration (ADLI). *Results* (Category 7) are also evaluated, using a different set of factors: Levels, Trends, Comparisons, and Integration (LeTCI). Exhibit 2.2 describes the evaluation factors Baldrige uses to assess an organization's current performance (BPEP 2019a, iii–iv). Processes and results both include integration, underscoring the importance of treating the organization, division, or department as an integrated whole (i.e., a system) as per priorities identified and defined in the OP.

In the following section, OP questions have been aligned with the most relevant process category and results item(s) (exhibit 2.3), although many will have relevance across multiple categories. Although it is presented this way to help show the logical connection between Baldrige components, understand that the OP questions should be completed first. Doing so provides context for processes and results.

Exhibit 2.3: Alignment of Organizational Profile, Processes, and Results

Organizational profile content	Process categories	Results items
Mission, Vision, and Values; Organizational Structure	Leadership	Leadership and Governance Results
Competitive Position; Competitiveness Changes; Strategic Context	Strategy	Strategy Implementation Results; Market Results
Patients, Other Customers, and Stakeholders	Customers	Customer Results
Comparative Data; Performance Improvement System	Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management	All
Workforce Profile	Workforce	Workforce Results
Health Care Service Offerings; Regulatory Requirements; Suppliers and Partners; Assets	Operations	Health Care and Process Results; Financial Results

THE PRACTICES OF HIGH-PERFORMING ORGANIZATIONS

Because Baldrige is based on the things high-performing organizations systematically do to create world-class results, we can use the set of questions contained in the criteria to describe what all organizations can do to improve. If organizations, business units, and departments routinely apply these questions, they can transform themselves over time from average (or below average) to good, to great, to world class. I will specifically reference departments throughout this section, to show how these practices can relate directly to ancillary and support services in their journey to excellence.

Category 1: Leadership

High-performing departments have high-performing leaders. It is difficult, if not impossible, to have one without the other. So what do high-performing leaders do differently from their less effective counterparts? According to the Baldrige Excellence Framework, a lot. First, they set and deploy the Mission, Vision, and Values (MVV), which are core to creating an intentional and inspirational culture. They also consistently role-model those values, along with legal and ethical behavior. In

other words, they are worthy of being followed. Keep in mind that when you are transforming a department, you are part of something larger. Everything you do must align with the broader organization, including its MVV. As a result, your values are likely to be the same. Yet the way they translate to specific day-to-day behaviors may look a little different. If your organization does not share a set of values-based behavioral standards, create one for your department. Also, determine how to best translate your department's MVV into language or imagery that, while honoring and aligning with the organization's MVV, sets a clear and inspiring course for department staff and shows how their work advances the achievement of organizational aims.

In addition to setting and consistently communicating the MVV, high-performing leadership teams have well-defined and deployed processes for communicating with and engaging the workforce, patients, and other key customers, including opportunities for two-way exchanges and the timely communication of key decisions. They also create an environment for success, which includes building a culture defined by customer focus, high performance, learning, and innovation. These successful leaders have a strong action orientation, demonstrate personal accountability, and focus the department consistently on improving its performance and achieving the organization's mission.

Senior leaders in particular are expected to ensure an effective and responsible governance system by establishing structure, operating transparently, protecting customer and stakeholder interests, evaluating leadership performance, and planning for succession. In addition to personally demonstrating legal and ethical behavior, senior leaders should build systems for anticipating and addressing the department's legal, ethical, and regulatory compliance.

A final aspect of high-performance leadership is a commitment to the community. This commitment is about looking beyond the walls of the organization and includes societal well-being and community support. Think about what you do, what you are really good at, and find a way to identify relevant (often underserved) community groups that can benefit. Then contribute to building community health through service.

Common across all the high-performing practices is a recurring focus on results. Management by Fact is a Baldrige core value, and, as exhibit 2.3 shows, each Baldrige process category has a corresponding results item. For instance, the Leadership process category corresponds with leadership, governance, and societal responsibility results. Key metrics of senior leader effectiveness include communication and engagement with the workforce, patients, and other customers; governance accountability; legal, regulatory, and accreditation compliance; ethical behavior; and societal well-being and support of your key communities.

Category 2: Strategy

As noted, effective leaders develop and deploy their MVV, engage their workforce and customers, focus on action, and create an environment for success. The remaining categories can be thought of as the building blocks that enable leaders and their organizations to excel. Strategy is about establishing direction to ensure the department or organization delivers on its mission and advances its vision. The Baldrige Strategy category focuses on two actions critical to high performance: the systematic development and deployment of strategic plans.

Establishing direction for the department begins with thoughtfully developing a strategic plan that sets the course for short- and long-term success. The plan should be based on, and directly address, relevant key factors from the OP. These factors include the MVV developed in Practice 1, along with three others: Strategic Context (your key strategic challenges and advantages, similar to a SWOT analysis), Competitiveness Changes (the key changes most affecting your ability to compete), and Competitive Position (your key competitors, your relative size and growth in the markets you serve, and what you want your size and growth to be in the future). Also, factor your responses to other OP questions into your planning process, such as key customers and their requirements, key suppliers/partners/collaborators, and key service offerings. Deciding all these things up front as a leadership team will ensure you stay focused on what matters most to you now and in the future.

So how do high-performing departments and organizations develop strategy? The short answer is they develop a consistent approach that includes key process steps and participants, sets short- and long-term planning horizons, identifies strategic objectives, prioritizes change initiatives, and retains the agility to correct course midway. One of the greatest benefits of Baldrige is it enables you to learn from organizations with successful records of developing, deploying, reviewing, and refining their processes, and are now delivering desirable results. You can access the practices of award recipient organizations by visiting the Baldrige website (https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/award-recipients). Consider reviewing the strategic planning processes of a few organizations, noticing the common elements of each, and then adopt or adapt a process to serve as your starting point. As you apply ADLI to your process, particularly through disciplined cycles of deployment and learning, it will evolve to become more effective and efficient. As noted, if you are applying Baldrige principles at the department level, every effort should be made to align your approaches with those of the broader organization. If there is a planning process in place, cascade it to the department level and enhance where needed to ensure it addresses the criteria for performance excellence. At the same time, keep it simple. Start small and then build as you mature with Baldrige by

using the criteria over multiple years through iterative cycles of describing your approach (try flow-charting it), evaluating it using the ADLI factors, and improving it to more fully address the criteria.

It is not enough to develop strategy. Many leaders and organizations have created a strategic plan, only to get caught up again in the day-to-day demands of running the business while the plan ends up on a shelf. High-performing departments have an approach to properly deploy the strategy over time without straying or losing traction. The key elements of effective implementation include crafting short- and longer-term action plans to address the identified strategic objectives, deploying these action plans to your workforce (and key suppliers, partners, and collaborators as appropriate), allocating appropriate resources (e.g., financial, human) to support the action plans, identifying and using measures to track the achievement and results of action plans (including performance projections), and modifying action plans as changing circumstances indicate.

The results related to strategy (exhibit 2.3) include measures of strategy implementation such as achieving your organizational strategy and action plans. Another key indicator is marketplace performance, including market share or position, market and market share growth, and new markets entered, as appropriate. All results across all practices are evaluated through the four LeTCI factors.

Category 3: Customers

Focusing on the customer may seem obvious for any organization that needs customers to stay in business (i.e., all organizations), yet few intentionally and consistently focus on developing, reviewing, and refining their customer-related processes. By responding to the related OP questions, leaders and staff will have a clearer understanding of who their key customers and stakeholder groups are, what each of these groups expects or requires from their services and operations, and the key differences in requirements and expectations between the groups. When an organization is still early in its journey to excellence, the answers to these questions may be more subjective than objective. However, as they mature their processes and corresponding results, the responses will become data based and more usefully inform decision-making and action. High-performing organizations and departments have systematic approaches in two key areas: voice of the customer and customer engagement.

Voice of the customer (VOC) is about listening. Consider whether you have a well-defined, well-deployed approach for listening to patients and other customers—current and potential. Such an approach requires a systematic process for capturing patient and other customers' stated, unstated, and anticipated requirements, expectations, and desires. If you already do this well, you should

have no problem answering the customer-related OP questions and knowing that your responses are completely valid, given the customer data for each of your key customer segments. Clarity regarding your key customers' requirements might come from the aggregation and analysis of survey data, focus groups, social media, complaints, rounding, and the like. Another part of listening to VOC and identifying requirements is knowing how you are doing relative to those requirements. Understanding your performance on key customer requirements is the ability to determine patient and other customer satisfaction, dissatisfaction, and engagement (relative to what they said matters most), to understand what is working and what is not.

With approaches in place to listen and understand customer needs and requirements, and to gauge how well requirements are being met, you can engage customers more effectively. Enhancing engagement of patients and customers requires a disciplined approach to build and manage relationships across all stages of these constituents' journeys, identify and adapt services offerings to meet their requirements, and identify and resolve complaints while preventing their future occurrence. Consider also how you determine patient and other customer segments, and how you use them to understand and address their key differences.

If these processes are effective, the results should be favorable. Customer-focused results consider the current levels and trends in key measures of patient and other customer satisfaction, dissatisfaction, and engagement. In addition to levels and trends, high-performing organizations track how these results compare with those of its competitors and other organizations providing similar services. They also consider how these results differ by service offerings, patient/customer group, or stage of relationship.

Category 4: Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management

For each of the practices thus far there have been key OP questions to be answered, processes to be addressed, and results to be tracked. The OP responses describe what's important; the process categories ensure there are systematic approaches for addressing what's important; and the results provide objective information about how you're doing relative to what's important (enabling learning and ongoing refinement so performance systematically improves over time). Practice 4 provides insight into what high-performing organizations do to measure, analyze, and improve performance. Also addressed is information and knowledge management, which allows best practices to be spread and organizational learning to occur. The Baldrige framework (exhibit 2.1) demonstrates how Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management forms the foundation for all the other categories.

The OP asks about comparative data—specifically, what key sources of comparative and competitive data are available from inside and outside the healthcare industry. The Results section of exhibit 2.3 associated with each category asks you to put your data in perspective by showing your performance relative to these comparisons, which in turn give organizations a more informed view of their results and enable better decision-making. For example, how are you performing relative to other similar organizations? What about direct competitors? What about benchmark organizations inside and outside of industry? Having this information enables you to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement (OFIs), consider them through the lens of what is most important to you (your OP), and then best prioritize where to spend energy and resources.

The other relevant OP question associated with this practice asks leaders to describe the organization's performance improvement (PI) system—in other words, the essential elements of the PI approach you use to evaluate and improve key processes and projects. Organizations commonly include a PI methodology such as Plan, Do, Study, Act; additional tools such as Lean Six Sigma; and an annual Baldrige assessment.

So how do high-performing organizations effectively perform Measurement, Analysis, and Improvement? They have a well-defined, systematic approach to select key measures, collect data, and track progress relative to daily operations and strategic objectives. They also conduct appropriate analyses to ensure conclusions are valid, then report and review performance (including the use of comparisons) so leaders can make informed decisions and respond rapidly to challenges or changing needs. The outcome of the performance review process serves as its own input (i.e., integration) by allowing organizations to prioritize and act on opportunities for continuous improvement and innovation, and to cascade these priorities to relevant work groups, suppliers, partners, and collaborators when appropriate.

The other item in this category is information and knowledge management. Mature organizations have processes to ensure the quality (accuracy, validity, integrity, reliability) and availability (timely and user-friendly format) of data and information. They also know how to manage knowledge by collecting and transferring workforce and other relevant knowledge from and to patients, other customers, suppliers, partners, and collaborators. They identify best practices for sharing and implementing across the organization where fitting, and use knowledge to embed learning in the way the organization operates.

Although the Baldrige results items (collectively, Category 7) have been distributed throughout the Practices of High-Performing Organizations section in an effort to best demonstrate the critical alignment between processes and results, a few general comments on results are relevant here. The performance measurement system just described is what supplies the needed data and information for

Exhibit 2.4: Comparison of Three Results-Focused Frameworks

Baldrige Results (Category 7)	Studer Pillars	Balanced Scorecard Perspectives
Leadership and Governance; Workforce	People	Organizational Capacity (Learning/ Innovation)
Customer	Service	Customer
Health Care and Process	Quality	Business Process
Financial; Market; Strategy	Finance Growth	Financial/Stewardship

tracking and reporting the results asked for in Category 7. As with any organization or business unit, the ancillary and support departments' results must be measured across each of the other categories. It is only possible to know how effective processes are by the results they produce. The Baldrige results items (Category 7) address all the key process items (Categories 1–6) and align well with other popular frameworks, including Studer Pillars. Exhibit 2.4 compares Baldrige and Studer, along with the traditional Balanced Scorecard approach, to demonstrate how they work well together.

Category 5: Workforce

Similar to Category 3, this one is also about people—in this case, engaging the workforce and ensuring an effective and supportive environment so they can succeed.

The OP asks for a description of your workforce relative to key employee groups and segments, their different educational requirements, and the key drivers that engage your workforce as they achieve the organization's mission and vision (which may vary by segment).

The Baldrige process category then asks about your practices for establishing a supportive environment, which begins by ensuring the organization has the right people with the right skills. Baldrige refers to *workforce capacity* as the organization's ability to ensure sufficient staffing levels to accomplish its work processes and deliver services to patients and other customers (i.e., the right number and type of people). *Workforce capability* is the organization's ability to accomplish its work processes through its people's knowledge, skills, abilities, and competencies (i.e., the right skills). Both are necessary, and high-performing departments have well-defined approaches in place to address capacity and capability. Specifically, they

- assess their current and future capability and capacity needs;
- recruit, hire, place, and retain new employees;

- organize and manage their workforce to accomplish the organization's work and meet or exceed customer requirements; and
- prepare the workforce for increases or decreases in capacity and changes in capability.

They also ensure workplace health, security, accessibility, benefits, and policies support high performance.

With approaches in place to create an environment where staff can succeed, it becomes possible to engage your workforce more effectively. Workforce engagement is the extent of workforce members' emotional and intellectual commitment to accomplishing your organization's work, mission, and vision. High-performing organizations develop and implement beneficial practices to address the Baldrige criteria in this area, focused on building an engaged workforce. The first practice is similar to what was described earlier for customers: determining their key requirements and measuring how you are doing relative to those requirements. In the case of employees, you determine the drivers of workforce engagement and then assess how you are doing relative to those drivers. Some of the methods you use for customers (e.g., surveys, focus groups, rounding) are often appropriate here too. Another approach is to create an organizational culture characterized by open communication and high performance. This approach was also identified in the Leadership discussion. Creating this culture is a key responsibility of leadership. Yet another driver is to ensure your performance management system supports high performance and high engagement by focusing on the right things (i.e., healthcare outcomes, patient/customer service, completing action plans, and the like) and then aligning reward, recognition, compensation, and incentive practices accordingly. The final driver is learning and development. High-performing departments create a learning and development system that supports the organization's needs (operational and strategic) and the individual development of its leaders and workforce. The system is continuously evaluated for effectiveness and efficiency, and includes ways to manage career progression and succession.

Workforce results should include measures that address each of the practices just listed, providing a gauge of how they are performing and where OFIs exist. Workforce results include measures of capability and capacity, such as levels and trends in key indicators for appropriate skills and staffing levels. Workforce environment results include health, security, accessibility, services, and benefits. Workforce engagement results include satisfaction and engagement for each key workforce segment. Last, workforce development results address the development and progression of employees and leaders, which also demonstrates increasing organizational capability.

Category 6: Operations

High-performing organizations engage in practices that allow them to run the business effectively and efficiently. Whereas *strategy* is about changing the business, *operations* is about running the business. Both are essential for success, and both are relevant to any level of the organization, including ancillary and support departments.

Operations focuses on the things organizations and their departments do to create operational excellence. The OP asks four types of questions directly related to operations. The first requires leaders to define their main service offerings, the mechanisms used to deliver those services, and the relative importance of each service to their success. Second is defining the assets of the organization or department—what are the major facilities, technologies, and equipment that enable you to deliver your services? Third is defining the regulatory requirements under which you operate and need to remain compliant. Fourth is identifying the key types of suppliers, partners, and collaborators that play a role in producing and delivering your services. The answers to these questions are likely to change over time as you refine your offerings and approaches to meet and exceed customer requirements, although completing the OP first provides focus for the early work on your journey to excellence.

The Operations category is divided into two items: work processes, and operational effectiveness and efficiency. Work processes are about how you design, manage, and improve your key services and related processes. High-performing departments have a systematic, repeatable approach to designing their services and processes. This approach includes determining key service and work process requirements, and then designing (or redesigning) the services and work processes to meet those requirements (to address patient/customer and organizational needs). It may be helpful to visit the Baldrige website and view a few recipient responses to the Operations category requirements to get a sense of the practices others have used.

Additional considerations for work processes include their management and improvement. Management means implementing the processes and ensuring their day-to-day execution is meeting or exceeding key process requirements and patient/customer expectations and preferences. It also considers how you manage the supply chain, including selecting, measuring, and evaluating key suppliers. Improving work processes calls for a systematic approach to continuously improve services and outcomes, demonstrated by an increase in performance, a decrease in variability, and pursuit of opportunities for innovation.

The second item in the Operations category is operational effectiveness and efficiency. This item looks at how the total costs of the operation are controlled (e.g., productivity, cycle time), how errors and rework are prevented (including medical errors), and how the need for cost control is balanced with the needs of
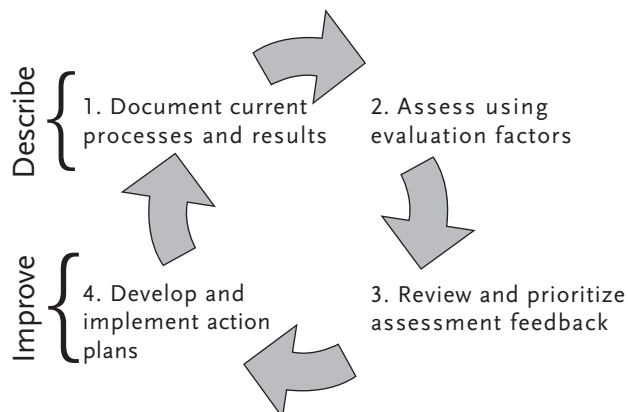
patients/customers when they differ. Operational effectiveness also considers the reliability and security of information systems so they are managed in a manner that controls access to and confidentiality of electronic and physical data and information. A final area to address relative to operational effectiveness is safety and continuity. High -performing departments have practices in place to provide a safe operating environment. Robust safety systems address accident prevention, inspection, root-cause analysis of failures, and recovery. Business continuity during disasters or emergencies is also fully addressed.

To ensure processes are useful, high-performing organizations track key indicators or measures of healthcare and customer-focused service results (i.e., healthcare outcomes and the performance of key services), process effectiveness and efficiency results (i.e., productivity, cycle time, other appropriate measures of process effectiveness and efficiency, security and cybersecurity, and innovation), safety and emergency preparedness, and supply-chain management results.

GETTING STARTED

The chapter began by describing Baldrige as a criteria-based framework offering a systems approach to help organizations improve (and in many cases transform) their performance. This transformation develops through continuous cycles of answering the Baldrige criteria questions, evaluating your responses using ADLI and LeTCI, identifying and prioritizing your organization's strengths and OFIs, and acting intentionally in the prioritized areas to improve processes and results. Repeating this approach (exhibit 2.5) increases process maturity and performance over time. Most organizations will repeat this cycle on an annual basis.

Exhibit 2.5: Journey to Excellence Process

Describe
1. Document current processes and results
2. Assess using evaluation factors

Improve
4. Develop and implement action plans
3. Review and prioritize assessment feedback

To get started, pick up a copy of the criteria for performance excellence (health-care version: www.nist.gov/baldrige/publications/baldrige-excellence-framework/health-care) and begin by answering the organizational profile questions. Do not rush the process; use it to generate valuable leadership team discussions and get everyone on the same page. Once your OP is complete, move on to the process and results questions using either the full award level criteria, the Baldrige Excellence Builder, or one of the stepping-stone versions offered by many state-level programs.

Throughout your journey, visit the Baldrige website to learn from award-recipient organizations. Review their processes and results to see how high-performing organizations respond to the Baldrige criteria and what they measure to gauge performance. You will often find practices to adopt or adapt—use them. Also, reach out for support to those experienced with the Baldrige approach, including those represented in the subsequent chapters of this book. Enjoy the journey!

KEY TERMS FOR LEADERSHIP USING BALDRIGE

Approach: The methods your organization uses to carry out its processes.

Deployment: The extent to which your organization applies an approach in addressing criteria questions (how broadly and deeply the approach is applied in relevant work units throughout your organization).

Integration: The harmonization of plans, processes, information, resource decisions, workforce capability and capacity, actions, results, and analyses to support key organization-wide goals.

Learning: New knowledge or skills acquired through evaluation, study, experience, and innovation; can be organizational or individual.

Measures and indicators: Numerical information that quantifies the input, output, and performance dimensions of processes, programs, projects, services, and the organization (outcomes).

Performance excellence: An integrated approach to organizational performance management that results in ever-improving value to customers and stakeholders, improvement of the organization's effectiveness, and learning for the organization and its workforce.

Process: Linked activities with the purpose of producing a service for a customer (user) within or outside your organization. Generally, processes involve combinations of people, machines, tools, techniques, materials, and improvements in a defined series of steps or actions.

Results: Outputs and outcomes achieved by your organization. Results are evaluated from current performance (i.e., current levels); the rate and direction of change over time (trends); performance relative to similar others, competitors, and benchmarks (comparisons); and the relationship of results measures to key organizational performance requirements (integration).

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