Upcoming Events

January 11, 2016 — Board of Overseers Meeting
January 13, 2016 — Fort Huachuca—SWAE Presentation
January 27, 2016 — Board of Directors Meeting
February 1, 2016 — Recognition Banquet for SWAE Award Recipients and Volunteers
February 8, 2016 — Board of Overseers Meeting
March 10, 2016 — Phoenix ASQ Section 0704 Meeting— SWAE Presentation
March 14, 2016 — Board of Overseers Meeting
March 23, 2016 — Board of Directors Meeting
April 3-6, 2016 — Quest for Excellence Conference—Baltimore, MD
Letter from the Chair of the Southwest Alliance for Excellence Board of Directors

Happy Holidays! I hope this note finds you all happy and healthy this holiday season! Another year is coming to an end and if it wasn’t for our staff and volunteers, we would not be able to sustain our organization. I would personally like to recognize our staff and all of our volunteers who make the Southwest Alliance for Excellence (SWAE) an organization that I am proud to be a part of! We continue to provide services for our members to advance improvement and excellence throughout Arizona, Nevada and Utah.

The 2015 Performance Excellence Program Award Recipients were recently announced and I am so excited to see another non-Arizona award recipient. Congratulations to the Student Development Center of the LDS Business College in Utah for achieving a Category 5 “Workforce” Award. In addition, congratulations to our first Commitment Award Recipient, Deer Valley Unified School District, AZ and to our 3 Showcase in Excellence Award recipients this year. Congratulations to the University of Phoenix who received 2 Showcase Awards and to our Showcase recipient, Yuma Regional Medical Center, AZ. These organizations have achieved recognition for their respective quality efforts and they will be recognized at our annual Performance Excellence Awards ceremony on February 1, 2016.

I would also like to recognize the efforts of the Board of Directors, valued Examiners, Board of Overseers, Examiner Team Mentors and our Panel of Judges for another excellent year of work! A special thank you to our retiring board members, Jill Howard – Banner Health, Michael Cavanaugh, MDCAV Associates, LLC, and Joe Mihaljevich, Arrow Electronics. We appreciate your years of service!!!

I hope you all have a wonderful Holiday Season and a Very Happy New Year! Thank you for your continued support of SWAE and your commitment to quality improvement!

Jean Hammelev
Vice President, Quality & Program Management Office
Sonora Quest Laboratories
Laboratory Sciences of Arizona
Jean.Hammelev@sonoraquest.com

“I strongly encourage organization leaders to participate in SWAE. I’m confident that it will strengthen their organization’s awareness of quality performance, enhance their competitive market position, and bring new insights on how other companies outside their industry are raising the bar on quality.”

— David A. Dexter, President & CEO, Sonora Quest Laboratories
Announcing the Award Recipients of the SWAE 2015 Performance Excellence Program

On December 4, 2015, Southwest Alliance for Excellence (SWAE) announced the five award recipients of the 2015 Performance Excellence Program.

The Performance Excellence Program recognizes organizations for excellence in quality and performance. The program – modeled after the Malcolm Baldrige Award criteria – provides not only an opportunity for recognition, but also valuable feedback on where an organization is positioned on the quality continuum.

Congratulations to our 2015 Performance Excellence Award Recipients:

Commitment Award:
Deer Valley Unified School District, AZ

Category Award—Category 5 “Workforce“:
Student Development Center of the LDS Business College, UT

Showcase in Excellence Awards:
- University of Phoenix, AZ - “Admissions Intake Work Distribution Process”
- University of Phoenix, AZ - “Office of Student Records Quality Control Process”
- Yuma Regional Medical Center, AZ - “Reduction of Early Elective Deliveries”

“SWAE is proud to continue empowering organizations to pursue performance excellence, improve outcomes and contribute to the economic strength of their community and state. We are proud to continue over two decades of the Performance Excellence Award Program, one of the best methodologies available to develop a higher level of organizational performance.”

-- Karen Shepard, Executive Director of the Southwest Alliance for Excellence

Applications for the 2016 program are available on our website. Click here.

Join us for the 2015 Performance Excellence Program Awards Banquet!

Date: Monday, February 1, 2016
Time: Luncheon 11:30 AM-1:30 PM
Location: Chaparral Suites Resort, 5001 N. Scottsdale Road, Scottsdale, AZ 85250

For more information, download our event flyer or registration form, visit www.swae.org, or contact us at 480-874-5815.
"WHAT DO WE WANT OUR ORGANIZATION TO BE? WHAT WILL SUCCESS FOR OUR ORGANIZATION LOOK LIKE?"

Southwest Alliance for Excellence (SWAE) can help you answer these questions and more through our approach to organizational assessment, performance and the development of best practices. As stated by one of our members, “Participation in SWAE will strengthen your organization’s awareness of quality performance and enhance your competitive market position.” If you want your organization to exude excellence and a progressive culture, then it is important to immerse your organization in a community that works toward the same shared vision. Explore all that Southwest Alliance for Excellence has to offer:

**WE ARE YOUR TIMELY RESOURCE FOR ACCURATE AND INNOVATIVE INFORMATION**

**Access to Best Practices** – Southwest Alliance for Excellence focuses on:
- Best practices employed by health care, education, government and private sectors.
- Relevant learning opportunities.
- Benchmarking tours and networking opportunities as well as workshops on the Performance Excellence Program.

**Tools you can use:**
- Review key points from the Baldrige Criteria and Resource Library.
- Visit the Case Studies and Awards portion of the website to find creative solutions and innovative practices.
- Use our e-learning program as a professional development and training tool for your organization.

**EVERYONE IN EVERY DEPARTMENT CAN BENEFIT**

**Your Entire Organization Belongs** – Membership in SWAE is unique, in that:
- Every employee in your organization can benefit from SWAE services.
- We support participation of employees at all levels and from all departments.
- We will help you develop and support a culture of excellence throughout your organization.

**Tools you can use:**
- Contact SWAE to host a personalized forum about the benefits of belonging.
- Register additional staff so they can begin to receive information and participate.

**USE SOUTHWEST ALLIANCE FOR EXCELLENCE SERVICES AND YOU WILL SEE THE DIFFERENCE**

**Tangible Improvements** – You can benefit from measurable organizational improvements by:
- Saving money by completing in-house projects with information that SWAE provides.
- Accessing practical ideas, suggestions and programs in use by progressive organizations.
- Replicating and reinventing service improvements used by other organizations.

**Tools you can use:**
- Participate in the Performance Excellence Program to improve your organization’s processes.
- Attend the Performance Excellence Program Awards Banquet to hear best practices of award recipients that can be implemented in your organization.

**CONNECTING MEMBERS IS WHAT WE DO BEST**

**Knowledge Network of Members** – We are made up of a wide network of organizations:
- Members value receiving information as well as sharing their innovative best practices.
- We connect you to organizations that have similar interests.
- Through SWAE Ambassadors, we focus on you as a unique organization.

**Tools you can use:**
- Sign up for informational e-blasts and newsletters.
- Contact SWAE to be connected to appropriate members and ambassadors.
Announcing the Finalists for 2016 SWAE Leadership Award

The Southwest Alliance for Excellence is proud to announce the finalists for the 2016 Leadership Award!

Jonathan Gardner  
Southern Arizona VA Health Care System  
Tucson, AZ

Adrian Juchau  
LDS Business College, Salt Lake City, Utah

Cynthia Seelhammer  
Coconino County Flagstaff, AZ

Join us for the 2015 Performance Excellence Program Awards Banquet!

Date: Monday, February 1, 2016  
Time: Luncheon 11:30 AM-1:30 PM

Location: Chaparral Suites Resort, 5001 N. Scottsdale Road, Scottsdale, AZ 85250

For more information, download our event flyer or registration form, visit www.swae.org, or contact us at 480-874-5815.
2015 Recipients of Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award

U.S. Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker named four U.S. organizations as the 2015 recipients of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, the nation’s highest Presidential honor for performance excellence. The honorees are recognized for their outstanding commitment to sustainable excellence through innovation, improvement, and visionary leadership. This year’s recipients represent four different sectors and include a two-time winner for the seventh time in Baldrige history.  Continue reading...

Get Ready to Apply for the 2016 Baldrige Awards!

Consider the helpful feedback and prestigious Presidential recognition your business, nonprofit, healthcare, or education organization can receive by submitting a Baldrige Award application in 2016. Forms and guidance are now available online.

Here’s how senior leaders of two recent Baldrige Award recipients described the benefits:

“Going through the Baldrige process has been truly transformational for us, and it continues to make us better… That’s really what the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award is all about. It’s about measuring our selves against the highest-performing organizations in the nation and applying what we learn along the way to help us improve.” (David Huffstutler, President and CEO, St. David’s Healthcare, 2014 Baldrige Award recipient)

“Using Baldrige to improve was, I think, one of the smartest things we did in our business. It really gave us a touchstone; it really gave us an opportunity … to constantly measure ourselves and evaluate how we’re doing.” (Scott McIntyre, Managing Partner, PricewaterhouseCoopers [PwC] Public Sector, 2014 Baldrige Award recipient)  Continue reading...

Baldrige Program Seeks Examiners for 2016 Board

The Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (BPEP) is seeking applicants for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Board of Examiners for the 2016 award cycle. The Examiner Application is now available online and will be open until January 7, 2016. Serving as a Baldrige examiner is an opportunity for personal and professional development and growth. It is an opportunity to work as part of a diverse team of professionals from all sectors of the U.S. economy. Examiners are volunteers who want to make a difference and help drive breakthrough improvement in their own organizations, as well as learn and promote identified role-model practices to advance the nation. Continue reading…

Paper on Baldrige Framework as World’s Standard for Organizational Excellence Honored

On October 1, the Society for Standards Professionals (SES) honored the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program with a third-place win for its paper “The Metrology of Organizational Performance: How Baldrige Standards Have Become the Common Language for Organizational Excellence Around the World.” Continue reading…

Publication for Health Care Executives Features Baldrige Award Recipients

The Fall 2015 issue of Frontiers of Health Services Management, a publication of the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE), features accounts and commentary by leaders of several U.S. health care organizations that have used the Baldrige Excellence Framework to transform their organizations into high performing national role models as recipients of the Baldrige Award in recent years. Continue reading…
As the Holiday Season Approaches, Prepare Yourself for Three of the Most Dreaded Words in the English Language

Posted on December 1, 2015 by Harry "The Baldrige Cheermudgeon"

Having recently bought some furniture at a big box store, those three dreaded words were boldly printed on the outside of the carton: **"Some Assembly Required."** As I opened the box, I wondered what I would find. Would there be lengthy assembly instructions and many different screws, bolts, washers, and nuts? Could I ignore the instructions and use my powers of logic to assemble the furniture? (Real men/women don't read instructions!) If there were many small parts and I had to follow the instructions would they be in readable English? Would they be largely in pictures that clearly showed assembly sequences? Would they have diagrams of full-size screws, bolts, etc. so that measurement with a ruler would not be needed? Would all the parts be there? Have the pieces been cut/machined correctly? In my case there were many different screws, bolts, washers, lock nuts, and cap nuts, so I opted to use the instructions. The first instruction is always to count the parts. I wasn't going to count all those nuts and bolts! So here is a brief summary of what happened:

I unpacked the box, scattering little static-charged Styrofoam beads all over the floor.

The instructions had clear pictures (for what they included).

On the third attempt, I put the bolts into a curved seat back in an order that worked (starting at the center and working out). This was not in the instructions, but only that sequence forced the outer edge holes to be torqued into place to line up with the holes on the matching piece.

One step from the end, I determined that I had three extra lock nuts and three too few washers. I could have called the manufacturer and had the washers sent with significant delay or I could go to the hardware store, purchase a packet of similar washers, and lose just an hour. I opted for the latter, mumbling to myself about the inability of the manufacturer to get it right.

I finished the assembly and spent 15 minutes clearing off and chasing Styrofoam around the floor and around the edges of the dust pan and trash bag.

After the experience, I tried to relate it to possible process failures from my perspective as a customer. While there are many questions in the Baldrige Excellence Framework Criteria that are relevant to the topic, I will highlight just a few of them to encourage the thinking of people in all organizations that interact with consumers (and customers in general):

- How do you prevent defects, service errors, and rework?
- How do you minimize customers’ productivity losses?
- How do you observe customers to obtain actionable information?
- How do you manage relationships with customers to meet their requirements and exceed their expectations?
- How do you improve your work processes to improve products and reduce variability?

The question that particularly intrigued me was #3 about observing customers. I wonder how many manufacturers who use the words "Some assembly required" actually observe different "real" customers follow their instructions to check for obvious gaps or errors. How many have their experts who possess full knowledge of how the product should be assembled write and be the testers of the instructions?

While this blog posting relates to assembly of manufactured product, I encourage everyone to think about instructions they give (or don’t give) to customers, students, patients, or colleagues. Are they clear and easy to follow? Do they lack detail or contain too much detail? Are they the instructions you would like to receive?

While you ponder those questions, allow me to return to the holiday spirit. I do wish you good luck, and.. let the assembly begin!
Baldrige Answers to Things Health Care CEOs Need to Know

Posted on December 10, 2015 by Dawn Bailey

The Advisory Board recently came out with “The 10 Things CEOs Need to Know in 2015,” and much had a direct correlation with the Baldrige Excellence Framework and its Health Care Criteria. Within the Baldrige framework are the requirements that CEOs need to consider to make educated, thoughtful, fact-based decisions to address these things that they need to know. For example,

#10: “Regardless of structure, the most successful health systems exhibit four hallmarks of ‘systemness.’”

According to the Advisory Board, the most cohesive health systems surveyed in the research exhibited four traits:

- Clearly defined governance structures doing the right things at the right level
- Hardwired roles and responsibilities for key stakeholders
- Incentive structures that don’t just support system goals but also don’t encourage counter productive behavior
- A free flow of information—not just data, but knowledge and experience—that enables smarter, quicker action

To emphasize its focus on a systems approach, the 2015–2016 Baldrige framework received a subtitle: “A Systems Approach to Improving Your Organization’s Performance.” A systems perspective means managing all of the components of your organization as a unified whole to achieve your mission, ongoing success, and performance excellence.

Baldrige promotes systems within the framework; the systems’ building blocks and integrating mechanism are the framework’s core values and concepts, the seven interrelated Criteria categories, and the scoring guidelines. In addition, the linkages among the Criteria categories are an essential part of the systems perspective provided by the Baldrige framework. In the 2015–2016 Baldrige framework, “systems perspective,” which is also a core value, has been reordered to be the first core value to emphasize its importance.

#3: “The move to consumer-driven health care is real and here to stay.”

#4: “Loyalty is the right paradigm for defining success.”

According to the Advisory Board, “With such a large financial stake in their health care, consumers will become more important as decision makers. Hospitals and health systems must be prepared to win consumers’ favor. . . Loyalty matters because consumers are faced with ever growing choices about where they should spend their health care dollars.”

The Baldrige framework has a category on customers that asks health care organizations to consider how they engage their patients and other customers for long-term marketplace success, including how organizations listen to their voices, build relationships with them, and use their information to improve and identify opportunities for innovation. Of paramount importance are patient satisfaction, dissatisfaction, and engagement, including how organizations enable patients and other customers to seek information and support, and identify and adapt service offerings to attract new patients and expand relationships with current ones. In addition, the word “loyalty” appears several times in the Health Care Criteria, including in the concept of “brand loyalty.”

#8: “Coordinated, integrated care can differentiate hospitals from narrowly focused competitors.”

In contrast to narrowly focused health care start-ups, “health systems have the combination of comprehensive clinical service and the care coordination that allows them to deliver a low-cost health care product to the market,” writes the Advisory Board.

Anyone who knows the Baldrige framework knows that “integration” is a key evaluation factor of both processes (that are evaluated for their approach, deployment, learning, and integration) and results (that are evaluated for their levels, trends, comparisons, and integration). Baldrige defines integration as the harmonization of plans, processes, information, resource decisions, workforce capability and capacity, actions, results, and analyses to support key organization-wide goals. Effective integration goes beyond alignment and is achieved when the individual components of an organizational performance management system operate as a fully interconnected unit. The word integration appears 37 times in the Health Care Criteria, across categories and core values, forcing readers to really think about how services, plans, decisions, etc., are integrated for comprehensive service and care coordination.
The high cost of poor customer service

Most of us have seen these statistics:

- In the average business, for every customer who bothers to complain, there are 26 others who remain silent.
- The average wronged customer will tell 8 to 16 people (about 10 percent will tell more than 20 people).
- 91 percent of unhappy customers will never purchase goods or services from you again.
- If you make an effort to remedy customer’s complaints, 82 to 95 percent of them will stay with you.

It costs about 5 times as much to attract a new customer as it does to keep an existing one.*

Based on several recent unpleasant customer experiences, I suspect that many executives don’t actually believe these statistics, or they would insist on creating a customer-focused culture if only to enhance their organizations’ bottom lines.

Many organizations believe that training employees to use standard phrases when confronted with a complaint or establishing guidelines that permit employees to compensate a wronged customer in some way is a sufficient approach to providing customer service. However, those fall short of what the Baldrige Criteria ask, “How does your management of complaints enable you to recover your customers’ confidence, and enhance their satisfaction and engagement?”

Effective customer service requires more than a program

What’s at the heart of genuine, effective customer service? I believe it’s empathy, the ability to put oneself into another person’s shoes and feel the emotions they are feeling. That leads, then, to responding appropriately to that person when there is a complaint.

According to the latest neuroscience research cited in a June 2015 edition of BBC Magazine, 98% of people (exceptions include those with psychopathic tendencies) have the ability to empathize wired into their brains, the built-in capacity for stepping into the shoes of others and understanding their feelings and perspectives. Multiple studies strongly suggest that empathy can be taught, in essence, tapping into what is already wired into our brains.

Proof that empathy delivers measurable results

But what if empathy went beyond providing a positive customer experience? What if it actually contributed to reducing a key problem in health care that drives higher costs and poor patient experience? An article in Harvard Business Review described a recent study that looked at hospitals with high quality care that focused on either improving communication with patients or on improving the response time to the expressed needs of the patient. The communication-focused dimension and high quality care combination resulted in a 5-percentage-point reduction in 30-day readmission rates for an average U.S. hospital. When the hospitals focused on high quality care and response time, the reduction was under 3 percentage points.

Empathetic customer service starts with empathetic leadership

These studies along with the statistics above point toward a different approach to improving customer engagement and loyalty. But the costs may be more than some executives are willing to pay. Creating a customer-focused culture where empathy is at the heart of each customer experience requires that the behavior be role modeled at the top. In another recent Harvard Business Review article, “Empathy Is Still Lacking in the Leaders Who Need It Most,” author Ernest J. Wilson III describes an unpublished survey of his university’s graduates over the past 10 years who now occupy professional positions. “Empathy is most lacking among middle managers and senior executives: the very people who need it most because their actions affect such large numbers of people.”

As leaders, have you assessed the quality of customer service in your organization? If it isn’t at the level of performance you expect or your organization needs to remain competitive, have you checked your EQ – empathy quotient?

*Source: The SCORE Association, a nonprofit association dedicated to entrepreneurial education and the formation, growth and success of small businesses nationwide.
The concept of Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) in health care was described by Dr. David Sackett as “the conscientious, explicit and judicious use of current best evidence in making decisions about the care of the individual patient. It means integrating individual clinical expertise with best available external clinical evidence from systematic research.”

It’s a concept that ought to be employed well beyond the health care sector. In fact, why wouldn’t any logical person want to accelerate organizational improvement through the adoption of proven approaches? The Baldrige Excellence Framework is that model of evidence-based practice for any organization, regardless of size or industry.

On October 1, the Society for Standards Professionals (SES) honored the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program with a third-place win for its paper “The Metrology of Organizational Performance: How Baldrige Standards Have Become the Common Language for Organizational Excellence Around the World.” The paper cites some compelling statistics to support this claim. “In the U.S., more than 35 state, regional, and sector programs that support local businesses, hospitals, and schools base themselves on Baldrige. Around the world, more than 100 international programs use the Baldrige Criteria in their entirety, translated, benchmarked, or adapted as standards to measure organizational excellence.”

The Fall 2015 issue of Frontiers of Health Services, a publication of the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE), is focused on the use of the Baldrige Criteria to transform organizations into high-performing national role models. Leaders of several recent award recipients -- Hill Country Memorial Hospital, St. David's HealthCare, Sutter Davis Hospital, and Schneck Medical Center -- share their stories about their journeys to performance excellence. [https://ache.org/pubs/Frontiers/frontiers_index.cfm](https://ache.org/pubs/Frontiers/frontiers_index.cfm)

Why is it then that more leaders don’t adopt the Baldrige Excellence Framework as the evidence-based practice for taking their organizations to ever higher levels of performance? These same leaders, if faced with a personal health crisis would almost assuredly seek out medical care from physicians and facilities with high degrees of success in treating that condition. Yet, when their organizations are facing tougher competition and increasing demands from customers and shareholders, these leaders look for silver bullets instead of committing to a proven approach.

I just don’t get it. Do you?
Promote Your Business

Looking for a way to expand your reach to other business professionals for a low cost? Consider purchasing ad space in the Southwest Excellence Quarterly—the Southwest Alliance for Excellence quarterly e-newsletter! Advertising opportunities start at $75.

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For more information, visit www.swae.org or call 480-874-5815.

SPRING ISSUE RESERVATION DEADLINE: March 11, 2016
### 2016 Performance Excellence Program Calendar

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<td>January</td>
<td>Leadership Award Finalists</td>
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<td>Announcement of SWAE annual leadership Award Finalists—Winner announced at Award Banquet</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 1</td>
<td>SWAE</td>
<td>Chaparral Suites</td>
<td>2015 Performance Excellence Program Awards Banquet—recognition for recipients and volunteers</td>
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<td>March 10, 2016</td>
<td>SWAE</td>
<td>Tempe</td>
<td>Phoenix ASQ Section 07014 Meeting 6:00pm-8:00pm</td>
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<td>April TBD</td>
<td>SWAE—Process Level Applicants</td>
<td>TDB</td>
<td>Workshop—Making your application the best it can be (Part A and Part B)</td>
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Phoenix ASQ hosted a lunch and learn in October.  
Click [here](#) for the Presentation

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**ISO 9001:2015 Begins With Leadership**

*The Audit Report - September 2015*

by Walter Tighe

As quality professionals, many of us have shared in the frustration regarding the lack of top management commitment, and specifically the lack of hands-on involvement with the company quality management system. What about management review meetings? Sure, the process of management review involvement; however, too many times the company quality manager is the delegated source of data collection, measurement representation, and communication to all management review meeting attendees on the quality system effectiveness, or worse, the lack of process effectiveness.

Will the ISO 9001:2015 standard make a real difference in promoting leadership involvement?  
[Continue reading](#)

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Announcement in Organizational Excellence Technical Committee (ASQ, QMD) *Submitted by Denis Leonard Ph.D. ASQ Fellow*

The OETC webpage has a range of free Baldrige and EFQM focused papers and reports. The website has a large number of Baldrige, EFQM and related papers and reports available for free download, accessible to all. You can find them at this link

[http://www.asq-qm.org/oetc-papers](http://www.asq-qm.org/oetc-papers)
Southwest Alliance for Excellence—formerly Arizona Quality Alliance—is a non-profit corporation that advances improvement and excellence in organizations, communities and individuals. To achieve our mission we will:

1. Administer the Performance Excellence Awards Program based on the Malcolm Baldrige Criteria; and annually recognize, showcase & highlight outstanding achievement in performance excellence.

2. Train individuals to become experts at assessing and evaluating, entire organizations or individual processes using the Criteria for Performance Excellence.

3. Facilitate programs so organizations can find and implement proven best practices to achieve a competitive advantage.

4. Provide organizations with a comprehensive, cost-effective performance analysis with extensive feedback based on the Malcolm Baldrige criteria.

5. Create and deliver relevant workshops, benchmarking tours and seminars that will develop the skills and knowledge of performance excellence professionals.

6. Provide a dynamic environment for professional networking and knowledge sharing.

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