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Orchestrating Engagement and High Performance



**Are there zombies
in your workplace?**

**Do you know how to sustain
employee engagement?**

**What coaching skills will
benefit your leadership
in the future?**

The Need for a Road Map

This excerpt from the new book, Road Map for the Baldrige Journey: A Guide to Effective Use of the Criteria for Performance Excellence and Baldrige-based Award Programs, explains why just having the criteria available isn't enough to change an organization's performance.

Joe Kilbride

Have you ever been to Europe? During my first trip there one of my strongest impressions was the age of its most famous sites. Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris was built in the twelfth century, more than 100 years before Columbus discovered America. The Tower of London was built in 1078. The Roman Colosseum dates to A.D. 70 and the Parthenon in Athens to the fifth century B.C. Though obvious in retrospect, my first experience of Europe made me acutely aware that by comparison, the United States is a very young nation.

I was struck by a similar observation about the profession of management while reading Walter Kiechel's 2012 *Harvard Business Review* article titled "The Management Century." Kiechel states that the management profession essentially came into being in the 1880s and in the century since has had a dramatic impact on the world in which we work.¹ It follows logically that management is a relatively young profession, that the work of leading organizations is in the early stages of development, and that management practices would benefit from clear direction and a means of continual refinement.

Not only is management a young profession, it is also a very difficult one. My experience working with executives suggests that leading an organization of any size is a complex endeavor. It requires:

- Balancing the needs and expectations of a wide variety of stakeholders,
- Understanding the cause-effect relationship between multiple variables in the organization and its operating environment, and
- Determining optimal courses of action when faced with an uncertain future.

The relative immaturity of the profession combined with its challenging nature may help to explain the difficulties experienced by organizational leaders who are almost universally smart, hardworking, and well-intentioned. Their profession is in its early

stages, and to some extent they are the ones defining its practice. It follows that these pioneers in the practice of organizational leadership would benefit from a road map that allows them to navigate the difficulties inherent in leading complex organizations and provides them with a method to refine their own practice for doing so.

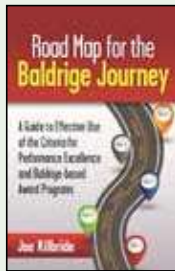
To be clear, the intent here is not to provide an instruction manual for leading a complex organization. No such thing exists. Instead, the term road map is being used in two senses. One is consistent with its definition, as a detailed plan to guide progress toward a goal. In this case the goal is to become an excellent organization, one that is successful now and will remain so in the future.

The other use of the term is to suggest that the road map serves to guide those who are committed to leading their organization on a journey of some duration and difficulty. When the destination is excellence, we are not talking about a quick trip but rather about a learning journey that takes time and will invariably involve unexpected twists and turns along the way. In that sense, the road map provided here is intended to serve as a guide for those who are committed to leading their organizations on a journey of discovery, where organizational success and sustainability are the intended destination.

How Will You Lead Your Organization Through the Coming Decade?

The need for a road map is even greater when one is navigating unfamiliar or uncertain terrain. Think about your own organization and its operating environment. What will it look like in 2025? Leaders in every sector understand that the next 10 years are likely to be extremely challenging. In the face of this uncertainty, many are seeking effective methods to lead their organizations through the decade ahead:

Road Map for the Baldrige Journey: A Guide to Effective Use of the Criteria for Performance Excellence and Baldrige-based Award Programs



Author: Joe Kilbride

Abstract: Although the *Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence* are one of the most widely known assessment frameworks in the world, interest in the criteria has ebbed and flowed over the years. In part this may be due to the fact

that organizations often don't know how to use the criteria and award programs in an efficient and effective manner. This difficulty is somewhat expected because the criteria are nonprescriptive; the requirements are presented as more than 200 questions written in a generic manner to enable their application by all types of organizations. The criteria do not tell leaders what to do to meet the requirements, which has both advantages and disadvantages. This approach makes it possible for organizations to develop processes

that meet their unique needs, but it has created a barrier to using the criteria for some leaders. This book provides a detailed road map and systematic process for designing and implementing a customized operating model for performance excellence based on the criteria. The road map includes regular use of state award programs for feedback to enable midcourse correction. Though recognition is not the road map's primary purpose, following its recommendations also increases the likelihood of earning recognition from the award programs by helping leaders use the criteria and award programs more effectively and efficiently as an aid to organizational transformation and improvement.

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- Health care in the United States is in the midst of a dramatic change as reimbursement models shift from payment based on the volume of services delivered to improvement of health outcomes, reduction of costs, and effective population management.
- With the adoption of Common Core State Standards, education is facing a challenge similar in magnitude to the one encountered after passage of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001.
- In the service sector, the Internet and web-based technologies have significantly increased competition by making it possible to deliver many types of service from virtually anywhere in the world directly to your phone or mobile device.
- Manufacturing has undergone successive waves of change since the 1960s, with the most recent being the emergence of China as a dominant force. Some think 3D printing will be the next great disruptive innovation to upend the business models and supply chains of manufacturers globally.
- Changing demographics will have a significant impact on every sector in the coming years as the

baby boomers retire and hand over responsibility for leadership to the next generation.

Organizations in every sector must be able to change and adapt if they are to thrive in the coming decade. How will your organization manage the changes ahead? Will you react to one challenge after another or will you adopt a proven assessment framework and use it as your platform for organizational transformation? The road map described here provides a well-defined approach that will enable leaders to identify and manage the changes needed to become and remain successful. It is based on a time-tested and validated set of requirements for becoming a world-class organization, the Criteria for Performance Excellence. It utilizes Baldrige-based state award programs as an inexpensive means to receive objective feedback and enable mid-course corrections as your operating environment and competitive situation changes.

Baldrige Provides a Framework for Those in Pursuit of Excellence

In 1987 the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Improvement Act was signed into law with the goal

of improving the competitiveness of U.S. businesses. Soon thereafter, the Baldrige Award Program was created as a way to identify and recognize role-model organizations and share best practices, and the Criteria for Performance Excellence were established to evaluate award applicants.

The criteria are revised every two years to ensure they continue to reflect validated, leading-edge practices for performance excellence. After 25 years of continuous improvement there is a compelling argument that they represent the most comprehensive and rigorous framework available for organizational assessment and improvement, not only in the United States but also globally. In fact, the criteria are the model for approximately 100 performance excellence frameworks used by award programs around the world. Baldrige and other award programs are appealing for the recognition they bring to organizations, but many leaders have recognized that the value of the assessment and improvement process is much greater.



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Joe Kilbride is a self-employed management consultant who works with clients in all sectors to achieve their goals. He is a member of the panel of judges for Illinois Performance Excellence, formerly the Lincoln Foundation, which administers the Illinois program modeled after the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. He is also a girls' basketball coach, leading his Benet Academy team to the Illinois Class 4A state championship in 2015. Kilbride is the author of Road Map for the Baldrige Journey: A Guide to Effective Use of the Criteria for Performance Excellence and Baldrige-based Award Programs. Contact him at Joe@KilbrideConsulting.com.