



# Foundation Update

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### Who We Are

Quality Texas focuses on an assessment and feedback process, education, training, and recognition to help businesses, schools, hospitals, non-profits, and government agencies improve performance. The Foundation administers the Texas Award for Performance Excellence program (Based on the Baldrige Criteria), the state's highest recognition for Quality.

### Vision

What we're striving to do  
Engage all Texas organizations in a journey toward the achievement of world-class performance excellence.

### Mission

#### Why we exist

Quality Texas helps organizations achieve performance excellence using the Baldrige Criteria as a framework for improvement.

## NOTES FROM THE CEO



Bill Denney  
Quality Texas Foundation

Dear Fellow Travelers on the Road to Excellence:

### What's In It For Me, NOW!

What I learned from the TQM era of the 1980's was the importance of planning and relationships. We were told the reason the Japanese were so successful was because they planned—10, 20 years out. They built relationships and made deals based on brief documents of intent and a handshake. Actions in the present laid groundwork for the future. Relationships and planning intertwined because, the theory taught us, the future is built on what we do today.

Lately, the future seems to have been abandoned for the immediacy of the present. ROI, which I have always taken to be about financial investment, has also come to be a relationship analysis. What's in it for me if I build this relationship? Does it have financial value? Why should I help that other person succeed if I don't see return by the end of the month, quarter, year?

Every salesman knows, that the hand you shake today may not provide a return for some years to come, if ever. Yet, among so many leaders I talk to, relationships are calculated by ROI. They seek out and support only those people or organizations they know will provide a return.

I have a friend who works for Ernst & Young, the financial accounting firm. He told me he was a stranger at an event where he saw a man across the room who seemed as out of place as him. He walked up and introduced himself. Through their conversation, he helped the man feel more at ease. He discovered that the man had a son who was looking for a job. "I'll interview him," my friend said, and he did.

It didn't work out for the son to get a job with EY, but a year later he got a call from this man of brief acquaintance who asked my friend to come to his office. "I never forgot your initiative and kindness," he said. He gave Ernst & Young a multi-million dollar contract.

Not all relationship building provides such a return, or should. But when we look at everything we do by first asking what's in it for me, we close ourselves off to the potential rewards and simple satisfaction of a single handshake.

My friend's advice: "Find out what's important to someone and help them achieve it. Expect nothing in return and they will remember you." How did we miss this at the Harvard Business School?

**"DO UNTO OTHERS AS YOU WOULD HAVE THEM DO UNTO YOU"**

## Rapid Cycle PDCA



John Moran, Grace Duffy, William Riley

We are often asked “What is Rapid Cycle PDCA?” The word “Rapid” means done or occurring in a brief period of time and characterized by speed. “Cycle” means an interval during which a recurring sequence of events occurs. Therefore Rapid Cycle PDCA, as shown in figure 1, is applying the recurring sequence of PDCA in a brief period of time to solve a problem or issue facing a team or organization that will achieve breakthrough or continuous improvement results quickly.

Too often we encounter teams or organizations that launch a PDCA effort but take 3 months to do what could be accomplished in 3 days or 3 hours. They waste too much time and energy by not solving the problem quickly. These teams fail to hold the gains or move on to the next organizational challenge. Consequences of not doing rapid cycle PDCA is that team members lose interest, become bored with a long process, do not gain experience and knowledge in applying QI, and do not see the impact of their efforts for a long time.

**PDCA/PDSA should be repeatedly implemented in spirals of increasing knowledge of the system that converge on the ultimate goal, each cycle closer than the previous.**

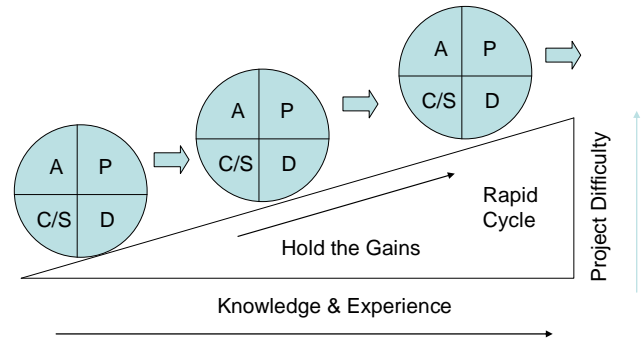


Figure 1

Figure 2 shows the Rapid Cycle Process Model which defines the steps to ensure a successful rapid cycle application of PDCA.

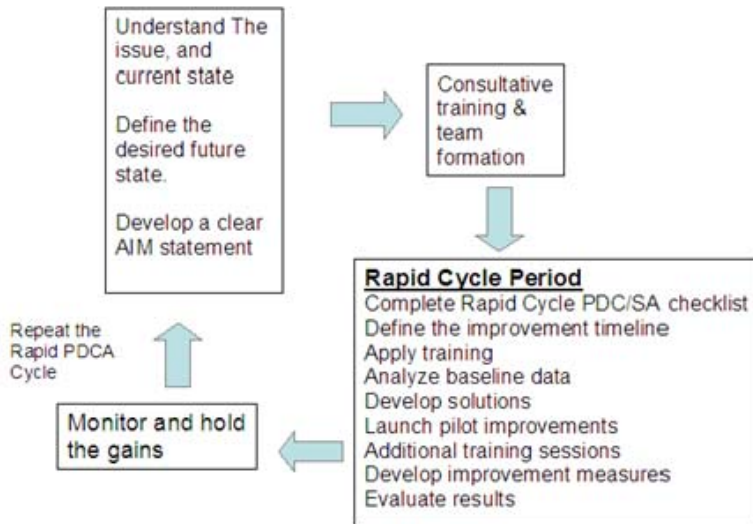


Figure 2 Rapid Cycle PDCA/PDSA Process Model

The Rapid Cycle Process is defined as follows:

- Realization of a problem or issue that needs to be corrected. Management is committed to making the change.
- Act to start a resolution or change to the problem or issue by utilizing the QI tools and techniques.
- Plan for success by developing a clear AIM statement.
- Involve key constituents in the PDCA process.
- Develop the change team and establish the rapid cycle time line.
- Consultative training interventions as required by the team.
- analyze baseline data and understand the current state and scope of the problem.
- Construct solutions to get to the desired future state.
- Launch pilot improvement solutions to determine if the desired change can be achieved.
- Evaluate results achieved from pilot improvement, make any necessary adjustments and launch it throughout the organization.

## We're just different

In a state that issues 73,000 concealed gun licenses a year and 52% of us admit to having 3 guns or more, in Austin it is illegal to carry wire cutters in your pocket. (Wild west...cutting fences...cattle stampedes...we forgot that era is over)



The utilization of a Rapid Cycle PDCA process helps organizations realize a quick return on its investment in QI. Some of the benefits of instituting Rapid Cycle PDCA are:

- short cycles of change to accelerate quality improvement in the organization,
- hold the gains as a platform for the next level of project improvement,
- develop a broad base of QI knowledge and experience in the organization, help in the establishment of an organization-wide culture of quality and excellence,
- solve many organizational problems that will promote needed organization change and improvement, and
- provide an iterative opportunity for team members to reinforce their QI knowledge quickly in the next project.

A *Pre-Planning Check Sheet* has been developed to help in using Rapid Cycle PDCA/PDSA (see Table 1). The check sheet contains questions that guide you when starting a Rapid Cycle Quality Improvement Project. This checklist leads you through the Rapid Cycle pre-planning to ensure a successful improvement project.

The check sheet provides columns to indicate what has been completed (✓) and what needs to be done (TBD) along with the expected completion date.

**Table 1: Rapid Cycle PDCA/PDSA Pre-Planning Check Sheet**

Step	Rapid Cycle PDCA/PDSA Pre-Planning Check Sheet	TBD/ Date	✓
<b>PLAN:</b>			
	What is the focus/AIM of this improvement project?		
	What are the improvement goals?		
	Who is impacted?		
	What is impacted?		
	When is it impacted?		
	Where is it impacted?		
	Why is it impacted?		
	How is it impacted?		
	Who is the customer?		
	Who is the supplier?		
	What are the constraints?		
	What is the rapid cycle time line?		
	Who should be on the improvement team?		
	✓ Who are the right people?		
	✓ What training does the improvement team require?		
	✓ Who will deliver the required training?		
	✓ When will the required training be delivered?		
	What do we predict will happen?		
	Measurement(s) defined/developed to show current performance and future task/future improvements.		
	Action plans developed to detail what will be done by/who and when		
	Communication plan developed to inform needed parties of potential changes, timing, and status		
	What additional information will we need to take action?		
	Other <b>Plan</b> questions unique to your improvement project		
<b>DO:</b>	Improvement plan developed?		
	When will the improvement plan be implemented?		
	When will the pilot test be carried out?		
	What did we observe from the pilot test?		
	Did we get sponsors approval and their support if implementation means going outside our personal area of responsibility?		
	Did we document the implemented changes so the process can be duplicated and standardized?		

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

TABLE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

<b>Check/ Study:</b>	Do the pilot test results agree with the predictions that we made earlier?		
	✓ / Not why?		
	What new knowledge was gained through this cycle?		
	How will we use this new knowledge to make additional improvements?		
	Are we continually checking the results as the process is initiated and after it is in place to determine if the changes are meeting requirements?		
	Are the measurements used to determine success adequate?		
	Did we automate data gathering if at all possible?		
<b>ACT:</b>	Did we go back to <b>Plan</b> if the process still is not meeting requirements and investigate additional process improvement opportunities?		
	Did we make minor adjustments and document them?		
	Did we standardize the change and instate the SDCA Cycle?		
	If the process changes meet requirements, have we set up continued monitoring after standardization?		

Add other questions that are applicable to your particular improvement project.

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### Same Emperors, Still No Clothes Today's Economic Crisis Strips Bare Faulty Leadership Practices.



DENIS LEONARD, PH.D. AND WILLIAM MURPHY, PH.D.

You know the fable, the Emperor who glorified in himself and considered no one to be above him. Having been told that the clothing he would be wearing could only be seen by someone wise, he proceeded to “wear” his new clothes. Not one of his trusted advisers dared tell him that he appeared to be completely naked (for fear of the Emperor’s wrath and wanting desperately to believe what they had been told by the Emperor himself, that only wise people could see his clothes). Off the Emperor went in a public display. Only when a child shouted out, was the truth made plain.

Imagine how often this plays out in the business world, with emperor’s wooed by their own sense of perfection, with underlings cowed into a permanent state of voicing admiration regardless of underlying thoughts to the contrary. Yes, emperors, that is, business leaders, can knowingly or unwittingly find themselves proudly wearing no clothes. Of course, there comes a day when a voice shouts the truth, and oh how quickly the facade is revealed. Sadly, we don’t have to look far today to see not just the cracking of the facade, but the crumbling of entire kingdoms. Look no further than the entire financial sector, with emperors and their entourages now cast as villains and nations on the verge of falling.

Yes, it is patently obvious exactly how wrong things can go when leaders become like the Emperor with no clothes. If it is not obvious already, all leaders stop right now and ask yourself: How do I guard against becoming like the Emperor?

As you consider this, think about just two of the most common ways that leaders become like the Emperor in the fable.

The first is by creating a toxic situation whereby the leader's counselors and advisers (the executive leadership team) are rewarded for being "yes" men or women. Leaders believe they are doing the best for the company and leading it well. They even believe their people are 100 percent behind them, following with glowing admiration. Leaders engage in this destructive path by either being passively or overtly aggressive.

The passive-aggressive leader rewards only those who shower admiration and agreement, drawing these favored into an inner circle. Since few want to be cast as an outsider, everyone soon learns what is necessary to win the leader's favor.

The aggressive leader has no need for such a pleasing system. This leader uses an iron fist, with the tacit understanding that failure to accept and show approval for whatever he or she wants will lead to a stern rebuke and perhaps even ousting from the company. Here again, everyone learns the system and showers the leader with admiration (although some prepare resumes and work on their exit strategies). Leaders are led to believe they are working well and might even ask if everyone is in agreement on a decision. The response should come as no surprise.

The second way leaders become emperors is even more toxic. In the first, they were most likely unaware of their damaging and destructive effects. But the leaders in our second scenario knowingly quash any original thought, innovation, or even the suggestion of challenge. Asking "What if..." would be met with an outright anger from these leaders. Other voices are not worthy and have nothing to offer here. As a result, these leaders forcefully impose the authority of their own voice and decisions; no others matter. Workers are indeed cowed in this environment, with the best workers looking for the exit door, and with those having nowhere else to go simply playing along while keeping a low profile.

When the company is in a tailspin and the leaders are unable to blame their people, an outside voice can often be heard to shout, "but he has no clothes," exposing the failed leadership.

During one of our recent meetings with a quality professional, he told us that a vice president had gathered him and two other department managers in his office. At that meeting, the vice president shared the fact that he subscribed to the *Harvard Business Review*—certainly not a slouch journal for leading-edge thinking—and he welcomed them to borrow copies at any time. The surprise came when he proceeded to tell his managers that they "were not—under any circumstances—to tell anyone else in the organization that they read and have access to HBR." He then told them that he did not want any suggestions about changing the company based on HBR articles since he himself would already have read the articles and decided whether or not there were any changes to be made.

In one fell swoop, and without even realizing it, the vice president had distanced himself from his own managers. Further, his disregard and disrespect for his workers was made transparent. Rather than encouraging a learning organization, he was stalling this potentiality. Sadly, the vice president surely thought he was getting closer to his management team. After all, he had opened his private vault of journals to them, bringing them into his circle. The quality manager we spoke with said he had been sorely tempted to speak out, but he felt his hands were tied. He said he was not going to put his job at risk by telling the vice president this was wrong. Thus, the situation remained, with the quality manager finally deciding to leave the company less than a year later.

Several years from now when the world emerges from the catastrophe so many emperors have led us into, we hope the Emperor's New Clothes syndrome becomes a "lesson learned" for all leaders. In the meantime, in what aspects of your engagement with your team members are you like the Emperor? If you don't know, how are you going to find out? For us, we'll stay on your good side by closing with, "You look wonderful Emperor!"

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**“Winning commitment begins with understanding the basic nature of a quality process. Quality is made up of simple concepts: ‘Let’s make or do things better than we used to.’ ‘We want to be the preferred choice among potential buyers.’ Actually defining and implementing a quality processes - and carrying through with the relentless, day-to-day work necessary to maintain a continual improvement effort is not easy. Quality is simple and difficult.”**

**--- Pat Townsend and Joan Gebhardt, *Quality Makes Money***

“And here is my secret,” said the fox, “a very simple secret: It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.”

“What is essential is invisible to the eye,” the little prince repeated, so that he would be sure to remember.”

--- Antoine de Saint-Exupéry , *The Little Prince*

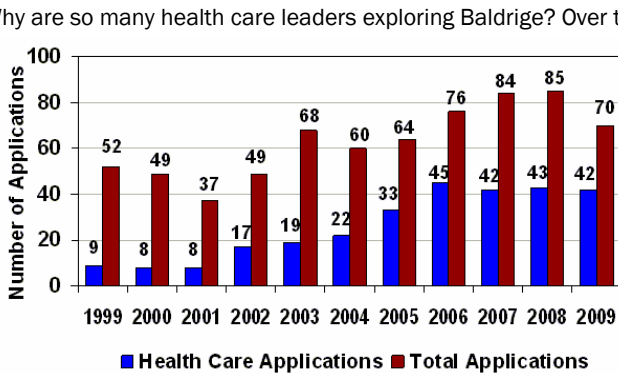
## Journey to Excellence: How Baldrige Health Care Leaders Succeed



Kathleen J. Goonan, MD, Joseph A. Muzikowski, and Patricia K. Stoltz

For the last several years, the number and percentage of health care organizations applying for the Baldrige Award have been high compared to other sectors. This year, 60 percent of all national award applicants come from health care (see Figure 1). In 2007, the last year for which we have complete data, 130 health care organizations applied for state-level Baldrige-based excellence awards. This interest level probably represents the “tip of the iceberg” of users of the Criteria.

Figure 1 - Trend in Baldrige Award Applications



Why are so many health care leaders exploring Baldrige? Over the last decade, the U.S. health care system has endured mounting scrutiny and declining public trust, prompted by well-researched and publicized evidence of far-reaching problems in safety, patient experience, and efficiency of care. Health care leaders face complex challenges - shrinking reimbursements, rapidly emerging safety and quality standards, expanding transparency on performance metrics, non-payment for “never events,” workforce shortages and waning morale and escalating consumer demands. These leaders are searching for a means to build more sophisticated operational systems that will enable them and their organizations to move beyond fighting fires and effectively meet these complex challenges.

We took a deep dive into the experiences of the nine organizations from the health care sector that have received the Baldrige Award to understand how and why they used the Baldrige Criteria. From that research, we distilled the common elements of their success, which are described in detail in our book *Journey to Excellence: How Baldrige Health Care Leaders Succeed*. We came to appreciate that for all nine organizations, Baldrige was far more than an award. It served as their roadmap, a comprehensive blueprint for building organization-wide competencies to address the challenges facing their organizations. These leaders were looking for a comprehensive solution to meeting and overcoming the following strategic challenges:

- Redesigning health care to comply with rapidly changing standards and expectations
- Building new ways of leading and managing the key work processes of the organization
- Moving from managing dozens of improvement projects to leading the organization as a holistic entity.

### The Journey

Organizations that embrace the Baldrige framework typically describe their transformation as a “journey.” Although all nine Baldrige health care recipients had their own unique circumstances and cultures, we found several universal themes in their experience. First, we found that there were stages of the journey common to all these organizations (see Figure 2).

Platinum Level Supporters  
\$75,000

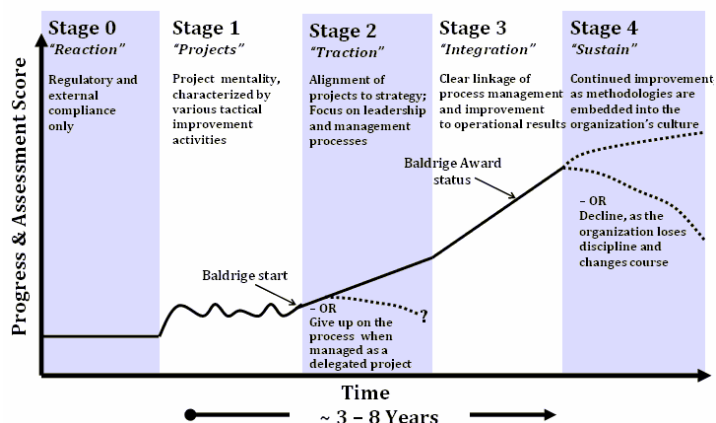


Gold Level Members  
\$25,000



**Figure 2 - Stages of the Baldrige Journey**

We call the first stage, Stage 0, the **Reaction** Stage. This is where many organizations live, quite naturally, given the pressures and speed of change they face. They are focused primarily on compliance: responding to the ever-growing list of demands to measure this, demonstrate that, or change particular practices and behaviors.



A focus on improving performance by launching improvement projects characterizes Stage 1, the **Projects** Stage. Seeking to improve proactively, organizations deploy improvement methodologies, such as Plan-Do-Check-Act, Lean, Six Sigma, or home-grown models and tools, often training large segments of the workforce for their use on the front line. These tool sets are invaluable, and organizations routinely using them experience some real gains. Projects alone, however, prove insufficient to create the system of interdependent processes and the organizational culture necessary for dramatic improvement in performance. Often organizations become overwhelmed by the number of projects and programs consuming resources but without a clear linkage to strategy. It becomes difficult to sustain the gains made.

Baldrige recipients found that they needed something else to align and integrate improvement activity, that is, to hardwire improvement and sustain the gains being made while moving to a higher level of performance overall. As Saint Luke's CEO, Rich Hastings, told us, "We needed a comprehensive business model, an integrated system to evaluate how well we do what we do. Baldrige is the only organizational tool available to do that, to help us align everything we were doing."

Baldrige provided a framework to diagnose their strengths and gaps in operational capability. Periodically evaluating and improving their approaches to leading and managing enabled the nine recipient organizations to hardwire their approaches and oversee improvement across the enterprise. We called this the **Traction** Stage, or Stage 2. They began to break down silos and barriers to cross-functional work. Their Baldrige feedback identified clear, actionable gaps in their culture and leadership and management approaches, such as leaders' communication, strategic planning, performance measurement, and transfer of best practices.

Addressing feedback, whether from their Baldrige or state applications, gave them a disciplined approach to becoming more competent in each Baldrige Category. Over time, these organizations grew increasingly process literate: they understood and systematically measured, managed, and improved their key processes of leadership and management as well as their front-line work processes. With increasing process literacy, they were able to improve organizational alignment and the connections across Categories, improving the entire system. We called this the **Integration** Stage.

### The LASER Model

We also discovered that a set of fundamental practices focused these organizations and accelerated their journey. These practices were common across all the Baldrige health care recipients, although they manifested themselves in different ways in each organization. We called these five practices the LASER model, an acronym for the five elements:

- Leadership
- Assessment
- Sensemaking
- Execution
- Results

The LASER practices represent the five strategic building blocks that form the foundation for transformation using Baldrige. Nested within each practice is a group of common approaches. For example, in Leadership, we noted that in every Baldrige health care recipient organization, senior leaders:

- *Made a personal commitment to lead their organizational transformation* - For example, at Mercy Health System, a 2007 Baldrige recipient, CEO Javon Bea personally led training programs to orient staff to the Baldrige Criteria and to explain why the organization was using Baldrige to improve performance. This reinforced to the staff that this was not just an effort to win an award, but the way to transform the organization's performance.
- *Aligned people at multiple levels to the organization's vision, mission and values* - Poudre Valley Health System, a 2008 Baldrige recipient, established standing Performance Excellence Teams aligned with the Baldrige Criteria to drive its improvement agenda. All the other Baldrige health care recipients used similar cross-functional structures, either as standing teams or as ad hoc groups to develop their applications and address the gaps identified in their feedback reports.
- *Fostered a culture focused on organizational learning and improvement* - After SSM Health Care won the Baldrige Award in 2002, CEO Sister Mary Jean Ryan made sure that SSM would maintain momentum by requiring every hospital in the system to participate in their state Baldrige-based award program.
- *Continually motivated, inspired and engaged their entire workforce* - Sharp HealthCare, a 2007 Baldrige recipient, has the broad-

est approach to motivating and engaging its workforce. It conducts annual all-hands meetings for all 14,000 employees to celebrate success and renew commitment to Sharp's mission and vision, a fun-filled event featuring the CEO's State-of-Sharp message.

- *Built a results focus and processes for driving personal and organizational accountability* - All Baldrige health care recipient organizations have a defined cascade approach to planning and measurement to make sure employees' personal goals and actions are aligned with the organization's strategy.

*Good to Great* author Jim Collins characterized "the Baldrige process as a powerful set of mechanisms for disciplined people engaged in disciplined thought and taking disciplined action to create great organizations that produce exceptional results." The Baldrige health care recipients discovered benefits they value far more than the Award, building cultural attributes and leadership competencies so deeply engrained that they can be sustained beyond the tenure of any individual leader. These leaders successfully transformed their organizations into high-performing systems capable of delivering quality and safety, engaging their workforce in building strong relationships with the patients they serve, and producing results that allow them to stay ahead of the enormous pressures in their industry.

#### **About the authors:**

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## **Attitude is Everything Management has a lot to do with influencing employee attitude**



David C. Crosby

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An electronic publication from *Quality Digest* magazine ([www.qualitydigest.com](http://www.qualitydigest.com))."

The most important element in producing a quality product or service is the attitude of the people doing the work—not only the worker—but the attitude of all levels of management. Employee attitude about the product, about the work, about the boss, and about the company will pretty well determine the quality of the work. By quality, I mean the absence of defects—conformance to the requirement—not the goodness of the product. However, goodness comes from attitude also.

#### **Attitudes are Habits**

An attitude is a thought habit; a habitual way of thinking. You might say that, it's thinking without thinking; acting without thinking. Take football fans, for example. Every major city has a professional football team. It's been said that on any given Sunday, any team can defeat any other team. Also, the players are from all over the country, and football is a business. Why then are fans so nutty about their team? Chicago fans sit out in freezing weather to cheer on the Bears. Any sensible person would prefer their living room, a cold beer, and a TV. Football fans have a attitude. Wouldn't it be nice if your employees were that nutty about their job and your company?

**“Knowing is not enough; we must apply.  
Willing is not enough; we must do.”  
- - - Goethe**



Most attitudes are formed as we grow up. Teachers, ministers, scout leader, parents, TV, etc. all influence our attitude. Once an attitude is formed, it's pretty much the way a person will think about any subject. We vote, select a mate, select a car, and raise our children based on that attitude. A person's attitude about their job, the product or service they produce, and about their leader will determine the quality of their work.

If a new employee starts their career with a company in a dirty shop, with rejected material sitting around on a dirty floor, with a supervisor who will ship anything, you can imagine what kind of attitude will develop. A "That's good enough" attitude will produce "That's good enough" work.

On the other hand, if you run a clean, well organized, well equipped, and safe shop or office, that first impression—that first attitude—will be positive, and will become a habit. When a candidate for employment walks into your lobby, or is interviewed, their attitude about you starts to form. As they say, "The product looks like the management." In fact, everything looks like the management; the building, the lawn, the parking lot—everything.

You have an opportunity to start molding a new employee's attitude through a new-employee orientation program. This program should be professionally presented by a knowledgeable person. People are used to professional presentations and will recognize a slipshod job. The person making the presentation must be properly dressed and well equipped. A slide show can display the rules as well as photos of the products, managers, and work area. The goal is to give the new employee a sense of belonging, like a football fan. You want your employees to be fans of the company.

While much of an orientation program will be devoted to insurance, company rules, safety, and company benefits, most of the program should be devoted to the importance of producing a quality product or service. Without a quality product there soon will be no company benefits. You should make an impressive sales presentation with photographs of your product in use, or better yet, the real thing. You should include information about your customers and what your customers do with the product. It's relatively easy to impress a new employee; you should give it your best shot. You might talk about what a defective would cost. For example, a helicopter part may cost enough to send a kid to college, or buy a sports car. That type of comparison makes an impression. New employees should leave the orientation program with a pamphlet in their hand and stars in their eyes. They should be excited about starting work.

There are many ways to develop a positive attitude. Don't forget the attitude of your present workforce; your "old" employees. They may have a good attitude, but then again, maybe not. They know all about you and your attitude; they know what you will put up with. If you haven't made your performance standard clear, they've pretty well figured out what it is. Their attitudes about the company, the product, and you are already formed.

The good news is that attitudes can be changed, even improved, if necessary. When you come up with your first-class employee orientation program, put the old employees through it too. They might be surprised at what they learn about their company.

Since an attitude is a habit, you need something to break the old habit; and establish a new habit. A special event, like kicking off a new quality improvement program, or announcing a new product, or a new boss, or a new customer can do it. If done well, it could be a fresh start for everyone. People must feel good about their work and their company.

### **Show Time**

Attitudes are affected by repetitive messages; advertising, examples, training, and communications. Some quality control gurus say advertising doesn't work. That's nuts, advertising is one of the most effective attitude adjustment tools known to man. If it wasn't, why would it occupy so much expensive TV time? Why would magazines be jam-packed full of ads? The idea of all advertising is to get into a person's head. In advertising terms, the idea is to position your company and the product correctly in the employee's mind.

I once had a boss who thought Mercedes Benz was the quality standard of the auto industry. That was his attitude. Yet, he never owned one and never even drove one. Who convinced him it was the best? Could it have been Mercedes Benz?

You should think about ways to keep the quality message in front of the employees all the time: posters, special events, award presentation for outstanding employees, and such.

Housekeeping should be a big issue. Are the yellow lines getting a little pale? Are overhead lights collecting dust? Are desks, file cabinets, and machines topped with paperwork that should be put away or tossed out? Are the rest rooms and break rooms clean? Is it a nice place to work?

If you are the big boss, you should examine the attitude of not only the workers, but the leaders—managers and supervisors. It's their attitude that has the biggest effect on the employee's attitude, and thus on product quality. The attitude of these people is formed by your attitude, and they pass along their version of your attitude and their version of your performance standard. A supervisor who is willing to bend the specification to get something out the door has installed a "that's good enough" attitude in the people he or she leads. Sometimes it's not the supervisor, but the thought-leader of the group; an employee who is more influential than the supervisor. It's a common thing. It's like the old black-and-white prison movies, when the new prisoner gets the real scoop from some old con leading against a gray wall, flipping a coin. "Hey kid, come over here. I want to talk to you."

Attitudes can be improved that will improve the quality of the work. Of course, it depends on how strong the attitude is. I think it would probably be hard to convince a terrorist that it's a better idea to negotiate with the enemy than to blow him up. From time to time, you may need to terminate someone with the wrong attitude. On the other hand, it's not difficult to persuade most workers that their work is important and

they must be careful not to make a mistake. I have known workers who would quit rather than cheat, or take shortcuts or to do “good enough” work. Their attitude won’t let them do it.

### Measuring Attitudes

There are many scientific tests to evaluate a person’s attitude. Forget those, you don’t need them. If you’ve been around a few years, you already know how to measure someone’s attitude. You do it every day. After failing to get information from the clerk at a local store, you might think, “That guy has a lousy attitude.” You don’t need to put a number on it.

Some obvious indicators of a poor attitude are poor attendance, lateness, complaining, high defect rate.

The important thing is that you recognize the importance of attitude and do something about it. Hire people with a good attitude, get rid of people with a bad attitude, take a close look at the attitude of the people who lead people doing work. Keep attitude in mind when making decisions.

## Keeping the Faith: The Role of Leaders and Employees during Crisis



Brian S. Lassiter  
President, Minnesota Council for Quality

To get out of this recession, I believe we need quite a few things: we need perspective (knowing we’ve been there before and we’ll get out of this again); we need hope for a better tomorrow; and we need confidence that our organizations and our economy will rebound. But we also need effective leadership and engaged employees. Today, I’d like to offer some candid thoughts as to what leaders can do to guide organizations through this crisis, and what individual contributors can do in their daily jobs to help navigate through this proverbial storm. As local columnist Ross Levin stated in a recent article: “If you keep feeding fear, it could grow big enough to devour you. Focus on what you can do now to provide a better outcome.” This column will provide an extensive list of ideas for taking action today to improve your tomorrow...

Times are indeed tough. But we cannot stand still, paralyzed by fear or stunned by uncertainty. Indeed, we must take action to manage and improve our organizations today, investing in initiatives that focus on improving our enterprises. That is the only way that we will improve productivity, enhance value for stakeholders (customers, workers, and owners), and sustain performance in the long term. We must take action as leaders and contributors.

### **The Role of Leaders**

I know the challenges today emanate from broader macroeconomic issues, and I know that the solutions to our economic problems require extraordinarily strong leadership from our elected and appointed community leaders. However, I’m focusing here only on organizational leadership – of what leaders can do today, given the circumstances, to improve their organizations and emerge stronger in the future.

Here are ideas to improve and sustain organizational performance today (in no order):

**Listen and Be Honest.** Stevie Ray, the Minneapolis-based nationally recognized speaker and trainer – and founder of the Brave New Workshop comedy club – had a column recently in the *Mpls-St. Paul Business Journal* on leadership. He said that tough economies like the one we’re in do a remarkable job at weeding out the good versus the bad leaders. He says “...leadership is based almost solely on trust. You can be the most brilliant thinker and planner in the world, but without the trust of your team, your ideas go nowhere. Trust is not an intellectual exercise; it is a purely emotional response. If you haven’t been fostering an atmosphere of trust in your workplace, you’ll...have to scramble...to catch up.” He goes on to say something that I think is really insightful for leaders during these tough times...

When leaders ask him ‘how can I regain morale in my group?’, his question in return is ‘what did you do to lose it in the first place?’ If their answer is ‘the economy went sour,’ then he suggests they look inward. His belief is that marriages rarely end because of an affair – the affair is a symptom that there was something else wrong with the marriage. “A bad economy doesn’t break up a good team; a bad economy illuminates problems that were underneath the surface all along.”

Stevie Ray’s advice for improving leadership? Be honest. But he believes American leaders are probably holding their cards closer to

chests these days out of fear and self-preservation. They are becoming more guarded with data, more limited with their communications – just at the time that American employees need to hear more. Ray says now is the time to sit down with your employees and say “I’m scared too” and tell them why. Now is the time to listen to your people to hear about their fears and then try like hell to avoid that outcome. Now is the time to have conversations with your people – not just about the problems, but about possible solutions.

**Lead with Courage.** This month, our state program hosted two breakfast discussions on the importance of leadership in tough times. The first was facilitated by Sandra Davis, Ph.D. and CEO of MDA Leadership Consulting (<http://www.mdaleadership.com/>). Sandra had numerous insights about the role of leaders during tough times (slides can be found at [http://www.councilforquality.org/performance\\_archive.cfm](http://www.councilforquality.org/performance_archive.cfm)). She advocates that leaders can do many things to lead with courage, including:

- Be deliberately visible. Like Stevie Ray above, Davis says that during tough times, employees need re-assurances from their leaders. “Your absence screams loudly,” she claims. Make it a point to be visible.
- Recognize that you represent hope.
- Communicate as much as you can about reality, your business plans, and hope.
- Reach out to customers whether they are doing business with you or not. I found this point insightful: whether or not customers are buying from you right now, they need to know that you are still there, that you care about their business, and that you can offer value to them today and in the future.
- Try to remove ambiguity for your people. Sandra says that ambiguity always breeds anxiety, so as much as possible try to eliminate uncertainty – or at least be candid about which are the things you are certain.
- Maintain your own optimism – it’s a learned characteristic.
- Keep focused on helping your team learn and grow. It’s always easy to inadvertently reduce your focus on employee development during hard times. But you still need to invest in your people...perhaps even more so during crisis.
- Stay close to your strongest performers – they need to know you value them.

**Lead with Energy, Passion, and Urgency.** The other breakfast discussion was facilitated by Jeff Lavers, Vice President and General Manager of 3M ESPE (Dental) Division, recipient of the Baldrige Award in 1997. Jeff believes that during tough times leadership comes down to passion. He claims that “...during a hurricane, people are searching for a tree to cling onto.” He advocates that good leaders:

- Quickly respond to internal and external changing circumstances – they use “outside-in” thinking” to confront realities.
- Convey a sense of urgency – while avoiding a feeling of panic, they are action-oriented, creating an environment in which critical thinking is encouraged and rewarded.
- Create a vision of winning that captures the imagination of others – they help their people “connect the dots” by showing them where the dots are (but allowing them to do the connecting).
- Speak with energy and expression that engages others – they inspire achievement and provide a spark for action.
- Demonstrate confidence and relentless optimism – very similar to Davis’s advice, they keep perspective and help people move forward.
- Are passionate about supporting and leveraging change

**Manage the Organization as a System.** Organizations are highly complex systems, comprised of literally hundreds of processes and procedures. I believe the role of leaders – during good times and bad – is to manage the overall system of processes so that it optimizes resources, reduces waste, leverages strengths, and improves outcomes and results. How? Here are some ways:

- Plan. Create a vision and establish goals that sets a strategic course for the future. Analyze your environment, set direction, create action plans to move in that direction, implement those plans, and adjust as new data become available. Make planning systematic, dynamic, and real.
- Use data to make decisions. Don’t rely only on intuition to make key decisions, but get in the habit of basing decisions on facts. Your decisions will be more accurate, more consistent and predictable, and more accepted by your people.
- Never stop focusing on your people. As Ray, Davis, and Lavers all imply: your workforce is your most valuable asset – they have knowledge, experience, relationships, and skills that allow the company to serve customers and achieve results. Focus on their development, their satisfaction and well-being, and their engagement.
- Manage your cash. Be cautious with capital spending, but don’t forget to invest in the “right” initiatives. It’s easy to freeze all spending during difficult times, but you have to continue to invest in the future – where those investments have an anticipated positive return.
- Manage your processes. Spend time investigating BETTER ways of doing things. Eliminate waste (using Lean or other methods). Focus on productivity – doing more with less (or doing less with less, as appropriate). Improve cycle times; reduce inventories. Simply put: manage your operations better.
- Focus on the customer. We can’t lose sight of who buys our products or consumes our services; we can’t lose sight of who generates revenue for our organizations. Today, more than ever, organizations need systematic ways to listen to customer requirements, develop offerings that satisfy customers’ needs in a differentiated way, and create value for the buyer.
- Build a culture of problem solving and innovation. Get to the root cause of issues; use quality tools and data to make decisions and resolve problems. Improve communication.

To me, the case for action is strong: now more than ever, leaders are compelled to more diligently and more systematically manage and improve their organizations. William A. Foster once said “Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skillful execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives.” During challenging times, leaders must lead.

### **The Role of Employees**

My final point today is what I believe to be the role of employees during these tough times. Remember I said pulling through this recession requires hope and perspective, effective leadership, and engaged employees. Well, that last point is up to ALL of us as individuals, regardless of our position or rank.

And as individual contributors, we all can spend a little time each day improving the work we do:

- Make suggestions; offer your improvement ideas; get involved in solving problems that you see at work. This applies to all levels of contributors, from the CEO to the shop floor. We all participate in daily activities, and we all know a better way to get work done. Now is the time to offer suggestions for changing and improving the processes in which you operate. No one knows better than those who are within the process.
- Keep focused on the customer. We ALL deal with customers – either internal or external. And as I mentioned above, more than ever, we need to focus on customer needs. Why more than ever? Because customers have a choice of buying from you, buying from your competitor, or not buying at all. Customer service and customer relationships are paramount in tough economies.
- Stay positive. As Levin said: “If you keep feeding fear, it could grow big enough to devour you.” Be realistic, but keep optimistic. Jeff Lavers says that too many employees (at all levels) are walking around each day looking at their shoes – there’s just a black cloud hanging over many organizations these days. Well, it’s difficult to see where you’re going (or to navigate a new direction) if you’re head’s always pointed to the ground. Keep confident.

Sometimes it’s easier said than done. As Ferdinand Porsche, founder of Porsche cars, once said “to change is easy; to improve is hard.” But we must try. We must experiment, adapt, react, and persevere. Just like there’s not one solution to helping this country’s overall economy, there’s not one solution to helping an individual organization grow and succeed in the future. But the only way we’ll get out of this crisis is to take action.

Dale Carnegie wrote his classic book “How to Stop Worrying and Start Living” in 1944, at the end of the worst 15-year period for stock market returns in history. His advice rings true today: “The best possible way to prepare for tomorrow is to concentrate with all your intelligence, all your enthusiasm, on doing today’s work superbly today.”

So as a leader or a contributor, figure out what you do well and do it well. As Levin said “...focus on your own piece to create your own peace.” Sounds like sound advice.

## **What’s The Point of Deming’s Red Bead Experiment?**

1. Defective products are caused by the system.
2. System variation (frequently referred to as random variation) is inevitably present in any process, operation or activity.
3. Knowledge of one source of system variation, such as the proportion of defects in the incoming supply, cannot be used to determine the total effect of system variation.
4. All workers perform within a system that is beyond their control.
5. There will always be some workers that are above the average and some workers that are below the average.
6. Workers should not be ranked because doing so merely represents a ranking of the effect of the system on the workers. In the red bead experiment, 100 percent of the variation in the workers' performances is determined by the system. Even in this controlled experiment where the workers use the same inputs and tools, they are all victims of the system and cannot be compared in any meaningful way.
7. Only management can change the system.

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**September 15, 2009**

**Hyatt Regency Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI**

**October 2, 2009**

**Hyatt Regency Cambridge, Cambridge, MA**

*If you have questions about the Regional Conferences, contact the Baldrige Program at 301-975-2036 or email [baldrige@nist.gov](mailto:baldrige@nist.gov).*

*The 2009 Regional Conferences are sponsored by the Baldrige National Quality Program in conjunction with MassExcellence ([www.massexcellence.com](http://www.massexcellence.com)), the Wisconsin Forward Award ([www.forwardaward.org](http://www.forwardaward.org)), the Alliance for Performance Excellence ([www.baldrigepe.org/alliance](http://www.baldrigepe.org/alliance)), and the Foundation for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award.*



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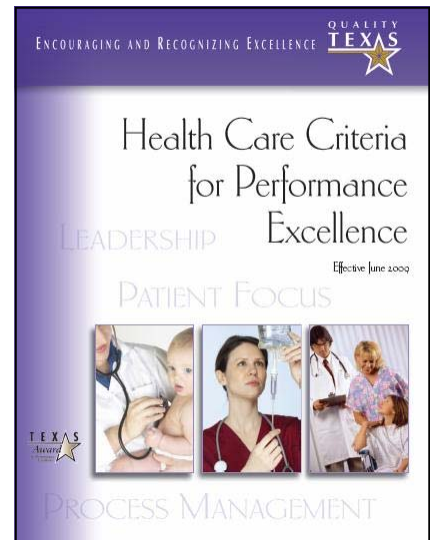
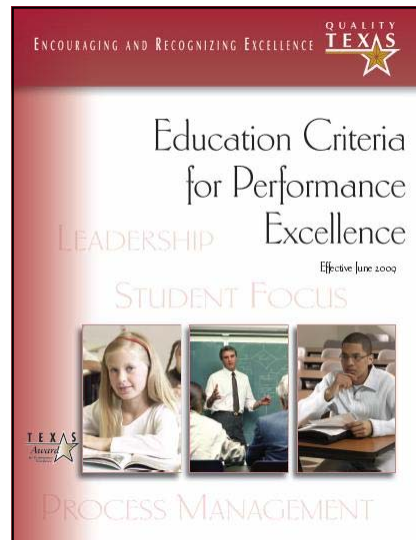
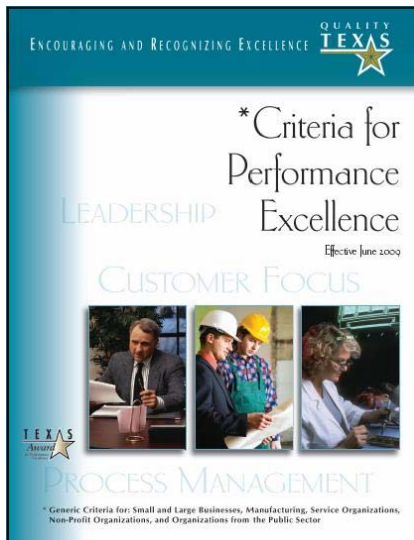
**What other Quality Texas volunteer opportunities are available?**

We are also seeking volunteers to assist with short- and longer-term special projects coordinated by the Board of Governors. If you don't have time to serve as an Examiner but want to be involved with Quality Texas in other ways, please contact our office, 214-565-8550, or write Bill Denney, [bdenney@texas-quality.org](mailto:bdenney@texas-quality.org).

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“REMPI is a patient index for North Texas,” said W. Stephen Love, president and CEO of the Dallas-Fort Worth Hospital Council and board member of the DFWHC Foundation. “This electronic innovation will allow hospitals participating in the Information and Quality Services Center to trend regional readmission patterns, emergency room visits and other patient/hospital encounters across hospitals and systems. REMPI opens new areas of research and exploration for the continued improvement of healthcare.”

areas of research and exploration for the continued improvement of healthcare.”

The service provides evaluation of patient readmission patterns across the region, regardless of which hospital is accessed by a patient. Using the proprietary matching algorithm, 7,364,432 inpatient records admitted from 2003 through September 2008 have been processed and made available for patient safety and quality analysis by participating hospitals of the DFWHC Foundation. The service complies with HIPAA and Texas state requirements for privacy and security of patients’ Protected Health Information.

“Our mission is to continually improve the community’s health by supporting safe, cost effective and equitable healthcare through education, research and collaboration,” said Kristin Jenkins, president of the DFWHC Foundation. “The REMPI tool allows us to focus even more so on this mission. We are excited about these new areas of exploration and the opportunity to promote the continued improvement of healthcare in North Texas.”

REMPI will be used for patient record linking methodology of inpatient and outpatient claims for future Regional Healthcare Information Exchange in North Texas. It can also be used for process improvement, care coordination and reducing healthcare costs.

Dallas-Fort Worth Hospital Council Education and Research Foundation is a non-profit 501c3 public charity. The mission of the Foundation is to continually improve the community’s health by promoting safe, high quality, cost effective, accessible, and equitable healthcare and by strengthening the healthcare workforce through education, research, and collaboration.

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<i>Site Visit: January 22-30 for Group 1 and January 29-February 5 for Group 2</i>		
Cycle 2		
Progress, Commitment & Engagement Levels	October 1, 2009	November 16, 2009
Cycle 3		
Progress, Commitment & Engagement Levels	December 1, 2009	January 18, 2010
Cycle 4		
Progress, Commitment & Engagement Levels	February 1, 2010	March 15, 2010
<i>Quest for Excellence Conference and Awards Banquet: June 2010</i>		



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