



2006-07

Glossary of Roundtable Topics

Performance Excellence

13-Oct-06

The term “performance excellence” refers to an integrated approach to organizational performance management that results in:

1. delivery of ever-improving value to customers and stakeholders, contributing to organizational sustainability;
2. improvement of overall organizational effectiveness and capabilities; and
3. organizational and personal learning. The Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence provide a framework and an assessment tool for understanding organizational strengths and opportunities for improvement and thus for guiding planning efforts.

Empowerment

17-Nov-06

The term “empowerment” refers to giving employees the authority and responsibility to make decisions and take actions. Empowerment results in decisions being made closest to the “front line,” where work-related knowledge and understanding reside.

Empowerment is aimed at enabling employees to satisfy customers on first contact, to improve processes and increase productivity, and to improve the organization’s performance results. Empowered employees require information to make appropriate decisions; thus, an organizational requirement is to provide that information in a timely and useful way.

High-Performance Work

15-Dec-06

The term “high-performance work” refers to work processes used to systematically pursue ever-higher levels of overall organizational and individual performance, including quality, productivity, innovation rate, and cycle time performance. High-performance work results in improved service for customers and other stakeholders.

Approaches to high-performance work vary in form, function, and incentive systems. High-performance work frequently includes cooperation between management and the workforce, which may involve workforce bargaining units; cooperation among work units, often involving teams; self directed responsibility and employee empowerment; employee input to planning; individual and organizational skill building and learning; learning from other organizations; flexibility in job design and work assignments; a flattened organizational structure, where decision making is decentralized and decisions are made closest to the “front line”; and effective use of performance measures, including comparisons.

Many high-performance work systems use monetary and non monetary incentives based on factors such as organizational performance, team and individual contributions, and skill building. Also, high-performance work usually seeks to align the organization's structure, work, jobs, employee development, and incentives.

Knowledge Assets

19-Jan-07

The term "knowledge assets" refers to the accumulated intellectual resources of your organization. It is the knowledge possessed by your organization and its employees in the form of information, ideas, learning, understanding, memory, insights, cognitive and technical skills, and capabilities. Employees, software, patents, databases, documents, guides, policies and procedures, and technical drawings are repositories of an organization's knowledge assets. Knowledge assets are held not only by an organization but reside within its customers, suppliers, and partners as well.

Knowledge assets are the "know how" that your organization has available to use, to invest, and to grow. Building and managing its knowledge assets are key components for your organization to create value for your stakeholders and to help sustain competitive advantage.

Learning

16-Feb-07

The term "learning" refers to new knowledge or skills acquired through evaluation, study, experience, and innovation.

The Baldrige Criteria include two distinct kinds of learning: organizational and personal. Organizational learning is achieved through research and development, evaluation and improvement cycles, employee and stakeholder ideas and input, best practice sharing, and benchmarking. Personal learning is achieved through education, training, and developmental opportunities that further individual growth. To be effective, learning should be embedded in the way an organization operates. Learning contributes to a competitive advantage for the organization and its employees.