Assessing Library Performance Using the Baldridge Criteria for Performance Excellence: Role Model Practices

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BACKGROUND
The Information Services Office (ISO) at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) provides professional scientific and technical information assistance to NIST research staff throughout their research and publishing cycles through the activities of three programs: (1) The Research Library and Information Program; (2) The Electronic Information and Publications Program; and (3) The Museum and History Program. ISO staff work across these organizational lines to lend skills and expertise to projects in order to provide seamless services to customers and achieve the most effective outcomes.

This approach to serving the customer, as well as the start of ISO’s journey of transformation, began in 1997. Over the last 13 years, ISO has transformed into an organization in which systematic evaluation and assessment backed by analysis and knowledge sharing are embedded and evident throughout the organization. In 2007, ISO undertook a formal organizational assessment using the Baldridge Criteria for Performance Excellence through its participation in the Maryland Performance Excellence Award (MPEA) Program.

This poster highlights several role model practices identified by the MPEA Examiners which can be adapted and used by other organizations.

PATHWAY TO BUILDING A CULTURE OF ASSESSMENT
ISO has developed and sustained an ongoing culture of assessment through the alignment of employee annual performance and professional development plans with ISO’s strategic and operational plans. The Vision, Mission, Values, and Strategic and Operational Goals provide the framework for employee learning. Each employee’s performance plan is directly linked to ISO’s Strategic and Operational Plans and key organizational competencies. ISO budgets each year for the cost and time for workforce development. To assess the impact of the investment in staff training and professional growth, ISO staff report twice a year on how they are applying their training to their work assignments. In reporting, each employee describes the application of training, as evidenced by, but not limited to: creation of a tool or information product; integration and consistent use of acquired skill or skills into a specific project or ongoing activity; or information gathering for specific recommendations.

Recruitment of new staff targets needed skill sets and the embodiment of ISO’s Values. This systematic approach to individual training, professional growth, and recruitment contributes to ISO’s organizational performance excellence, improvement, and sustainability. Today, ISO’s workforce demonstrates high levels of expertise and a focus on knowledge sharing and impact, resulting in innovative approaches to service delivery and increased customer satisfaction and loyalty.

MEASURING IMPACT
ISO has created metrics to assess its impact on NIST’s overall research. One metric was designed to assess the Research Library’s collection in terms of its impact and influence. Each year, ISO identifies the most highly cited articles published by NIST authors in the previous year. ISO analysts then calculate the number of references cited within each article that come from titles available through the Research Library. In this way, ISO can demonstrate that the collection facilitates NIST’s ability to conduct research that enhances its reputation as an organization.