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The Baldrige framework empowers your organization to reach its goals, improve results, and become more competitive. The framework consists of the Criteria, the core values and concepts, and the scoring guidelines.

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You can use this booklet as a reference, for self-assessment, or as the basis of an external assessment.

1 Criteria for Performance Excellence Overview and Structure

The Criteria include the Organizational Profile and seven interconnected categories.

3 Criteria for Performance Excellence Items and Point Values

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Performance against Criteria items is scored on two evaluation dimensions: process and results.

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This section explains how to respond most effectively to the Criteria item questions.

38 Core Values and Concepts

These embedded beliefs and behaviors form the foundation of the Criteria.

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The glossary includes definitions of terms in SMALL CAPS in the Criteria and scoring guidelines.

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On the Web

Criteria Commentary (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/baldrige-criteria-commentary>)

This commentary provides the “why” behind the Criteria, as well as additional examples and guidance.

1 Leadership (120 pts.)

The **Leadership** category asks HOW SENIOR LEADERS' personal actions guide and sustain your organization. It also asks about your organization's GOVERNANCE system; HOW your organization fulfills its legal and ethical responsibilities; and HOW it makes societal contributions.

1.1 Senior Leadership: How do your senior leaders lead the organization? (70 pts.)

a. VISION and VALUES

- (1) **Setting VISION and VALUES** HOW do SENIOR LEADERS set your organization's VISION and VALUES? HOW do SENIOR LEADERS DEPLOY the VISION and VALUES through your LEADERSHIP SYSTEM, to the WORKFORCE, to KEY suppliers and PARTNERS, and to CUSTOMERS and other STAKEHOLDERS, as appropriate? HOW do SENIOR LEADERS' personal actions reflect a commitment to those VALUES?
- (2) **Promoting Legal and ETHICAL BEHAVIOR** HOW do SENIOR LEADERS' personal actions demonstrate their commitment to legal and ETHICAL BEHAVIOR? HOW do SENIOR LEADERS promote an organizational environment that requires it?

b. Communication

HOW do SENIOR LEADERS communicate with and engage the entire WORKFORCE, KEY PARTNERS, and KEY CUSTOMERS? HOW do they

- encourage frank, two-way communication;
- communicate KEY decisions and needs for organizational change; and
- take a direct role in motivating the WORKFORCE toward HIGH PERFORMANCE and a CUSTOMER and business focus?

c. MISSION and Organizational PERFORMANCE

- (1) **Creating an Environment for Success** HOW do SENIOR LEADERS create an environment for success now and in the future? HOW do they
 - create an environment for the achievement of your MISSION;
 - create and reinforce your organizational culture, and a culture that fosters CUSTOMER and WORKFORCE ENGAGEMENT;
 - cultivate organizational agility, accountability, organizational and individual LEARNING, INNOVATION, and INTELLIGENT RISK taking; and
 - participate in succession planning and the development of future organizational leaders?
- (2) **Creating a Focus on Action** HOW do SENIOR LEADERS create a focus on action that will achieve the organization's MISSION? HOW do SENIOR LEADERS
 - create a focus on action that will improve the organization's PERFORMANCE;
 - identify needed actions;
 - in setting expectations for organizational PERFORMANCE, include a focus on creating and balancing VALUE for CUSTOMERS and other STAKEHOLDERS; and
 - demonstrate personal accountability for the organization's actions?

Terms in SMALL CAPS are defined in the Glossary of Key Terms (pages 46–53).

Notes

1.1. Your organizational performance results should be reported in items 7.1–7.5. Results related to the effectiveness of leadership and the leadership system should be reported in item 7.4.

1.1a(1). Your organization's vision should set the context for the strategic objectives and action plans you describe in items 2.1 and 2.2.

1.1b. Two-way communication may include use of social media, such as delivering periodic messages through internal and external websites, tweets, blogging, and customer and workforce electronic forums, as well as monitoring external social media outlets and responding, when appropriate.

1.1b. Senior leaders' direct role in motivating the workforce may include participating in reward and recognition programs.

1.1b. Organizations that rely heavily on volunteers to accomplish their work should also discuss efforts to communicate with and engage the volunteer workforce.

1.1c(1). A successful organization is capable of addressing current business needs and, by addressing risk, agility, and strategic management, is capable of preparing for its future business, market, and operating environment. In creating an environment for success, leaders should consider both external and internal factors. Factors might include risk appetite and tolerance, organizational culture, work systems, the potential need for transformational changes in structure and culture, workforce capability and capacity, resource availability, core competencies, and the need for technologi-

cal and organizational innovation. Other factors include risks and opportunities arising from emerging technology, data integration, data and information security, and environmental considerations.

1.1c(2). Senior leaders' focus on action considers your strategy, workforce, work systems, and assets. It includes taking intelligent risks, implementing innovations and ongoing improvements in performance and productivity, taking the actions needed to achieve your strategic objectives (see 2.2a[1]), and possibly establishing plans for managing major organizational change or responding rapidly to significant new information.

For additional guidance on this item, see the Criteria Commentary (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/baldrige-criteria-commentary>).