Virginia SPQA
Discovery Guide – 2018

Our Mission

To promote continual improvement strategies and provide training, mentoring and recognition to organizations in pursuit of performance excellence.

Discovery

 Revision Apr 2018 Discovery Guide

United States Senate Productivity and Quality Award
for Virginia and the District of Columbia

Dear Virginia Leader,

The U.S. Senate Productivity and Quality Award for Virginia (SPQA) is celebrating its 35th year serving organizations across the Commonwealth of Virginia and the District of Columbia. From the beginning, Virginia SPQA has been a national leader in spreading excellence in organizational performance. Virginia SPQA endorses the Baldrige Excellence Framework and its Criteria for Performance Excellence, which is used by hundreds of organizations to stay abreast of competition and to improve their performance.

Whether large or small, and regardless of sector (i.e., manufacturing, business service, nonprofit, education, healthcare or government), your organization can benefit from the application of the Baldrige Excellence Framework.

Our Discovery program provides organizations an opportunity to learn more about the Framework through education, self-assessment, and feedback. It is designed for organizations in the early stages of their journey to performance excellence. SPQA Discovery can help your organization achieve the next level of organizational maturity and performance excellence. If you are interested or just have questions, please contact SPQA at programs.services@spqa-va.org.

Sincerely,

Eric Fletcher
Chairman, SPQA Board of Directors

Overview

Virginia SPQA's mission is to promote continual improvement strategies and provide training, mentoring and recognition to organizations in pursuit of performance excellence. We accomplish our mission through a process of knowledge sharing, evaluation and feedback, and recognition through four distinct programs; Award, Discovery, Ones to Watch and Training. Virginia SPQA, a 501-C3 non-profit corporation, is administered and supported by an extensive network of organizations, sponsors, and individual volunteers. Virginia SPQA's Board of Directors, comprised of volunteer non-partisan representatives from public and private sector organizations, administers the program under the sponsorship of US Senators Mark Warner and Tim Kaine. To learn more about SPQA visit our website at www.spqa-va.org. Although SPQA primarily serves organizations in Virginia and the District of Columbia, we are glad to support organizations in other areas of the United States.

Why Participate?

Virginia SPQA promotes awareness of performance excellence as an increasingly important element of competitiveness. Participation in one of its Award, Discovery or Ones to Watch Programs creates an opportunity to critically examine your organization and identify strengths and opportunities to improve. The process accelerates improvement by introducing a rigorous and objective review, by a team of trained examiners, of your organization's performance based on nationally recognized criteria. Virginia SPQA uses the *Baldrige Excellence Framework* Criteria for Performance Excellence as its assessment methodology for the Award Program. The Discovery Program and Ones to Watch (OTW) uses a simplified version of the Criteria for Performance Excellence based on the core maturity concepts, Basic, and Overall Requirements of the Criteria.

What is the Virginia SPQA Discovery Program?

The Discovery Program is designed to introduce organizations and their leaders to a business improvement framework based on the *Baldrige Excellence Framework*. SPQA will provide an introductory workshop on the *Baldrige Excellence Framework* and a mentor to help the organization understand the *Framework* and the Discovery process. The organization will then complete a Self-Assessment using the Discovery process. The level of effort associated with participating in the Discovery Program is significantly less than participating in the SPQA Award Program. SPQA provides a team of experienced examiners to conduct an objective evaluation of the organization's Self-Assessment submission based on the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. SPQA provides a Discovery Feedback Report and the organization is strongly encouraged to participate in an optional post-Feedback Teleconference with the examiner team and the assigned mentor.

The organizational learning brought about by going through the Discovery Program can improve an organization's:

- Competitiveness,
- Customer satisfaction,
- Efficiency and effectiveness, and
- Sustainability

The benefits of the Virginia Discovery Program participation include:

- Lower cost and fewer resources to complete the Self-Assessment relative to the Award Program.
- An on-site introductory workshop on the *Baldrige Excellence Framework*
- An SPQA mentor is assigned to help the participant navigate a Self-Assessment Template and Discovery process.
- A Feedback Report is developed by a team of three or four experienced SPQA Examiners. The report provides an independent assessment of the organization's business strengths and improvement opportunities, and the report is normally provided within 45 days after the completed Self-Assessment is received by Virginia SPQA.
- An optional teleconference is available at the organization's request. During the teleconference, members of the SPQA Examiner Team and mentor will provide clarification on items in the Feedback Report. To be of value, this teleconference should take place within 60 days of the date the organization receives its Feedback Report. The organization, SPQA mentor, and Examiner Team Leader together schedule the teleconference.

Participant Eligibility & Timeframes

Businesses, large and small, and all organizations in the business, healthcare, government, education and nonprofit sectors are eligible. Participants are usually located in the Commonwealth of Virginia or the District of Columbia since SPQA primarily serves these areas; however, organizations from other areas of the United States are welcome to participate.

Although the Discovery Program operates year-round, SPQA periodically revises the Discovery Guide and Self-Assessment Template to incorporate improvements and updates made to the Baldrige Excellence Framework by the national Baldrige Program *for Performance Excellence. Organization's Self-Assessment submissions will be reviewed and evaluated using the version of the Discovery Guide in effect at the time that the organization's Intent to Apply form is received by the SPQA.*

SPQA offers several public training courses and workshops each year. The one-day "*inquirer's Guide to the Baldrige Excellence Framework*" workshop provides an in-depth review of the Framework, which includes the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. To check on locations and dates and to register, go to the SPQA website www.spqa-va.org/training/. Additionally, SPQA offers customized on-site workshops for organizations that wish to train multiple individuals at one time. Visit the website to see the Virginia *SPQA Training: Bring Us to You* catalog. SPQA also periodically hosts a forum on performance excellence. Attendees can participate in training workshops, learn more about SPQA and the Baldrige Excellence Framework, and network with other executives and quality professionals who are interested in the pursuit of performance excellence.

How to Participate

The following four steps outline how your organization can participate in the Discovery Program.

Step One: Complete the "Intent to Participate" Form

Each participant in the Virginia SPQA Discovery Program must complete the **Intent to Participate** form found on the Virginia SPQA website, www.spqa-va.org/Discovery/. The **Intent to Participate** requires the support of your organization's senior executive as expressed by that person's signature. The Discovery Program is designed to facilitate organizational learning. You may elect to conduct your organizational self-assessment in a short timeframe, e.g. 60 days, or you may elect to work with your assigned **SPQA Mentor** for a longer period taking up to 6 months to conduct your self-assessment. SPQA and your mentor will work with you to develop a Discovery timeline that suits your organization. Note: SPQA needs your intent letter no less than 60 days in advance of submission of your Self-Assessment because we need sufficient lead time to prepare the examiner team.

Submitting an **Intent to Participate** form allows SPQA time to assemble an impartial Team from among members of the SPQA Board of Examiners in advance of receiving the Self-Assessment. Virginia SPQA follows the highest ethical standards as set forth by the Malcolm Baldrige Performance Excellence Program regarding confidentiality of information and avoiding any direct or implied conflicts of interest. Each Examiner completes a worksheet and executes an affidavit stating he/she has no conflicts of interest with the organization. All submissions are treated confidentially, and each Examiner assigned to the assessment agrees, in writing, to hold all information presented in complete confidentiality.

Step Two: Contact Your SPQA Mentor

SPQA will assign a **Mentor** upon receiving your organization's **Intent to Participate**. You will be given your Mentor's contact information via email or phone call. SPQA suggests that each participant organization begin building a working relationship with its **SPQA Mentor** prior to starting its Self-Assessment. The **SPQA Mentor**'s role is to help guide your organization through the Discovery process and help you better understand the *Baldrige Excellence Framework* and Criteria for Performance Excellence. The **Mentor** will also work with you to schedule your *Baldrige Excellence Framework* training workshop session(s) (See Step Three). Leverage your **SPQA Mentor** throughout the Discovery process. He/she will further your organizational learning, help provide clarity, answer your questions and enhance your Discovery experience.

Step Three: Learn more about SPQA Discovery

The Discovery Self-Assessment Framework and Glossary found in this Guide provide a good introduction to SPQA Discovery and the *Baldrige Excellence Framework*. In addition to studying this Guide, SPQA will provide your organization an 8-hour workshop to introduce members of your organization to the *Baldrige Excellence Framework* and Criteria for Performance Excellence. You can elect either a one-day workshop or a series of 2, 3 or 4 sessions of 4, 3 or 2 hours respectively. Your assigned **SPQA Mentor** will help you decide whether to conduct one training workshop or several shorter sessions. Your **Mentor** may conduct the session(s) or other members of the SPQA Education team. A formal one-day workshop may be the best fit for your organization, especially if you wish to expose many members of your workforce to the *Framework* alternatively, informal and interactive short sessions may better suit you. Several short sessions for members of your leadership team and/or writing team can be very effective. We can customize these to fit your needs.

Step Four: Prepare Your Organization's "Self-Assessment"

Each Discovery Program participant must use the **Discovery Self-Assessment Template** (found as an Appendix to the Discovery Guide) to write their Self-Assessment. The template is based on the core concepts and Overall Requirements of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. Your organization's writer is to use MS Word to create an exact copy of the **Discovery Self-Assessment Template** and then use this template to answer the questions in the Organizational Profile and in each Category. Deviating from the template will make it more difficult for the examiners to evaluate and provide meaningful feedback to your Self-Assessment.

Possible Self-Assessment Methods

How you conduct your self-assessment depends, in part, on the size of your organization. The information below is only suggested. You must decide for yourself how to proceed with the self-assessment. ***Regardless of the self-assessment method you choose, we advise all organizations to carefully review pages 5-14 of this Guide which provides valuable insights regarding the basic constructs of the assessment method and what the examiner team expects to see.***

In a small organization, with fewer than 50 employees, the senior leader or his/her designee may write the assessment with the assistance of a few individuals. In a larger organization, the senior leader might assign a team to gather the information and write the self-assessment. Your **SPQA Mentor** can make some suggestions and facilitate a decision on your approach to self-assessment. During your Discovery journey, your **Mentor** will be a good source of information on Discovery and the Criteria. Also, you may consider sending someone on your staff to SPQA Examiner Training. Having a trained and experienced examiner on your staff as a resource can enhance your Discovery effort. Information on SPQA Examiner training can be found on the SPQA website, www.spqa-va.org/examine/.

Regardless of the approach adopted to complete the Self-Assessment, the value to the organization is in the discussion, which occurs around each of the questions provided. The Discovery Self-Assessment process will only add value if it engages enough individuals to ensure a broad consensus on the answers. Discovery works best if it can prompt internal debate and initiative on how to improve or sustain performance.

For a large organization - the steps below or some variation may help ensure the maximum benefit of completing the Discovery Self-Assessment.

First, A Meeting of Senior Management

The senior leader (or his/her designee) gathers senior leaders and managers to devise a strategy to complete the Self-Assessment. The senior leaders and managers might prepare the Organizational Profile and then assign each assessment Category to a cross-functional team. They also might create a separate Assessment Writing Team to refine and ensure continuity among Organizational Profile content and Category teams' content.

Second, The Draft Assessment

When each Category Team completes its work, the Assessment Writing Team assembles the findings of each Category Team and creates a succinct assessment within the page limit and ensures cross-content integration and compatibility.

Third, Consensus Meeting

When the Assessment Writing Team has completed its assignment, all participants meet and ensure consensus with the prepared submission. If approached correctly, this consensus meeting could positively impact the future of the organization. When consensus is reached in all seven Categories and the Organizational Profile, each member of the team, although not required, is encouraged to sign the Transmittal letter, which is part of the Self-Assessment Submission.

Your Self-Assessment and Feedback Template

The Template

First, exactly replicate (as a MS Word document) the **Discovery Self-Assessment Template,** found in the Appendix to this Guide. Then, answer each question in the template. This is your Discovery Self-Assessment. The Examiner Team will attach its feedback to your Self-Assessment. Your Self-Assessment cannot exceed 36 pages using the template font **Arial Narrow, size 11**. The page limit *includes* the embedded questions within the template, but *excludes* the Cover Page, the one-page transmittal letter, and a glossary, if you choose to include one. Although not required, embedded figures/tables/graphics are more helpful than narrative explanations in the Organizational Profile, and all categories. Figures/tables/ graphics may use a smaller font (not less than **font 8**) but must still be legible. Small (legible) charts and graphics in each of the five results areas of Category 7 are highly encouraged. It is also helpful to include arrows in the graph to identify the direction of a positive trend.

The following is a suggested, not required, guide to the 36-page limit.

Section	Page Limit (max. 36):
Organizational Profile	6 pages including embedded questions and graphics
Categories 1-6	24 pages including embedded questions and graphics
Category 7	6 pages including embedded questions and graphics

IMPORTANT: Please exactly replicate the Discovery Self-Assessment Template and follow the required type fonts and sizes. Also, keep within the 36-overall page limit. Failure to do so can result in your initial submission being rejected and ultimately a delay in receiving feedback.

The Content

It is important to answer all the questions found in the Discovery Self-Assessment Template, which is an appendix to this Guide. Your ability to succinctly answer the questions for each Category within a limited number of pages is in and of itself a measure of maturity. No Award is associated with Discovery; it is meant to be a learning opportunity. Discovery is intended to help your organization improve by prompting the documentation and achieving consensus for what is needed in areas that are less mature. We encourage you to use the Discovery process to better understand and document your organization's strengths and its opportunities for improvement. Discovery should prompt serious self-reflection within your organization based on core *Baldrige Excellence Framework* concepts.

When developing your Self-Assessment, remember you are preparing a response for a Virginia SPQA Examiner Team which will not be visiting your site or reviewing your website. The Team is solely dependent on your written Self-Assessment to understand who you are and what is important to your when evaluating your responses to the Categories. It is incumbent upon you to create an accurate and thorough account of your organization by addressing all the questions in the Organizational Profile. Taking the time to document who you are, where you are, and where you think you should be will only enrich the feedback you receive.

SPQA Mentor Role in the Discovery Process

The **SPQA Mentor** reinforces the Discovery Self-Assessment process and can help you better understand the template and how to complete it. The Mentor may conduct your Introduction to the *Baldrige Excellence Framework* training workshop(s). During the Discovery Self-Assessment process, your **Mentor** will continue to enhance your organization's understanding of the *Baldrige Excellence Framework* and how the Criteria for Performance Excellence relates to the discussion areas in the **Discovery Self-Assessment Template**. The **Mentor**; however**,** cannot act as a business consultant and will not assist with, or provide content suggestions for, writing your Discovery Self-Assessment. For clarification on the SPQA Mentor's role, please contact SPQA at programs.services@spqa-va.org.

Feedback to Discovery Program Participants

All Discovery Program participants receive feedback. The Examiner Team reviews your organization's Self-Assessment and develops a Feedback Report that will be attached to your Self-Assessment Submission. At the end of the process, there is only one document that includes both the Self-Assessment and the Feedback Report. The Examiner Observations in the feedback report are based entirely on an organization's ability to communicate its performance in a manner that (1) reflects an understanding of, and (2) is relative to the *Baldrige Excellence Framework*. Feedback is intended to help an organization determine if it is on the right track relative to the fundamental Baldrige performance concepts and if it can clearly articulate how its processes compare to the Baldrige Criteria

Discovery offers no site visits or face-to-face feedback sessions. If requested by your organization, within 60 days of your receipt of the Feedback Report, Virginia SPQA will provide verbal feedback via teleconference. The teleconference is offered to help clarify the feedback for your organization. The written and verbal feedback is intended to be educational and to contribute to organizational performance improvement. For many organizations, Discovery provides a way to learn more about the Baldrige Criteria and is a prelude to applying for the SPQA Medallion Award.

In the ***Process Maturity*** section, examiners address what SPQA is looking for relative to the basic maturity of the processes and methods an organization describes in each Process Discussion Area (Categories 1-6). Here, the Examiners are looking for how an organization addresses the fundamental maturity indicators (**Approach** and **Deployment**). The Examiners indicate their overall impression of your responses to each of the Process Discussion Areas and elaborate by making observations regarding "what they saw" and "what they didn't see" and offer improvement suggestions.

For each Process Category the Examiners comments will have the following format:

- *What We Perceived Overall Regarding Maturity in this Discussion Area*
- *What We Saw as Evidence of Maturity in this Discussion Area*
- *What We Didn't See as Evidence of Maturity in this Discussion Area*
- *What Opportunities Might be Considered to improve Maturity in this Discussion Area*

The ***Results Maturity*** section (Category 7 and its related five Results Discussion Areas) focuses on the organization's ability to demonstrate how it measures the success of its processes and methods previously identified in Categories 1-6. As in the case of Processes, albeit from a slightly different perspective, the Examiners are looking for fundamental or basic maturity indicators (**Levels** and **Trends**) in the way Results are discussed and portrayed. Examiners provide one set of overarching feedback and observations for all five Discussion Areas in Category 7. Examiners will select one of the following statements and may provide an additional narrative to indicate their overall impression of Category 7:

- ☐ Few if any results were provided in the six Discussion Areas/Categories.
- ☐ A few organizational performance results are reported in a few of the Discussion Areas/Categories.
- ☐ Organizational performance results are reported in most Discussion Areas/Categories.
- ☐ Sustained improvement in organizational performance results are reported in all areas/Categories.
- ☐ Other:

They will make some specific observations as to "what results they saw" or "didn't see" based on LeTCI. Also, they may offer some improvement options and even give examples of results they might have expected to see based on what seemed important to your organization in its Organizational Profile.

A ***Team Observation Summary*** is included at the end of the Feedback Report. Here, the Examiner Team shares overarching observations and comments, summarizes the Team's impressions of the organization's maturity, and offers overarching opportunities for improvement.

How to Apply

Step 1: Complete Intent to Participate

The SPQA Discovery Program operates year-round thus SPQA accepts Intents to Participate at any time during the year. The Intent to Participate should be emailed to programs.services@spqa-va.org. Upon receipt of the Intent to Participate, SPQA will invoice the participant organization (see next section for fee amounts) and assign an **SPQA Mentor** to the organization. The **Mentor** will contact the organization's point of contact (POC) listed on the Intent form. Subsequently, the **Mentor** will assist the organization in developing a Discovery process timeline to include the training workshop(s) and the self-assessment. The **Mentor** will communicate the participant organization's timeline to the appropriate SPQA Program Directors to ensure that SPQA resources are available to respond to the organization's Discovery timeline. If SPQA cannot provide the resources to meet the proposed timeline, at its sole discretion, Virginia SPQA reserves the right to reject or to offer a postponement of an "Intent to Participate" request. Any rejection of this nature would result in the return of funds to the participant organization.

Step 2: Submit Participation Fee

The fee to participate in the Discovery Program is $1,750.00 and is payable in two installments. The Intent to Participate Fee is $750.00. SPQA will invoice the Participant after receiving the Intent. This fee is non-refundable. It covers costs incurred to conduct the Introduction to the *Baldrige Excellence Framework* workshop(s) and recruit and train the SPQA Mentor and Examiner Team. The remainder of the Participation Fee ($1,000.00) is payable when SPQA receives the completed Discovery Self-Assessment. SPQA prefers using PayPal to receive payment. If you have any questions about the fees or payment methods, contact SPQA at programs.services@spqa-va.org.

Step 3: Conduct and Submit Self-Assessment

Submit one electronic copy (MS Word only) of your completed Discovery Self-Assessment to Virginia SPQA at programs.services@spqa-va.org. The Self-Assessment submission should occur no sooner than 60 days and no later than 6 months after the date on your Intent to Participate Form. Participants will be notified when submissions are received.

Discovery Program Protection of Information and Confidentiality

All SPQA Discovery personnel, including **Mentors** and members of the SPQA Examiner Team, are held to a strict set of standards for conduct and confidentiality to protect each Discovery participant's communications with the **Mentor**, and the Discovery Self-Assessment and Examiner Feedback Report contents. Mentors and examiners attest that they understand the SPQA Code of Conduct and have no Conflict of Interest concerning the participant organization. Additionally, Discovery participant organizations won't be identified publicly unless they elect to receive recognition through Virginia SPQA formal communications efforts (e.g., website, forum, or other recognition events). **If you have questions regarding SPQA policies and practices to protect participant's information and confidentiality, and/or our Code of Conduct, contact SPQA at** programs.services@spqa-va.org**.**

The Discovery Self-Assessment Framework

I. Organizational Profile: What we are looking for

Your Organizational Profile is critically important because:

- It is the most appropriate starting point for self-assessment.
- It is a snapshot that describes your organization and the environment in which it operates.
- It helps you identify potential gaps in key information.
- It helps you to focus on key performance requirements and business results.
- It is used by the Examiners in reviewing your Self-Assessment, to understand your organization and what you consider important.

The ***Organizational Profile*** and the process for creating it are among the most important parts of the Discovery process. For some organizations, the ***Organizational Profile*** may be used by itself as an initial self-evaluation.

The ***Organizational Profile*** is a snapshot of your organization, the key influences on how you operate, and the key challenges you face. The *Discovery Self-Assessment Template* (illustrated in the Appendix) divides the Organizational Profile into five sections. Each Section contains a series of questions. Consider the page limits and keep your responses brief.

1. **Organizational Environment**
2. **Organizational Relationships**
3. **Competitive Environment**
4. **Strategic Context**
5. **Performance Improvement System**

II. Process Maturity (Categories1-6): What we are looking for

The Baldrige Excellence Framework method of assessing process maturity is based on the relative depth of maturity or sophistication in four areas: Approach, Deployment, Learning, and Integration (**ADLI**).

In evaluating your response to each Process Discussion Area, the Examiners will look for evidence in your narrative to determine the maturity of the processes and methods you have identified: **Approach – Deployment – Learning – Integration (ADLI)** concepts. For each Process Discussion Area, the Examiners look for answers to the following with a focus on **Approach** and **Deployment**:

Review of the Baldrige Excellence Framework will provide additional information on the **ADLI** concept.

- **Approach.** Are approaches, i.e., methods and/or processes identified? How mature/sophisticated are they relative to what would be resource-reasonable for your organization? How long have they been around? Are they in writing and/or well known?
- **Deployment.** Are the approaches fully deployed (well implemented and established)? How long have they been deployed? Are they deployed in a way that ensures they are working as intended?
- **Learning**. Are the approaches regularly reviewed for improvement? Do the approaches provide information to enable improvement in other areas?

- **Integration**. Are approaches aligned with the organizational needs identified in the Organizational Profile? Are approaches, plans and actions harmonized across processes and work units to support organization-wide goals? Are your measures, information, and improvement systems complementary across processes and work units?

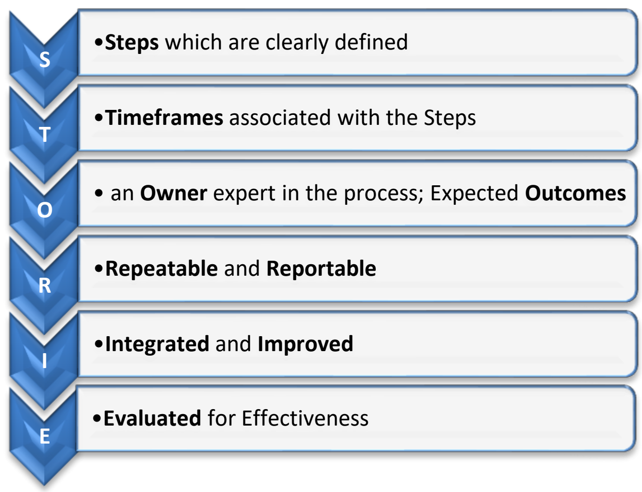
The Importance of Story Telling

A Discovery Self-Assessment requires a business to tell a story about each of its KEY processes and/or methods applicable to the Process Discussion Area. Stories should be able to minimally address the ADLI fundamentals of **Approach** and **Deployment** clearly and concisely for each process identified. In telling these stories, most organizations that conduct their first Self-Assessment fall into one of the following categories:

- There is a great story to tell, but because the *maturity concept* (relating to ADLI) is not fully understood, it is not clearly articulated.
- There is not a great story to tell relative to process maturity, so the organization describes what it has the best it can.

More mature organizations can tell their great story in the context of ADLI or the *maturity concept*. The ability of an organization to easily articulate the story of its KEY processes and methods using the ADLI framework is in and of itself a positive indicator. When there is not a great story to tell, it is especially important for opportunities for improvement to be self-identified. Helping organizations to understand the need for improvement and to identify specific opportunities is an essential part of the Discovery Program.

Another way to remember that *Story Telling* is important in conveying the maturity of your processes is found in the acronym **STORIE**. A mature systematic process, i.e. a process described in the *maturity concept* or ADLI framework sense has or is:



For each Process Discussion Area, Examiners will read and evaluate your Self-Assessment narratives, tables and graphs and provide written feedback primarily based on the two perspectives described above: **Approach** and **Deployment**. Both perspectives work together as indicators of overall organizational maturity in evaluating each Process Discussion Area. Should you address the more mature indicators of processes (**Learning** and **Integration**), Examiners may make observations as well.

Clarity on Approach and Deployment perspectives are presented below:

1. **Your description of your business's Approach(s) in the context of activities that address the Discussion Area**.
   Understanding the range of activity associated with a Process Discussion Area as it contributes to overall success is essential to conducting a baseline Self-Assessment which identifies where your organization is today or needs to be as related to the subject. The Self-Assessment narrative should describe the range of activities to address the full scope of the Process Discussion Area. The narrative should include activities that are currently underway; planned and/or desired that support the Discussion Area.

2. **Your description of the Deployment of your Approach(es) in the context of the activities identified that address the Discussion Area.**
   In addition to being able to describe your organization's range of current, planned and/or desired activities to address the full scope of the Process Discussion Area, your narrative also needs to describe the level of sophistication relative to implementation of these activities. You must be able articulate how activities associated with the Process Discussion Area are being deployed in a systematic and methodical manner. Activities, which are not being deployed in a systematic and methodical manner, may represent opportunities for future improvement, including how they impact other Discussion Areas.

1. Category: Leadership

*In your discussion of these areas, regardless of the methods you use, the Examiners are looking for evidence of breadth in methods and maturity of each. Of the two, maturity has the most impact. Further, **the Baldrige Criteria are not prescriptive**. The purpose of noting processes often found in this Area is purely educational and not an expectation for how your organization should operate.*

Process Discussion Area:

1.1 How do your senior leaders lead and how do their personal actions guide and sustain your organization? Answer each of the following questions:

- How do they set your organization's vision and values?
- How do their actions demonstrate their commitment to legal and ethical behavior?
- How do they communicate with and engage the entire workforce and key customers?
- How do they create an environment for success now and in the future?
- How do they create a focus on action that will achieve the organization's mission?

Suitable Processes: What we are looking for-

This Discussion Area is fundamentally about how senior leaders lead and the KEY ways leadership information is "pushed" to and "pulled" from the workforce and key customers. It is followed by how the information is actually used to improve the organization's performance, particularly in areas of innovation, workforce engagement, and customer engagement (customers' commitment to an organization's brand, products and/or services). This Area is also about how leaders sustain and move the organization toward an envisioned future.

Workforce communication methods and processes often found in this Area include large and small employee meetings hosted by leadership, brown bag leadership lunches at multiple levels, newsletters, and technology applications ranging from emails, to chats and social networking applications. Other methods identified include the organization's performance management system, which translates leadership goals to individual employee goals. It is also not unusual to find Leadership feedback systems such as employee surveys, focus groups and the use of Leadership 360° assessments. Examples of customer communication methods and processes include quarterly program reviews with customers or periodic, e.g. annual meetings of senior leaders with business-to-business key customer CEOs, senior leaders' participation in focus groups, and hosting customer appreciation days. Examples of leadership processes that help sustain an organization may include regular review of operational dashboards and annual leadership off-sites to discuss ongoing mission, vision and strategic goals.

Maturity Example: An organization has quarterly "all-employee" meetings. First, do they actually occur quarterly? Second, does each session include components, which not only "push" information, but "pull" information from attendees and how sophisticated is that element? Third, how does the quality of the "all-employee" meeting improve over time? Finally, how is the information "pushed" and "pulled" used to affect improvement in other areas?

Note: Some of these methods might be repeated in other Discussion Areas to satisfy different objectives.

Process Discussion Area:

1.2 How do you govern your organization and fulfill your societal responsibilities? Answer each of the following questions:

- How does your organization ensure responsible governance?
- How do you evaluate the performance of your senior leaders and your governance board?
- How do you address and anticipate legal, regulatory, and community concerns with your products and operations?
- How do you promote and ensure ethical behavior in all interactions?
- How do you consider societal well-being and benefit as part of your strategy and daily operations?
- How do you actively support and strengthen your key communities?

Suitable Processes: What we are looking for-

This Discussion Area is fundamentally about the KEY ways senior leaders run the organization to ensure it does the right thing from both a business and stewardship perspective.

The methods and processes often found in this Area include those processes associated with well-established leadership groups with governance responsibilities. Other processes include approaches to decision-making, diversity, equal opportunity, ethical behavior, and environmental and regulatory compliance. Additionally, this Area includes community and social outreach methods and processes used by the organization. Finally, individual performance systems often specify proper behavior at the individual level.

> **Maturity Example**: An organization conducts annual Ethics Training. First, how is the training conducted? Second, is there an attendance goal, if so, is it met? Third, how is effectiveness measured and how does the content evolve? Finally, how are the training discoveries used to improve other aspects of the organization?

Note: Some of these methods might be repeated in other Discussion Areas to satisfy different objectives.

2. Category: Strategy

In your discussion of these areas, regardless of the methods you use, the Examiners are looking for evidence of breadth in methods and maturity of each. Of the two, maturity has the most impact. Further, ***the Baldrige Criteria are not prescriptive****. The purpose of noting processes often found in this Area is purely educational and not an expectation for how your organization should operate.*

Process Discussion Area:

2.1 How do you develop your strategy? Answer each of the following questions:

- How do you conduct your strategic planning?
- How does your strategy development process stimulate and incorporate innovation?
- How do you collect and analyze relevant data and develop information for your strategic planning process?
- How do you decide which key processes will be accomplished by your workforce and which by external suppliers and partners?
- What are your organization's key strategic objectives and timetable for achieving them?
- How do your strategic objectives achieve appropriate balance among varying and potentially competing organizational needs?

Suitable Processes: What we are looking for-

This Discussion Area is fundamentally about how the organization creates strategic objectives and goals, and its ability to articulate them.

The methods and processes often found in this Area include elements of a strategic management cycle such as Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA), which is a traditional overarching strategic planning and management approach integrated with many Categories (Discussion Areas). Aspects of this Area also include efforts to collect information from customers, employees and others as inputs to the strategic planning process. Many organizations identify an environmental assessment, or a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) assessment, as inputs to these efforts. Processes may also include how the organization identifies its structures and systems to accomplish the work of the organization and how key work system decisions, which are strategic in nature, are made, including what work to outsource. In the most basic view of an organization, there may be three generic work systems: production, customer interface (e.g. sales and marketing), and general and administrative support.

> **Maturity Example**: An organization has leadership planning retreats as one approach to strategic planning. First, who is involved, how is information gathered and used during the retreat, how often does it occur and what does it drive? Second, do sessions occur when planned and how does the information drive actions? Third, how do these retreats improve over time? Finally, how is the information from the retreats used to effect improvement in other areas?

Note: Some of these methods might be repeated in other Discussion Areas to satisfy different objectives.

Process Discussion Area:

2.2 How do you implement your strategy? Answer each of the following questions:

- What are your key short- and longer-term action plans?
- How do you deploy your action plans?
- How do you ensure that financial and other resources are available to support the achievement of your action plans while you meet current obligations?
- What are your key workforce plans to support your short- and longer-term strategic objectives and action plans?

- What key performance measures or indicators do you use to track the achievement and effectiveness of your action plans?
- For these key performance measures or indicators, what are your performance projections for your short- and longer-term planning horizons?
- How do you establish and implement modified action plans if circumstances require a shift in plans and rapid execution of new plans?

Suitable Processes: What we are looking for-
This Discussion Area is fundamentally about the KEY processes and methods used by an organization's leadership to convert high level strategic goals into actions where progress can be systematically monitored – changing strategy (agility) as needed based on information.

The methods and processes often found in this Area integrate with the Plan-Do-Check-Act construct outlined in 2.1. Use of Strategy Execution Team Charters, Gantt charts and other ways to demonstrate a systematic approach to execution of strategy are often described. Strategic Management Systems, which cause senior executives to actively review progress relative to strategic goals and make changes on a periodic basis, are often found in this Category. Additionally, how do you resource action plans – financial, human resources, and otherwise.

Maturity Example: An organization has a strategic plan that needs to be executed as an approach in this Category. First, are the action items for each goal clear, with a person/team accountable? Second, is there a timeline with a specific activity, cost, etc.? Third, is the effort reviewed periodically – based on performance measures? Finally, how is the effort impacting other areas?

Note: Some of these methods might be repeated in other Discussion Areas to satisfy different objectives.

3. Category: Customers

In your discussion of these areas, regardless of the methods you use, the Examiners are looking for evidence of breadth in methods and maturity of each. Of the two, maturity has the most impact. Further, ***the Baldrige Criteria are not prescriptive****. The purpose of noting processes often found in this Area is purely educational and not an expectation for how your organization should operate.*

Process Discussion Area:
3.1 How do you obtain information from your customers? Answer each of the following questions:

- How do you listen to, interact with, and observe customers to obtain actionable information?
- How do you listen to potential customers to obtain actionable information?
- How do you determine customer satisfaction, dissatisfaction, and engagement?
- How do you obtain information on customers' satisfaction with your organization relative to other organizations?

Suitable Processes: What we are looking for-
This Discussion Area focuses on KEY methods and processes your organization uses to ensure it can sustain its future through understanding its current and potential customer base, what they want, where they are going, and how your products and services adapt to match their future needs. It includes processes for determining their satisfaction, engagement, and dissatisfaction. The methods and processes often discussed in this Area include current and potential customer focus groups, satisfaction and engagement surveys as well as market research methods and processes. Because of its broad applicability, customer relationship management systems may be identified in this and the next Discussion Area. Other processes often mentioned in this Discussion Area relate to how you obtain customer feedback on your products and services through means other than surveys.

Maturity Example: An organization offers surveys to customers as a KEY process. First, in addition to satisfaction issues, does the approach help to determine customer engagement? Second, how broad is the participation, are the right people participating, and how do they know their participation counted? Third, is the collected information actionable? Finally, is social media being used?

Note: Some of these methods might be repeated in other Discussion Areas to satisfy different objectives.

Process Discussion Area:
3.2 How do you engage customers by serving their needs and building relationships? Answer each of the following questions:

- How do you determine product offerings?
- How do you enable customers to seek information and support?
- How do you determine your customer groups and market segments?

- How do you build and manage customer relationships?
- How do you manage customer complaints?

Suitable Processes: What we are looking for-

This Discussion Area is fundamentally about how the organization determines its product requirements and how the organization keeps and engages customers as strategic partners in a greater enterprise for mutual benefit.

The methods and processes often found in this Area relate to customer relationship management systems, including systems which answer questions, provide technical support, adjudicate complaints and reward repeat business. Other processes may include how current and future customer and market requirements are determined. For pro-active organizations, it is not unusual to include processes and methods like focus groups, which engage customers in the design and improvement of products and services for the future.

Note: Some of these methods might be repeated in other Discussion Areas to satisfy different objectives.

Maturity Example: An organization has a 1-800 number for customers to call for complaints as well as a place to lodge complaints on the website. First, is it relatively easy for a customer to get through on the phone or navigate the website? Second, how qualified are the employees who receive the complaint? Third, how quickly and how well is the complaint resolved and is the information that is collected used to improve the complaint system? Finally, how is the information used to improve customer satisfaction and to affect other processes?

4. Category: Measurement, Analysis and Knowledge Management

*In your discussion of these areas, regardless of the methods you use, the Examiners are looking for evidence of breadth in methods and maturity of each. Of the two, maturity has the most impact. Further, **the Baldrige Criteria are not prescriptive**. The purpose of noting processes often found in this Area is purely educational and not an expectation for how your organization should operate.*

Process Discussion Area:

4.1 How do you measure, analyze, and then improve organizational performance? Answer each of the following questions:

- How do you track data and information on daily operations and overall organizational performance?
- How do you select comparative data and information to support fact-based decision making?
- How do you select Voice-of-the-Customer (VOC) and market data and information?
- How do you ensure that your performance measurement system can respond to rapid or unexpected organizational or external changes?
- How do you review your organization's performance and capabilities?
- How do you project your organization's future performance?
- How do you use findings from performance reviews (addressed in fifth bullet) to develop priorities for continuous improvement and opportunities for innovation?

Suitable Processes: What we are looking for-

This Discussion Area examines how the organization effectively selects, manages, and uses data and information to improve organizational planning and performance improvement. This Area is often referred to as the "brain center" for the alignment of organizational operations with its strategic objectives. This is where an organization would discuss how it compares itself to competitors or other similar organizations, or benchmarks and uses these comparisons to improve and support decision-making. Also, this Area examines how the organization uses customer data, e.g. survey and complaint data to support decision-making.

The methods and processes often found in this Area include "Balanced Scorecard," input-output-outcome models, and other types of measurement systems. Other methods and processes often found in this Category (Discussion Area) relate to how the performance information systems, both qualitative and quantitative, relate to the development and systematic execution of strategy. Processes connecting customer data to strategy and operations are often discussed.

Maturity Example: An organization has chosen the Balanced Scorecard as a key process in this Discussion Area. First, are the outcomes in each area sufficiently defined including leading and lagging indicators, balanced, and related to organizational goals? Second, is the information sufficiently mature and visible so the data is understood? Third, is the information used to systematically manage improvement? Finally, is the information used to cause improvement across Scorecard areas?

Note: Some of these methods might be repeated in other Discussion Areas to satisfy different objectives.

Process Discussion Area:

4.2 How do you manage your information and your organizational knowledge assets? Answer each of the following questions:

- How do you verify and ensure the quality of organizational data and information?
- How do you ensure the availability of organizational data and information?
- How do you build and manage organizational knowledge?
- How do you share best practices in your organization?
- How do you use knowledge and resources to embed learning in the way your organization operates?

Suitable Processes: What we are looking for-

This Discussion Area examines how the organization manages electronic and other data and information to ensure accuracy, integrity, reliability and availability of data and information as well as ensuring reliable and user-friendly software, and hardware. It also addresses how an organization builds and manages its knowledge, shares best practices across the organization, and is a learning organization. High performing organizations make data and information available and accessible to all appropriate users and its hardware systems and software are reliable and user-friendly. In high performing organizations, every appropriate person, from top leaders to individual workers, and every customer and stakeholder, as appropriate, have access to the data they need to make decisions about their work.

Methods and processes often found in this Area include collaborative work and/or file sharing systems, information assurance efforts, quality control efforts for data, intranet, and internet web sites among others. Processes to manage knowledge assets including the retention of knowledge for retiring workers and processes to share knowledge and best practices across the organization, are found in this Area.

Note: Some of these methods might be repeated in other Discussion Areas to satisfy different objectives.

Maturity Example: An organization lists its Information Assurance as a key process. First, is it based on standards and updated systematically? Second, since it is outsourced, how is the contract managed? Is the workforce trained? What internal processes ensure data integrity, e.g. by controlling access? How does this process tie to the organization's management of knowledge and cyber security?

5. Category: Workforce

*In your discussion of these areas, regardless of the methods you use, the Examiners are looking for evidence of breadth in methods and maturity of each. Of the two, maturity has the most impact. Further, t**he Baldrige Criteria are not prescriptive**. The purpose of noting processes often found in this Area is purely educational and not an expectation for how your organization should operate.*

Process Discussion Area:

5.1 How do you build an effective and supportive workforce environment? Answer each of the following questions:

- How do you assess your workforce capability and capacity needs?
- How do you recruit, hire, place, and retain new workforce members?
- How do you prepare your workforce for changing capability and capacity needs?
- How do you organize and manage your workforce?
- How do you ensure workplace health, security, and accessibility for the workforce?
- How do you support your workforce via services, benefits and policies?

Suitable Processes: What we are looking for-

This Discussion Area is fundamentally about the KEY ways the organization ensures that work is being done; how the organization determines how many and what types of employees it needs to get the work done; and ways that the organization recruits, hires, and retains employees who will meet the skill requirements required to position the organization for future success and sustainability. It examines how the organization ensures and improves workforce security and health and workplace accessibility and supports the workforce via benefits and policies.

The methods and processes often found in this Area are purposed to identify and maintain the workforce's knowledge, skills, abilities, and competencies to accomplish the organization's work. Processes that assess current and future workforce capabilities and respond to identified needs by hiring, training, and mentoring are often mentioned. Processes for managing and organizing the workforce to get work done, and quality of life initiatives like variable hours, telework, and others, are frequently mentioned. Likely Discussion Area topics also include descriptions of how the organization addresses its responsibility to ensure regulatory standards on workplace health and security are met.

> **Maturity Example**: An organization identifies its Telework Program. First, is there a clear approach (policy, processes)? Second, how widely is it deployed, i.e., do all supervisors buy-in, is it used? Third, how does it evolve? Finally, how key is it to success in other areas such as retention?

Note: Some of these methods might be repeated in other Discussion Areas to satisfy different objectives.

__Process Discussion Area:__

5.2 How do you engage your workforce to achieve a high-performance work environment? Answer each of the following questions:

- How do you foster an organizational culture that is characterized by open communication, high performance, and an engaged workforce?
- How do you determine the key drivers of workforce engagement?
- How do you assess workforce engagement?
- How does your workforce performance management system support high performance and workforce engagement?
- How does your learning and development system support the organization's needs and the personal development of your workforce members, managers, and leaders?
- How do you evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of your learning and development system?
- How do you manage career progression for your workforce and your future leaders?

__Suitable Processes: What we are looking for-__

This Discussion Area is fundamentally about workforce and leader performance management, learning and development processes, and determining workforce satisfaction and engagement. It examines KEY ways that the organization assesses workforce engagement and performance and ensures high performance, continual improvement and innovation.
It examines how an organization engages, compensates and rewards employees; develops both employees and leaders; and assesses the level of engagement; and how the organization creates a good working environment.

> **Maturity Example**: An organization has an individual performance management system that calls for annual individual performance plans. First, are the plans developed so the employee is clear about expectations? Second, do systematic supervisor/employee reviews occur and if so, how is quality measured? Third, is there a learning effort to assess quality and extract information for the organization? Finally, are employee plans aligned/ integrated to organizational plans?

Frequently found processes include employee training programs such as periodic mandatory training, new employee orientation, technical training and professional development programs. Also, the methods and processes often found in this Area focus on how employees are engaged, both emotionally and intellectually, and how that information is used to improve individual and organizational performance. Annual Employee performance evaluation systems are often examined here. Compensation and reward systems are typical of methods and processes listed and may be tied to demonstrated skills or peer evaluations. Organizational reward and recognition approaches are often listed including profit sharing, peer-to-peer recognition, and rewards for exemplary team performance. Employee feedback systems, e.g., surveys, focus groups, etc. along with how they are used to improve the organization are also frequently mentioned in this Discussion Area.

Note: Some of these methods might be repeated in other Discussion Areas to satisfy different objectives.

6. Category: Operations

*In your discussion of these areas, regardless of the methods you use, the Examiners are looking for evidence of breadth in methods and maturity of each. Of the two, maturity has the most impact. Further, **the Baldrige Criteria are not prescriptive**. The purpose of noting processes often found in this Area is purely educational and not an expectation for how your organization should operate.*

__Process Discussion Area:__

6.1 How do you design, manage, and improve your key products and work processes? Answer each of the following questions:

- How do you determine key product and work process requirements?
- What are your organization's key work processes?
- How do you design your products and work processes to meet requirements?
- How does your day-to-day operation of work processes ensure that they meet key process requirements?
- How do you determine your key support processes?
- How do you improve your work processes to improve products and performance, enhance your core competencies, and reduce variability?
- How do you manage your supply chain?
- How do you pursue your opportunities for innovation?

Suitable Processes: What we are looking for-

This Discussion Area is fundamentally about the KEY approaches the organization uses to identify critical processes within key work systems, how processes, including internal support processes, are managed and measured, and how processes are continually improved to better support customer requirements and expectations. It examines supply chain management and how the organization manages innovation, i.e. how are: (1) ideas generated; (2) decisions made to pursue, resource, and implement them; and (3) these decisions linked and aligned to strategic objectives.

Methods and processes often discussed in this Area include approaches to managing and systematically improving products and key work processes, which may be as simple as developing detailed process flow charts. Processes to select, manage and communicate with suppliers are often discussed. Other methods frequently mentioned are Lean Enterprise System, Six Sigma, International Organization of Standards (ISO), Capability Maturity Model Integration (CMMI) programs, etc. Lists of product and service delivery processes and support processes may be furnished along with information on how an organization knows when these processes are working well. Idea generation processes like suggestion boxes may be discussed. Processes that tie decisions to implement ideas to the organization's strategic planning efforts may be mentioned.

Maturity Example: An organization lists its Lean Six Sigma Program as key. First, is there an understanding of how processes are reviewed and prioritized for improvement relative to strategy? Second, is there sufficient knowledge and commitment to implement the initiatives to fulfillment? Third, are the improvements reviewed for effectiveness? Finally, are the methods replicated in other areas?

Note: Some of these methods might be repeated in other Discussion Areas to satisfy different objectives.

Process Discussion Area:

6.2 How do you ensure effective management of your operations? Answer each of the following questions:

- How do you control the overall costs of your operations?
- How do you ensure the reliability of your information system?
- How do you ensure the security and cyber-security of sensitive or privileged data and information?
- How do you provide a safe operating environment?
- How do you ensure that your organization is prepared for disasters or emergencies?

Suitable Processes: What we are looking for

The Discussion Area is fundamentally about KEY ways to control the cost of operations, keeping operations safe, protecting privileged data and information and being prepared for disasters or emergencies. Methods and processes often discussed in this Area include approaches to systematically increase process efficiency and effectiveness to control costs. Processes to prevent accidents and workplace safety inspections may be discussed. Processes to keep data and information secure, including cyber-security are discussed. Contingency plans and emergency preparedness plans are often discussed.

Note: Some of these methods might be repeated in other Discussion Areas to satisfy different objectives.

Maturity Example: An organization discusses its workplace safety program. First what processes are used in executing the program to prevent accidents. Second, how are safety inspections accomplished and corrective actions taken; are employees given the necessary training and how are safety practices communicated and enforced? Third, how are safety incidents or near misses used to improve the safety program? Finally, are improvements replicated across the organization?

III. Results Maturity (Category 7): What we are looking for

The Baldrige Excellence Framework method of assessing results maturity is based on the relative depth of sophistication in four areas: Levels, Trends, Comparisons, and Integration (LeTCI).

In evaluating your response to each Results Discussion Area, the Examiners will look for evidence to determine how well the results of your processes and methods relate to the **Levels – Trends – Comparisons - Integration** (**LeTCI**) concepts. For each Results Discussion Area, the Examiners look for answers to the following with a focus on **Levels** and **Trends**:

Review of the Baldrige Excellence Framework will provide additional information on the **LeTCI** concept.

- **Levels.** Has results-oriented information been presented or portrayed relevant to the Result Discussion Area? Is there a clear link between this information and the process(es) and methods discussed in Categories 1-6?
- **Trends.** Are there trends associated with the results-oriented information? If so, is there enough information to determine how favorable the trends are?
- **Comparison**. Has information been presented relative to how the results-oriented information relates to comparable examples from competitors, benchmarks, or other appropriate organizations?
- **Integration**. Do the results address important customer or product requirements identified in the Organizational Profile? Are results harmonized across processes and work units to support organization-wide goals?

The Importance of Portrayal

A picture is worth a thousand words. To the extent practical, results-oriented portrayals should be able to highlight at least the LeTCI fundamentals of **Levels** and **Trends**. Graphics are helpful tools to show Levels, Trends, and Comparisons at the same time. Results are usually the most difficult area for organizations. Most fall into one or more of the following groups:

1. Much information is available and provided – sometimes satisfying fundamental LeTCI concepts, but the KEY results related to the KEY processes have never been determined.
2. Information is provided and can satisfy fundamental LeTCI concepts, but there is no discernible link to the processes and methods articulated in Categories 1-6 and/or the goals and objectives of the organization.
3. Information is provided, but is simply not mature enough to make the maximum contribution to leadership, i.e., anecdotal, not systematic, etc.

The ability of an organization to present its KEY results in a manner which shows an understanding of LeTCI is a positive indicator. For Discovery, acknowledgement of opportunities for improvement in this Category is also a positive indicator. The Category is looking for the portrayal of actual data and results used by the organization, not merely examples of data it might use. Graphs and charts should be readable (Font 8 point or larger) and be straightforward so the Examiner Team can interpret the data and understand its meaning. The Examiner Team is looking for evidence that the results that are shown are desirable to the organization, i.e. the results are good for the organization.

Results Discussion Areas:

7.1 Provide your key ***product performance and process effectiveness*** results. Include results for your products and customer service processes. Include results for your process effectiveness and efficiency. Include your safety and emergency preparedness results. Include your supply-chain management results. Include appropriate comparative data. Segment your results by product offerings, customer groups, and market segments, and by process types and locations, as appropriate.

7.2 Provide your ***customer-focused performance*** results. Include results for customer satisfaction, dissatisfaction and engagement. Include appropriate comparative data. Segment your results by product offerings, customer groups, and market segments, as appropriate.

7.3 Provide your ***workforce-focused performance*** results. Include your workforce capability and capacity results. Include workforce climate results (e.g. health, safety, security, services, and benefits). Include your workforce engagement results. Include your workforce and leader development results. Include appropriate comparative data. Segment your results to address the diversity of your workforce and to address your workforce groups and segments, as appropriate.

7.4 Provide your ***senior leadership and governance*** results. Include results for senior leaders' communication and engagement with the workforce and customers. Include results for governance accountability, including those for fiscal accountability. Include legal and regulatory results. Include results for ethical behavior and results for societal well-being and support of your key communities. Include results for the achievement of your organizational strategy and action plans. Include appropriate comparative data. Segment your results by organizational units, as appropriate.

7.5 Provide your ***financial viability*** results. Include your financial performance results and marketplace performance results. Include appropriate comparative data. Segment your results by market segments, customer groups, or organizational units as appropriate.

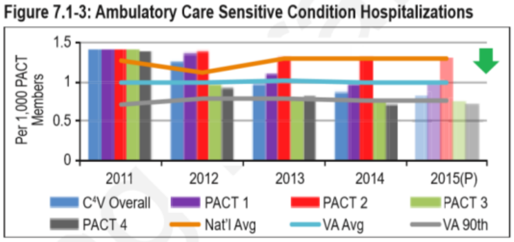
<u>Results Portrayal: What we are looking for-</u>

The five Results Discussion Areas examine the organization's KEY performance and improvement measures. KEY measures are those that are the most important and critical to achieving success. Category 7 reflects timely measures (weekly, quarterly, annual as applicable) of performance for evaluation and improvement of an organization's processes, products, and services that are aligned with overall organizational strategy, goals and direction and are produced by those processes and methods the organization outlines in Categories 1-6.

For example, an organization lists its employee Mentor Program as a KEY process in Category 5. Results of this program would be included as part of the 7.3 discussion. One view of results could simply be "participation" – not unusual if the effort is new. Another view of results could be "user value" identified through surveys, etc. Likewise, if the purpose of the program is to address "employee retention of young people" that also might show up. Thus, multiple Results are often associated with one process.

Processes and methods have purposes and outcomes intended to be achieved. The question is which are KEY results, i.e., what outcome does the process really intend to affect? Indeed, there might be multiple processes directed toward the same outcome.

Figure 7.1-3: Ambulatory Care Sensitive Condition Hospitalizations



Maturity Example: A hospital tracks ambulatory care sensitive conditions hospitalizations, which is critical information (LEVELS and INTEGRATION). The hospital tracks data for 4 PACTS and shows overall data (segmentation). It shows data for the last 4 years and for the current partial year. The example graph shows a favorable overall trend and favorable trends for all four PACTS for 2011 through 2014 (TRENDS). Hospital data is compared against 3 benchmarks. Results are better than the Nat'l Avg. and VA Avg. since 2012 but not yet better than the VA 90th.

GLOSSARY

Action Plans - Specific actions that your organization takes to reach its short- and longer-term strategic objectives.
Approach - The methods your organization uses to carry out its processes, which are linked activities with the purpose of producing a product or service.
Basic Requirements - The most central concept of a Discovery Discussion Area reflected by bolded text at the beginning of a Discussion Area.
Core Competencies - Your organization's areas of greatest expertise, those strategically important capabilities that are central to fulfilling your mission or that provide an advantage in your marketplace or service environment.
Customer Engagement – Your customers' investment in or commitment to your brand and product offerings. Characteristics of an engaged customer include retention and loyalty, willingness to make an effort to do business with your organization, and willingness to actively advocate for and recommend your brand and product offerings.
Customer Satisfaction – The measure of how well you meet the expectations of your customers concerning the products and services provided by your organization.
Deployment - The extent to which your organization applies an approach in addressing the requirements of a Discussion Area.
Effective - How well a process or a measure addresses its intended purpose.
Goals - Future conditions or performance levels that your organization intends or desires to attain.
How - The systems and processes that your organization uses to achieve its mission requirements. In responding to HOW questions in each Discussion Areas include information on your approach (methods and measures) deployment, learning, and integration. In other words, tell your **STORIE** (see page 9 or this Guide).
Maturity – Maturity is how well the organization describes its methods/processes (approaches) or results in the context of the Discussion Area's Basic, Overall, and Multiple Requirements as well as Approach-Deployment-Learning-Integration or Levels-Trends-Comparisons-Integration, respectively. Immature processes are more reactive to problems; mature processes are systematic, effective, and well-integrated with other processes and support key strategic and operational goals. Immature results are characterized as, e.g. unfavorable with respect to a goal or comparison, absent of trend data and comparative information, or not significant to the accomplishment of an organization's mission. Mature results show excellence performance levels and trends and show good relative performance against comparisons. Mature results indicate a likelihood of success because they are linked to the organization's mission and its strategic and operational goals.
Measures and Indicators - Objective, numerical information that quantifies the input, output, and performance dimensions of processes, products, programs, projects, services, and the overall organizations (outcomes).
Multiple Requirements – These requirements are found within the Baldrige Excellence Framework Criteria for Performance Excellence. They represent the individual questions that are asked in each Area to Address including the first boldface question, which is the most important one in that group. Note: The individual boldface questions are also considered 'overall requirements'.
Overall Requirements – The most important features of a Discovery Discussion Area, as elaborated by the questions directly following the Basic Requirements (shown in boldface text at the beginning of each Discussion Area). These are also the boldface questions that appear at the beginning of the Multiple Requirements within the Criteria for Performance Excellence.
Process - Linked activities with the purpose of producing a product or service for a customer (user) within or outside your organization.
Products and Product Offerings – These terms refer to both the goods and services that your organization offers in the marketplace.
Results – Outputs and outcomes achieved by your organization. Results are evaluated based on current performance; performance relative to appropriate comparisons; the rate, breadth, and importance of performance improvements; and the relationship of results measures to key organizational performance requirements.
Segment – One part of your organization's customer, market, product offering, or workforce base. Segments typically are common characteristics that allow logical groupings. In the Discussion Areas, segmenting refers to disaggregating results data in a way that allows for meaningful analysis of your organization's performance. Understanding segments is critical to identifying the distinct needs and expectations of different customer, market, and workforce groups and to tailoring product offerings to meet their needs and expectations.
Senior Leaders – Your organization's senior management group or team.
Strategic Advantages – Those marketplace benefits that exert a decisive influence on your organization's likelihood of future success. These generally arise from either or both of two sources: (1) core competencies, which focus on building and expanding internal capabilities, and (2) strategically important external resources, which are shaped and leveraged by your organization.
Strategic Challenges – Those pressures that exert a decisive influence on your organization's likelihood of future success. They are generally externally driven, although not always. External strategic challenges may relate to customer or market needs or expectations whereas internal challenges may relate to capabilities or human and other resources.

Strategic Objectives – The internal or external aims or responses that your organization articulates to address major change or improvement, competitiveness or social issues, and business advantages. They are what your organization must achieve to remain or become competitive and ensure long-term success. Strategic Objectives set your longer-term directions and guide resource allocation and redistribution.

Support Process – Support processes provide support to the workforce engaged in product design and delivery, customer interactions, and business and enterprise management. Examples are: research and development, call center operations, human resources, information technology, procurement, accounting, maintenance, and supply-chain management.

Systematic – Well ordered, repeatable, and exhibiting the use of data and information so that learning is possible. Approaches are systematic if they build in the opportunity for evaluation, improvement, and sharing, thereby permitting a gain in maturity.

Work Process – Your organization's most important internal value-creation processes. They might include product design, production, and deliver; customer support; supply-chain management; business; and support processes. They are the processes that involve the majority of your organization's workforce.

Work Systems – How your organization's work is accomplished, consisting of the internal work processes and external resources you need to develop and produce products, deliver them to you customers, and succeed in your marketplace. Also, all work needed to produce products and related services to create value for customers and achieve organization success.

Workforce – All people actively supervised by your organization and involved in accomplishing your organization's work, including paid employees as well as contract employees supervised by your organization, and volunteers, as appropriate. Your workforce includes team leaders, supervisors, and managers at all levels.

Workforce Capability – Your organization's ability to accomplish its work processes through its people's knowledge, skills, abilities, and competencies.

Workforce Capacity – Your organization's ability to ensure sufficient staffing levels to accomplish its work processes and deliver products to customers, including the ability to meet seasonal or varying demand levels.

Workforce Engagement – The extent of workforce members' emotional and intellectual commitment to accomplishing your organization's work, mission, and vision. In general, workforce members feel engaged when they find personal meaning and motivation in their work and receive interpersonal and workplace support.

Note: The majority of these glossary definitions came from the Baldrige Excellence Framework Glossary.

Appendix 1: *The Participant should replicate/re-create this template as a MS Word document; answer all the questions according to the outline and submit the resulting Discovery Self-Assessment to SPQA*

Virginia SPQA

Discovery Self-Assessment Template

Discovery

[Organization Name]

[Date Submitted]

[Transmittal Letter – Insert Organization's Letterhead if desired and remove this note]

(Date)

Discovery Director, SPQA

Dear SPQA Discovery Director,

[Organization Name] is pleased to submit its Discovery Self-Assessment for the Examination Team's review and feedback.

[optional text for the organization – remove]

Sincerely,

Organizational Profile

The **Organizational Profile** is a snapshot of your organization, the key influences on how you operate, and the key challenges you face. *Insert your response and related graphics if applicable at the end of each question or question set.*

1. Organizational Environment

a. ***What are your main product offerings? What is the relative importance of each to your success? What mechanisms do you use to deliver your products?***

- **Response:**

b. ***What are your stated mission, vision, and values? What are your organization's core competencies and what is their relationship to your mission?***

- **Response:**

c. ***What is your workforce profile? What recent changes have you experienced in workforce composition or in your needs with regard to your workforce? What are your workforce or employee groups and segments? What are the educational requirements for different employee groups and segments? What are the key drivers that engage them in achieving your mission and vision? What are your organized bargaining units (union representation)? What are your organization's special health and safety requirements?***

- **Response:**

d. ***What are your major facilities, technologies, and equipment?***

- **Response:**

e. ***What is the regulatory environment under which you operate? What are the key applicable occupational health and safety regulations, accreditation, certification, or registration requirements; industry standards; and environmental, financial, and product regulations?***

- **Response:**

2. Organizational Relationships

a. ***What are your organizational leadership structure and governance system? What are the reporting relationships among your governance board, senior leaders, and parent organization, as appropriate?***

- **Response:**

b. ***What are your key market segments, customer groups, and stakeholder groups, as appropriate? What are their key requirements and expectations for your products, customer support services, and operations? What are the differences in these requirements and expectations among market segments, customer groups, and stakeholder groups?***

- **Response:**

c. ***What are your key types of suppliers, partners, and collaborators? What role do they play in your work systems, especially in producing and delivering your key products and customer support services? What role do they play in enhancing your competitiveness? What are your key mechanisms for two-way communication with suppliers, partners, and collaborators? What role, if any, do these organizations play in contributing and implementing innovations in your organization? What are your key supply chain requirements?***

- **Response:**

3. Competitive Environment

a. ***What is your competitive position? What are your relative size and growth in your industry or the markets you serve? How many and what types of competitors do you have?***

- **Response:**

b. ***What key changes, if any, are affecting your competitive situation, including changes that create opportunities for innovation and collaboration, as appropriate?***

- **Response:**

c. ***What key sources of comparative and competitive data are available from within your industry? What key sources of comparative data are available from outside your industry? What limitations, if any, affect your ability to obtain or use these data*?**

- **Response:**

4. Strategic Context

***What are your key strategic challenges and advantages in the area of business, operational, societal responsibilities, and workforce*?**

- **Response:**

5. Performance Improvement

***What are the key elements of your performance improvement system, including your processes for evaluation and improvement of key organizational projects and processes*?**

- **Response:**

1. Leadership

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, ethical, and societal responsibilities.

1.1 How do your senior leaders lead and how do their personal actions guide and sustain your organization? Answer each of the following questions.

How do they set your organization's vision and values?
- **Response:**

How do their actions demonstrate their commitment to legal and ethical behavior?
- **Response:**

How do they communicate with and engage the entire workforce and key customers?
- **Response:**

How do they create an environment for success now and in the future?
- **Response:**

How do they create a focus on action that will achieve the organization's mission?
- **Response:**

1.2 How do you govern your organization and fulfill your societal responsibilities? Answer each of the following questions.

How does your organization ensure responsible governance?
- **Response:**

How do you evaluate the performance of your senior leaders and your governance board?
- **Response:**

How do you address and anticipate legal, regulatory, and community concerns with your products and operations?
- **Response:**

How do you promote and ensure ethical behavior in all interactions?
- **Response:**

How do you consider societal well-being and benefit as part of your strategy and daily operations?
- **Response:**

How do you actively support and strengthen your key communities?
- **Response:**

2. Strategic Planning

The Strategy Category asks how your organization develops strategic objectives and action plans, implements them, changes them if circumstances require, and measures progress.

2.1 How do you develop your strategy? Answer each of the following questions.

How do you conduct your strategic planning?

- **Response:**

How does you strategy development process stimulate and incorporate innovation?

- **Response:**

How do you collect and analyze relevant data and develop information for you strategic planning process?

- **Response:**

How do you decide which key processes will be accomplished by your workforce and which by external suppliers and partners?

- **Response:**

What are your organization's key strategic objectives and timetable for achieving them?

- **Response:**

How do your strategic objectives achieve appropriate balance among varying and potentially competing organizational needs?

- **Response:**

2.2 How do you implement strategy? Answer each of the following questions.

What are your key short- and longer-term action plans?

- **Response:**

How do you deploy your action plans?

- **Response:**

How do you ensure that financial and other resources are available to support the achievement of your action plans while you meet current obligations?

- **Response:**

What are your key workforce plans to support your short- and longer-term strategic objectives and action plans?

- **Response:**

What key performance measures or indicators do you use to track the achievement and effectiveness of action plans?

- **Response:**

For these key performance measures or indicators, what are your performance projections for your short- and longer-term planning horizons?

- **Response:**

How do you establish and implement modified action plans if circumstances require a shift in plans and rapid execution of new plans?

- **Response:**

3. Customer Focus

The Customer Focus Category asks how your organization engages its customers for long-term marketplace success, including how your organization listens to the voice of the customer, builds customer relationships, and uses customer information to improve and identify opportunities for innovation. ***Note for Education and Health Care Participants:*** *The Criteria for Education focuses on Students and Stakeholders in lieu of "Customers", and your responses to this Category should address the questions in this way. The Criteria for Health Care focuses on Patients, and other customers, and your responses to this Category should address the questions in that way.*

3.1 How do you obtain information from your customers? Answer each of the following questions.

How do you listen to, interact with, and observe customers to obtain actionable information?

- **Response:**

How do you listen to potential customers to obtain actionable information?

- **Response:**

How do you determine customer satisfaction, dissatisfaction, and engagement?

- **Response:**

How do you obtain information on customers' satisfaction with you organization relative to other organizations?

- **Response:**

3.2 How do you engage customers by serving their needs and building relationships? Answer each of the following questions:

How do you determine product offerings?

- **Response:**

How do you enable customers to seek information and support?

- **Response:**

How do you determine your customer groups and market segments?

- **Response:**

How do you build and manage customer relationships?

- **Response:**

How do you manage customer complaints?

- **Response:**

4. Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management

The Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management Category asks how your organization selects, gathers, analyzes, manages, and improves its data, information, and knowledge assets; how it learns; and how it manages information. The Category also asks how your organization uses review findings to improve its performance.

4.1 How do you measure, analyze, and then improve organizational performance? Answer each of the following questions.

How do you track data and information to track daily operations and overall organizational performance?

- **Response:**

How do you select comparative data and information to support fact-based decision making?

- **Response:**

How do you select Voice-of-the-Customer (VOC) and market data and information?

- **Response:**

How do you ensure that your performance measurement system can respond to rapid or unexpected organizational or external change?

- **Response:**

How do you review your organization's performance and capabilities?

- **Response:**

How do you project your organization's future performance?

- **Response:**

How do you use findings from performance reviews (addressed in 5th bullet) to develop priorities for continuous improvement and opportunities for innovation?

- **Response:**

4.2 How do you manage your information and organizational knowledge assets? Answer each of the following questions.

How do you verify and ensure the quality of organizational data and information?

- **Response:**

How do you ensure the availability of organizational data and information?

- **Response:**

How do you build and manage organizational knowledge?

- **Response:**

How do you share best practices in your organization?

- **Response:**

How do you use knowledge and resources to embed learning in the way your organization operates?

- **Response:**

5. Workforce Focus

The Workforce Focus Category asks how your organization assesses workforce capability and capacity needs and builds a workforce environment conducive to high performance. The Category also asks how your organization engages, manages, and develops your workforce to utilize its full potential in alignment with your organization's overall mission, strategy, and action plans.

5.1 How do you build an effective and supportive workforce environment? Answer each of the following questions.

How do you assess your workforce capability and capacity needs?

- **Response:**

How do you recruit, hire, place, and retain new workforce members?

- **Response:**

How do you prepare your workforce for changing capability and capacity needs?

- **Response:**

How do you organize and manage your workforce?

- **Response:**

How do you ensure workplace health, security, and accessibility for the workforce?

- **Response:**

How do you support your workforce via services, benefits and policies?

- **Response:**

5.2 How do you engage your workforce to achieve a high performance work environment? Answer each of the following questions.

How do you foster an organizational culture that is characterized by open communication, high performance, and an engaged workforce?

- **Response:**

How do you determine the key drivers of workforce engagement?

- **Response:**

How do you assess workforce engagement?

- **Response:**

How does your workforce performance management system support high performance and workforce engagement?

- **Response:**

How does your learning and development system support the organization's needs and the personal development of your workforce members, managers, and leaders?

- **Response:**

How do you evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of your learning and development system?

- **Response:**

How do you manage career progression for your workforce and your future leaders?

- **Response:**

6. Operations Focus

The Operations Focus Category asks how your organization designs, manages, and improves its products and work processes and improves operational effectiveness to deliver customer value and achieve organizational success and sustainability.

6.1 How do you design, manage, and improve your key products and work processes? Answer each of the following questions.

How do you determine key product and work process requirements?

- **Response:**

What are your organization's key work processes?

- **Response:**

How do you design your products and work processes to meet requirements?

- **Response:**

How does your day-to-day operation of work processes ensure that they meet key process requirements?

- **Response:**

How do you determine your key support processes?

- **Response:**

How do you improve your work processes to improve products and performance, enhance your core competencies, and reduce variability?

- **Response:**

How do you manage your supply chain?

- **Response:**

How do you pursue your opportunities for innovation?

- **Response:**

6.2 How do you ensure effective management of your operations? Answer each of the following questions.

How do you control the overall costs of your operations?

- **Response:**

How do you ensure the reliability of your information system?

- **Response:**

How do you ensure the security and cybersecurity of sensitive or privileged data and information?

- **Response:**

How do you provide a safe operating environment?

- **Response:**

How do you ensure that your organization is prepared for disasters or emergencies?

- **Response:**

7. Results

The Results Category asks about your organization's performance and improvement in all key areas – product and process results, customer results, workforce results, leadership and governance results, and financial and market results. The Category asks about performance levels relative to those of competitors and other organizations with similar product offerings.

7.1 Provide your key ***product performance and process effectiveness*** results. Include results for your products and customer service processes. Include results for process effectiveness and efficiency. Include your safety and emergency preparedness results. Include your supply-chain management results. Include appropriate comparative data. Segment your results by product offerings, customer groups, and market segments, and by process types and locations, as appropriate.

- **Response**:

7.2 Provide your ***customer-focused performance*** results. Include results for customer satisfaction, dissatisfaction, and engagement. Include appropriate comparative data. Segment your results by product offerings, customer groups, and market segments, as appropriate.

- **Response:**

7.3 Provide your ***workforce-focused performance*** results. Include your workforce capability and capacity results. Include workforce climate results (e.g. health, safety, security and services and benefits). Include your workforce engagement results. Include your workforce and leader development results. Include appropriate comparative data. Segment your results to address the diversity of your workforce and to address your workforce groups and segments, as appropriate.

- **Response:**

7.4 Provide your ***senior leadership and governance*** results. Include results for senior leaders' communication and engagement with the workforce and customers. Include results for governance accountability, including those for fiscal accountability. Include results for ethical behavior and results for societal well-being support of your key communities. Include results for the achievement of your organizational strategy and action plans. Include appropriate comparative data. Segment your results by organizational units, as appropriate.

- **Response**:

7.5 Provide your ***financial viability*** results. Include your financial performance results and marketplace performance results. Include appropriate comparative data. Segment your results by market segments, customer groups, or organizational units as appropriate.

- **Response**: