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April Newsletter - Changing Results

The content in the April Newsletter was created before widespread impact of COVID-19 had occurred. We regret that the March Newsletter was not distributed due to challenges from the impact.

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Over the past few months I have discussed change and how we may resist change. One area that we often resist change is in measures and metrics – or changing results.

I remember once, much earlier in my career, when I was working for a company that was heavily involved in Six Sigma. Most of you are familiar with the idea of getting to 3.4 failures per million parts opportunities (99.9997%). My manager was absolute in his drive to get us to that point. Our product offering ran the gamut from hand assembled temperature and flow gauges made one at a time to a highly automated line that manufactured inexpensive pop-off valves that released gas pressure. I felt it was unfair to compare the measure of the highly automated line that produced a higher number of failures than acceptable with the hand-made gauges that received individual attention and inspections. We discussed this extensively over many months until I was sufficiently aware of where my arguments fell short.

First, it was not about me or the automated line. It was about ensuring that we minimize the opportunity for disappointment by the customer, regardless of the process used to manufacture them. Any failure in transformers can be catastrophic. Second, the measure was not one meant to penalize the team running the equipment, but rather to drive us to produce higher and more consistent quality by ensuring that operations were standardized, and the equipment properly maintained in order to meet those goals.

For me the lesson learned went well beyond the immediate and led me to take the perspective of measuring from the “outside to the inside.” In other words, from the customer back into our operations, and not the typical method of inside out. Changing results requires us to change perspectives. When results are concerned with internal performance as an end, they fail to consider the value proposition to the customer.

We measure the “perfect order,” not to ensure that every team inside the factory or distribution center are performing as expected, though that is also a result; rather, we measure these activities to ensure the customer experience is a value-add one. We measure to ensure that we can effectively and efficiently bring value to the customer and offer a product or service they are willing to pay for. We measure so the value-added proposition that customers pay for provides us with the needed revenue and profits to continue and develop into a better, more dynamic organization.

Finally, we continue to measure ourselves, to benchmark, to make our lives internally easier, simpler. What I did not understand in the earlier part of my career was that a properly focused measure is not punitive, but rather about valuing the customer and the service of those who perform the tasks. Paying proper attention to the correct measures and metrics will change our results to ensure satisfaction for all concerned.

Eric-Stephan Neill
President, KyCPE



Upcoming Events

- March 26** - Chicago Presentation- **postponed**
- September 1** - letter of intent to apply due to KyCPE (details found under "Improved Application Process")
- September 18** - KyCPE Conference

Save the Date

What: [KyCPE Educational Conference](#)
Where: BCTC Leestown Road Campus Conference Center
164 Opportunity Way, Lexington KY 40511
When: Friday September 18, 2020

2020 Conference Theme: Leading for Performance Excellence

Speakers to include Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award winners and others who have achieved organizational excellence. You won't want to miss this opportunity to network with and learn from innovative leaders! Register [here](#).

HQ Update

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This month we are highlighting [BLOGRIGE, The Official Baldrige Blog](#). It's a valuable source of insights from performance excellence organizations using the framework.

Pro Tip

By Conley Salyers

Quotations about change abound. "Be the change that you wish to see in the world." ~Mahatma Gandhi. "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world." ~ Margaret Mead. But most of us work on a much smaller scale than the world; we focus on changing our lives, changing our relationships, changing our business results.

I ask your indulgence that I may write briefly about changing/improving the results of your leadership within your organization.

A good leader leads the people from above them. A great leader leads the people from within them. ~M. D. Arnold

As Arnold implies, understanding the necessity of using everyone's knowledge and skill is a first step toward improving results. When the knowledge or skill required to improve results is missing, a great leader needs to expand the circle of "the people" to include new folks with different knowledge and skill. This may mean employing new people, hiring outside contractors, joining new organizations.

But first, how does a leader know what is needed to improve the organization? The Baldrige Excellence Framework is an excellent starting point. By answering the questions posed by the Framework, a leader begins to understand the organizational areas needing improvement (change). Having identified those areas - in leadership; strategy; customers (focus upon); measurement, analysis, and knowledge management; workforce (focus upon); operations; and results - the next step is to locate the knowledge and skill required to improve. That equates to finding people. Do I have the knowledge and skill within my organization, or do I need to expand my "people" to acquire the knowledge and skill?

Many organizational improvement drives end here because the leader ducks out - "I don't have the time for this," "my employees don't have the time for this," "I cannot afford to hire the outside expertise," and so on.

If you have found yourself in this position or even uttered these same words, the [Baldrige Excellence Builder](#) may be a good place to begin your exploration into organizational improvements. This tool will lead you through the high level questions to consider as you work to improve processes and results with your "people."

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