

THE BENEFITS OF THE MALCOLM BALDRIGE CRITERIA APPLIED
AT NORTHCENTRAL TECHNICAL COLLEGE

By

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A Research Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

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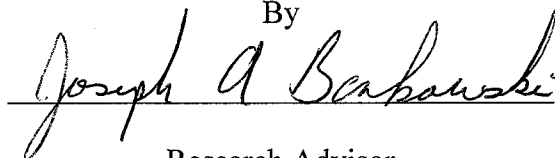
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By

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joseph A. Benkowski". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this descriptive study was to conduct an analysis of the benefits gained at Northcentral Technical College from the application of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Program, also identifying training opportunities for the employees at NTC, as they relate to the Baldrige Criteria.

The literature review on this subject looked at benefits realized at other educational institutes, methods of training used to educate employees regarding the criteria and approaches used in the private sector to develop the survey questionnaire.

The data collected reveals benefits gained from the application of the criteria alone with potential opportunities for training the workforce to better understand the many elements within the Baldrige Model.

Northcentral Technical College has been on a journey of continuous improvement based on the Baldrige Criteria since 2000. The goal of the college is to involve all employees in this effort.

Another goal of the college is to change the method by which the college receives accreditation. The use of the Baldrige Criteria along with employee training regarding the criteria will help to attain this goal.

Training efforts in the past were not based on the seven criteria covered in Malcolm Baldrige. Training efforts have become more focused and consistent since adopting this new approach

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
Chapter I Introduction.....	1
<i>Statement of Problem</i>	1
<i>Purpose of Study</i>	2
<i>Research Objective</i>	2
<i>Need for Study</i>	2
<i>Model</i>	2
<i>Limitation of Study</i>	3
<i>Assumptions</i>	4
<i>Definitions</i>	4
<i>Summary</i>	6
Chapter II: Review of Literature.....	7
<i>History</i>	7
<i>NCA Accrediting Position</i>	9
<i>Benefits</i>	10
Chapter III: Methodologies of Procedures.....	13
<i>Introduction</i>	13
<i>Instrumentation</i>	14
<i>Data Collection</i>	15
Chapter IV: Findings and Analysis of results.....	42

<i>Leadership</i>	42
<i>Strategic Planning</i>	45
<i>Customer and Market Focus</i>	47
<i>Information and Analysis</i>	51
<i>Human Resource Focus</i>	54
<i>Process Management</i>	55
<i>Business Results</i>	57
<i>Conclusion</i>	58
<i>Next Steps</i>	60
Chapter V: Conclusions and Recommendations of Results.....	62
Reference.....	66
Exhibit A.....	67
Exhibit B.....	71

List of Tables

Table 1: Scoring Table.....	19
Table 2: Strengths and Weakness—Leadership.....	23
Table 3: Strengths and Weakness—Strategic Planning.....	25
Table 4: Strengths and Weakness—Market Focus.....	28
Table 5: Strengths and Weakness—Information and Analysis.....	32
Table 6: Strengths and Weakness—Human Resource Focus.....	35
Table 7: Strengths and Weakness—Process Management.....	38

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

Educational organizations are accredited through independent accrediting organizations. One such accreditation organization is the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools Commission of Institutions of Higher Education, more commonly referred to as NCA. This is the agency that Northcentral Technical College, (located in Wausau, Wisconsin), has used for its accreditation process. NCA provides a list of criteria for accreditation for schools involved in this process.

An initiative has developed in recent years that involve the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Program criteria as a means for accreditation. NCA has recognized and accepted the Baldrige criteria as a model through which schools can opt to become accredited.

NTC is in the process of applying the Baldrige criteria and approach to their accreditation process.

The Baldrige criterion has been used in the private sector since 1987. Many organizations using the criteria have shown significant improvement in targeted results of their business, thus prompting educational organizations to consider the same approach.

Statement of the Problem

Little research has been conducted to identify the benefits that the application of the Baldrige criteria has brought to educational institutions. In addition, information on necessary training to implement this process is lacking.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify training needs to effectively use the Baldrige model for continuous improvement.

Research Objective

The following objectives will be achieved as a result of this study of Northcentral Technical College:

1. Identify the benefits that the college has realized since the start of this process which began in 1999.
2. Identify workforce training opportunities relating to the Baldrige criteria.
3. Assess the level of understanding that the employees of NTC have regarding continuous improvement.

Need for the Study

Little information is available regarding the benefits that are gained through the application of a continuous quality improvement model such as Baldrige.

Model

This research on the benefits that the application of the Baldrige criteria has brought to educational institutions will be conducted by comparing the seven categories of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award to the results of a survey conducted by the college in 2003 and 2004. This survey solicited responses from faculty, management, paraprofessionals, and staff. All employees of the district were given the opportunity and encouraged to respond. The survey asked employees to respond to 31 questions which were later divided into categories of questions that related to employees being:

- Inspired
- Connected
- Strengthened

A criterion from Category 5 of the MBNQA which is titled, "Faculty and Staff", is the primary criteria used in this evaluation. The remaining categories:

1. Leadership
2. Strategic Planning
3. Student Stakeholder and Market Focus
4. Measurement Analysis
5. (Faculty and Staff)
6. Process Management
7. Organization Performance Results

All of the above categories will be referenced.

An effort will be made to show improvements in responses on the survey from 2003 to 2004, based on initiatives undertaken that align to the criteria of MBNQA.

Limitations of the Study

1. Most continuous improvement efforts take many years to show measurable results. This study is limited to improvements that are evident over a one year period.
2. The study conducted is restricted to a survey conducted only at Northcentral Technical College. Other educational institutions may show greater or lesser results.

Assumptions

1. The results, conclusions, and recommendations of the research will be used by NTC to help evaluate the results of their efforts thus? To inspire connect and strengthen their employees.
2. Northcentral Technical College will continue their current philosophy to apply the Baldrige criteria as a model for continuous improvement.
3. Employees of NTC will support the improvement initiatives of the college.

Definitions

MBNQA – Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award

WFA – Wisconsin Forward Award

The following was taken from Education Criteria for Performance Excellence (2004):

Criteria #1 Leadership – The leadership category examines how your organization's Senior Leader address you organizations values, direction, and performance expectations, as well as a focus on students and stakeholders, student learning, faculty and staff empowerment, innovation, and organizational learning.

Criteria #2 Strategic Planning – The strategic planning category examines how your organization develops strategic objectives and action plans.

Criteria #3 Student, Stakeholder, and Market Focus – The student, stakeholder, and market focus category examines how you organization determines requirements, expectations, and preferences of students, stakeholders, and markets.

Criteria #4 Measurement Analysis and Knowledge Management – The measurement analysis and knowledge management category examines how your organization selects, gathers, analyzes, manages, and improves its data information and knowledge assets.

Criteria #5 Faculty and Staff Focus – The faculty and staff focus category examines how your organizations work systems, faculty, and staff learning and motivation enable faculty and staff to develop and utilize their full potential in alignment with your organizations overall objectives and action plans.

Criteria #6 Process Management – The process management category examines the key aspects of your organizations process management, including key learning centered processes for your educational programs, offerings, and services that create student, stakeholder, and organizational value.

A criterion #7 Organizational Performance Results – The organizational performance results category examines your organizations performance and improvement in key areas:

- Student and stakeholder learning results
- Student and stakeholder focused results
- Budget, Financial, and Market performance
- Faculty and Staff results
- Operational Performance
- Governance and Social Responsibility

Summary

This study will provide a detailed look at the benefits gained at Northcentral Technical College, through the application of initiatives based on criteria from the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. Survey results will reflect current and future needs of employees in regard to Category #5 of the MBNQA.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

History

Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award

Blazey (2001) states:

The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award was established by Congress in 1987 to recognize U.S. companies and organizations for their achievements in quality and performance, and to raise awareness about the power of quality management to tap the full potential of American Businesses. In 1998 Congress authorized an expansion of the award to include educational institutions. School districts, colleges and universities have recognized the value of the process and have been applying the criteria to help improve their performance. The Baldrige Criteria for performance excellence has been a significant tool used by thousands of America's organizations to assess their performance and improve it based on identified criteria factors. The U.S. Department of Commerce, National Institute of Standards and Technology, is responsible for the Baldrige National Quality Program and the Award.

It is a recognized honor to become a Baldrige National Award recipient based on outstanding performance. The President of the United States traditionally presents the award at a special ceremony in Washington D.C. Those organizations that are recognized must share information with other U.S. organizations.

The award is named in honor of Malcolm Baldrige who served as Secretary of Commerce from 1981 until his death in 1987. His managerial excellence contributed to long-term improvement in efficiency and effectiveness of government.

Wisconsin Forward Award

Established in 1998, the Wisconsin Forward Award models the criteria used in the Baldrige award. Over 40 states have established state level awards in an effort to get more organizations involved in the process.

Northcentral Technical College

Northcentral Technical College (NTC) has over a decade of experience working to improve quality. The journey began in 1990 with a variety of training, team building, quality awareness, and quality measurement activities.

--NTC is a founding member of Continuous Quality Improvement Network (CQIN) which is a network of colleges and corporate partners interested in quality improvement.

--In 1999 the NTC Forward Committee was established and constructed a self-assessment using the Wisconsin Challenge Instrument.

--In 2000 NTC committed to the Higher Learning Commission (NCA) college reaccreditation using the Academic Quality Improvement Plan (AQIP).

--January 2002 NTC received the Wisconsin Forward Award at the proficiency level. The proficiency level is awarded to organizations making significant progress in successful implementation of quality measurement practices.

--December 2004 NTC received the Wisconsin Forward Award at the Mastery Level.

Other Colleges Using This Approach

In the State of Wisconsin, the sixteen Technical Colleges that make up the Wisconsin Technical College System are all involved in the program in addition the following Wisconsin educational institutions are involved in the process:

- Alverno College
- Concordia
- Greenfield School District
- School District of Holmen
- University of Phoenix – Online
- University of Wisconsin – Medical School
- University of Wisconsin – Madison
- University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee School of Business Administration
- University of Wisconsin – Stout
 - University of Wisconsin – Stout was the first educational institution to win the Baldrige Award in the United States.

NCA Accrediting Position

The following is from the Handbook of Accreditation (1997):

NCA provides the school with products, services, technical support, and human resources that can be used to translate the Baldrige criteria into action.

NCA serves as a regional, national, and international source of recognition through accreditation and school improvement planning while Baldrige serves as a state, national, and international source of recognition through organizational benchmarking. NCA personalizes its work with schools so that one school

improvement plan is developed containing Baldrige elements and NCA standards. NCA District Accreditation process assists districts in evaluating the implementation of Baldrige-based strategies and suggests next steps for moving forward.

You must meet the NCA standards and develop a continuous improvement plan focused on improving student performance. Baldrige fosters an alignment between district, school, classroom, and learner that is supported by NCA standards and leads to the implementation of Transitions, NCA exemplary school improvement model. In addition, the district's and/or school's implementation of the Baldrige organizational framework may be evaluated through NCA peer review process and lead to District Accreditation.

Benefits Achieved By Other Organization

Economic Professors Albert M. Link, University of North Carolina and John T. Scott, Dartmouth College recently examined the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Program and estimated the total economic benefits of the program to the U.S. economy at almost 25 billion dollars for a benefit ratio of 207 to 1. They determined the total operational costs at 119 million dollars.

the following is from Baldrige Plus.com:

Baldrige benefits

"Applying for the Baldrige Award will help US companies improve their competitive performance. The application and review process for the Award is the best, most cost effective, and comprehensive organization health audit you

can get."

Arnold Weimerskirch,

former chairman, Panel of Judges, MBNQA, and VP of Quality, Honeywell, Inc.

"The Baldrige process forced us to take a long, hard look at our practices, our people, and our customer relationships in objective and measurable ways which we had not done before. The results were sometimes uncomfortable because both our internal evaluations and objective feedback reports from the outside were not always flattering. They did, however, provide valuable information to help us identify and implement improvements that lead to substantial performance improvements. In fact, many of our competitors now benchmark their operations against ours. The process helped us become a better company."

Edward J. Shultz, Chairman and CEO, Dana Commercial Credit Corp., 1996
Baldrige Award Recipient.

"Internal assessments play a valuable role. However, at some point in the journey, you need the outside perspective that only an application can secure."

Wendell Weeks, Senior VP & GM, Corning Telecom. Products, 1995 Baldrige
Award Recipient

"Participating in the Baldrige process energized improvement efforts. That energy resulted from the team motivation that occurs when pursuing a common goal. That trend has continued. We have reduced the number of process defects to only one-tenth what they were at the time we won the Baldrige. We now take one week on production processes that several years ago took four weeks. Our

cost is now 20 to 30 percent less in many manufacturing areas, as compared to several years ago"

Phil Roether, VP, Product Production Processes, Raytheon Systems Company, (Formerly TI Defense Systems), 1992 Baldrige Award Recipient.

"In my opinion, win or not, the greatest value in applying for the award is the feedback report compiled by the examiners. The objective evaluation prepared by a team of well-trained, hard working experts provided the information and focus necessary for us to cause positive change in our organization."

Henry A. Bradshaw, Former President, Worldwide Armstrong World Industries
1995 Baldrige Award Recipient.

"More than any other thing, applying for the award encourages a process of organization introspection. The process provides an unparalleled opportunity to better understand your customers, people, procedures and company culture."

James W. Selzer, Senior VP, Customer Care, AT&T Universal Card Services
1992 Baldrige Award Recipient

Future Applications

Many educational institutions are seeing the value of the criteria and using it for accreditation. This trend will grow in the future as more become involved and realize the benefits gained.

At NTC a new 20 million dollar Health Services Center will be operational beginning January 2005. This facility and its systems were designed with the Baldrige Process in mind. Improvement efforts will be centered on the Baldrige Criteria.

Chapter 3

Methodologies of Procedures

Introduction

Northcentral Technical College, in an effort to continually improve has chosen the MBNQA as its model to achieve excellence in the operation of the organization. Along with this commitment to align to the Baldrige criteria have come specific initiatives based on guidelines set in the criteria. It is important to assess the success of the application of these initiatives. The research conducted here is intended to demonstrate some of the benefits gained. This chapter explains the methodology used in this study.

Research Design

This is a descriptive study that will identify benefits gained applying the MBNQA criteria through the use of a survey instrument. The survey will be sent to employees of the Northcentral Technical College who will be asked to complete the questionnaire and return it.

The survey data will be analyzed and the finding reported along with the summary, conclusion, and recommendation to the NTC forward committee in charge of continuous improvement.

Population

The population of this study consists of employees of Northcentral Technical College and includes paraprofessionals, teamsters, faculty, and adjunct faculty, confidence staff, non-represented, EMS, electricians, middle leadership and executive leadership.

Instrumentation

A written survey was developed and distributed to all employees encouraging their participation. Most of the survey questions relate to Category #5 of the MBNQA which deals with faculty and staffs focus. Respondents have been asked to rate each attribute using a Likert Scale (e.g.; rating 1-5, 1=Very dissatisfied, 5=Very satisfied)

These survey questions were to assess the importance of the following workplace issues:

- The employee experience at NTC inspires me to do my best work.
- I have received recognition or praise for doing good work in the last seven days.
- Learners receive an excellent education at NTC.
- I trust my co-workers to do what they say they are going to do.
- My opinions count at NTC.
- The work environment at NTC is more inspiring than other employment options available to me outside NTC.
- NTC supports my pursuit of outside goals.
- I have the opportunity to do what I do best everyday at NTC.
- NTC's operational principles are consistently practiced at NTC.
- I feel inspired to create a rich learning experience for learners at NTC.
- There is someone at NTC that who cares about me as a person.
- I am able to do my best work at NTC.
- I feel energized when I'm at work at NTC.
- I consistently practice the operational principles at NTC.
- The employee experience motivates me to support the goals at the college.

- I feel a strong sense of connection to other employees at NTC.
- There is someone at NTC who encourages my development.
- I can confidently recommend NTC as a place to work.
- I am very satisfied with NTC as a place to work.

Other questions relate to employee demographics and employee commitment to NTC was included. A copy of the survey results is attached and labeled Appendix A and Appendix B.

Wisconsin Challenge

In addition to the employee survey, an evaluation of the organization using the Baldrige Criteria was conducted.

The Wisconsin Challenge was used which helps organizations to do a self-evaluation. This approach assisted NTC employees in the understanding of the criteria. Small groups were organized and assigned to evaluate each of the Seven Categories of the standard.

Data Collection

The survey will be distributed to all NTC employees. Respondents will be given adequate time to respond to the survey. A return rate of greater than 25% is expected to provide satisfactory valid information.

Summary

This descriptive survey will provide NTC with data to evaluate the success of college initiatives based on MBNQA criteria. When the surveys are completed and returned, a quantitative analysis will be done comparing the results to specific MBNQA criteria.

The Formal beginning of NTC's journey to align itself to the Baldrige Criteria began in August 1999. Prior to this date the college had a group of employees called the Team Leadership Council. It was felt that many good things were implemented by the TLC, but it was time for a change. A group called the NTC Forward emerged from the initial discussion and consisted of members from faculty, administration, paraprofessional, teamsters and NESPA.

The initial and current outcomes of this group are listed below:

- Establish a standing committee to center its efforts on activities that will engage and develop people to support learning.
- Received a commitment from committee members to a long-term relationship with this standing committee and to ask the same for future members.
- Develop a strategic plan that will allow the college to systematically review, self-evaluate, and establish performance excellence in all of NTC's systems utilizing the Baldrige Education Criteria as a guide.
- Utilize a proactive approach to communicate with and engage others throughout the college.
- Develop measurable criteria to assess progress and to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement.

In addition to the outcomes, the following mission statement was established:

Mission statement: Engage the NTC community in strategies that support and optimize learning.

The model chosen to begin this journey was the Wisconsin Challenge is a self-assessment process that allows organizations to "gauge" how they measure up to the

criteria of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. Ermer (1998) states the following:

The Wisconsin Challenge consisted of these three steps:

1. Conduct a self-assessment.
2. Identity the “vital few” opportunities for improvement.
3. Taking Action.

Guidelines used by the college during the self-assessment were as follows:

- Assemble a team including representatives of different functions and different levels in your organization or unit;
- Involve at least one key leader in your organization or unit;
- Have designated facilitator for team meetings;
- Have a designated timekeeper for team meetings; and
- Maintain a manageable team size, so that everyone can participate and your team can still be effective.

Our team was then divided into seven sub-teams to address each category of the criteria.

The process went like this:

- The whole team starts by working together on an assessment of Category 1, Leadership.
- Each sub-team then conducts the self-assessment for its designated category or categories.

- When all of the sub-team work is done, all teams reconvene to report their findings to one another. This sharing can lead to even more ideas and learning for everyone.
- Then, the whole team works together to identify the “vital few” opportunities for improvement.
- Last, the complete team defines possible action steps.

The outcome of this assessment was a preliminary evaluation in implementing continuous performance improvement.

The following scoring guidelines were used during the process:

- The self-assessment exercises helped the team develop general understanding of the Wisconsin Forward Award Criteria. The real benefit of going through the self-assessment process was that it helped to identify key opportunities for organizational improvement.
- Scoring the self-assessment helped us to focus on those key improvement opportunities.

The following scoring system was used:

- **APPROACH:** The plan, the intent, the way of organizing or “getting ready” to implement quality and performance improvement in our organization. We asked: How do we go about addressing the improvement concepts in the Wisconsin Forward Award Criteria? Are our improvement processes implemented in a planned, systematic way?
- **DEPLOYMENT:** The extent of our implementation of performance improvement. We asked: How many of our employees are involved in our improvement activities? How long have they been in place? How much and how often are they

used? Are all activities implemented in primary and support area of our organization?

- **RESULTS:** The outcome of our performance improvement efforts. We asked: What benefits have we derived from our improvement activities? How are we currently doing, in quantitative terms? Have there been positive trends in our business results over the last few years? How do we compare to our competitors? Or, if we don't have competitors, how do we compare similar organizations?
- **SCORES:** The scores for each Category were graded as: "inadequate," "fair," "good," or "excellent."

The following table was used to assist in the scoring process:

Table 1: Scoring Table

Score	General Assessment
Inadequate	There is little or no evidence of effort in this category. Performance and quality improvement issues are of low priority to our organization.
Fair	There is evidence of effective efforts in some areas. Some good processes exist, but they may not be well integrated throughout most primary and support areas. Many approaches are in the early stages of development. We need to achieve further deployment of performance improvement practices, more continuous improvement cycles, and stronger results clearly linked to performance improvement efforts.
Good	There is evidence of effective efforts in many areas, and outstanding in some. Deployment and results show strength, and there are some improvement trend data. Some efforts are still in the early stages of development, however. Additional

	improvement cycles are needed.
Excellent	There are effective efforts in most areas, and outstanding in many. We have good integration and good to excellent results in all areas. We also have strong, positive trends in most areas. Our organization has fully deployed its performance and quality efforts are systematic and widespread. We are a state, national, or world leader in several areas.

The following description for each Category and Questions were used during the assessment process and taken directly from the Wisconsin Challenge:

STEP 1: CONDUCTING A PRELIMINARY SELF-ASSESSMENT

Category Exercises—Each Category is divided into two parts:

Part 1: Questions and information.

Part 2: Recording and analyzing your self-assessment.

Category 1—Leadership

The *Leadership* category asks you to begin with an examination of your executives with the most responsibility. Some traits to consider include personal leadership and involvement in creating and sustaining core values, company direction, quality improvement expectations, customer focus, and a leadership system that promotes performance excellence. You also are asked to look at how the values and expectations of your organization are integrated into the leadership system, and how you continually learn and improve. Also examined is your organization's commitment to its societal responsibilities and citizenship. Specific areas to assess in your own organization are:

- Leadership System

Senior executives' personal involvement in setting direction and in developing and maintaining a leadership system for performance and quality excellence. How senior executives create and reinforce values, expectations, a strong customer focus and continuous learning. How the organization's customer focus and performance expectations are integrated into its leadership system and structure.

- Company Responsibility and Citizenship

How the organization includes its responsibilities to the public in its performance improvement practices and how it supports and strengthens its citizenship responsibilities.

Part One: Self-Assessment Exercise

Ask yourself the following questions about your organization:

1. How do our senior leaders tangibly demonstrate that a commitment to total quality and performance improvement principles and to customers "start at the top?"
2. What are the mission, vision and values that are articulated by our senior leaders? Do these statements emphasize the importance of total quality of our organization's products, services, programs, and people? Do these statements provide a customer focus and direction for employees?
3. Have our senior leaders created a leadership system which focuses attention on the mission, vision and values and permits good communication down and back up the organization? Define the leadership system and discuss its effectiveness.

4. How do we communicate and reinforce values, expectations, and directions throughout the workforce?
5. How does our organization demonstrate a commitment to continuous learning and improvement?
6. How often do we review progress to ensure that we are moving toward our planned goals?
How are these reviews conducted, and do they produce actions to improve performance?
7. How do our senior leaders determine the effectiveness of our leadership system and their own leadership skills? How do we use this information to generate improvement actions?
8. How do we determine what our responsibilities to the public are? How do we ensure we are "doing the right thing?"
9. How do we determine the methods we will use to support and strengthen the community or communities in which we operate?
10. How do we determine the effectiveness of our public responsibility and community involvement activities?

Part Two: Recording your Self Assessment

On a flip chart, list your organization's strengths in relation to the questions on the previous page. In other words, list what you believe is done well in your organization.

Next list opportunities for improvement. Capture ideas on what needs to be changed and improved. Then, using the Scoring Guidelines on Pages 10 and 11, agree on an

appropriate score for your organization for this Category. Your flip chart page(s) might look something like this:

Table 2: Strengths and Weaknesses—Leadership

CATEGORY 1—LEADERSHIP

Strengths	Opportunities for Improvement
Question 1	Question 1
Question 2	Question 2
Question 3	Question 3
Question 4	Question 4
Question 5	Question 5
Question 6	Question 6
Question 7	Question 7
Question 8	Question 8
Question 9	Question 9
Question 10	Question 10

Our score for this Category:

Excellent Good Fair Inadequate

Category 2—Strategic Planning

The *Strategic Planning* category asks you to examine your organization's planning process, how it sets strategic directions, and how it determines key action plans. Also examined is how the plans are translated into an effective performance management system.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The process for developing a strategy for the long term and a plan to achieve that strategy. Development of action plans to communicate and align critical requirements, determine gaps, and provide a basis for tracking performance.

COMPANY STRATEGY

The strategy and action plans and how they are deployed.

Part One: Self-Assessment Exercise

Ask yourself the following questions about your organization:

1. How do we develop our strategy? Is there a well-defined, well-documented process for accomplishing this action?
2. Who is involved in the planning process and is planning done consistently, or just when someone feels the need arise?
3. How do we consider customer requirements and expectations in our strategy development process?
4. How do we consider competitors as we develop our strategy?
5. How do we develop specific action plans once our strategy has been determined?
6. How do we deploy the action plans so that all work units, teams, and employees understand their specific responsibilities in achieving plan requirements?
7. What are our key performance requirements and how do we measure if we are achieving them?

8. How do we develop our human resource plans so that we enable our people to achieve high levels of performance? What are those plans?
9. How are resources committed to achieve plan requirements, such as capital, equipment, facilities, training, and personnel?
10. How do we project what our key measures or indicators of performance will be in the future? How can we expect to compare to competitors or similar organizations?

Part Two: Recording your Self-Assessment

On a flip chart, list your organization's strengths in relation to the questions on the previous page. In other words, list what you believe is done well in your organization.

Next list opportunities for improvement. Capture ideas on what needs to be changed and improved. Then, using the Scoring Guidelines on pages 10 and 11, agree on an appropriate score for your organization for this Category. Your flip chart page(s) might look something like this:

Table 3: Strengths and Weaknesses—Strategic Planning

CATEGORY 2—STRATEGIC PLANNING

Strengths	Opportunities for Improvement
Question 1	Question 1
Question 2	Question 2
Question 3	Question 3
Question 4	Question 4
Question 5	Question 5

Question 6	Question 6
Question 7	Question 7
Question 8	Question 8
Question 9	Question 9
Question10	Question 10

Our score for this Category:

Excellent Good Fair Inadequate

Category 3—Customer and Market Focus

The *Customer and Market Focus* category asks you to examine your relationships with your customers. You are asked to describe how you determine their requirements, now and in the future. You should also examine how you determine whether or not they are satisfied with your products, processes, and services. Specific areas to assess in your own organization are:

CUSTOMER AND MARKET KNOWLEDGE

How your organization determines customers' near-term and longer-term requirements and expectations and develops strategies to understand and anticipate needs.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND RELATIONSHIP ENHANCEMENT How the organization builds relationships with its customers, and how it uses the information to improve those relationships and to improve products, processes, and services. How the organization determines its customers' satisfaction, and how it determines its own customer satisfaction relative to competitors or other providers.

Part One: Self-Assessment Exercise

Ask yourself the following questions about your organization:

1. Have we identified the major products, processes, or services we are providing? If so, who are the customers or constituents of those products, processes, or services?
2. How do we identify different customer groups and/or market segments? Do we consider the customers of competitors or other potential customers?
3. How do we determine customers' near-term and longer-term requirements and expectations?
4. How do we determine what product or service features are of the greatest value to customers?
5. Have we developed relationships with our customers or constituents? Do we continually follow up after they receive or use a product, program, or service? Do we know what would delight our customers?
6. How do we provide easy access and avenues for our customers or constituents to obtain information on services we provide them, or to complain or voice their concerns?
7. How do we determine requirements for our customer contact employees? What are they? Do we train our employees to provide enhanced customer service?
8. How do we resolve complaints and feedback received by all organizational units? Do we do it effectively and promptly?

9. How do we determine customer or constituent satisfaction? How do we determine customer or constituent satisfaction of our competitors or similar providers?

Part Two: Recording your Self Assessment

On a flip chart, list your organization's strengths in relation to the questions on the previous page. In other words, list what you believe is done well in your organization in focusing on your customers. Next list opportunities for improvement. Capture ideas on what needs to be changed and improved. Then, using the Scoring Guidelines on pages 10 and 11, agree on an appropriate score for your organization for this Category. Your flip chart page(s) might look something like this:

Table 4: Strengths and Weaknesses—Customer and Market Focus

CATEGORY 3—CUSTOMER AND MARKET FOCUS

Strengths	Opportunities for Improvement
Question 1	Question 1
Question 2	Question 2
Question 3	Question 3
Question 4	Question 4
Question 5	Question 5
Question 6	Question 6
Question 7	Question 7
Question 8	Question 8
Question 9	Question 9
Question 10	Question 10

Our score for this Category:

Excellent

Good

Fair

Inadequate

Category 4—Information and Analysis

The *Information and Analysis* category asks you to examine the use and management of valid data and information to drive excellence and improve overall performance compared to competitors or similar organizations. In other words, this is the "nerve center" for the alignment of an organization's information systems with its strategic direction. Also examined is the adequacy of the organization's data, information, and analysis system to support "management by fact" and to support improvement of the organization's processes, services, internal operations, human resource capabilities, and customer focus. Specific areas to assess in your own organization are:

SELECTION AND USE OF INFORMATION AND DATA

The types of data and information the organization collects and uses for planning and management (e.g., data on employees, customers, processes, suppliers); and how the organization uses the data to improve overall performance of the organization.

SELECTION AND USE OF COMPARATIVE INFORMATION The types of data and information the organization collects on competitors, similar providers, and world or national leaders in the field (e.g., data on the quality of other organizations' products, processes, and services, or data on other organizations' customer

satisfaction); and how these benchmark or comparative data are analyzed, are used to improve overall performance, and used to support overall operational objectives.

ANALYSIS AND REVIEW OF COMPANY PERFORMANCE

The integration of data and information from all parts of the organization and how they are analyzed to support reviews, decisions, and planning. The reviews conducted by the organization to assess progress gaps and identify improvement priorities.

Part One: Self-Assessment Exercise

Ask yourself the following questions about your organization:

1. What process do we use to determine which data are important to use and should be collected? What are those key data and how do they relate to key organization processes and improvement goals?
2. How do we ensure that our data are valid, reliable, up-to-date, and readily available to all appropriate organizational units?
3. How do we get information from data users within the organization and from outside to understand their needs and requirements? What is our process to improve our data collection and management based upon these inputs?
4. How do we determine what kinds of information to seek about competitors, public agencies, or other providers, and about the very best organizations in our field?
5. How do we decide which organizations to use as sources of comparative and benchmark data? Do we go outside our own industry?

6. How do we use competitive/comparative data to set goals and targets for performance improvement?
7. How do we use benchmark information to generate improvement in our processes?
8. How do we improve all of our data and information processes, including collection of data, deployment to users, and analysis?
9. How do we integrate data from all parts of the organization and analyze it to assess overall performance in key areas? What measures are used to determine our performance relative to customers, our operations, competitors and finances?
10. Do we conduct reviews at various levels of the organization to determine our progress relative to our goals and plans? What are those reviews and how are the findings used to identify improvement actions?

Part Two: Recording your Self-Assessment

On a flip chart, list your organization's strengths in relation to the questions on the previous page. In other words, list what you believe is done well in your organization. Next list opportunities for improvement. Capture ideas on what needs to be changed and improved. Then, using the Scoring Guidelines on pages 10 and 11, agree on an appropriate score for your organization for this Category. Your flip chart page(s) might look something like this:

Table 5: Strengths and Weaknesses—Information and Analysis

CATEGORY 4—INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS

Strengths	Opportunities for Improvement
Question 1	Question 1
Question 2	Question 2
Question 3	Question 3
Question 4	Question 4
Question 5	Question 5
Question 6	Question 6
Question 7	Question 7
Question 8	Question 8
Question 9	Question 9
Question 10	Question 10

Our score for this Category:

Excellent

Good

Fair

Inadequate

Category 5—Human Resource Focus

The *Human Resource Focus* category asks you to examine how the workforce is enabled in order to develop and realize its full potential and how that is aligned with the organization's performance improvement objectives. An organization that is committed to human resource excellence maintains a work environment that is conducive to performance and quality excellence,

full participation, and personal and organizational growth. Specific areas to assess in your own organization are:

WORK SYSTEMS

How the organization's work and job design and compensation and recognition approaches enable and encourage employees to contribute effectively to achieving high performance objectives.

EMPLOYEE EDUCATION, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT How the organization determines what types of education and training employees need, how the employees' knowledge and skills are used, how the organization encourages the development of a multi-skilled workforce, and how education and training are delivered, reinforced, and evaluated.

EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING AND SATISFACTION

How the organization maintains a work environment and climate conducive to the well-being and personal development of all employees.

Part One: Self-Assessment Exercise

Ask yourself the following questions about your organization:

1. How do we provide opportunities for individual initiative and responsibility for improving the organization's work processes?
2. How do we give employees the opportunity to manage themselves how work gets done?
How widespread are these approaches?

3. How do we create a more flexible work force and encourage effective communications and shared learning across the organization?
4. How does our compensation and recognition systems reinforce our approaches to involving employees to a greater degree, working in teams, and achieving higher levels of performance?
5. How do we determine what training is needed? Do we ensure that training is linked to organization plans and needs and delivered just-in-time?
6. How do we design, deliver, reinforce, and evaluate our employee education and training?
7. What focus do we place on health and safety in the workplace? Identify health and safety initiatives that are underway.
8. How do we make sure that our staff maintains a high level of satisfaction? What facilities, services, activities, and opportunities are available?
9. How do we determine the level of employee well-being, satisfaction, and motivation?
10. How do we use the information we obtain from employees to improve our human resource activities? Do we ensure that actions are taken in response to employee issues?

Part Two: Recording your Self Assessment

On a flip chart, list your organization's strengths in relation to the questions on the previous page. In other words, list what you believe is done well in your organization.

Next list opportunities for improvement. Capture ideas on what needs to be changed and

improved. Then, using the Scoring Guidelines on Pages 10 and 11, agree on an appropriate score for your organization for this Category. Your flip chart page(s) might look something like this:

Table 6: Strengths and Weaknesses—Human Resource Focus

CATEGORY 5—HUMAN RESOURCE FOCUS

Strengths	Opportunities for Improvement
Question 1	Question 1
Question 2	Question 2
Question 3	Question 3
Question 4	Question 4
Question 5	Question 5
Question 6	Question 6
Question 7	Question 7
Question 8	Question 8
Question 9	Question 9
Question 10	Question 10

Our score for this Category:

Excellent

Good

Fair

Inadequate

Category 6—Process Management

The *Process Management* Category asks you to examine the systematic processes used by your organization to pursue ever-higher quality and overall organizational performance. Examined are

the key elements of process management: integration of quality into the design and development of new products, processes, and services; management of every step in your organization's processes, including primary and support processes; management of supplier quality; and continuous improvement of your processes. Specific areas to assess in your own organization are:

MANAGEMENT OF PRODUCT AND SERVICE PROCESSES

How products, processes, and services are designed and introduced to meet quality and operational performance requirements. How the processes for the primary purposes of your organization (such as production of goods and services, or delivery of a government program, or delivery of instruction) are managed and improved.

MANAGEMENT OF SUPPORT PROCESSES

How the business processes and support services are managed so that current requirements are met and quality and operational performance are continuously improved. Support services include areas such as clerical, accounting, information, marketing, and purchasing.

MANAGEMENT OF SUPPLIER AND PARTNERING PROCESSES

How the quality of materials and services furnished by suppliers is assured and improved. Is there a partnering process?

Part One: Self-Assessment Exercise

Ask yourself the following questions about your organization:

1. What process do we use to develop designs for products, programs, services or delivery processes to prevent quality and performance problems?
2. How are customer requirements "built into" our designs and into the development of new products, processes, and/or services?
3. How do we take into account future needs or expectations when designing new products, processes, and/or services?
4. How do we determine the quality of the products, processes, and services to ensure they perform as they were designed?
5. How do we manage our processes to identify improvement opportunities?
6. How do we continuously improve all of our processes to ensure ever-improving performance of our organization?
7. What organizational mechanisms (such as teams) do we use to pursue improvement opportunities?
8. How do we manage and improve the quality of our support services? Support services include such diverse activities as legal services, cafeteria services, payroll, purchasing, information and supplies, etc.
9. How do we identify requirements for our suppliers? What methods do we use to communicate these requirements?

10. How do we ensure our suppliers are improving in their efforts to meet our requirements? How do we provide them feedback on their performance and prevention approaches?

Part Two: Recording your Self Assessment

On a flip chart, list your organization's strengths in relation to the questions on the previous page. In other words, list what you believe is done well in your organization. Next list opportunities for improvement. Capture ideas on what needs to be changed and improved. Then, using the Scoring Guidelines on Pages 10 and 11, agree on an appropriate score for your organization for this Category. Your flip chart page(s) might look something like this:

Table 7: Strengths and Weaknesses—Process Management

CATEGORY 6—PROCESS MANAGEMENT

Strengths	Opportunities for Improvement
Question 1	Question 1
Question 2	Question 2
Question 3	Question 3
Question 4	Question 4
Question 5	Question 5
Question 6	Question 6
Question 7	Question 7
Question 8	Question 8
Question 9	Question 9

Question10	Question 10
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Our score for this Category:

Excellent

Good

Fair

Inadequate

Category 7—Business Results

The *Business Results* category asks you to examine the achievements of your organization, based on a number of key measurements. Looking at these measures, you are asked to describe the current levels of performance and recent improvement trends. You are also asked to compare your results with competitors and/or providers of similar services.

Specific areas to assess in your organization are:

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION RESULTS

Current levels and recent trends in the most important measures of customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction and comparison of those levels and trends with competitors or other providers.

FINANCIAL AND MARKET RESULTS

Current levels and recent trends for the most important measures of financial performance and marketplace performance, and comparison of those levels and trends with competitors, other providers, or appropriate benchmarks.

HUMAN RESOURCE RESULTS

Current levels and trends in key measures, and/or indicators of employee development, well-being, satisfaction, work system improvement and effectiveness of HR focus.

SUPPLIER AND PARTNER RESULTS

Current levels and recent improvement trends in supplier and partner performance and comparison of those levels and trends with competitors, other providers, and with key benchmarks.

COMPANY-SPECIFIC RESULTS

Current levels and recent trends in all key measures of product, process, and service quality, and comparison of those levels and trends with competitors or other providers. Also, the most important measures of key process and support activity performance are included.

Upon completion of the Category Assessment a tally sheet was created to give a clear picture of the results.

Self-Assessment Tally Sheet

Category 1—Leadership

Excellent Good Fair Inadequate

Category 2—Strategic Planning

Excellent Good Fair Inadequate

Category 3—Customer and Market Focus

Excellent Good Fair Inadequate

Category 4—Information and Analysis

Excellent Good Fair Inadequate

Category 5—Human Resource Focus

Excellent Good Fair Inadequate

Category 6—Process Management

Excellent Good Fair Inadequate

Category 7—Business Results

Excellent Good Fair Inadequate

Overall Assessment: _____

By completing this Self-Assessment, the college took its first step toward initiating a continuous quality and performance improvement effort. We gained a sense of our organization's achievements relative to the general requirements of each Wisconsin Forward Award / Malcolm Baldrige Award Criteria.

Activities that followed the assessment were:

1. We reviewed as a whole team the opportunities for improvement that all our sub-teams have identified.
2. We decided which areas to address first. What areas must be improved right away to make the most significant difference in the quality and performance achievement of our organization?
3. Agreed on the best way to measure our results.
4. Prepared a corrective action plan.
5. Write a feedback report.

Chapter 4

Findings and Analysis of Results

Results of the Wisconsin Challenge Evaluation are shown by the categories as follows:

1.0 Leadership

The *Leadership* category examines the organization's leadership system and senior leaders' personal leadership. It examines how senior leaders and the leadership system address values, organization directions, performance expectations, a focus on customers and other stakeholders, learning, and innovation. Also examined is how the organization addresses its societal responsibilities and provides support to key communities.

Strengths:

- (+) The executive group has a demonstrated commitment to the NTC Forward process. Leadership from the top is essential to assure implementation, commitment, and follow-through when applying continuous improvement philosophies. Upper management is in position to review and allocate resources needed during this ongoing effort.
- (+) Regional director involvement with the Learning Team brings community involvement to the larger group. The Malcolm Baldrige approach to organizational management is highly focused on customer needs and expectation. Involving the communities served is the only way to ensure customer satisfaction. Customer input is vital in the process of designing, developing, and implementing products and services that go beyond the needs of the customers.

- (+) Employer and graduate follow-ups are conducted. Proactively seeking input after services have been provided is an excellent way to measure effectiveness and level of satisfaction. Trends can also be scrutinized to gauge the rate of improvement in areas identified as vital to the success of the college. This follow-up allows the college to react in a timely manner and initiate corrective action as needed. Lack of such feedback could cause the college to be unprepared to react to negative trends quickly enough.
- (+) The college has a documented mission and vision statement, value statements, end statements, and operating principles which support learning and are customer focused. All of these provide employees with a common goal and purpose. A solid foundation for the organization has been created and is essential to allow the college to build into the future. Dr. W. Edwards Deming's first point of his 14 points of effective management is to create a constancy of purpose for improvement of product and service. The conglomerate of these statements creates this constancy of purpose.

Opportunities for Improvement:

- (-) Communication up and down the organization needs a tremendous amount of work. Lack of good communication causes confusion, errors, and mistrust. Value statements, principle statements, and the like quickly erode when communication is lacking, poor, or not timely. The organization has many vehicles for communication in place, but it is unclear how effective the communication is throughout the entire college.

- (-) We are not sure we are as good as we should be at making people live the operating principles. Talking the talk is one thing; walking is another. Stated operating principles are integrity, respect, learning, collaboration, responsibility, innovation, and service. These are often difficult to measure, but become even more important in an environment of shared leadership. The shared leadership philosophy becomes less effective each time the operating principles are violated.
- (-) There is a disconnect between what the Board of Trustees and President's staff work on and the remainder of the college. World-class organizations utilize a short-and-long-term strategic plan that everyone in the organization understands and supports. All departmental and individual goals and objectives are set based on the strategy of the organization. Lack of this type of approach can hinder progress toward the goals that are vital to the long-term success of the college. Resources can be drained on efforts that satisfy individual interest rather than organization interests.
- (-) The shared leadership system appears to be ineffective. Most world-class organizations are world class because they embrace shared leadership. This trend is continuing and is supported by the Malcolm Baldrige philosophy. Xerox, a winner of the Baldrige Award, and heavily involved with shared leadership, learned early on in their efforts to align to the criteria that you cannot empower incompetence. What they mean by this is that employees need proper training to operate in a shared leadership environment. We cannot assume that shared leadership will occur by itself. Dr. Joseph Juran makes the argument that for people to be in a state of "self-control" they need the following:

1. They need to know exactly what is expected of them.
2. They need to be able to measure how they are doing in regard to what is expected.
3. They need to have the means to adjust when what they are doing does not match the expectations.

If any one of these are lacking, we are not in a state of self-control. People need to be in a state of self control to be empowered and support shared leadership.

2.0 Strategic Planning

The *Strategic Planning* category examines how the organization sets strategic directions, and how it develops the critical strategies and action plans to support the directions. Also examined are how plans are deployed and how performance is tracked.

Strengths:

- (+) The NTC Board of Trustees and staff seek input from multiple internal and external stakeholders through a variety of methods. Input from multiple sources is a good way to assure information is received that represents the needs of all the various stakeholders. Involvement from internal as well as external resources is key in developing a strategic plan that satisfies the requirements of the standard.
- (+) Progress is measured in a variety of ways including the preparation of end statements and executive limitation monitoring reports that are annually reported to the NTC Board of Trustees.

Opportunities for Improvement:

- (-) Document and communicate strategic planning process and key performance requirements consistently to all staff to ensure alignment on district vision to achieve desired outcomes.
- Ensure consistent application of existing planning processes throughout NTC.
 - Monitor and align our S-Unit and E-Unit operational and action plans with the college's strategic plan.
 - Train staff on how to do strategic, operational, and project planning.

World-class organizations lead their organization with the use of short- and long-term strategic plans. All activities at all levels of the organization have direct links to the plan. Individual and departmental goals and objectives are based on and originate from the strategy. This assures that all employees are working on the right things that are needed to move them forward^ It appears that NTC has a system in place to set strategy, but lacks the communication necessary to support the plan. Employees are not all aware of the plan or understand it. Because of this, the college is at risk of efforts carried out that do not necessarily link to the plan. A systematic plan with predictable outcomes drives continuous improvement. Pockets of the college are supporting the plan, but others are not. These inconsistencies prevent the organization from achieving goals and objectives at a rate of improvement that is equal to its full potential. More specifically, it was mentioned that S-Units and E-Units need to be aligned to and monitored against the progress toward the strategic

plan. These units are the fundamental operational functions of the college. They need to all be clearly aligned to the plan.

- (-) Consistently tie strategic planning efforts with allocation of all resources: financial, human, etc. The most effective use of resources can be achieved by aligning those resources to the strategy. Without this alignment, random improvements can and will occur, but the overall rate of improvement for the college will be minimized. Limited resources need to be carefully distributed to areas that clearly are aligned to the overall strategy.

- (-) Develop a cogent human resource plan to enable high levels of performance. This area of improvement not only applies to the strategic planning category, but to several others as well. A solid human resource plan is fundamental to the successful implementation of any strategic plan. The Baldrige criterion asks us to "explain how critical action plan requirements, including human resource plans, are aligned and developed to the strategy." This is a major requirement of the standard, and we need to be sure all employees support the strategic plan.

3.0 Customer and Market Focus

The *Customer and Market Focus* category examines how the organization determines requirements, expectations, and preferences of customers and markets. Also examined is how the organization builds relationships with customers and determines their satisfaction.

Strengths:

- (+) The Leede Employer Survey - Needs Assessment of Area Employers—The Leede employer survey is an excellent way to generate information regarding customer/student/community needs and expectations. The results of this survey will be analyzed and utilized to assist in developing a strategic plan. How we use the information generated with this survey is critical. Information combined with other inputs should be used to develop action plans to support improvement. Consideration should be given to the frequency at which we conduct such surveys. Customer needs are continually changing. A need identified in this survey may be different a year from now, given the rate of change that exists in the world today. The college may want to conduct follow-up surveys and consider the frequency of such surveys in order to remain current with ever-changing needs.
- (+) Program expansion for fiscal year 2000/01 considered customer needs. Any program expansions should always be tied to specific and measurable customer needs.
- (+) S-Unit and E-Unit decision making vs. dean/management decision making, i.e., decisions made by those closest to the situations—Organizations have discovered that the most effective decision making comes from those closest to the situation, provided that they have the necessary skills, knowledge, and systems in place. Although we identified this as a strength, we also identified this as an opportunity in the strategic planning category stating that we were unsure if the S-Units and E-Units were all aligned to the strategic plan. The danger here is in making decisions that are in the best interest of a particular E-Unit or individual and not in the best interest of

the entire organization. This disconnect can lead to inefficient use of resources and critical customer needs not being met.

- (+) The Regional Leadership Team (RLT) is connected to area business and industry and their communities. The criterion calls for us to identify customer groups and market segments. The RLT structure and activities within their regions help us to meet this requirement. Customer needs vary from region to region, and a regional leader in tune with their customer base allows us to quickly react to and articulate their needs.

Opportunities for Improvement:

- (-) Gather and prioritize internal/external customer needs and make decisions based upon customer priorities—Customer needs both internal and external are the key drivers in successful organizations. World-class organizations go beyond customer satisfaction and discover ways to delight customers, providing them things that were unexpected. By doing this, they establish loyalty which translates to repeat business and positive referrals that generate new business. In order to satisfy and delight the external customer, we must first identify the needs to the internal customers and provide them with the products and services vital to their success. The college needs to develop and implement a systematic approach that assures that all the internal/external needs are identified/prioritized and developed to go beyond customer satisfaction to customer delight.
- (-) Marketing tools may not send the desired message/image—Customers and potential customers need to have a high level of confidence in our ability to meet their needs.

The way we market our products and services plays a key role in building this confidence.

- (-) Administrative/support services need to make decisions based upon instructional needs and recognize instruction and the learner as the customer—The strategic plan should provide the college with the critical success factors deemed necessary for current and future success. Progress toward the successful implementation of the plan will ensure that instructional needs are being met. Decisions made counter to the plan should not be allowed unless a change occurs and is justified.

- (-) A structured complaint process is not in place, and communication is lacking to our customer. The lack of an effective complaint system is putting the college at risk. Customer dissatisfaction requires immediate attention if we expect to retain the current customers. It is impossible to know the reasons for dissatisfied customers without an effective complaint system in place that is deployed throughout all areas and functions of the college. Dissatisfied customers will spread the "bad news" rapidly and extensively when not dealt with properly. On the other hand, an effective complaint management system can turn a bad experience into a positive one. Everyone understands that errors can occur from time to time. How we handle those errors makes the difference. Without a complaint system in place, we often don't even know the errors are occurring. Consistent, positive complaint handling is impossible.

4.0 Information and Analysis

The *Information and Analysis* category examines the selection, management, and effectiveness of use of information and data to support key organization processes and action plans, and the organization's performance management system.

Strengths:

- (+) Lots of useful data and information are available to us—The information that organizations gather, analyze, and take action on is critical to their success. The information needs to be accurate, reliable, easily accessible, and deployed throughout the entire organization. Many forms of information are gathered at the college and available to employees. If and how this information is used for continuous improvement will be discussed in the opportunities for improvement section of this category.
- (+) Active leadership role of the board (PQMs, Ends Statements)-The board has been proactive in determining the information that is important to collect and analyze. The information that we choose to collect and analyze is important to measure against the strategic plan.
- (+) Accreditation by outside agencies is a good model of using data and performance standards to drive actions and decisions—Outside agencies such as NCA are an excellent way to receive an objective view on how the college is doing in critical areas. These audits assure that minimum standards are consistently met. These agencies also provide information on how we compare to other technical colleges.

This feedback is valuable to assist in future planning and identifying areas for improvement. Conformance to NCA requirements assures that we are complying with and meeting standards that have been identified as being critical success factors for a college of our type.

- (+) Making effort to learn and use benchmarking and learn and implement PeopleSoft (stronger system)—Note: The subcommittee is aware that these strengths are still "in process" but both have been "launched." Leading organizations have learned that simply continually improving is not enough to remain competitive. The rate at which you improve is becoming more important in the competitive world we live in. Benchmarking, which is a technique to compare systems and processes to your competition or to the best of the best, is a way to gauge your own rate of improvement. Although in its initial stages, the college is headed in the right direction with its benchmarking efforts.

Opportunities for Improvement:

- (-) Lack of knowing what is important (value) to student/customer—The primary requirement of the information and analysis category is that organizations gather and act on information that is relevant to the customer needs. It is unclear if NTC captures information that clearly indicates the needs of its customer. Lack of this understanding will prevent the college from providing critical needs of its customers and result in customer dissatisfaction.
- (-) Lack of building effective, cooperative teams to deal with issues, the ownership for continuous improvement, and lack of follow-through on information received-It

appears that the information that is received is inconsistently acted on for improvement. When opportunities are identified through the information gathered, a systematic approach using the shared leadership philosophy seems to be lacking. The reason we collect data is to take action to improve the college. The improvements that do occur appear to be sporadic and inconsistent. Improvement projects should be qualifiable, aligned to the strategic plan, and deployed throughout all functions of the college.

- {-} Users not consulted as to their data and information needs-Information that is not relative to the users' needs is of no value. Collection of this type of information represents non-value added activity and should be discontinued. Information needs continually change. A system of evaluating the usefulness of the information gathered is needed. Improvement projects are difficult to identify without information that satisfies the needs of the user.

- (-) Information not disseminated to key organization units, not readily available, and not easily interpreted—The best information gathered is of little value if it is not deployed throughout the college. Accurate, understandable, relevant information is needed by all functions of the college to realistically choose projects that support continuous improvement efforts. This information is also necessary to measure the effect of project improvements. The lack of an integrated information system inhibits sustained continuous improvement.

- (-) Lack of external benchmarks and comparisons (other than WTCS)-The college has begun to address this area.

5.0 Human Resource Focus

The *Human Resource Focus* category examines how the organization enables employees to develop and utilize their full potential, aligned with the organization's objectives. Also examined are the organization's efforts to build and maintain a work environment and work climate conducive to performance excellence, full participation, and personal and organizational growth.

Strengths:

- (+) The college employs several communication tools including e-mail, brown bag sessions, student forums, *Target*, updates, middle leadership forums, etc.—A diversified infrastructure of communication tools is useful for the success of any organization. NTC has many communication tools in place utilizing the available technology as well as other more traditional approaches. This is important because the "receivers" of information have a variety of preferences as to how they receive the information. Using multiple techniques assures that user preferences are addressed.
- (+) College is proactive in supporting professional development—There are many opportunities for professional development supported by the college. The salary structure for its faculty members supports and encourages professional development.

Opportunities for Improvement:

- (-) In order to better serve our external customers, we first need to foster and develop an environment of care. Care is defined as the feeling employees have that they are valued by each other—There appears to be a disconnect between our written principles

of integrity, respect, learning, collaboration, responsibility, innovation, and service and what actually occurs. These principles are the foundation to shared leadership, and when violated, inhibit the effectiveness of this philosophy.

- (-) Improve communication—There appears to be adequate communication tools in place; however, the effectiveness of the communication is in question. Effective communication is a characteristic of leading organizations. NTC might consider a way to measure the effectiveness of communications.

- (-) Improve professional development needs of individuals—Although it was mentioned that a strength of the college was providing professional development opportunities, it is unclear how well the professional development links to the strategic plan. Professional development that does not link to the strategy does little to improve the competitiveness of the college.

6.0 Process Management

The *Process Management* category examines the key aspects of process management, including customer-focused design, product and service delivery, support, and supplier and partnering processes involving all work units. The category examines how key processes are designed, implemented, managed, and improved to achieve better performance.

Strengths:

- (+) NTC Forward will help in the continuous improvement of all our processes—Evaluation of organizations using the criteria in the Baldrige Process is a good way to assure business processes incorporate those used by leading world-class

organizations. The criterion was established by analyzing what world-class organizations do and then developing the requirements based on those things. The criterion is not compliance driven, but rather based on the philosophy of continuous improvement. NTC Forward has chosen a model that has proven results and utilized globally by thousands of product and service organizations.

- (+) We meet with community representatives and discuss future needs or expectations when designing new products, processes, and/or services. Meeting with product and service users is a good way to assure that our processes provide outputs to satisfy community needs.
- (+) We know who to go to in the organization if we need specific equipment.

Opportunities for Improvement:

- (-) Need systematic assessment of processes (registration, content delivery, and library checkout, establishing a credit course, advising, payroll, purchasing)—Good processes are efficient, effective, and value added. It appears that some processes exist at NTC that are outdated, unused, incorrectly used, and/or are ineffective. Processes should be continually evaluated for improvement opportunities and revised accordingly. Key processes should be formally documented to assure consistent application.
- (-) Measure and increase the effectiveness of our processes based on statistically valid information—Statistics provide a way to separate special cause variation from natural variation. This separation is critical when choosing projects to work on. Without an understanding of statistics, data is oftentimes misunderstood, and as a result, improper action is taken. It is important that the individuals who analyze the data

understand statistics. The use of statistics is of vital importance in continuous improvement.

7.0 Business Results

The *Business Results* category examines the organization's performance and improvement in key business areas—customer satisfaction, financial and marketplace performance, human resource results, supplier and partner performance, and operational performance. Also examined are performance levels relative to competitors.

Strengths:

- (+) SACE
- (+) Student evaluation of faculty
- (+) Contract training evaluation
- (+) Advisory committees for programs
- (+) Employers' survey (3-year)
- (+) Leed's survey
- (+) Leaver's survey
- (+) Strategic conversations
- (+) Repeat business
- (+) Hiring students
- (+) Making money
- (+) Grants allow service increases
- (+) Objective compensation process related to measures
- (+) Need for process of progressive discipline approach

- (+) Nonrepresented staff eligible for bonus based
- (+) Safety measures related to unemployment
- (+) PACE-climate survey
- (+) Team sharing of what has been learned
- (+) Role of NTC Forward and communication planning
- (+) Mentoring program

Opportunities for NTC:

- (-) Work on process improvement documentation, share results, review progress, start over. The lack of documentation for key business processes can result in inconsistencies which negatively impact business results.
- (-) Challenge state bureaucracy for data that focuses on the customer. The organization needs data that is customer focused to /IA A *, measure effectiveness.
- (-) Documentation of trends in supplier performance. The only way to satisfy external customers is to satisfy internal customers. External suppliers have a major impact on customer satisfaction. A system to evaluate supplier performance is needed for continuous improvement.

VI. Conclusion

The identification of the vital few strengths and opportunities for improvement in each of the seven categories helped to reduce the long lists to ones that were more manageable. A multi-voting technique was then used to reduce these even further. The following

strengths and opportunities from all seven categories combined are the results of this effort.

Strengths:

- (+) Demonstrated commitment to the NTC Forward process
- (+) The college is proactive in supporting professional development
- (+) NTC Forward will help in the continuous improvement of all our processes
- (+) Adoption of mission statement, values, end statements, operating principles which support learning and are customer focused
- (+) NTC Board of Trustees and staff seek input from multiple internal and external stakeholders through a variety of methods
- (+) The college employs several communication tools including e-mail, brown bag sessions, student forums, *Target*, updates, middle leadership forums, etc.

Opportunities for NTC:

- (-) Communication up and down the organization needs a tremendous amount of work
- (-) Foster and develop an environment of care
- (-) Enhance the effectiveness of the shared leadership system
- (-) Gather and prioritize internal/external customer needs and make decisions based upon customer priorities
- (-) Thread alignment of strategic planning and key performance requirements (disconnect) throughout the entire organization

- (-) Not sure we are as good as we should be at making people live the operating principles. We don't walk the talk.
- (-) Measure and increase the effectiveness of our processes based on statistically valid information

VII. Next Steps

- A. Work teams will be established to address each of the "vital few" opportunities. They will develop a mission statement and document each phase of their project. These phases will include a diagnostic stage that uses the tools of Quality to determine root causes and a remedial phase that documents processes and improvements to address the issue. The documentation will be formalized and controlled to assure that correct procedures are followed, revisions are updated properly, and users are confident they are operating on the correct procedure. The final phase of the improvement team will be to develop a method to control the gains so improvements are maintained now and into the future.
- B. The NTC Forward group will continue regular meetings to review the plans and timeliness of the work teams.
- C. A presentation of NTC Forward will be made at the fall all-college in-service.

Results of the Employee Survey (Exhibits A&B) support the findings of the Wisconsin Challenge.

Both tools were used to set direction at the college and resulted in the following.

Key quality action projects currently being addressed:

- Optimize student success.
- Collect and use data to improve processes and decision making (quality programs and services)
- Implement and evaluate a process to identify significant initiatives (strategic initiatives)
- Enhance a “Culture of Care” based on the operating principle (Culture of Care)
- Baldrige Criteria tie directly to customer value and overall organizational performance
- Key quality indicators channel quality activities consistently toward continuous improvement
- Key quality indicators are communication tools
- Key quality indicators measure continuous improvement activities

Chapter 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

The NTC journey to align itself to the Baldrige Criteria is one that began in ...

A long term commitment to this process was the driving force that allowed the college to reach the Master level rating the Wisconsin Forward Award during 2004. Organizations looking for a quick fix need to understand that a systematic approach toward business requires time. Most organizations report that it is not unusual for this improvement cycle to take 5 years or more and that the improvement process never ends. The Baldrige Criteria provides a road map to use that assure consistency in the improvement effort. The Criteria has been used extensively by world class organizations since 1987 and continues to be the benchmark for companies worldwide. The proven success of organizations using the criteria gives the assurance that successful implementation will give the company a way to implement their improvement plan. Thousands of organizations, not necessarily interested in the "award" aspect of the program still use the criteria to guide their organizations.

Employee involvement and understanding of their role in the process is critical. Departmental efforts need to be aligned to the short-and-long-term strategic plans of the organization as a whole. This is emphasized throughout the entire process. Efforts that do not support the direction of the company should be scrutinized and evaluated for their worth.

Most organizations during the initial evaluations realize that they are doing many things quite well and that they should continue to do so. The process helps organizations to reflect and enjoy assurances that many of their procedures and processes are at a level

that are commendable against the Baldrige Criteria. This boost in confidence can set the stage for further improvement. An important aspect of the process is that you compare how you are improving not to your previous performance but to others who are world class in that area. Benchmarking your improvements to world class processes assures that you are improving at a rate that will keep you competitive. It is not enough to just improve but rather the rate of improvement must match or exceed your competitors to survive.

Training in traditional quality improvement efforts is essential and suggested topics would include:

- Problem identification
- Root cause analysis
- Conflict resolution
- Systems thinking
- Time Management

Things to Avoid

Involvement from all areas of the organization will help to assure that deployment of systematic processes is complete. Too often effective procedures are not embedded throughout the organization because key areas were not included.

It is easy to become “defensive” during the evaluation process. Be open-minded and work to compare to leading organizations to that criteria. Look outside your industry to find the best of the best.

Do not discount the feedback of the audit team if you choose to formally become involved in the process. The audit team is an experienced group with extensive training in the understanding and application of the criteria.

Avoid placing emphasis on the “award” aspect. Most companies that achieve the greatest gain are those that see the value in the process and not the award. Many companies that have won the Baldrige Award comment that they got involved because they saw it as a way to improve their business and that the award was a secondary benefit.

Don’t expect it to be a quick fix. It will take time, hard-work, organization and patience.

Next Steps

When companies become involved in the process they see it as a way to continuously measure how they are doing against a set of proven criteria.

Use the feedback (internal or external) as a tool to maintain already effective systems and to set a course of action to those items that are opportunities for improvement.

Have effective tools in place to measure the results of efforts and improvements in areas selected and areas identified in the criteria.

Replication Throughout the Organization

The work deployment is used in the evaluation process. A world class systematic approach may have been developed. However, if that approach is not deployed throughout the organization the measurable results will be minimal. Look to all areas of

the company that may benefit from the improvement and assure it is being replicated throughout the organization.

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Appendix A—Employee Survey

The following survey and results were distributed to all NTC employees during the Spring of 2004. Targeted employee groups were:

- Teamsters
- Faculty/Adjunct faculty
- Confidential staff / non-represented / EMS / Electrical
- Middle leadership / executive leadership

A response rate of greater than 50% assures a high confidence level in a representative sample.

For each question, a mean score was calculated based on the following Likert

Scale:

1 = Very dissatisfied

5 = Satisfied

NTC Employee Opinion Survey

Spring 2004 Questions

*Ratings 1—5, 1=Very Dissatisfied to 5 = Satisfied

	N	Mean
1. Learners' needs are consistently central to what we do at NTC.	295	3.40
2. The employee experience at NTC inspires me to do my best work.	294	2.89
3. NTC graduates are well prepared to adopt new skill quickly on the job site.	291	3.91
4. I have received recognition or praise for doing good work in the last days.	296	2.82

5. Learners receive a excellent education at NTC.	292	4.01
6. I trust my co-workers to do what they say they are going to do.	295	3.40
7. My opinions count at NTC.	298	2.57
8. NTC prepares learners very well to achieve their goals.	293	3.91
9. The work environment is more inspiring than other employment options available to me outside NTC.	296	2.77
10. NTC supports my pursuit of professional goals.	294	3.12
11. I have the opportunity to do what I do best everyday at NTC.	297	3.41
12. NTC Operating Principles are consistently practiced at NTC.	293	2.56
13. I feel inspired to create a rich learning experience for learners at NTC.	293	3.43
14. There is someone at NTC that cares about me as a person.	295	3.59
15. I am able to do my best work at NTC.	296	3.36
16. I feel energized when I am at work at NTC.	296	3.12
17. I consistently practice the Operating Principles at NTC.	294	4.00
18. The employee experience at NTC motivates me to support the goals of the college.	294	2.92
19. I feel a strong sense of connection to other employees at NTC.	297	3.22
20. There is someone at NTC who encourages my development.	298	3.14
21. NTC is connected to the community in meaningful ways.	295	3.49
22. NTCs graduates have a solid foundation for further learning.	294	3.95
23. Learners' competencies are enhanced at NTC.	291	3.86
24. Ethnic and cultural diversity are valued at NTC.	297	3.71
25. I can confidently recommend NTC as a place to receive an education.	297	4.01

26. I can confidently recommend NTC as a place to work.	298	2.93
27. I am very satisfied with NTC as a place to work.	297	2.99

28. I plan to be working at NTC a year from now (2004-05 Academic Year).

	%
Yes	76.90
No	4.83
Uncertain	18.38

29. Compared to a year ago, would you say that NTCs employee culture has:

	%
Improved	10.69
Remained the same	42.76
Gotten worse	39.66
Do not know	6.90

30. How long have you worked at NTC?

	%
Less than 1 year	5.57
1-4 years	29.27
5-9 years	25.44
10-14 years	16.38
15or more years	23.34

31. What is your employee group?

	%
NESPA	24.00
Paraprofessional	3.64
Teamsters	1.45
Faculty / Adjunct Faculty	47.27
Confidential Staff/Non-represented/EMS/Electricians	4.00
Middle Leader/Executive Leadership	19.64

Appendix B—Question Categories

Questions were separate into four categories to better understand the results and allow for focused improvement. The four categories are:

- Inspired (Are employees inspired to do their best?)
- Connected (Do employees feel connected to the organization?)
- Strengthened (Are employees strengthened by their experiences at the college?)
- Student Centeredness (Are students/customers a primary focus?)

NTC Employee Opinion Survey

Spring 2004 Results

Motif	Overall mean Score
Inspired	3.05
Connected	3.25
Strengthened	3.00
Learner-focused Analysis	3.82

*Rating 1—5, 1=Very Dissatisfied, 5=Very Satisfied

Motif Analysis: Inspired	N	Mean
Overall Mean: Inspired	296	3.05
2. The employee experience at NTC inspires me to do my best work.	294	2.89
9. The work environment at NTC is more inspiring to me than other employment options available to me outside NTC.	296	2.77
13. I fell inspired to create a rich learning experience for learners at NTC.	293	3.43

16. I feel energized when I am at work at NTC.	296	3.12
Motif Analysis: Connected		
	N	Mean
Overall Mean: Connected	298	3.25
6. I trust my coworkers to do what they say they are going to do.	295	3.40
7. My opinions count at NTC.	298	2.57
14. There is someone at NTC that cares about me as a person.	295	3.59
19. I feel a strong sense of connection to other employees at NTC.	297	3.22
21. NTC is connected to the community in meaningful ways.	295	3.49
Motif Analysis: Strengthened		
	N	Mean
Overall Mean: Strengthened	298	3.00
4. I have received recognition or praise for doing good work in the last 7 days.	296	2.82
10. NTC supports my pursuit of professional goals.	294	3.12
11. I have the opportunity to do what I do best everyday at NTC.	297	3.41
12. NTCs Operating Principles are consistently practiced at NTC.	293	2.56
18. The employee experience at NTC motivates me to support the goals of the college.	294	2.92
20. There is someone at NTC who encourages my development.	298	3.14

Student-Centeredness Analysis		
	N	Mean
Overall Mean: Student Centeredness	297	3.82
1. Learners' needs are consistently central to what we do at NTC.	295	3.82
3. NTC graduates are well prepared to adopt new skills quickly on the job site.	291	3.91
5. Learners receive an excellent education at NTC.	292	4.01
8. NTC prepares learners very well to achieve their goals.	293	3.91
22. NTC graduates have a solid foundation for further learning.	294	3.95
23. Learners' competencies are enhanced at NTC.	291	3.86
24. Ethnic and cultural diversity are valued at NTC.	297	3.71