

Second Baldrige study mission

Dallas, Texas, USA was the venue from 7 to 11 November, when APO participants from 15 countries attended the second mission to study recipients of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. The seminar was a busy five days of learning, experiencing, and sharing proven productivity improvement techniques practiced by some of the USA's best-managed organizations.

Better known as the Baldrige Award, the USA's premier mark of achievement for business, healthcare, and education, the accolades are presented annually to those organizations that demonstrate excellence in the seven categories of the award framework: leadership; strategic planning; customer and market focus; measurement, analysis, and knowledge management; human resources focus; process management; and business results. During 2005, more than 1,000 US-based organizations applied for the award, and only a select 62 qualified as recipients. Over one million application forms that describe the framework and categories have been distributed worldwide.

The primary focus of the 2005 study mission was organizations located in the state of Texas, which has the greatest concentration of Baldrige award recipients in the USA. Participants heard presentations by three Texan CEOs, Jo Ann Brumit of KARLEE Company, Inc., David Branch of Branch-Smith Printing, and Dale Crownover of two-time winner Texas Nameplate Company, Inc. While practicing Baldrige principles does not guarantee organizational success, Brumit emphasized that when her business had been severely impacted by the technology bubble, without Baldrige principles and practices in place her team-based organization would not have survived. Crownover confided that he had "fired" a major customer. Although he has a passion for excellence in customer relations and wants to ensure consistent delivery of products and services by his small, family-owned company, that should not come with the trade-off of reduced productivity, profitability, and respect for his employees.



Participants introducing themselves

Additional companies sharing their success stories and in many cases candid "lessons learned" in the improvement journey included Clarke American Checks, Inc., Marlow Industries, Boeing Airlift and Tanker Program, Boeing Aerospace Support, Xerox Business Products and Systems, and Xerox Business Services. The US Department of Commerce in Washington, D.C., administrator of the Baldrige program, was also represented.

Based on their positive feedback, the APO participants agreed that the study mission provided numerous learning opportunities. An additional benefit was meeting people from other countries and establishing personal contacts, with the result that sharing and learning can continue for many years to come. 🌐

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