

4.2 Information and Knowledge Management

Purpose

This item asks how you build and manage your organization's knowledge assets and ensure the quality and availability of data and information. The aim of this item is to improve organizational efficiency and effectiveness and stimulate innovation.

Commentary

Information management. Managing information can require a significant commitment of resources as the sources of data and information grow dramatically. The continued growth of information within organizations' operations—as part of organizational knowledge networks; through the web and social media; and in business-to-business, organization-to-organization, and business-to-consumer communications—challenges organizations' ability to ensure reliability and availability in a user-friendly format. The ability to blend and correlate disparate types of data, such as video, text, and numbers, provides opportunities for a competitive advantage.

Data and information availability. Data and information are especially important in business or organizational networks, partnerships, and supply networks. You should take into account this use of data and information and recognize the need for rapid data validation, reliability assurance, and security, given the frequency and magnitude of electronic data transfer and the challenges of cybersecurity.

Knowledge management. The focus of your knowledge management is on the knowledge that your people need to do their work; improve processes, products, and services; and innovate to add value for the customer and your organization.

Your organization's knowledge management system should provide the mechanism for sharing your people's and your organization's knowledge to ensure that high performance is maintained through transitions. You should determine what knowledge is critical for your operations and then implement systematic processes for sharing this information. This is particularly important for implicit knowledge (i.e., knowledge personally retained by workforce members)

Organizational learning. One of the many issues facing organizations today is how to manage, use, evaluate, and share their ever-increasing organizational knowledge. Leading organizations benefit from the knowledge assets of their workforce, customers, suppliers, collaborators, and partners, who together drive organizational learning and innovation.

SOURCE: 2019–2020 Baldrige Performance Excellence Framework Criteria Commentary - This commentary provides brief summaries of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence categories and items. It also includes examples and guidance to supplement the notes that follow each Criteria item in the Baldrige Excellence Framework booklet. For additional free content, and to purchase the booklet, see www.nist.gov/baldrige/publications.