

An Introduction To Georgia Oglethorpe

Georgia Oglethorpe's vision is...

Georgia: Outperforming the World!

Its mission is...

Leading Georgia's organizations to improve performance.

What Is Georgia Oglethorpe?

Georgia Oglethorpe is a nonprofit public-private partnership that provides services to Georgia's business, industry, government, education, healthcare, and nonprofit organizations. It promotes both strategic and tactical organizational performance improvement and excellence. This is achieved by offering education, assessment, feedback, and recognition based on the *Criteria for Performance Excellence* the same *Criteria* used to determine recipients of the *Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award*.

Use of the *Criteria* as a diagnostic tool for self- and third-party assessments, as well as for planning, training, and communication can accelerate the pace of economic development in Georgia.

What Are The Criteria For Performance Excellence?

The *Criteria for Performance Excellence* address all the basic considerations for any organization—business, industry, government, education, healthcare, and nonprofit—to create and sustain high performance. The *Criteria* provide a logical framework for top leadership to use in managing and improving the interdependencies between the organization's key business drivers and its core processes. Establishing these linkages and

addressing them systemically is essential to maximizing resources and attaining sustainable performance results and outcomes.

More specifically, through the questions contained in the *Criteria*, top leaders are encouraged to view the cause-and-effect relationship between their operational approaches and actual results and then to evaluate and improve those approaches as a means to improve results and outcomes. The underlying premise for performance excellence is that managing above the bottom line drives desired results. That is, you don't manage your results: you manage the approaches that create your results.

Unfortunately, this fact is often overlooked or, at best, misunderstood. Too often managers try to improve the bottom line using reactionary, quick fix solutions as opposed to a systematic evaluation and improvement approach to identify and address the root cause, thereby preventing future failures.

Just as increased exercise, combined with eating fewer calories and lower fat may result in weight loss, the *Criteria* have been proven time and again to enable business and industry to improve profitability using tested, sustainable methods. All types of organizations, including government, education, and healthcare, can fulfill their



Continued on page 2

Continued from page 1

mission more effectively with fewer resource requirements using the *Criteria* as a guide. The *Criteria* provide the roadmap, Georgia Oglethorpe's educational outreach efforts and assessments provide the tools, and our celebrations provide the recognition.

In summary, the *Criteria* are designed to:

- ◆ **Provide all organizations a roadmap for systemic leadership to create and sustain high performance.** It provides *what* you need to know to get there; it does not tell you *how* to approach your journey. For example, whether you walk, take land transportation, or fly is up to you. But the *Criteria* expect you to design a plan for your journey and to monitor your progress along the way. Then make improvements as needed to continue achievement of superior results.
- ◆ **Provide a diagnostic tool** for use in determining an organization's maturity in focusing on a customer-driven, systemic approach to creating and sustaining high performance. The *Criteria* are used to provide organizations with productive, actionable feedback for improvement, as well as identify role models as *Award* recipients. The *Criteria* are used both for self- and third-party assessments.
- ◆ **Provide a common language** for benchmarking and sharing model practices both within and between all sector groups (business, industry, government, education, healthcare, and nonprofit organizations).

The *Criteria* also may be used as a tool for organizational planning, focus, and education. Used effectively, they can enable an organization to optimize its limited resources while improving customer loyalty, employee contribution and productivity, and financial/bottom-line performance. The *Criteria* provide the basis for determining which organizations should receive Georgia's highest level of recognition for organizational performance excellence—the *Georgia Oglethorpe Award*. They also are the basis for providing assessment, feedback, and recognition throughout your journey.

Why Use The Criteria For Performance Excellence?

Mediocrity is easy—excellence takes a little work and a plan. The *Criteria* offer a values-based, systems approach to managing your organization. This approach is distinctive, enabling a view of the “big picture” and how an organization's purpose and all the essential parts fit together. This organizational insight can enhance buy-in for achievement of broad goals and objectives. The intent is to raise the performance level of your organization and people.

If your organization is for-profit, research has shown that over the years entire organizations that receive the national *Baldrige Award* actually outperform the S&P 500 by as much as three-to-one or five-to-one. Another study, by Dr. Vinod Singhal and Dr. Kevin Hendricks, has shown that for-profit organizations actually improve their stock price by 44% and their operating income by 48% while creating new jobs for Georgians.

The key success indicators for any organization wanting to improve through this process are:

- ◆ Top leadership's commitment and involvement. **ONLY** the top leader can ask and ensure that all parts of an organization work together to achieve unprecedented results.
- ◆ People's buy-in and ownership. People throughout the organization must believe in what you are doing and be responsible and accountable for their role in its success.
- ◆ The organization's ability to track and use data and information for decision making. Data and information must not be used in a punitive way but, rather, in a constructive way to make fact-based decisions.

The *Criteria* create an interdependent system comprising seven *Criteria* Categories and 11 Core Values. Together they enable your organization to be more effective and accountable as you move to:

- ◆ A customer-driven (external) focus as opposed to an operational-driven (internal) focus.

Continued on page 3

Continued from page 2

- ◆ A proactive approach rather than a reactive approach.
- ◆ Focused, aligned, and well-balanced priorities.

Your results are focused on what the customer needs and wants, as well as operational results that are directly linked to providing these services, products, or information.

What Steps Can Your Organization Take In Its Journey To Improve?

Three different initiatives entailing varying degrees of effort are now available to acknowledge your organization's progress in becoming more effective and accountable while improving your performance results. *Georgia Oglethorpe* provides low-cost, high-value assessment, feedback, and recognition to a full range of organizations through this three-step approach. The *Criteria* are used as the basis for these assessment and recognition decisions.

- ◆ *Georgia Focus Recognition* – Step 1, exists to engage you and your organizational leaders in an understanding of how the *Criteria for Performance Excellence* can be of value to your organization. Participation in this step requires an Organizational Profile (explained elsewhere), a self-assessment (available on our web site) using the *Criteria*, and an action plan describing how you and your organizational leaders plan to address your assessment findings.
- ◆ *Georgia Progress Award* – Step 2, expects your organization to demonstrate significant progress in building and deploying sound, systematic approaches to building organizational effectiveness and attaining notable results. Organizations apply for the *Georgia Progress Award* primarily to share the approaches and results attained thus far, to validate that they are on the right path using the *Criteria*, and for feedback on what is required to achieve higher performance levels. Participation requires an Organizational Profile (explained elsewhere) and asks your organization to respond to a condensed version of the *Criteria* (available on our web site) in a response no longer than 25 pages. Organizations that receive the *Georgia*

Progress Award are well on their way to excellence, even though they do not yet have all the systems and results in place to be named a *Georgia Oglethorpe Award* recipient and role model.

Applicants for the *Georgia Progress Award* are expected to:

- Provide a trainee to the *Georgia Oglethorpe Board of Examiners*, and
 - Support *Georgia Oglethorpe* by providing assistance to other companies/organizations interested in submitting an application the next year.
- ◆ *Georgia Oglethorpe Award* – Step 3, is Georgia's highest level of recognition for organizational performance excellence. Simply stated, recipients of the *Georgia Oglethorpe Award* are role models to other organizations. Participants in this Award must respond to all the Areas to Address contained in the *Criteria* (available in this book) in a response of 50 pages or fewer. At this level of recognition, your organization is expected to:
 - Know what you do, why you do it, and how it links to the bigger context in which your organization must thrive.
 - Have sound, systematic approaches in place for running your organization.
 - Show evidence of successful deployment of those approaches.
 - Demonstrate ongoing strategic and incremental evaluation and improvement of your key approaches based on results and outcomes.
 - Show results data, trends, and comparative data.

Applicants for the *Georgia Oglethorpe Award* are expected to:

- Provide a trainee to the *Georgia Oglethorpe Board of Examiners*, and
- Support *Georgia Oglethorpe* by providing assistance to other companies/organizations interested in submitting an application the next year.

Note: None of these steps is a prerequisite for the other steps.

Continued on page 4

What Does It Mean To Receive The Georgia Oglethorpe Award And Be Recognized As A Georgia Role Model?

Because of its high standard for excellence, the *Georgia Oglethorpe Award* remains one of the most challenging means of recognition an organization can receive. Why? Because when you receive the *Georgia Oglethorpe Award*, it means your organization has documented and sustained improving performance results over time in areas such as clear customer focus, financial and market stature, workforce excellence, ethical standards, and operational effectiveness.

Applicants do not receive credit for results that cannot be attributed to sound, systematic approaches. Your organization's results should derive from the approaches you have deployed; the results should withstand comparison results to other organizations, whether within or outside your business sector. Additionally, to receive the *Georgia Oglethorpe Award*, your organization continually evaluates and improves "how" its results are achieved in order to sustain or improve performance.

As an *Award* recipient, you can clearly describe what is

important to your organization, and your leaders' commitment to continuous organizational learning and sharing is pervasive. Evaluation and improvement of work processes is routine. You track data and results and use them for fact-based decision-making, and your results are trended and include comparisons to other organizations.

Maturity in using the *Criteria* can be a predictor (though not a guarantee) of future sound performance. Research has shown that organizations applying the values and principles encouraged in the *Georgia Oglethorpe Criteria* framework may experience significant improvement in performance levels. Emphasis on the *Criteria* as an organization's means to achieve sustainable results is central to the purpose of the *Georgia Oglethorpe Award*. For example, the

Results Category accounts for 450 of the possible 1000 points in scoring the application. Thus, it is easy to see how organizations that distinguish themselves in the application of the *Criteria* also succeed in their respective markets.

