Robert C. Baldwin, CMRP, Editor After editing and formatting an item about the Baldrige National Quality Program, I downloaded " Criteria for Performance Excellence ," the program's information manual, to study it in more detail.

The 63-page document contains some valuable information for making a self-assessment of organizational effectiveness. The criteria are designed to help organizations focus on performance management that results in

- Delivery of ever-improving value to customers
- Improvement of overall organizational effectiveness and capabilities
- Organizational and personal learning.

The criteria are built on a set of interrelated core values and concepts that make up beliefs and behaviors found in high-performing organizations. Outlined topics include visionary leadership, customer-driven excellence, organizational and personal learning, valuing employees and partners, agility, focus on the future, managing for innovation, management by fact, public responsibility and citizenship, focus on results and creating value, and systems perspective.

The core values and concepts are embodied in seven categories that form the structure of the program:

- Leadership
- Strategic planning
- Customer and market focus
- Information and analysis
- Human resource focus
- Process management
- Business results

They are concepts that can be scaled to department level. But in the larger scope of the business enterprise, for which the Baldrige Quality Program is designed, reliability and maintenance seems to fall into Item 6.3 Support Processes, key process that support daily operations in delivering products and services.

So far, so good. Then I turned the page and read the point values for the various categories and items. Support Processes counts for only 15 points out of a total of 1000, just 1.5 percent. And, asset management shares those 15 points with finance and accounting, legal, and human resources. That puts us way below 1 percent.

If we assume that company leadership focuses on the most important issues, those categories with the most points, it is no wonder maintenance and reliability professionals have a hard time getting their attention. What category gets the most attention? Business results, with 450 points.

Obviously, using this scorecard, it is virtually impossible for a group to get any attention from top management without building a case for its contribution to business results. Will your case stand top management scrutiny? **MT**