

# The THIRD BALDRIGE

## Award

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #287 —

Short Story #191, "The First Baldrige Award" provides a good description of the Baldrige Program. Twelve years have now passed, since that first award, and we have just received our third. According to the rules, after receiving a Baldrige Award, an organization must wait five full years, before applying again - in the sixth year, or later. The intent of this time lapse was to help ensure that consecutive Baldrige Award winners had sustained their success over a long period of time.



The pocket patch on our Baldrige blazers commemorates nearly 20 consecutive years of hard work, resulting in three consecutive Baldrige awards.

Of course, the easiest way to sustain anything is to get it embedded into the organization's Culture, which is exactly what we did. Immediately after the "first" Baldrige Award, our Senior and Middle Leadership Teams began talking about Baldrige 2.0; there weren't many two-time winners and we set the goal to receive our second award in 2015; which we did. The word "maintain"

has never been part of the MidwayUSA vocabulary, we have always focused on "continuous improvement." There are no two-time Baldrige Award winners, without a serious, demonstrated focus on continuous improvement.

Strategic Planning has always been a key component of the Baldrige program. Actually, it's just one of the tools used to formalize continuous improvement efforts; and for this reason, it was easy to incorporate it into our Culture. Our Senior Leadership Team used day-long, monthly, Strategic Planning meetings to formally discuss, prioritize and monitor the most important of our continuous improvement ideas, always focusing first on things that would improve service to our Customers.



Our Baldrige Award display case containing all three awards 2009, 2016 and 2021. Only one other company has received three Baldrige awards, Mesa Products of Tulsa, OK. We're pleased to join them.

Building a Baldrige-aligned organization was not easy or fast. There is no MVP, it is simply a team of like-minded people who share the same values and align with the organization's Culture. Working in many different teams, they develop the confidence and the competence to play at a higher level, pursue more important goals, take on greater responsibility and deliver extraordinary results. For all of us, the Baldrige Award, first, second and third, are simply milestones along the way to a great job in a great business.

No one can predict the future of an organization, but it's relatively easy to identify

“...embedded into the organization's Culture”

those organizations that are more prepared than others to successfully engage the future. MidwayUSA is one of those organizations. We have stayed unwaveringly focused on the Leadership and Management Principles of Baldrige for all these years, and have received three awards, with only three applications. First time ever accomplished!



Larry Potterfield

MidwayUSA Campus  
Office of the Founder and  
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Columbia, MO  
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The Baldrige award is a simple, but elegant crystal, with a solid brass medallion embedded within. The only engraving is the company name and the year. (Image by Jarrod Schwartz)