



## Managers encouraged to play cards for business advantage

**Press release, 25 May 2009, PYXIS Consulting, Marton, New Zealand:** New Zealand business improvement company, PYXIS Consulting, has devised a unique card solution that provides a fresh and convenient approach for businesses wanting to enhance performance.

“Assessor” is the only card-based business improvement tool in the world based on the Baldrige Criteria that effectively improves efficiencies by educating and channelling leadership for optimal performance. It works by enabling managers to quickly assess and benchmark their success and evolve their opinions on strategy. It is an engaging solution designed to help all-sized organisations meet their performance excellence objectives and improve systems and processes.

Developer Michael Voss of PYXIS Consulting says more and more organisations are looking for ways to free up or optimise their existing resources. “In these challenging times especially, businesses have to operate leaner and meaner. Assessor adds value to businesses by enabling managers to scrutinise processes and ensure everything and everyone works efficiently. It’s about ‘empowering’ managers with an understanding of how world class businesses work and ‘enabling’ them to benchmark their performance and pinpoint key areas for improvement. And because the sessions are designed to be run in teams, they’re a fun hands-on approach to learning.”

Equally applicable for government organisations like Housing NZ and for-profit companies such as the Marsden Point Oil Refinery, the Assessor cards are proving an excellent learning tool for helping managers to better understand the framework, assess the maturity of their processes, and evaluate how they are performing.

For example, Assessor recently helped 45 senior managers of one national organisation to review their approach to leadership and measure their performance against the criteria. The course was taught in a very tactile and practical way, which meant managers quickly grasped the depth and breadth of the criteria and discovered how widely the approach could be deployed.

“The managers were so engaged with Assessor that the session developed its own momentum. They eagerly pushed through to the advanced scoring stage so they could benchmark their performance results. They found Assessor a valuable performance excellence exercise that they intend to repeat again and again,” said Voss.

Unlike traditional business improvement tools that require a professional consultant to manage and can take 3-5 days to conduct, Assessor cuts to the chase and delivers results on day one with ready-to-go mind-maps for immediate action by improvement project teams. While best conducted by experienced business excellence professionals Assessor can be run in-house by a performance excellence manager with only a days training on how to use the cards. At just a fraction of the price of a single professional assessment, Assessor is a cost effective and practical solution that encourages rapid learning, enthusiasm for improvement and value to the business.

Voss developed Assessor having seen many organisations struggling to take senior management from their daily routine to spend the 2-3 days needed to adequately cover even a basic understanding of the Baldrige performance excellence criteria.

He says. “Managers find it frustrating to absorb and comprehend all the intricacies of the criteria, particularly when calibrating the scoring prior to the application. Assessor is designed to allow effective learning and application of the criteria to the business to happen concurrently. It reduces

the time needed to complete a full organisational self assessment to a single day and makes it easier and more affordable to realise the full benefit of regular assessments.”

Card-based business excellence systems are proving increasingly popular because they provide a practical approach to understanding and applying proven processes and strategies that make businesses successful. Assessor retains the richness of the accepted Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence, with a streamlined process to deliver maximum efficiencies and business value from day one.

To hear more Voss will be speaking on 8 June at the NZ Organisation for Quality Central's Symposium on Raising Productivity in Palmerston North. For more information visit [www.nzoq.org.nz](http://www.nzoq.org.nz)

### **About PYXIS Consulting**

[www.pyxis.co.nz](http://www.pyxis.co.nz)

PYXIS Consulting, an independent consultancy founded by director Michael Voss in 1999, provides focus and direction to enable organisations to achieve performance excellence. He is an NZOQ certified Quality Manager, consultant to the Centre for Organisational Excellence Research and Authorised Consultant to the New Zealand Business Excellence Foundation. Prior to establishing PYXIS Voss was the Business Improvement Manager of PEC (NZ) Ltd for more than 13 years. His achievements include 10 years as business improvement coach and mentor. Voss has worked with the performance excellence criteria for over 15 years conducting over 200 organisational assessments. He is developer of the NZ Business Excellence Foundation Regional Award programme and assessment tools for organisational improvement.

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## About Assessor

Based on the internationally acclaimed Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence, 'Assessor' provides a fresh and agile approach for businesses keen to improve performance and profit.

Assessor, which took almost eight years to develop and perfect, is a powerful and purposefully low tech self-assessment card system that enables businesses to quickly recognise and work on areas that need improvement.

The system is unique in that it is an engagingly interactive, card-based assessment system that is also time-efficient and affordable. It enables managers to benchmark their businesses against world-class organisations by showing how they achieve strategic goals through smarter execution, better aligned resources, improved communication and efficient processes.

Assessor is a low tech, interactive system developed to bring a fresh approach to learning and applying the Criteria for Performance Excellence to organisations. It consists of a set of cards that allow members of a team to work together efficiently on various aspects of their organisation. The cards come with a set of instructions for self application. As an alternative to self assessment an organisation can employ a facilitator to guide a session using the cards, or use a team member trained in how to use Assessor.

'Mind maps' supplied as part of the system are used to record the results from the Assessor session. Organisations can also use the cards to score their results in line with the Criteria to see how they compare with world class performing organisations.

Baldrige's searching questions are transposed and presented in a series of statements on individual cards within the Assessor card deck. Each card is grouped into blocks that align with the seven Baldrige Criteria Categories:

1. Leadership
2. Strategic planning
3. Customer and market focus
4. Measurement, analysis and knowledge management
5. Workforce focus
6. Process management
7. Results

The card gives all the participating team a voice and being an interactive action based activity is actually fun. Freed from excessive note taking it allows members of the team to fully engage in a heads up discussion. Different learning styles are catered for. It is a visual and physical activity as well as a mental one.

The Assessor system is reviewed and updated yearly to keep it aligned with the changes in the Baldrige Criteria. As a continuous improvement tool other aspects of the system undergo timely improvements. PYXIS encourages users of Assessor to share their experiences.