TPE Site Visit Applicant Guidelines Overview

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The on-site phase of the Site Visit Review begins with the opening meeting at the applicant's site and ends with the closing meeting at the applicant's site. **The purpose of the Site Visit is for the Examiner Team to verify and clarify issues identified in the Application.** The Examiner Team will review changes and updates of results data that have occurred since the Application Report was written. Significant changes in the organization can also be reviewed.

The Examiner Team uses the Site Visit Review to more fully understand the applicant's operations and processes that an Application Report may not be able to fully convey.

At the onset of the site visit, the Team Leader should conduct a Safety Briefing for the Examiner team, so Examiners know what to do in the case of evacuation, shelter in place situation or accident.

Opening Meeting

The opening meeting is held for senior executives, category leads and selected employees/faculty/staff of the applicant and the Site Visit Team. The applicant will discuss any deviation(s) from this guideline with the Team Leader in advance.

When Examiners are asked to introduce themselves, they provide only their name and organization. Examiners are *NOT* to provide additional background information, such as their Baldrige or TPE experience, credentials, title, work experience or specialty in their organization.

The purpose of the Opening Meeting is to provide valuable information regarding:

1. The On-Site Process. The examiner team will provide a brief overview.
2. Applicant's Business Model. This will provide the examiners a deeper understanding of the organization and a more meaningful context from which to evaluate. The examiner team can ask questions during this piece of the presentation to clarify the business model.
3. Applicant's story of success.

The Opening Meeting is scheduled for 1 hour and 15 minutes, with a maximum of one hour allotted to applicant's presentation. The applicant should choose only the most appropriate topics from the list below that will provide the examiner team the richest understanding of applicant's business in the time allotted:

1. Understanding the Business Model

- The role of competition in the industry
    - Where does applicant cooperate with competitors?
    - Where does applicant not cooperate with competitors?
- The role of size:
    - Advantage?
    - Driving the rate of change/improvement?
- The importance of tailored products or services
- What the "standards" are in the industry for products and services

- The ability of any group to establish pricing
- The keys to applicant's organizational success, and its journey to drive these keys
- The reasons others in applicant's industry are succeeding/failing
- How will the dynamics of the business change in the next 3 years?
- What are the keys to organizational sustainability?

2. What makes applicant unique?
3. Significant changes since the application was written, and in the future?
4. What keeps the senior leaders up at night?
5. What are applicant's greatest challenges?
6. What are applicant's keys to success
7. Are there any other factors which an outsider to applicant's industry needs to understand to effectively understand the industry or business model?
8. Impacts due to the COVID pandemic

A computer, projector & screen will be required for the Opening Meeting.

Photos & Videos

The applicant may take pictures before the opening meeting. The opening and closing meetings also may be videotaped. The applicant is asked not to photograph or videotape the Examiner team during the rest of the Site Visit Review.

Prior Baldrige / TPE Feedback

Previously, Site Visit Teams were not allowed to request previous feedback reports, to review prior years' reports, or to use prior feedback in the current site visit investigation. This approach was used to promote a fresh perspective in the current year's evaluation.

However, the previous feedback could hold important information to assist the team. The applicant may present strengths and/or opportunities from previous reports in the opening meeting remarks, and the applicant may voluntarily share its most recent feedback report with the team, provided the report was from within the past two years. However, the team may not request the report.

If a Site Visit Team receives a previous feedback report, it must consider it along with all other data collected on the site visit.

Additional Meetings During Site Visit

After the opening meeting, a meeting is held with the applicant's senior leaders and/or with the applicant's Category Leads.

In addition, the Examiners, in teams of two, conduct interviews and review documents. These interviews follow the meeting with Senior Leaders/Category Leads and will be scheduled over the next few days. If the applicant has multiple shifts, some interviews will be conducted on the evening and night shifts.

In most cases, Examiners are not permitted to interview customers, suppliers, patients, students, parents, or nonemployees. If the applicant considers certain contractors like they are employees, they can be interviewed. The applicant and Team Leader will agree on any exceptions.

Interviews are normally done in the employee's office. Interviews of multiple employees, such as a focus group, will be in a conference room.

Interviews will not be conducted in the conference room used by the Examiner Team.

The TPE President will interview the Highest Ranking Official (HRO) of the applicant for about one hour to discuss the TPE evaluation process and certain confidential information. The Team Leader will take notes during this meeting.

Each day the Team Leader should check in with the applicant's official point of contact (POC) to finalize the schedule for the next day and to discuss any issues that are emerging. The POC should always relay concerns that the Site Visit team is missing key elements or should be interviewing certain employees.

The Examiner Team will caucus during scheduled times each day at the applicant site, preferably mid-morning, mid-afternoon, lunch time and at the end of the day, to exchange information and make any needed adjustments to the schedule. For those site visits where Examiners are at several different locations, the Team Leader should work with the POC to schedule conference calls so that all Examiners participate in these meetings.

Administrative and Logistical Items

The applicant is responsible for arranging and providing travel out of town to other sites. The Team Leader and POC will work these out prior to the Site Visit Review. The Team Leader and POC will try to minimize travel to out of town locations and use other means – conference calls, video conferences, etc. to avoid travel costs.

The applicant will provide lunch to the Examiner Team. Normally, Examiner Teams will either eat lunch in the cafeteria with employees or will caucus in their conference room during lunch.

The Examiner Team will wear clothing typical of the applicant's employees. Safety equipment, such as hard hats or protective glasses, should be provided by the applicant for areas required. The Examiner Team will normally be briefed on appropriate safety conduct in the applicant's facilities by the applicant at the beginning of the Site Visit Review.

The Examiner Team conference room should have a non-network printer that a laptop can connect to. The Examiner Team should have access to a copier. No other word processing or typing will be required by the applicant. The conference room should sit up to 12 individuals comfortably and have walls that documents can be posted to.

The applicant may choose to provide coffee, beverages or snacks in the conference room or provide access to vending machines.

TPE assigns Examiners to review the Applicant based upon sector and evaluation experience and location. It tries to minimize the number of Examiners who will have to travel and stay overnight in a hotel. Costs for excessive travel will be borne by the applicant.

If a team member behaves inappropriately, immediately confer with the POC. The POC will contact the Team Leader or TPE who will take the necessary action.

The Team Leader will communicate regularly with the POC on other logistical issues and find resolutions.

Applicant Materials

All Examiners will track all materials they receive from the applicant's employees. The applicant's employee should provide some type of name card to attach to the materials, or the originator should write his/her name on the material. These materials will be returned to the applicant at the end of the Site Visit Review. The Team Leader will coordinate with the POC on the return of all the materials. Materials will not be taken from the site except for Examiners traveling to another site.

Last Chance

Before the closing meeting the Team Leader will meet with the POC to identify any areas that the applicant feels that the Site Visit team is missing. As necessary, the Examiners will interview these employees or review these documents.

The Examiner Team will be sensitive to the applicant's reactions. If the applicant indicates the team is missing the point, it will make time to listen.

Closing Meeting

The closing meeting signifies the end of the on-site phase of the site visit with the applicant.

The closing meeting can last from 15 minutes to one hour. If the applicant would like to provide additional information on an unsettled issue, the POC and Team Leader should reach agreement on the topic, the length of time, and the presenter.

After the applicant presents any more information, the Team Leader presents a brief (15-minute) closing, which also includes draft Key Themes information, using a presentation provided by TPE.

Following the closing meeting, no data or information may be accepted by the Examiner team. There will be no further contact with the applicant, except the POC.

After Closing Meeting

The team will normally continue to meet after the site visit concludes in the same conference room used during the site phase. If the applicant cannot provide this, the Team Leader will make arrangements to meet elsewhere. It usually takes from half to one day to complete the remaining activities.

The Examiner Team will review all their findings, make conclusions and finalize comments and scoring. The site visit does not end until all items are discussed and the Site Visit Scorebook is completed.