



Recognition Program

Join a Class of Distinction

2017 -2018

“Interest in Excellence”

Application

**Manufacturing, Service, Small Business,
Nonprofit, Government**

ILPEX Recognition Program
1501 W. Bradley Ave, Jobst 428
Peoria, IL 61625

Ben Krupowicz, Executive Director
bkrupowicz@imec.org
www.ilpex.org

Introduction

The ILPEX Awards for Excellence Program is a self-assessment recognition program designed and administered with the primary objective of helping you understand your organization's strengths and opportunities for improvement as defined by the criteria of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award®. Known around the world as best-in-class, these biennially reviewed and updated criteria provide the framework for assessing yourself against role model organizations both within and outside your sector. Throughout the year, ILPEX also offers multiple training programs geared toward assisting your organization on its journey toward excellence.

ILPEX offers two levels of review that include external assessment:

1. Full 50-page Application, including the Organizational Profile, and
2. Interest Level Application, based on only the 5-page Organizational Profile.

Those completing the full 50-page Application receive a thorough assessment by a team of trained examiners resulting in a feedback report focused on the organization's strengths and opportunities within each of the 7 Criteria and 18 Items. This may include a site visit by a team of examiners and some level of award recognition.

Those organizations completing the Interest Level Application receive a written feedback report based on the information provided and have the opportunity to be recognized with the Interest in Excellence Certificate during ILPEX annual "Saluting Excellence" Recognition Ceremony.

The Interest Level Application is based on completion of the *Organizational Profile* because this is considered the starting point for self-assessment. Why?

- The Organizational Profile helps you and your management team step back and answer logically sequenced questions that collectively provide an overview of what your organization does, values, worries about, and focuses on strategy. The answers provide an overview of your organization that can be shared with new employees, customers, suppliers, stakeholders, grantors, etc.
- Working together to complete the profile will help you determine the cohesiveness of your organization's management team members as you identify any gaps in information, focus, and/or conflicting viewpoints.
- Your self-assessment relative to the organizational profile questions will help you understand potential gaps based on areas where you find conflicting, little, or no information; these gaps represent areas to be addressed before you move any further in the application process.
- Completing the Organizational Profile is not only one of the requirements for the full Application, but it also sets the context for addressing the unique aspects of your organization within each of your responses in categories 1-7 (should you decide to complete the full Application at a later date).
- Your participation in the Interest Level Application process demonstrates your organization's interest in excellence and continuous improvement. This process can serve as an effective starting point to improve the quality of your products and service, enhance customer loyalty, increase workforce engagement, and provide a platform to accelerate change, growth, and improvement throughout your entire organization.

Interest Level Application Specifics

What you can expect...

Once you complete and submit the Interest Level Application:

- Your 5-page Organizational Profile will be assigned to a group of experienced examiners who will individually assess and then collectively complete a synthesized written Feedback Report based on the information provided.

Please note that each examiner working on your application:

1. *signs an affidavit stating he/she has no conflict of interest with your application or organization, and*
2. *agrees in writing to maintain the confidentiality of all information provided in your application.*

As set forth by the Baldrige Program, ILPEX follows the highest ethical standards regarding an application's confidentiality, removing any direct or implied conflicts of interest.

- Within approximately 45 days of receipt of your Interest Level Application by ILPEX, you will receive the examiner team's Feedback Report that will summarize:
 - Organizational Profile questions that were not addressed, were missing expected information, or that provided excess detail and/or unrelated information.
 - Answers to Organizational Profile questions that need additional clarity, or may require a better understanding of key terms or concepts and where they connect to the Criteria as appropriate.
 - A sample list of possible metrics that an examiner would expect the applicant tracks and regularly reviews based on the information provided in the Organizational Profile,
- After receiving the Feedback Report, you may request a one hour phone call to verify and clarify any points within the report.
- If you submit your application no later than the last day in January, you will receive formal recognition at ILPEX annual "Saluting Excellence" Recognition Ceremony held in the spring. This recognition includes media exposure and a certificate signifying your completion of the self-assessment process.

Application Fee and Timetable for Submission

The application fee for Interest in Excellence Level is **\$1,500** and is due when you submit the **Interest in Excellence Application Overview and Release Form** along with the five-page **Organizational Profile**. Please make checks payable to **IMEC**.

Interest Level Applications will be accepted at any time throughout the year. All applicants will receive the Feedback Report and optional one hour phone debriefing. **All applicants submitting Interest Level Applications by the last day in January** will also receive one free admission and special discount rates for the applicants' employees, partners, families, and other stakeholders to attend ILPEX annual Recognition Ceremony. This ceremony will take place in the spring.

Process

Application Overview and Release Form Instructions

1. Complete the **ILPEX Interest Level Application Overview and Release Form** on page 6.
2. Develop your organization's responses to the **Organizational profile** questions. A pre-formatted template is provided on page 8 and should be used to document and submit your Organizational Profile responses. When complete, **your Organizational Profile responses may not exceed five pages.**
 - The Organizational Profile template is set up in a two-column format, with 10 point font. Please do NOT change the two-column format or font size.
 - You may add charts or tables within the template as needed to summarize key information.
 - In addition to the five-pages allotted for your responses to the Organizational Profile questions, you may also include an organization chart and a summary of terms, acronyms and abbreviations that are used within your Organizational Profile. Neither of these count against the five-page maximum. The organization chart may help the examiners understand the structure of the applicant organization. The terms, acronyms and abbreviations are provided to clarify information included in your Organizational Profile that would otherwise be unfamiliar to the examiners.

Organizational Profile Instructions

The following color-coding is used to identify three different types of information within the Organizational Profile template that begins on page 8.

- **Bolded Black text** is used for all section headers [e.g., **P.1a(2) Vision and Mission**]. Black text is also used after each set of **blue text questions**, indicating the applicant should "<Insert your response here>." Please replace the prompts labeled <Insert your response here>. All of your answers should be in black text.
- **Blue text** is used for all questions that you will respond to in developing your Organizational Profile. For example:
What are your main product offerings? What is the relative importance of each to your success? What mechanisms do you use to deliver your products?
- **Red text** is used for **NOTES** that help further explain the questions in the Organizational Profile. Once you have read the information in the **NOTES**, please delete all red text before submitting your application to ILPEX. For example:
[NOTE P.1a(1): Read and delete - Product offerings and products are the goods and services you offer in the marketplace. Mechanisms for delivering products to your end-use customers might be direct or might be indirect, through dealers, distributors, collaborators, or channel partners. Nonprofit organizations might refer to their product offerings as programs, projects, or services.]

In addition to the **NOTES** in the template, applicants are encouraged to consult the **Glossary of Key Terms** in the Baldrige Excellence Framework (<http://www.nist.gov/baldrige/publications/criteria.cfm>)

Additional Suggestions regarding how you might organize yourselves to complete the Interest Level Application

How you proceed depends upon the level of involvement and time an organization wants to expend on the application.

For smaller organizations with less than 50 employees, the senior executive or their designee may write the initial application with one or two helpers over a period of two to four weeks, and then present the application to the entire management team for review and updates.

For larger organizations, the senior executive may want to gather his/her senior managers to first discuss the Organizational Profile questions, and then assign a team(s) to write the Organizational Profile.

Consider using project management tools to assist in meeting your application preparation deadlines. Prior to starting, spend time to define and agree on the scope, timetable and budget. Each team may choose to meet regularly until it has completed its assignment and responded thoroughly to each of the Organizational Profile questions.

Questions or Comments

Please contact the ILPEX office for all questions or comments about the Illinois Performance Excellence program or this application process at **630-536-7062** or **bkrupowicz@imec.org**.

Please mail all materials to:

IMEC
229 A. Bowie Court, Bolingbrook, IL 60440
Attn: Ben Krupowicz – Executive Director

Write checks payable to IMEC

ILPEX Interest Level Application Overview and Release Form

1. Applicant

<i>Organization Name</i>	Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center – Illinois Performance Excellence
<i>City, State Zip</i>	Peoria, IL 61625
<i>Total # of employees (full-time equivalent)</i>	47
<i>Total # of sites</i>	5 sites

2. Industry Sector

Place an "X" to identify the sector that best describes your organization

	Manufacturing
X	Service
	Health Care
	Education
	Government
	Nonprofit

3. Industrial Classification

List up to three of the most descriptive 3 or 4 digit NAICS codes (see page 7 for listing)

611 Education Services

4. Official Contact

<i>Name</i>	David Boulay
<i>Title</i>	President
<i>Address (no PO Box)</i>	1501 W. Bradley Ave., 428 Jobst Hall
<i>City, State Zip</i>	Peoria, IL 61625
<i>Phone</i>	309-677-3765
<i>E-mail</i>	dboulay@imec.org

5. Application Fee

Application Fee of \$1,500 is due when application is submitted.

Contact the ILPEX office to clarify payment options. (630-536-7062 or bkrupowicz@imec.org)

6. Enter a one-sentence description of your organization:

IMEC/ILPEX provides educational services to help organizations achieve sustained competitiveness through (1) process excellence (i.e. lean, quality, Baldrige, six sigma); (2) growth and innovation strategies; (3) environmental, health and safety; (4) supply chain optimization; and (5) workforce and staff development.

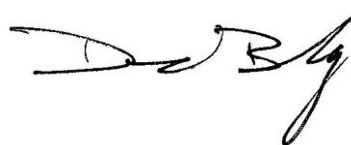
7. Release Statement and Signature of Highest Ranking Official

<i>Name</i>	David Boulay
<i>Title</i>	President
<i>Address</i>	1501 W. Bradley Ave.
<i>City, State Zip</i>	Peoria, IL 61625
<i>Phone</i>	309-677-3765
<i>E-mail</i>	dboulay@imec.org

Please read and sign:

I state and attest that:

I have reviewed the information supplied in this Application and related Organizational Profile. To the best of my knowledge, no untrue statement or omission of a material fact has been made in this application package. Based on the information herein and the current eligibility requirements for the Illinois Performance Excellence Award, my organization is eligible to apply.



Signature

9/23/17

Date

North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Codes

Please insert NAICS codes most relevant to your organization's products and/or services on the first page of the Level 1 Application Form

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 111 Crop Production | 518 Data Processing, Hosting and Related Services |
| 112 Animal Production | 519 Other Information Services |
| 113 Forestry and Logging | 521 Monetary Authorities-Central Bank |
| 114 Fishing, Hunting and Trapping | 522 Credit Intermediation and Related Activities |
| 115 Support Activities for Agriculture and Forestry | 523 Securities, Commodity Contracts, and Other Financial Investments and Related Activities |
| 211 Oil and Gas Extraction | 524 Insurance Carriers and Related Activities |
| 212 Mining (except Oil and Gas) | 525 Funds, Trusts, and Other Financial Vehicles |
| 213 Support Activities for Mining | 531 Real Estate |
| 221 Utilities | 532 Rental and Leasing Services |
| 236 Construction of Buildings | 533 Lessors of Nonfinancial Intangible Assets (except Copyrighted Works) |
| 237 Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction | 541 Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services |
| 238 Specialty Trade Contractors | 551 Management of Companies and Enterprises |
| 311 Food Manufacturing | 561 Administrative and Support Services |
| 312 Beverage and Tobacco Product Manufacturing | 562 Waste Management and Remediation Services |
| 313 Textile Mills | 611 Educational Services |
| 314 Textile Product Mills | 6111 Elementary and Secondary Schools |
| 315 Apparel Manufacturing | 6112 Junior Colleges |
| 316 Leather and Allied Product Manufacturing | 6113 Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools |
| 321 Wood Product Manufacturing | 6114 Business Schools and Computer and Management Training |
| 322 Paper Manufacturing | 6115 Technical and Trade Schools |
| 323 Printing and Related Support Activities | 6116 Other Schools and Instruction |
| 324 Petroleum and Coal Products Manufacturing | 6117 Educational Support Services |
| 325 Chemical Manufacturing | 621 Ambulatory Health Care Services |
| 326 Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing | 6211 Offices of Physicians |
| 327 Nonmetallic Mineral Product Manufacturing | 6212 Offices of Dentists |
| 331 Primary Metal Manufacturing | 6213 Offices of Other Health Practitioners |
| 332 Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing | 6214 Outpatient Care Centers |
| 333 Machinery Manufacturing | 6215 Medical and Diagnostic Laboratories |
| 334 Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing | 6216 Home Health Care Services |
| 335 Electrical Equipment, Appliance, and Component Manufacturing | 6219 Other Ambulatory Health Care Services |
| 336 Transportation Equipment Manufacturing | 622 Hospitals |
| 337 Furniture and Related Product Manufacturing | 623 Nursing and Residential Care Facilities |
| 339 Miscellaneous Manufacturing | 624 Social Assistance |
| 423 Merchant Wholesalers, Durable Goods | 711 Performing Arts, Spectator Sports, and Related Industries |
| 424 Merchant Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods | 712 Museums, Historical Sites, and Similar Institutions |
| 425 Wholesale Electronic Markets and Agents and Brokers | 713 Amusement, Gambling, and Recreation Industries |
| 441 Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers | 721 Accommodation |
| 442 Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores | 722 Food Services and Drinking Places |
| 443 Electronics and Appliance Stores | 811 Repair and Maintenance |
| 444 Building Material and Garden Equipment and Supplies Dealers | 812 Personal and Laundry Services |
| 445 Food and Beverage Stores | 813 Religious, Grantmaking, Civic, Professional, and Similar Organizations |
| 446 Health and Personal Care Stores | 814 Private Households |
| 447 Gasoline Stations | 921 Executive, Legislative, and Other General Government Support |
| 448 Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores | 922 Justice, Public Order, and Safety Activities |
| 451 Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, and Music Stores | 923 Administration of Human Resource Programs |
| 452 General Merchandise Stores | 924 Administration of Environmental Quality Programs |
| 453 Miscellaneous Store Retailers | 925 Administration of Housing Programs, Urban Planning, and Community Development |
| 454 Nonstore Retailers | 926 Administration of Economic Programs |
| 481 Air Transportation | 927 Space Research and Technology |
| 482 Rail Transportation | 928 National Security and International |
| 483 Water Transportation | |
| 484 Truck Transportation | |
| 485 Transit and Ground Passenger Transportation | |
| 486 Pipeline Transportation | |
| 487 Scenic and Sightseeing Transportation | |
| 488 Support Activities for Transportation | |
| 491 Postal Service | |
| 492 Couriers and Messengers | |
| 493 Warehousing and Storage | |
| 511 Publishing Industries (except Internet) | |
| 512 Motion Picture and Sound Recording Industries | |
| 515 Broadcasting (except Internet) | |
| 517 Telecommunications | |

Organizational Profile – IMEC

P.1 Organizational Description

“I love the basic concept of IMEC. They help you discover issues, make it clear to your team where those issues lie, identify solutions and then train your people to put those solutions in place and sustain them.”

Craig Zoberis, Fusion OEM

The IMEC team wakes up every day to fulfill its core purpose of fostering long-term economic and workforce competitiveness. For over twenty years, the organization has focused on transferring knowledge and technology in best practices and standards to stimulate improvement and innovation in Illinois. At the heart of our passion to succeed is our desire to drive positive change for the competitive future of the organizations we work with.

IMEC is a public-private partnership, with a non-profit 501C3 status. We serve as the Illinois steward of two U.S. Department of Commerce NIST programs– the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) and the state affiliate for the national Malcolm National Quality Award Baldrige, known as the Illinois Performance Excellence recognition program (ILPEX). Through the MEP program, IMEC’s service delivery and outreach efforts are targeted at small and mid-sized manufacturers. The ILPEX recognition program serves organizations in all industries by utilizing the Baldrige framework as a standard for them to advance their performance and practices in enterprise excellence. This is accomplished by developing their expertise, providing feedback on their document submissions, and celebrating their progress. The results of IMEC’s work are measured by the economic impacts we help create for organizations, their workforce, and communities across Illinois. It is our job and how we bring our vision to life.

P.1a. Organizational Environment P.1a(1) Product Offerings

IMEC delivers educational services through open enrollment events, training, coaching, assessments, and implementation projects. Service offerings align with the Baldrige categories of Strategy, Leadership, Operations, Customers, Workforce, and Measurement/Results. IMEC’s traditional services are the ILPEX Recognition Program, lean manufacturing, quality systems, and workforce training. Lean manufacturing and quality represent 62% of revenues and 72% of projects over the past three years, followed by workforce training. The ILPEX Recognition Program is a modest revenue and project contributor yet serves as a service for a “class of distinction” and a framework for the overall IMEC brand. To highlight the scope of these services, IMEC delivered over 3,100 value-added services to slightly under 1,500 organizations over

the past three years. Thirty-six percent of these (1,108) services were events. The remaining 64% of services represent a blend of on-site assessments, technical assistance, coaching, and training.

P.1a (2) Vision and Mission

Core Purpose (Corporate bylaws)
Fostering long-term economic and workforce competitiveness
Mission
Committed to driving growth through enterprise excellence
Vision
We will lead the way for organizations to create their competitive future
Core Values
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning – continuously acquiring and sharing knowledge that helps our organization succeed • Collaboration – working with colleagues, clients, and stakeholders to produce impactful results • Agility - being responsive and flexible to client, stakeholder, and organizational needs • Passion – demonstrating pride and enthusiasm in delivering on our core purpose and mission
Permission to Play Values
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity - approach all interactions in an ethical, respectful and honest manner • Results Driven - strive to excel in delivering meaningful outcomes in all endeavors
Aspirational Value: Innovative

Figure P.1-2: Vision, Mission, and Values

The vision and mission statements were updated in a 2016 strategic planning process. The aspiration of our vision is for more and more organizations across the state to say “but for” IMEC’s involvement, their future competitive position would not have been as strong as it is today. More competitive organizations are a foundation for fostering long-term economic and workforce strength. The mission draws more clarity to this vision by referencing growth

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through enterprise excellence, a framework of best practice approaches and tools for any organization.

The organization’s Core Competencies are as follows:

- 1) U.S. Commerce programs of excellence – IMEC serves as the sole MEP center for Illinois and as the state’s Baldrige affiliate and a member of the Alliance for Performance Excellence, a network of national, state and local Baldrige-based award programs. These relationships provide federal, state, and local stakeholder acknowledgement of our work as well as alignment and best practice sharing with equivalent organizations across the nation.
- 2) Integration with four universities – the universities serve on the IMEC Board, employ and provide benefits for staff, and provide expertise to manage federal and state grants and contracts. Furthermore, extensive programmatic resources are accessible through faculty and students. These integrated university relationships provide a unique blend of credibility, capabilities, and resources that would otherwise be difficult for smaller organizations to manage and achieve.
- 3) Subcontractor partners – an extensive team of vetted third party experts in manufacturing fields of expertise that creates a one-stop shop of services to achieve results for the MEP program.
- 4) Statewide footprint- IMEC’s field staff are local ensuring coverage within a 60-90 minute drive of all parts of the state.

These core competencies blend together to provide institutional credibility to the mission, extend a full breadth of resources and solution offerings beyond staff and volunteers, and creates an infrastructure of local presence and outreach. IMEC is deeply integrated with trusted names and organizations and drives enterprise excellence through local relationships and support, serving as a ‘one-stop’ shop or go-between, particularly for manufacturers, and a path for a class of distinction by serving as the state’s Baldrige affiliate.

P.1a (3) Workforce Profile

IMEC has a workforce of 47 permanent staff members, between 50-60 volunteers involved with the ILPEX Recognition Program annually, and up to five university interns. The staff is divided into outreach field staff called Regional Managers (35%) and Technical Specialists (35%); support functions (16%); and leadership (14%). A bachelor’s degree is required for all staff positions and employees are not represented by organized bargaining units. The most significant change in workforce composition occurred with the 2015 merger of IMEC and ILPEX, integrating the volunteer and staff workforce. The hiring and selection process focuses on experienced industry leaders who align with the values. This is a vital

foundation of staff engagement with the mission and vision. Their relevant work backgrounds facilitate genuine empathy and understanding of client needs. In the 2017 employee engagement survey, values and support, leadership communication, and collaboration and teamwork, were the highest rated factors of engagement. IMEC staff also highlights cultural attributes such as a passion for the mission, making a difference, and autonomy and control over their work.

Volunteers serve as examiners for the ILPEX Recognition Program. Their commitment to annual training and on-site reviews of applicant organizations results in hundreds of hours devoted to the program. They are driven by their passion for standards of excellence, their professional development, and to support improvements within their own organizations. Many describe the ILPEX Recognition Program as a “mini-MBA” leading to tremendous professional growth and satisfaction.

Ethnicity	Caucasian	95%
	Hispanic	3%
	Asian	0%
	Indian Subcontinent	2%
Gender	Male	57%
	Female	43%
Tenure	<2 years	14%
	2 to 5 years	43%
	5 to 10 years	18%
	10 to 20 years	20%
	>20 years	5%
Education	H.S. Diploma	0%
	Bachelor's	50%
	Master's	43%
	PhD	2%

Figure P.1-3 Staff Profile 2016-2017

As employees of the universities, staff members receive a comprehensive benefit packages that include extensive vacation and sick time benefits, highly competitive healthcare insurance options, and accessibility to retirement healthcare for those meeting the requirements. Special safety and health requirements apply to employees who work in various client facilities throughout the year. These employees must be aware and comply with the safety policies at these facilities which can vary based on the type of business operation.

P.1a (4) Assets

The major facilities are offices throughout the state with the main office located on Bradley University’s campus. Most employees and all volunteers work remotely and at client sites delivering services. To address information

requirements for a remote workforce, IMEC has a fully developed IT infrastructure. This infrastructure includes portable communications and computers, an employee portal, cloud-based software, and staff dedicated to supporting the organization's IT needs. IMEC has a centrally based server system and uses a customized Lotus Notes based system, called iMAPS, that is inclusive of all client interactions, stakeholder management and reporting, as well as communication tools such as instant messaging. ILPEX volunteers utilize software systems purchased through the Alliance for Performance Excellence. Finally, the intellectual capital of the staff is a significant asset and resource for the outreach to clients.

P.1a (5) Regulatory Requirements

Tied to state universities, IMEC is subject to the statutes and policies of the State of Illinois and each university for purchasing, financial, and human resource matters, and to the audit requirements of the Office of the State Auditor.

Since a portion of IMEC funds comes from the federal government, IMEC must abide by the requirements of OMB Uniform Guidance. Other requirements may be imposed by federal agencies entering into a contract or grant program with IMEC. The Bradley University Office of Business Affairs works closely with IMEC staff to ensure appropriate compliance.

Beyond the standard regulations of the state and federal government, IMEC has no additional or specialized certification or registration requirements.

P.1b Organizational Relationships

P.1b (1) Organizational Structure

The IMEC Board of Directors serves in a strategic and fiduciary capacity to the President. The Board is comprised of up to 17 voting members from the private sector. The four university members and U.S. Commerce NIST MEP are non-voting members. The President reports directly to the Board. The Board's role is to guide strategic choices, provide support and outreach with key stakeholders, and evaluate the President's performance.

In addition to this fiduciary Board, IMEC has an advisory Board of Trustees for the ILPEX Recognition Program. This Board of Trustees serve as champions of the program. They provide strategic guidance to the ILPEX Executive Director in order to maintain relevancy and high standards for the recognition program as well as provide support and outreach. Two trustees serve on the fiduciary Board of Directors.

The leadership team consists of functional roles that include the VP of Finance and IT, VP of Operations, Marketing Manager, and HR and Talent Development Manager. The President serves as the primary role to manage key funding relationships with the federal and state government and other major funders.

Since the MEP program represents a significant funding source, performance expectations, as well as participation and reporting requirements of the program result in a key influence of strategic discussions, systems, and processes.

P.1b (2) Customers and Stakeholders

IMEC's key market segment is small and mid-sized manufacturers (under 500 employees) in Illinois. This market represents over 13,000 establishments and over 95% of IMEC's value-added services. Given the significant size of this market, it is broken into customer groups based on decision making personas for marketing and outreach purposes (Owner/President, Plant Manager, Human Resources, etc.). IMEC has a strategic priority to further segment this market by adapting a service model better suited for very small manufacturers (less than 20 employees).

With respect to the ILPEX Recognition Program, the market segment is defined as leaders in any industry that desire leading edge Baldrige based service offerings. These leaders represent two primary customer groups, committed senior leaders capable of making enterprise wide commitment to excellence and technical leaders passionate to utilize, guide, teach, and implement the Baldrige approach.

The notion that educational services can help to improve any process or system applies to all customer groups. The key requirement of all customers is the ability to customize and provide relevant application to their specific needs. These customers further require delivery of services by experienced and credible experts in relevant areas of content knowledge at a cost effective level. These requirements are consistent across all service offerings. The variations in customer requests require robust systems of delivery and project management, effective relationship management, and strong models for assessment and action planning.

Key stakeholders include the U.S. Department of Commerce (MEP, Baldrige), State of Illinois, federal and state legislative leaders, the City of Chicago, and the four university partners. These stakeholders expect IMEC to enhance the state's economic growth, as measured by economic impact, and to be responsible stewards of the programs. There are modest differences among these stakeholders' requirements, primarily in the means and frequency of communication and collaboration.

P.1b (3) Key Suppliers, Partners and Collaborators

Key suppliers are a pre-vetted qualified pool of subcontractors who play an integral part of the key work systems through project-based service delivery. Expertise, such as Baldrige, competitive intelligence, human resource policies, information technology, and total productive maintenance, are a few examples of the subcontractor

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pool. This pool enhances competitiveness by ensuring a broad and relevant set of skills to solve client challenges.

Partners are categorized as academic institutions (university and community colleges), government agencies (federal, state, local), private sector trusted advisors (banks, lawyers, accountants), non-profit economic development councils, associations, and foundations. These partners tend to have formal arrangements in place to provide lead generation, innovation, financial support, guidance and expertise depending on the relationship.

Primary collaborators are the national network of MEP and the Alliance for Performance Excellence which serves as key resources for best practice sharing. These national networks are a major source for innovation. There are also less formal in-state collaborators that include organizations who work closely with IMEC by championing the mission, and co-marketing occasional events.

For two-way communication with subcontractors, IMEC uses a systematic approach to qualify, onboard, and measure performance and impacts of subcontractors. These formal process steps ensure subcontractors meet contractual requirements, staff is informed and aware of the offering, and outreach plans regarding subcontractor services are well integrated into territory plans. IMEC has developed a subcontractor rating report, which balances the priorities of impact, penetration, and revenue which define our key subcontractor requirements. This report examines total projects, unique clients, and project impacts. Through quarterly analysis of the results, IMEC is able to provide and garner feedback, highlight successes, promote capabilities, and address concerns to ensure that subcontractors appropriately represent the IMEC and MEP brands. Key subcontractors provide ongoing feedback through the development of client projects and implementation as well as regularly engaging field staff.

The key mechanism for communicating with and managing relationships with partners is dependent on the deployment model (geography, frequency, work plan). Partnership communication and relationship management are mostly guided by Memorandums of Agreement that outline roles. For example, partners with funding commitments are tied to ongoing formal programmatic and financial reporting on a monthly or quarterly basis. Other partners will have less formal communication mechanisms often tied to IMEC local staff.

P.2 Organizational Situation

P.2a Competitive Environment

P.2a (1) Competitive Position

The type of work conducted by IMEC places it in a unique competitive environment. Relative to its role serving as the state’s MEP and state Baldrige program, IMEC is the sole provider. When examined by the service offerings, the

competitive environment extends from colleges and universities to private consulting firms of various sizes. These providers range from sole proprietors with a single service offering to national and international firms with a broad array of service offerings. As a result, the competitive landscape can feel like co-opetition – at times other organizations are strong collaborators and at times can feel like potential competition.

Given the total market of firms and organizations providing services within the state, IMEC is a very small provider relative to the overall market potential. The industry is best characterized as highly fragmented, because no main organization dominates the marketplace. While IMEC not does maintain active and systematic competitor data, there are no known competitors that exhibit our core competencies of being tied to multiple universities and federal/state agencies and offer a statewide footprint of local staff.

P.2a (2) Competitiveness Changes

The merger of IMEC and ILPEX presents significant competitive change and opportunity to integrate workforce capabilities, grow and diversify market penetration, and strengthen service offerings and related branding. The progression of digital technologies and automation that is changing the competitive landscape provides the opportunity for innovation and collaboration for IMEC internally and for client services.

P.2a (3) Comparative Data

IMEC actively participates in quarterly benchmarks with MEP centers in other states (peers) and explores comparative data for use to determine new methods and priorities for clientele. To understand manufacturing service trends, IMEC uses ongoing reports generated by MEP as key sources of comparative data. Related to the ILPEX Recognition Program, the organization is an active member of the Alliance for Performance Excellence which offers ongoing benchmarking with other state programs. Furthermore, IMEC staff participates in professional conferences to benchmark best practices of services and to raise awareness of IMEC competencies. IMEC currently does not systematically perform competitor data analysis.

P.2b Strategic Context

IMEC’s key strategic challenges are:

- Maintaining robust systems that proactively respond to client needs in an environment of increasing service commodity risk due to the large quantities of similar service providers and the ease of accessibility to knowledge and services through the Internet.
- Highly dependent on MEP funding and the related need to diversify into new sectors while having a significant tradition in manufacturing.
- Leadership succession planning.
- Hiring and retaining talent.

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- Complexity of the IMEC funding model and management of state, federal, and local funds.
- Effectively managing organizational knowledge.
- Nurturing more strategic relationships with clients.

The key business advantages are:

- Strong stakeholder relationships with four highly regarded universities and with U.S. Commerce NIST programs.
- Extensive institutional resources available to IMEC from the universities, subcontractors, partners, and collaborators.
- Highly experienced staff and volunteer talent who provide instant credibility with organizations.
- Comprehensive service offering model to address enterprise excellence and create an “honest broker” or one-stop for manufacturers.
- Robust Customer Relationship Management (CRM) model with three fundamental components; 1) Regional Managers across the state to provide local connections, 2) a marketing department for coordination of brand, events, print, web, and social media, 3) the iMAPS system that is the data backbone with extensive client records.
- System of performance accountability to measure economic impact, based on voice of the customer data collected by a third-party surveying process. Clients and stakeholders, such as elected officials, continually seek measurable impacts for their investments. This level of program evaluation measurement has not been found in similar organizations.

Operations Coordinator and appropriate project staff elevate issues to ensure appropriate management and continuous improvement. Reasons for using the board include poor satisfaction or impact scores, net promoter detractors, heading over budget, being off scope, and/or falling behind schedule. The teams analyze root cause, define immediate solutions, and implement system improvements to prevent recurring problem.

Two-level continuous improvement process: The process consists of IMEC Ideas, a suggestion system for “easy to implement” improvement ideas estimated to take less than 20 hours, and the use of A3 for more longer term improvement projects. IMEC Ideas is integrated in the iMAPS database system so all staff can create and submit ideas. Because this is a new system, the President serves as the initial reviewer and provides direction to proceed or not based on impacts and rationale. For more expansive internal projects, the leadership team uses an A3 and/or project charter for a staff team lead to drive improvements to address the gaps.

Best practice sharing: The three primary best practice sharing approaches are regional team report outs on the weekly staff huddle, staff meeting topical sharing, and the use of Bizlibrary learning management system to learn and develop consistent knowledge and skills.

P.2c Performance Improvement System

The IMEC Way for continuous improvement is comprised of four elements; strategic/ business level reviews, IMEC service and process audits, a two level continuous improvement process, and best practice sharing.

Strategic/business level review: To cascade and implement the strategic plan, the leadership team conducts strategic and business level reviews by utilizing the tools and methodology of lean policy deployment. As a result, strategic goals are converted into annual high level process objectives. From these objectives and current performance are the gaps that serve as the “To / from” targets for improvement. The leadership team reviews high level performance weekly, often focused on planning and exception reporting. These meetings set the priority for improvement focus.

Service/process audits: Staff conducts ongoing service and process audits to identify and implement improvement opportunities and quality checks. Technical Specialist service champions focus on service audits in their knowledge areas of expertise while administrative staff conducts internal process audits. When client related projects face potential challenges, a Project Review Board consisting of the VP of Operations, VP of Finance and

SUMMARY OF TERMS, ACRONYMS and ABBREVIATIONS

A

B

Box – Cloud-based system where documents are accessed.

C

Charter - Project Charters are used for IMEC internal and external projects as a means to confirm project expectations with team members. The Project Charter is a working document that the team will update before, during, and after the project.

CRM – Customer Relationship Management

D

E

F

G

H

HR – Human Resources

I

ILPEX – Illinois Performance Excellence

iMAPS – collection of databases that comprise IMEC’s information system. It is used to collect and manage information about current, pending and previous activities, subcontractors, revenue sources and staff.

IMEC – Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center

IT – Information Technology

J

K

L

M

MEP – U.S. Dept. of Commerce Manufacturing Extension Partnership

N

NIST – National Institute of Standards and Technology

O

OMB – Office of Management and Budget

P

Project Review Board – Board consists of the VP of Operations, VP of Finance, Operations Coordinator and appropriate project staff who step in when projects are facing potential challenges.

Proposal - A Service Proposal and related information submitted to a client company for approval prior to establishment of a project.

Q

R

ROI – Return on Investment

S

T

U

V

VOC – Voice of the Customer

W

Y

Z