



12^{TO} WATCH

A Virginia Small Business
Development Initiative

Sponsored by Virginia SPQA in partnership with

- The Office of the LT. Governor of Virginia as Chief Jobs Creation Officer
 - The National Federation of Independent Business
 - The Virginia Department of Business Assistance
- The Virginia Office of the US Small Business Administration
 - Virginia Small Business Development Centers



United States Senate Productivity and Quality Award for Virginia
Post Office Box, 6099, Suffolk, Virginia 23433 571.215.8881

January, 2012

Dear Small Business Executive,

The U.S. Senate Productivity and Quality Award Program for Virginia (Virginia SPQA) is entering its 30th year of serving organizations across the Commonwealth. From its beginnings in 1983, Virginia SPQA has been a national leader in spreading excellence in organizational performance.

For 2012, Virginia SPQA is pleased to announce the continuation of an initiative especially for the small business community. Started in 2011, the "12 to Watch" is a joint effort among several Virginia organizations. Its purpose is to introduce small business to the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence as a means of moving to the next level. As more fully described in this Guide, using the Criteria for Performance Excellence as an improvement tool and becoming one of the "12 to Watch" has significant benefits.

We are pleased that your company has an interest in becoming part of the community of hundreds of businesses seeking performance excellence and encourage your organization to become one of the "12 to Watch" for 2012.

We wish your organization a strong and healthy journey in performance excellence. Please feel free to contact us at 571.215.8881 or chair@spqa.va.org if you have questions.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jo L. Rohr". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

Jo L. Rohr
Chair, Virginia SPQA

What is “12 to Watch?”

“12 to Watch” is an initiative of the United States Senate Productivity and Quality Award Program in Virginia (Virginia SPQA) to promote the participation of, and provide **Virginia SPQA Discovery Program** technical assistance opportunities to twelve selected Virginia small businesses.

Although most any organization can participate in the Discovery Program, the “12 to Watch” initiative provides a host of unique benefits to its small business participants which are not offered through the normal program. Among those unique benefits is the ability to display the official “12 to Watch” logo once all obligations have been completed.

Becoming one of the 12 is a two-step process. First, small businesses which meet the Basic Eligibility Criteria (found on the next page) must submit an Eligibility Application to be accepted as a participant in the “12 to Watch” initiative. There is no guarantee of acceptance. Second, the accepted small businesses must complete their Discovery Program self-assessment during the required timeframe.

Eligible small businesses which apply to become one of the twelve participants are selected based on criteria outlined in the Eligibility Application. The selection criteria considers among other factors, a small businesses’ position today relative to high level requirements of the nationally recognized Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence (CPE) as articulated through Virginia SPQA’s Discovery Program. ***Small businesses selected to be one of the twelve are considered to be those poised for positive and sustainable job growth in the Commonwealth.***

Organizations assisting in the development and promotion of the “12 to Watch” initiative include the:

- Virginia Department of Business Assistance
- United States Small Business Administration
- National Federation of Independent Business
- Office of the Lieutenant Governor as Chief Jobs Officer, Commonwealth of Virginia
- Virginia Small Business Development Centers

Being selected to participate in the Discovery Program’s 12 to Watch initiative represents a unique opportunity for Small Businesses to sharpen their strategic management skills so critical to sustained growth.

Virginia SPQA is a 501c-3 non-profit volunteer organization which since 1982 has administered the US Senate Productivity & Quality Award Program in Virginia. Based on the nationally recognized Malcolm Baldrige Award, Virginia SPQA uses the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence as the basis for its various programs. Because of its simplicity, **Virginia SPQA’s Discovery Program** provides the perfect tool to assist Small Businesses evaluate and improve performance.

Small businesses interested in becoming one of the 12 are advised to thoroughly review the **Virginia SPQA Discovery Guide for 2011-12** prior to submitting the Eligibility Application to be one of the “12 to Watch.” The Guide and Self-Assessment Template are available for download from <http://spqa-va.org/discovery.html> and outlines the Program’s methods, processes, and time commitments.

Why become “one of the 12?”

While not an Award in the context of the traditional Virginia SPQA Award Program associated with achieving the United States Senate Productivity and Quality Award, being named as one of the “12 to Watch” is an indicator that the business possesses certain fundamentals to warrant promotion and assistance in a class of its own. Benefits include:

- Press and other promotion as a one of the “12 to Watch” small businesses in Virginia.
- Discovery Program participation fee waiver.
- Discovery Program Self-Assessment “12 to Watch” one-day Training at no registration cost for two company attendees.
- An assigned Virginia SPQA “Mentor” to answer technical questions during the Discovery Self-Assessment period.
- Written Discovery Program Self-Assessment feedback from trained Examiners for each participant.
- A follow-up feedback explanation teleconference for each participant if requested.

- Promotion at the annual Virginia Forum for Excellence on September 10 and 11, 2012 in Richmond, Virginia along with two complimentary registrations.

In addition to the prestige and promotion associated with becoming one of the 12, the benefits of Discovery Program participation are significant. At its heart, the Program provides a method to conduct a company self-assessment based on the nationally recognized Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence and receive written feedback from trained examiners. The results of the Discovery self-assessment and feedback process can serve as a catalyst for moving a small business to the next level in many ways. Many Discovery Program participants move forward and apply for the Virginia SPQA Medallion.

How to become “one of the 12”

For 2012, the Eligibility Application (see Appendix) is submitted to Virginia SPQA by May 31, 2012. Only small businesses which meet the basic Eligibility Criteria may apply. Please review the basic Eligibility Criteria below to determine if you can apply. Your Eligibility Application will require you to certify Eligibility.

Basic Eligibility Criteria

- The Company's headquarters and principle operations are primarily located in the Commonwealth of Virginia.
- The Company is at least 51% independently owned and controlled by one or more individuals who are U.S. citizens or legal resident aliens.
- One or more of the individual owners controls both the management and daily business operations.
- The Company is at least five years old.
- The Company's annual revenue was no more than \$10 million for its fiscal year prior to the Eligibility Application submission.
- The Company has at least 15 employees including those who are part time at the time of Eligibility Application submission but no more than 150.
- During the past five years, the Company has not filed for bankruptcy.
- The Company or its owners are not subject of investigations and not a named subject of any current criminal investigations or criminal proceedings.

IMPORTANT: Prior to submitting the Eligibility Application to become “one of the 12”, the Company's leadership should review the Virginia SPQA Discovery Program Guide for 2011-12 to determine if the internal resources are available to fully participate consistent with the schedule below. Selection of the “12 to Watch” will occur on or about June 15, 2012.

For those selected, a one-day training session is tentatively scheduled for June 29, 2012 in Richmond, Virginia (the date will be reviewed after selection of the 12 to ensure its feasibility). The Discovery Self-Assessment must be submitted by August 31, 2012 for recognition to occur at the Virginia Forum for Excellence. Virginia SPQA Examiner teams will review the Self-Assessment and provide written feedback along with a follow-up teleconference during the months of September through November.

2011 "12 to Watch" Time Line	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV
Application Deadline	31						
"12 to Watch" Selection Announcement		15					
"12 to Watch" Discovery Program Training		29*					
"12 to Watch" Self Assessment				31			
Virginia Forum for Excellence Recognition					10&11		
"12 to Watch" Virginia SPQA Feedback							

*Tentative

Submit an Eligibility Application

Small businesses that meet the Basic Eligibility Criteria including the ability to support the schedule shown must fill out and submit the "12 to Watch" Eligibility Application shown in the Appendix. The MS Word version to be used is available on-line at www.spqa-va.org or you can request one from director@spqa-va.org or call us at 571.215.8881.

NOTE: If selected to participate in the 12 to Watch initiative, there is no need to submit an "Intent to Participate" form referenced in the Discovery Program Guide.

The completed Eligibility Application must be submitted by May 31, 2012 to: **Bob Bowles, Executive Director, Virginia SPOA, P.O. Box 6099, Suffolk, Virginia 23433**

Selection Process

An independently chartered Selection Panel appointed by Virginia SPOA will review the Eligibility Applications submitted and make the selections. In addition to the Basic Eligibility Criteria certifications, the Eligibility Application asks for information intended to help the Selection Panel understand where your business is today. The selection process includes quantitative and qualitative elements and others as the Selection Panel deems necessary.

Confidentiality is Prized

The Selection Panel and Virginia SPOA maintains strict confidentiality rules regarding information found in "12 to Watch" Eligibility Applications and Self-Assessment information. Each Panelist signs a Non-Disclosure Agreement and all Eligibility Applications, except for those selected are destroyed. Those selected are destroyed at the end of the process. Additionally, Panelists are selected to ensure there are no conflicts of interest.

Applicant Incentives

Naturally, not all Applicants will be selected. Those companies which are not selected can still find value in participating in the Discovery or other Virginia SPOA programs. Indeed, the simple act of submitting an Eligibility Application is a strong indicator of interest in performance excellence. As such those companies whose Eligibility Applications were not selected will be offered an opportunity for one of their employees to attend the Virginia Forum for Excellence *at half the normal registration cost.*

Not Eligible? Timing Wrong? Small Business which are not eligible to participate in the 12 to Watch initiative may still participate in the basic Discovery Program. Although there are modest costs, many businesses see value in conducting a Baldrige based self-assessment along with feedback provided by the Discover Examiners.

Virginia Forum for Excellence



The "12 to Watch" will be formally recognized at the September 10-11, 2012 Virginia Forum for Excellence at its Awards Ceremony on September 11, 2012. The 2012 Virginia Forum for Excellence will be held at the Holiday Inn Koger Center in Richmond. In addition recognizing the "12 to Watch", the Forum offers a variety of keynote addresses and workshops.

Attended by organizational performance improvement specialists for across the Commonwealth, the Forum for Excellence is Virginia's longest running annual venue devoted to organizational excellence. For 2012 the theme is *Innovation for Results.*

Meet the 2011 “12 to Watch”



Congratulations to the 2011 “12 to Watch.” Here’s who they are and what they are saying about their experience...

“A terrific tool to pull businesses back into thinking strategically and long term. In our industry, the day to day tends to pull us off of the mission and vision work (which would impact the day to day positively.) The 12 to Watch reinforces best practice and has been really great for our performance and planning. THANK YOU!”

Aromas Specialty Coffee & Gourmet Bakery



American Technology Services - Fairfax

A full-service information technology consulting firm serves small and mid-sized companies who need and value high quality support. Visit them at www.networkats.com.



Aromas Specialty Coffee & Gourmet Bakery - Williamsburg and Newport News

Looking for a treat? Aromas serve specialty coffee and gourmet baked goods. Visit them at www.aromasworld.com.



The Chief Information Group - Falls Church

This health information management consulting company specializes in business intelligence and clinical informatics services and solutions. Visit them at www.thechiefinformationgroup.com.



GRC Enterprises - Warrenton

This enterprise offers a full range of Direct Mail services including Graphic Design, Offset printing, mailing lists and related services. Visit them at www.grcdirect.com.



Harmonia Holdings Group -Blacksburg

The company creates comprehensive, cradle-to-grave software process improvement tools. Visit them at www.harmonia.com.



JACER Corp - Fairfax

It provides professional consulting services and comprehensive business and technology solutions to federal client organizations, primarily in the health care arena. Visit them at www.jacer.com.



MicroAutomation, Inc. Centreville

The firm designs, develops and supports advanced Integrated Voice Response (IVR) and Computer Telephony Integration (CTI) systems. Visit them at www.microautomation.com.



New Horizon Security Services - Manassas

The firm provides security services in the Washington D.C. Metropolitan area and throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. Visit them at <http://newhorizonsecurity.com>.



ScienceLogic - Reston

The company offers software that helps IT operations staffs manage their data center and cloud resources. Visit them at <http://ww2.sciencelogic.com>.



Specialty's Our Name – Ashland

The business offers sheet metal fabrication, machinist and welding services. Visit them at www.specialtysourname.com.



SteelMaster Buildings - Virginia Beach

The company sells pre-engineered corrugated arch steel buildings in the United States and in over 50 countries throughout the world. Visit them at www.steelmasterusa.com.



Veris Group - Vienna

Is a management and technology services firm that helps government and commercial sector clients respond to growing strategic and technical challenges. Visit them at www.verisgroup.com.

“It helps one think through some business protocols which need to be incorporated as the business expands.”

Harmonia Holdings Group

“We would recommend the SPQA 12 to Watch Program to other small business. The Baldrige program provides an excellent framework for small businesses that are looking for strategic analysis of their current strategies and opportunities for growth.”

SteelMaster Buildings



12 to Watch Eligibility Application (2012)

I. Business Information

Company Name: _____

Highest Ranking Official: _____

Title: _____

Point of Contact (POC): _____

POC Title: _____

POC Phone: _____

POC E-Mail: _____

Business Address: _____

City, State, Zip _____

Web Site: _____

Main Product or Service: _____

Number of Employees: _____

Number of Senior Leaders: _____

II. Business Eligibility

Please validate your eligibility to apply to be one of the "12 to Watch." By checking each box, we certify that the Company...

- Is headquartered and principle operations are primarily located in the Commonwealth of Virginia.
- Is at least five years old.
- Is at least 51% independently owned and controlled by one or more individuals who are U.S. citizens or legal resident aliens.
- Has one or more of the individual owners controlling both the management and daily business operations.
- Had revenue no more than \$10 million for its fiscal year prior to the Eligibility Application submission.
- Has at least 15, but no more than 150 employees including those who are part time at the time of Eligibility Application submission.
- During the past five years has not filed for bankruptcy
- And/or its owners are not subject of investigations named subject of any current criminal investigations or criminal proceedings.
- If selected, understands the time commitments associated with participating in the "12 to Watch" initiative including the need to complete the Discovery Self-Assessment by August 31, 2012.

III. Business Attributes

Please take a look at the following list of attributes. Using a scale of 1-5 as defined below; select the numbered statement which most describes the status of the specific attribute at your Business today.

- 1 = Our Business does not currently have this attribute.
- 2 = Our Business has talked about this attribute but it is not yet developed.
- 3 = Our Business is in the beginning stages of developing this attribute but it has not yet been implemented.
- 4 = Our Business has a process for this attribute and it is being implemented.
- 5 = Our Business has a formal process for this attribute which has been fully implemented and employees at all levels understand it.

Business Attributes	1	2	3	4	5
A published company vision, mission, and values	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A written Business Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A way to gather customer feedback	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A set of key performance measures which are regularly reviewed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A backup plan if computer systems fail	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
An employee training effort	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A list of the Business's key processes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Note: at your option, you may share additional written information as an attachment to the Eligibility Application. Additional written information should not exceed two pages. Company marketing materials such as brochures, etc. are also acceptable attachments.

IV. Business Values

Consistent with the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence, the following list of organizational values has been linked to high performing businesses. Thinking about your business, please select the ONE value you believe is most reflective of your business culture today and in the space provided below the list, tell us why in 75 words or less?

- visionary leadership
- customer-driven excellence
- organizational and personal learning
- valuing workforce members and partners
- agility
- focus on the future
- managing for innovation
- management by fact
- societal responsibility
- focus on results and creating value
- systems perspective

V. Business Reference

Would you be willing to provide a name and telephone number for one of your customer points of contact that we might reach out to regarding your company? If yes, please provide the information below:

Customer Organization: _____

Point of Contact: _____

Phone: _____

VI. Help Us

While not a factor in your Company's selection, the "12 to Watch" Partner organizations are interested in understanding the inspiration of your response. Your introduction(s) to "12 to Watch" came through (check all that apply):

- National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB)
- Virginia Department of Business Assistance (VDBA)
- United States Small Business Administration (SBA) Virginia office
- Virginia Small Business Development Center
- Virginia SPQA
- Other

Thank you for your Eligibility Application to become one of the 12 to Watch. By signing, the company's highest ranking official certifies the truthfulness of information to the best of his or her knowledge.

Signature

Name:

Title:

Date: