

Will Your Company Be One Of The 12 To Watch In 2011?

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"12 to Watch" is an initiative of the United States Senate Productivity and Quality Award Program for Virginia (Virginia SPQA) to promote the participation of twelve selected small businesses in the Virginia SPQA Discovery Program and provide related performance excellence technical assistance at no cost. Small businesses selected to be one of the twelve are considered to be those poised for positive and sustainable job growth in the Commonwealth and will be recognized at the 28th annual Virginia Forum for Excellence on September 8, 2011.

Offered in partnership with the Virginia Department of Business Assistance, the United States Small Business Administration, the National Federation of Independent Business, Virginia Business Magazine and the Office of the Virginia Lieutenant Governor in its role as Virginia's Chief Jobs Officer, small businesses apply to become one of the "12 to Watch" based on eligibility and selection criteria.

In his role as Chief Jobs Officer, Lieutenant Governor Bill Bolling noted that "Small businesses are the backbone of Virginia's economy. Almost eighty percent of the people in Virginia are employed by small businesses. That's why we are doing everything we can to ensure that Virginia is the best place in America to open and run a small business, and that's why we are encouraging small businesses across the Commonwealth to participate in Virginia SPQA's "12 to Watch" program. This important small business development initiative will help improve the efficiency and performance of Virginia's small businesses and ensure that they are reaching their full potential. This will help us get Virginia's economy growing again and create jobs."

According to Jo Rohr, Chairperson of the Virginia SPQA Board of Directors, "selection criteria considers among other factors, a small businesses' position relative to high level requirements of the United States Department of Commerce's Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence (CPE)." Rohr went on to say "we are looking for those small businesses intent on becoming better because they are able to look at themselves through a broader performance lens." The twelve selected organizations will develop and provide a Virginia SPQA Discovery Program self-assessment submission for evaluation and receive written feedback from Virginia SPQA Examiners. Additionally, representatives of the twelve organizations will be trained in conducting the assessment and throughout the process will receive the services of a Mentor.

Rohr added, "being one of the twelve in and of itself is a level of recognition with positive benefits, but the process has broad and potentially positive implications for all applicants. The ability to adequately address broad performance issues can be critical to business financing and customer success."

Small businesses interested in this program can go to www.spqa-va.org and download the 12 to Watch Guide, Application, and Discovery Guide. Applications for one of the "12 to Watch" must be submitted by May 31, 2011.

Founded in 1982, Virginia SPQA is a 501-c3 non-profit all volunteer organization charged with administering Virginia's version of the nation's Malcolm Baldrige Quality Award.

For more information, please visit: spqa-va.org

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