



CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Fall 2009

First of all, I would like to share with you an update on this year's recently completed Examiner training. In late October and early November, Sterling's volunteer Examination Committee planned and delivered two weeks of training to over 130 new and returning Examiners. In addition, close to 40 Master, Lead, and Senior Examiners participated in Leadership Training, which continues to improve each year as new leaders are brought into this process. In recognition of our leadership, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the significant contribution that Barbara Barnhouse, Chair of the Examination Committee, personally made in developing and delivering a significant portion of the 3-day Examiner Training and Leadership Training. I would also like to recognize Examination Committee facilitators who, for their third year, led the 3-day Examiner Training – Michael Carroll, Phil Centonze, Lynne Drawdy, Dave Klater, Bob Madeiros, and Chris Wehrenberg. Finally, many thanks to the team leaders and backups who worked tirelessly each day to facilitate the exercises and lead table discussions. The entire Sterling Examiner team did a terrific job of making this year's training a memorable learning experience for all. To quote one of our Sterling Senior Examiners, "This year's training was awesome; it was the best experience I've had in four years." Thanks to everyone who contributed to this successful as we launch our 2010 assessment cycle.

In addition to an excellent roll-out of Examiner training, we are currently developing the examination teams for our 2010 applicant organizations. Over the next six months, approximately 15 examination teams will work to complete the Sterling assessment process through site visits for each of the Governor's Sterling Award and Sterling Challenge applicants.

During the months of October and November, our four 2009 Governor's Sterling Award recipients held their Great Practice Showcases, with close to 500 people attending these events in total. These showcases are an excellent outlet to raise awareness of the Sterling Management Model in Florida and are a great learning experience for new organizations as they hear from Florida's benchmark companies and how our process can benefit them as well.

Beyond the annual assessment cycle lies one of our most exciting initiatives, the Sterling Small Business Blueprint. This year-round process involves specialized tools targeted to help small businesses weather the economic recession. Being the newest of Sterling's assessment tools, the Sterling Small Business Blueprint coaches businesses with 15 to 100 employees on how to develop effective management approaches to help them sustain their businesses and continue to grow during this very difficult economic downturn and beyond.

Next on the agenda is the 18th Annual Sterling Conference, being held June 1 through 5 of 2010. With a continuing focus on this event as ^{THE} *Competitive Advantage*, this year's conference theme, *The Ultimate Business Huddle: Plan your Perfect Play*, has generated many new sessions and topics on how to maximize your competitive edge. Moreover, Sterling is partnering with the Department of Education, Lockheed Martin, and Workforce Florida to add many new workshops, keynote sessions, networking venues to maximize your return on investment, many being sector specific to provide further benefit to our attendees. Whether you are searching for ways to capitalize efficiency, enhance customer retention, or differentiate your service, the 2010 Sterling Conference will provide you with the tools and techniques to make it happen. I truly hope that you will be able to join us in Orlando, Florida for this annual event.

In closing, I would like to make a special note of thanks to our Sterling Board Member, Tom Lawler with Wachovia, for securing our largest Sterling Foundation donation to date of \$10,000. Thank you to all the organizations that have donated to the Foundation; we could not provide so many services to Florida-based organizations without your support and generosity.

During this time of year, more than ever, we extend our best wishes and thoughts of happiness this holiday season and throughout the coming year. Sterling could not survive without the support of our many committed volunteers. We truly appreciate your time, dedication, and all that you provide for Sterling. Thank you.

Happy Holidays!

Sincerely,

John A. Pieno, Chairman
Florida Sterling Council

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