



Governor's Sterling Award & Sustained Best Practices



Ken Burton Jr.
Innovating Better Ways to Serve

Title of Best Practice: Communication: The key to Employee Engagement

Description of Best Practice:

The Manatee County Tax Collector's Office has been implementing the Sterling/Baldrige model for performance excellence for seven years now and with every step along the way, we have felt like winners. By focusing on our key success factors – service, innovation, financial and people, our office has become more customer focused, employee engaged and innovative while providing more and more services.

Seven years ago the Sterling Navigator assessment revealed that our employees believed leadership did not communicate with them. The Senior Team leadership charted a course to change to an employee-engaged culture with the implementation of:

1. **Standardized Weekly Meetings.** Meetings start with the Senior Team on Tuesday with recognitions and information pass downs to Direct Report Home Team meetings on Wednesday and Front Lines Home Team meetings on Friday – with pass ups ensuing from those meetings.
2. **Balanced Scorecard.** We instituted Organizational Performance Reviews where strategic priorities and departmental scorecards are reviewed monthly. Each department independently reviews and updates its own scorecard weekly; this data is then rolled up into the organizational scorecard.
3. **Employee Roundtables.** A Roundtable is a randomly selected group of employees who are given the opportunity to present issues, concerns, strengths and recommendations in a non-threatening environment. Example: Appearance Guidelines are addressed annually by randomly selected employees who review suggestions submitted online over a two week period. The Roundtable then makes recommendations to the Senior Team and when approved, the Appearance Guidelines are set for the year. (This is the only time during the year that "dress code" is altered or discussed.)
4. **Employee Surveys.** Surveys for staff to review motivation events, in-service training events, and to provide feedback for in-house services (IT, facilities, human resources, quality control) and opportunities to recommend programs are ongoing throughout the year.
5. **Training.** We moved our open to the public hours back ½ hour to provide necessary training especially for our front lines that have to be current on over 800 changes to DMV rules annually. Bi-weekly webinars may pertain to work-related topics, human resources, annual budget and legislative session reviews, appearance guidelines, anything! Also incorporated are a reading day and supervisor training day.

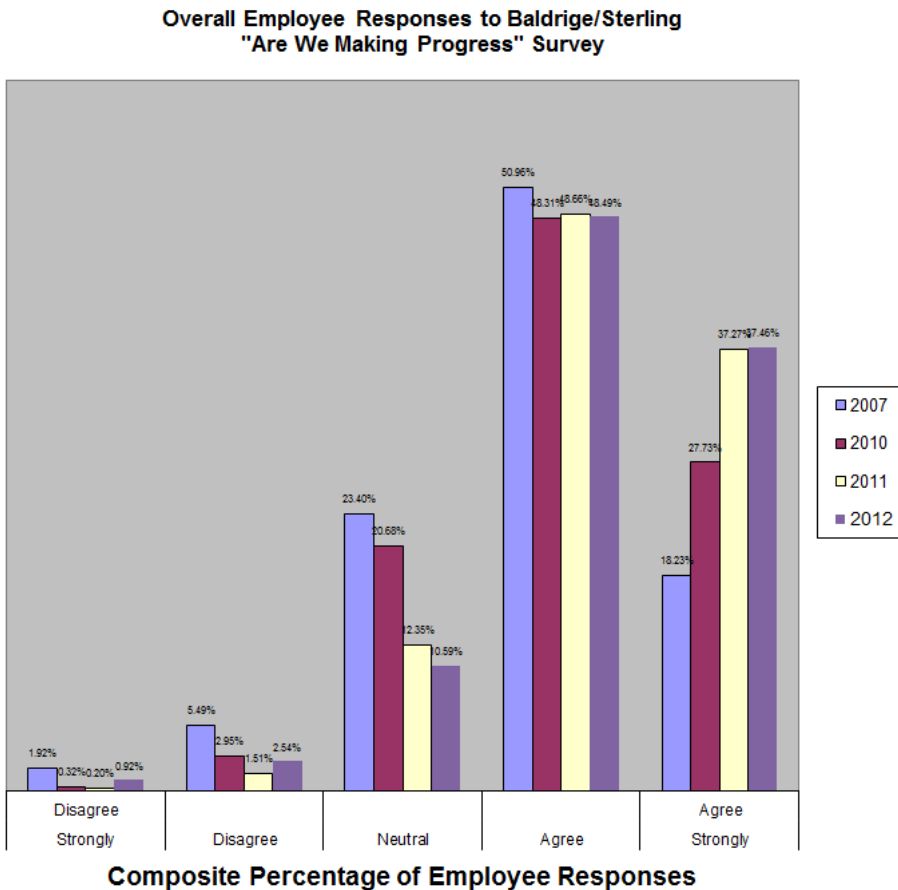
Results:

This is what our employees say now:

- *"We communicate better within our own departments through weekly formal meetings with an agenda and with other departments through Pass-up/Pass-downs."*
- *"We know our strengths and weaknesses through the Scorecard review."*
- *"We're better informed, therefore, we work better and getting the Governor's Sterling Award is a deserving way of saying, 'job well done!'"*

- *"I have had more communication than ever before in my department such as brainstorming, meetings and continual cross training (knowing each other's job) to become a better department and work as a team."*
- *"I feel more in the loop and have gained knowledge within my own department as to what we are doing as a whole."*
- *"I have a better understanding of what the different departments are required to do and see more of the Senior Team being involved."*
- *"I feel using the Sterling Criteria has made us change how we do things in the organization for the better. We have had a future focus, to improve communication, implement team work, and show that we stand out with our customer service."*

The Sterling/Baldrige Assessment Survey tool "Are We Making Progress?" was used to validate our progress with engaging our employees. The result below demonstrates that with each succeeding assessment, the data has shifted to the right, which is exactly the direction in which we want to move!



Application:

We utilize Scorecard software that houses all of our meetings, roundtables, scorecard metrics and documents. Any employee can access their information from anywhere. Our Senior Team often participates from out of town via phone conferencing, because they can follow the meeting agenda and access information on their computer. We believe this employee engagement best practice can be implemented in both the public and private sector with great success if the Senior Leadership is united 100% in support.