The Sterling Criteria Leadership Series: Demystifying the Criteria

The Sterling Criteria Leadership Series: Demystifying the Criteria is offered by the Sterling Council to help organizations gain a more foundational understanding of the Sterling Criteria, which is the internationally recognized model for High Performance Leadership Systems. For each of these sessions, we have developed summary points to emphasize key ideas made as part the presentations. The summary points will be updated each week, to support the YouTube videos, which are also being uploaded to our Sterling YouTube Channel, to provide context for the learning of and application you will take-away from each session.

Session 1: The Core for Assessing High-Performing Organizations

Summary Points:
- Find your WHY
- Fact – Leaders struggle with ensuring their organizations are efficiently and effectively executing against strategic objectives
- Leaders need to be able to pivot the organization when industry changes occur - the Sterling framework supports the development of this capability
- There are many great Best Sellers that are worthy of reading, but they reflect best practice points in time -   approaches but not systems.
- In contrast, Sterling is a Leadership system that evolves as the industry and competitive landscape evolves
- Sterling framework integrates visionary planning with successful execution methods
- The Sterling Criteria provide Leaders with a framework for structuring the organization
- Sterling Criteria helps Leaders successfully execute against and deliver strategic objectives.
- Sterling Criteria is a standard for global organizations … not just specific to a small set of businesses or organizations.

Session 2: Category 1 – Leadership

Summary:
- Leadership is about " knowing, going and showing the way" (quote from John Maxwell)
- Leadership is broken into 2 sections 1. Senior Leaders and 2 Governance and Societal Contributions
- Leadership is responsible for the organization's culture
- Leadership creates organizational focus through the integration of Mission, Vision and Values into the daily interactions and obligations of the workforce
- Good to note – one cannot "*deploy a process that does not exist*"
- Methods of communication must be effective and consistent throughout all levels of workforce and includes partners, suppliers and key stakeholders -- this frames the communication system in place for the organization.

- Organizational sustainability is a focal point to ensure the organization thrives into the future
- Governance is a framework of processes that form a system of evaluation
- Leaders need to understand how societal contributions help to connect the organization to the communities they serve and build organizational sustainability

Session 3: Category 2 – Strategy

Summary:
- Sterling is a framework that can be used to ensure the Strategic Planning Process is systematic, repeatable, follows a cadence, and is transparent – cascaded through all levels in the entire organization
- Can use SWOT, SWOTT or other tools to prepare a Strategic Plan
- Strategic Planning is about planning for the future - really knowing where we are and deciding where we want to be.
  - Strategic Planning helps to leverage strengths and improve areas of opportunity that help to focus on innovation, core competencies and intelligent risks
  - Strategic planning requires an understanding of your organizational   knowledge management system
  - Strategic Planning uses an environmental scan or a scan that leverages the Pestel process - Political, Economic, Social, Technological Environmental and Legal
  - Consider risks and impacts associated with the work supported and delivered – including a sharp focus on balance
  - Tools used to prepare Strategi Planning include Environmental Scans, Benchmarking, SWOTT analysis and other methods for gathering information and funneling it through a defined and repeatable Strategic Planning Process
  - The 6 questions associated with Strategic Planning include :
    1. What is your process for Strategic Planning?
    2. How do you incorporate innovation ?
    3. How do you collect and analyze data?
    4. How do you decide what key processes you will do versus outsource
    5. How does your process identify your key strategic objectives?
    6. Do these Strategic objectives address the requirements of the Sterling framework as needed?
- Implementing the Strategic Plan is the hardest part
  - Often we run out of time to improve the business
  - 87% Business respondents did not know the last major initiatives
  - Focus on a handful of key strategic initiatives – do not get distracted
  - Performance measures are needed to track effectiveness of action plans
  - Focus on leading (not lagging) measures
  - Keep a compelling scoreboard to promote engagement and create cadence of accountability
  - Need to track performance in comparison to industry competitors
  - 2017 HBR survey found only 8% of leaders are good at both

Session 4 – Category 3 - Customer

Summary:
- Customer focused excellence is a Core Value in the Sterling Framework as well as a key requirement in an Organization's Profile
- ***Not everyone is your Customer***
- Customer is who is impacted by the product or service that is produced by your organization
- Focus on identifying your customer groups and market segments
- Each stage of the customer lifecycle will need to be assessed to fully understand the needs of your customers and customer expectations
- Customer listening methods also help to understand evolving needs and trends
- Segmentation techniques include – understanding demographics, product or service user groupings, customer lifecycle engagement routines
- Customer engagement includes building and managing relationships, establishing customer access and support, compliant management and fair, balanced and equal treatment of all customers
- Interaction with customers that promote customer engagement can include email, social media, text messaging, billboards, spinning signs, events, free information, and others – however the approach, the key is an easy to leverage experience
- ***Most unhappy customers are greatest source of learning and opportunity***
- Measurements / metrics should be used to understand how you are meeting your customer expectations and your refine customer focus and improve satisfaction and engagement successes

Session 5 – Category 4 – Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management

Summary:

- Having a measurement system is critical to understanding how to manage your business and resources - it is the 2nd most highest scoring area in the Baldrige / Sterling criteria
- As technology grows - more data will need to be managed
- Data turns into information which turns into competitive advantage
- 15 years ago there were limited career options in the Data Sciences field – but today Data Science skills are in high demand with the promise of continued
- Important to collect data, clean data and arrange data in order to achieve a competitive advantage in the industry by tailoring products and services to customer needs.
- Data must be subject to industry comparatives in order to determine positioning in the marketplace.
- *It is not enough to do your best, You must first know what to do – then do your best*   (W. Edwards Deming quote)
- One Best practice is to leverage dashboards for monitoring performance on a daily / regular basis for improving decision making. (Baldrige award winner)
- Managing Knowledge is key in order to optimize performance potential
- Knowledge is power – when knowledge is shared the power is multiplied
- Important to assess the quality of the data (goodness) and then make it available for decision making
- Organizational Knowledge is broken into 3 things –
  1. Processes followed
  2. Sharing of information (best practices)
  3. Ability to embed learnings and evolution into business functions to drive meaningful change

Session 6 – Category 5 - Workforce

Summary:
- Human Capital is the most important business resource – human capital represents the biggest on-going business investment
- It is important to assess capability and capacity as well as to consider the importance of competencies
- There is a growing focus on hiring competencies and not necessarily skills – this is driven based upon workforce shortage and increased need for resources
- It is most important to know what core competencies align with your business core values and profile requirements
- It is important to understand the various characteristics that define the various segments that reflect your workforce
- Workforce engagement is not the same as workforce satisfaction – a satisfied worker does not imply an engaged worker
- Workforce engagement starts with a Workforce Planning cycle and considers the lifecycle of all workforce members
- There are various methods for measuring capabilities and workforce competence – good to select one that works best
- Engagement hinges on the ability to tailor benefits for specific workforce segment needs
- Drivers of engagement can vary and need to be determined and measured to ensure focus