

Sharing the District's STAR Culture

Governing Board Study Session
May 7- 8, 2014



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Key Elements of STAR

- Providing excellent customer service
- Empowering employees to identify and solve problems
- Setting and maintaining high standards of employee performance, attitude and behavior
- Ongoing training
- Consistently recognizing and reinforcing positive employee contributions



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Results

- Positive feedback from stakeholders on District's excellent customer service
- Successful implementation of zero-based budgeting
- Lowest administrative overhead
- Lowest permit fees
- Greatest staff productivity
 - permits issued
 - inspections conducted
 - grant projects administered
 - regulatory measures designed and adopted
- Most advanced and cost-effective incentive grants program (administer grant programs for 18 other air districts)



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Results (cont'd)

- Public accountability and transparency (easy access to staff and information, open and deliberative)
- Innovation that serves as role model
- Met or exceeded all state and federal mandates
- Demonstrated ability to garner support from the regulated community, the media, and the public for strong and effective clean air strategies
- Entrepreneurial management with a focus on continuous improvement and efficiency
- Positive working relationship with the Employees Association



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Must be engrained in the organization's DNA

- **UNSHAKEABLE** belief at all levels of leadership that employee welfare and well-being is essential to an agency's achievement of excellence
- Embracing change and having the entrepreneurial and risk-taking spirit to seek change
- Making delivery of great customer service to internal and external customers the top priority for the organization
- Always striving to be the best and the first in everything in which the agency endeavors
- Placing a higher value on positive attitude and initiative over technical expertise in hiring and promotional decisions



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Core Implementation Principles

- Work constantly through actions and words to demonstrate to employees that you value their welfare and well-being
- Communicate expectations clearly and routinely
- Use employee recognition to reward good behavior and to communicate expectations
- Build an environment where employees take pride in working for the agency
- Create a safe environment for employees to offer suggestions for change/improvement
- Follow through with addressing the employee suggestions in a timely manner
- Train employees and provide the necessary tools to meet and exceed expectations



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Core Implementation Principles

(cont'd)

- Hold employees accountable
- Infuse constant energy in STAR to keep it fresh
- Make STAR an intrinsic part of each employee's job
- Create an environment where employees are not put in silos and see themselves working for the agency as a whole – not for an individual department or division
- Provide freedom and encouragement to constructively critique the work of others
- Serve as a role model



How do we Implement STAR?

- Evolution of STAR
 - 1992 to now
- STAR recognition
 - First item of every meeting
 - Peer to peer, management to staff
 - Less formal (daily) to more formal (annual symposiums)
 - Communicates and reinforces expectations



How do we Implement STAR? (cont'd)

- STAR in hiring and promotions
 - Attitude is everything!
- STAR in training
 - Starts on day one
 - Mentorship, formal training, daily interactions
- STAR in performance evaluations
 - Integrated throughout evaluation process
 - Establishes accountability and reinforces expectations



How do we Implement STAR? (cont'd)

- STAR suggestion program
 - Key to innovation
 - Within and outside of own department
 - STAR suggestion charts
 - Follow-up and action essential
- STAR as a work culture
 - Constantly evolving and enhancing
 - Big investment, but much greater return!



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Dissemination of STAR

- STAR requires the prerequisite beliefs, convictions and commitments be engrained in the organization's core identity
- Organizational foundation may not exist
 - May require change in leadership
- Organizational foundation may exist
 - Training and validation to acquire prerequisite of commitment
 - In some cases, additional motivation and convincing may be necessary for desired transformation
 - Sharing can create the impetus & desire to transform



What can we Share?

- Conceptual Knowledge
 - High Level Concepts
- Processes & Procedures
 - Documents etc.
- Actual Experience
 - Success Stories
 - What effort it took to create these success stories



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How can we share STAR?

- Sharing District's success story
 - Alone may be sufficient for organizations that are almost there
 - By a third party or District staff – Which is more effective?
 - Enhanced written materials, hands-on training sessions, workshops, or self-produced videos



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How can we share STAR? (cont'd)

For organizations needing more transformational changes

- District staff may not have necessary skills to train and motivate without outside expert
- Retain an external expert:
 - Perform case study on District's STAR program
 - Develop an action plan that could include videos, workshops, conferences, books, etc.
 - Can be costly

