

FLORIDA DIVISION OF BLIND SERVICES IS 2007 STERLING AWARD RECIPIENT

April 25, 2007
Tallahassee, Florida

In March, 2003, Florida Department of Education (FDOE) Commissioner Jim Horne engaged Florida-based consulting firm ets, Inc. to lead "Operation Excellence" – an initiative to transform all operating units in the FDOE. Florida's Division of Blind Services (DBS) was one of those operational units of focus.



ets, Inc. led by Bob Seemer, commenced Operation Excellence with a Malcolm Baldrige and Florida Sterling based organizational assessment which culminated in a prioritized ets Transformation Plan. ets' Transformation Plan for DBS consisted of the following elements:

1. Establish the mission, vision and values.
2. Engage stakeholders in the development of an inclusive strategic plan.
3. Create the Strategic Balanced Scorecard with 5 year targets on all Critical Few Objectives (CFOs).
4. Develop the Core Process System and cascade Golden Threads throughout the organization.
5. Train every employee in ets six sigma tools and techniques, including DMAIC.
6. Develop a Quality Performance Information System to facilitate the sharing of current information, best practices, and organizational knowledge.
7. Review progress regularly at all levels and locations throughout Florida.
8. Evaluate and track progress using the Malcolm Baldrige – Florida Sterling Criteria as the measurement instrument.

Over the course of four (4) years, DBS' Baldrige/Sterling score increased from 225 points in May, 2003 to 720 points in March, 2007. An on-site audit by certified Florida Sterling Award examiners resulted in near-perfect scores in the categories of Strategic Planning and Process Management – a first in the 15 year history of the Florida Governor's Sterling Award for Performance Excellence.

Following is a summary of DBS and its management system.

The Florida Division of Blind Services is a division within Florida's Department of Education with its Central Office located in Tallahassee. With 12 districts and five satellite offices, the Braille and Talking Book Library, and the Orientation and Adjustment Center, the Florida Division of Blind Services serves blind and visually impaired Floridians in every Florida county and city.

The Florida Division of Blind Services ensures access to services through formal collaborative partnerships which include service providers, local government entities, and its representation on numerous boards, councils, committees, and task forces.

OUR VISION

“By 2010, Florida’s Division of Blind Services will be recognized as the leading agency in the United States empowering blind and visually impaired people to achieve self-determined goals.”

OUR MISSION

“To ensure blind and visually impaired Floridians have the tools, support, and opportunity to achieve success.”

VALUES

Decisiveness, Responsive to Challenge, Innovation, Maximum Efficiency, Reliability, Confident Use of Advanced Technology, Quick Action, Flexibility, A Collaborative Approach, Integrity, and Pride.

These values are integrated with the reward and recognition system. This helps ensure they are understood and applied by all employees and reinforces them as a key element of our culture.

LEADERSHIP

Senior leaders have created a sustainable organization by developing and improving a leadership system which is based on process, or systematic approaches, and the DBS values. Through process, DBS customer requirements are translated into process and program requirements which become the measures, standards, and targets by which all employees, key suppliers, and partners are held accountable.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Strategic planning is managed through the **ets** nine-step Strategic Planning Process. As a key business process it has an owner and a control system with schedules, measures, and targets to ensure it is effective, evaluated, and improved each year. A web-based SWOT analysis is conducted to encourage broad and diverse inclusion of stakeholders.

The **ets** Strategic Planning Process is benchmarked against **ets** Sterling and Baldrige Award winning clients. The Florida Division of Blind Services’ strategic plan is the mechanism used to translate the Vision into accountable activities for every employee. By aligning processes and employee evaluations to the goals and Strategic Plan’s Critical Few Objectives, all employees have a stake in ensuring successful outcomes for our customers. Strategic measures are tracked on the Balanced Scorecard. All strategic measures are cascaded throughout the organization via the **ets** Golden Thread methodology.

CUSTOMER AND MARKET FOCUS

The Florida Division of Blind Services uses several approaches to identify customers, customer groups, and market segments. Market segments are identified in the Quality Performance Information System process of “Manage Market Information.” The process owner and his team review several sources of information including Federal and State reports, demographic trends, feedback from core process and program teams, and performance data.

Emerging gaps in services provided or potential unserved or underserved customers are reviewed by program managers. If emerging needs are beyond the scope or capability of an existing program, then a determination is made by the senior leadership team to classify a new segment and define its requirements.

MEASUREMENT, ANALYSIS, AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Quality performance data and information are critical to Florida Division of Blind Services' strategic plan, business, core/value creation and support processes, and performance management systems. The selection of key types of information is driven from strategic challenges, business factors, customers, partners, collaborators, key stakeholders, and business, core/value creation and support process requirements.

The quality information from each source is ensured with one or more process control systems managed by a process owner. Each of the ten information types has a process control system with a process owner, and each of these processes may have one or more sub-processes with individual control systems. **ets'** methodologies define a process control system (PCS) as a flow chart and supporting in-process and outcome measures for each process.

HUMAN RESOURCE FOCUS

The Florida Division of Blind Services' work systems are designed to meet the needs of the organization, its customers, and employees. All human resource systems have been designed using **ets'** process management methodology. Therefore, all are focused on the customers or needs of the organization, rely on measures for daily management, and have process owners responsible for the evaluation and improvement of each work system. The Florida Division of Blind Services' vision and segmented customer requirements drive all work in the organization. All work is part of a process, and all jobs are designed to meet process requirements. Through process management, DBS leadership can confidently set high expectations knowing that job design, compensation, incentive rewards and recognition, performance management, and succession planning will support the achievement and sustainability of high performance goals. To ensure the workforce was capable of improving and sustaining high performance of all DBS processes, over 90% of all employees were trained in **ets** six sigma tools and techniques.

PROCESS MANAGEMENT

Florida Division of Blind Services' core and value creation processes are those which create and deliver value directly for existing and potential external customers. These processes were formally defined by **ets**-led service delivery teams through a series of process management workshops. The teams used customer data provided by service delivery reports, customer satisfaction surveys, counselors and partners to define initial process requirements and develop the measurement system and Integrated Service Delivery System (ISDS). The ISDS is an executive level process control system for the nine DBS core processes.

This approach enables each team to design each core process to ensure it was capable of meeting customer requirements. It also ensured each process included a

measurement system consisting of quality outcome measures and in-process measures. Each process and its measures were aligned to the organizational Vision and Goals.

RESULTS

- Overall customer satisfaction in all program areas has exceeded 90% and has sustained high performance levels for the last three years.
- Average annual earnings per Vocational Rehabilitation customer is 21.5% above national median.
- 99.5% of Vocational Rehabilitation customers are competitively employed.
- The Florida Division of Blind Services is exceeding the Rehabilitation Services Administration Federal Performance Indicator benchmarks on all key measures.
- Self-sufficiency and self-support have increased from 43% to 50% in the last three years.
- 97.82% of Independent Living Adult Program customers “strongly agree and agree” that they are living independently and participating in family and community activities.
- Children successfully transitioning from pre-school to school has increased to 86%.
- Students successfully transitioning to work is up 19.3% in 3 years.
- Blind babies transitions have increased by 65% in 3 years.
- The number of Business Enterprise facilities is up 13% in 3 years.
- The Braille and Talking Book Library has reversed national trends in market share and repeat business.
- Employee satisfaction exceeds 82%.
- Over 90% of employees have completed **ets** Six Sigma “Yellow Belt” training.
- Over 15% of employees have completed **ets** Six Sigma “Green Belt” training.

FUTURE

The Florida Division of Blind Services will continue its commitment to apply the Sterling Criteria of quality and performance excellence. It has resulted in dramatic results and transformed the agency into a high performing organization.

Always focused on the future, the Florida Division of Blind Services will realize its Vision: “By 2010, Florida’s Division of Blind Services will be recognized as the leading agency in the United States empowering blind and visually impaired people to achieve self-determined goals.”

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