



# 2017 Award Recipient

## Stellar Solutions

- Sector vice presidents meet one-on-one with all employees every month seeking their input and insights on their customers, personal accomplishments, and well-being, and what would help them progress toward their dream jobs.
- A comprehensive, multiyear succession plan is in place for the chief executive officer and chief financial officer, as well as for the senior leaders of lines of business and business operations. The succession plan provides an assessment of the skill proficiencies and potential knowledge and experience gaps to be addressed by each possible successor.

## Satisfying Customers' Critical Needs

- Voice-of-the-customer methods center on regular customer visits by senior leaders and directors. Customers are also surveyed annually, and resultant data are captured in a customer relationship management system.
- From 2013 to 2016, 100 percent of customers surveyed said they would recommend the company to others. Stellar Solutions consistently has scored in the 4.7 range in ratings on its customer survey, in which 4 = Very Satisfied and 5 = Extremely Satisfied.

## Helping Others

- In addition to its core services, the company is developing technology and methods for forecasting earthquakes, with the goal of creating a global warning system. Aiming to save lives, Stellar used its engineering expertise to create a humanitarian research and development program, QuakeFinder, in 2000 and has made significant investments since to build and deploy sensors designed to monitor electromagnetic precursors to earthquakes. Stellar and QuakeFinder monitor and analyze data from their deployed sensors in California, Peru, Chile, Greece, and Indonesia. In 2003, Stellar and QuakeFinder launched the first commercial triple cubesat, QuakeSat. (A cubesat is a type of miniaturized satellite for space research that is made up of multiples of 10×10×10 cm cubic units.)
- The Stellar Foundation contributes \$1,000 on behalf of each employee to the charity of his/her choice each year; 100 percent of Stellar employees take advantage of this program. Employees are also encouraged to get involved in their communities through a participation incentive in the organization's bonus plan.

## Growing Revenue and Profitability

- Revenue has grown from a rate of 1.18 percent in 2013 to 6.81 percent in 2016. Such growth has occurred despite the constraints in government funding being identified as a key business challenge for the organization.
- Process improvements and cycle time reductions have led to Stellar Solutions' profitability growing consistently.

- The percentage of chargeable employees is consistently higher than 90 percent and exceeds the top 5 percent benchmark of Service Performance Insight, a global research, consulting, and training organization.

## Crossing Boundaries to Collaborate

- All key stakeholders and employees are invited to contribute input for each strategic planning cycle through "Stellar All" emails and meetings. Senior leadership and off-site employees collect input from customers, partners, and the community throughout the year. Stellar's "crossing the boundaries" collaboration method facilitates leveraging the knowledge base of the entire company to identify potential new business as well as to deliver high impact for both current and future customers.

## Monitoring What is Important to Us

- Stellar Solutions monitors all key work and support processes through a "what is important to us" criteria that include multiple metrics to measure the status of critical process goals. Each work and support process has a design template that also acts as a review scorecard.
- A fully operational IT disaster-recovery plan provides for continuity of operations in the event of a local emergency at any of the company's locations. The plan addresses firewall improvements, antivirus software, and robust password protocols to strengthen the company's cybersecurity position. A systematic eight-stage approach is used to design work processes. It begins with understanding stakeholder needs through voice-of-the-customer feedback and continues with best practices and defining metrics. After senior leadership approval, the process steps are created, employees are trained, and the process is deployed and monitored.

### For more information:

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### Baldrige Performance Excellence Program

The Baldrige Program educates organizations of all sizes and from all sectors in organizational performance management and improvement. We also administer the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. Our key services are to identify and recognize role-model organizations, share best management practices, and help organizations achieve best-in-class performance levels. We are the only public-private partnership and Presidential award program dedicated to improving U.S. organizations.

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