

Case Study: Silver Star Brands



Silver Star Brands (formerly named the Miles Kimball Company), based in Oshkosh, WI, is a top 100 U.S. direct-to-consumer multi-channel catalog and Internet company. The organization markets five direct-to-consumer catalog and internet brands which include Miles Kimball®, Walter Drake®, Easy Comforts™, As We Change® and Exposures®. Products offered include health and wellness items, gifts, photo albums, household convenience items and personalized merchandise. Silver Star Brands has won numerous awards for its performance, culture and contributions to customers, suppliers and community.

Situation

Silver Star Brands is known nationally for its KIXS (“Kimball’s Improvement in eXcellence System”) culture, which has functioned successfully for several years. Key ingredients in the KIXS culture include the importance of understanding customers’ ever-changing needs, continuous improvement, teamwork, empowerment, and goal alignment. The KIXS cultural objectives are firmly embedded throughout the organization, and the senior leaders of Silver Star Brands play a key role in meeting those objectives through “leading by example.”

“Enhanced collaboration and alignment within the leadership team has led to improved business decisions, and the enVision Alignment™ process was the critical first step we took to get there.”

Vicki Updike
President
Silver Star Brands

Recent changes and additions to the Silver Star executive leadership team implied a need for a team alignment process that would ensure all executives had opportunities for discussion, full understanding, and alignment regarding key aspects of organizational vision, mission, strategies and execution requirements. This was seen as critical in order to ensure successful operating results, as well as to continue and enhance Silver Star’s KIXS culture.

Partnership and Solution Design

Led by Vicki Updike, Silver Star Brands’ President, and Margie Harvey, Vice President of Human Resources, a partnership was established in 2011 with Drs. Tom Wiltzius and Gail Wise to design and facilitate an executive team alignment process. The enVision Alignment™ process and the enVision.360® multi-rater feedback tools were then tailored and offered to Silver Star to meet their objectives.

Process and Outcome

Each Silver Star Brands executive was provided with two assessment tools: the enVision Alignment™ Survey and the enVision.360® multi-rater feedback survey. Following the surveys, Tom and Gail met privately with each executive team member, conducting an extended interview based on each executive’s initial survey input. The interviews were designed to stimulate executive thought and gather information, insights and nuances beyond what the survey responses offered.

Both the survey data and interview information were then aggregated, without individual reference or attribution, and a feedback report was developed for presentation at a two-day

executive retreat. The retreat was crafted to facilitate two objectives: (a) to present the data collected, and (b) to facilitate alignment through structured exercises and enhanced executive relations.

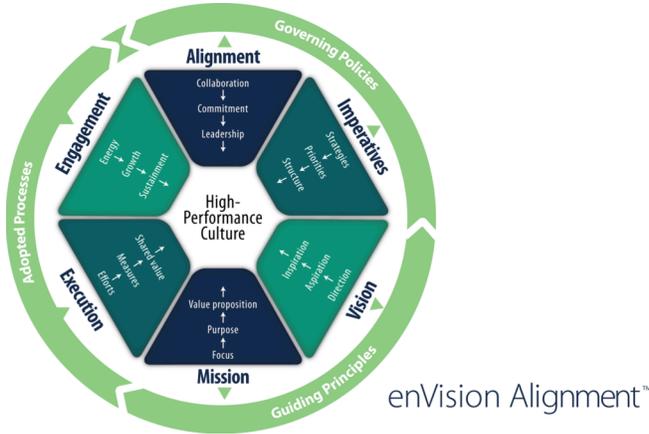
The executive retreat came shortly after the interviews were concluded. Facilitated by Tom and Gail, the executive off-site included the following key elements:

- Aggregate executive team 360 assessment feedback (team summary) from the enVision.360[®] tool, with discussion.
- enVision Alignment[™] survey and interview results review and discussion.
- Carefully selected executive team-building activities.
- Review of typical team dysfunctions, conflict tensions, and misalignment symptoms.
- Facilitation of key executive team learning.
- Facilitation of action planning to ensure a keen focus on enhancing team and organizational performance and alignment.

“Going through the enVision Alignment[™] process had amazing results for our executive leadership team. It helped us identify areas of team performance that we were able to strategically balance and enhance, resulting in total alignment within our executive team.”

Margie Harvey
Vice-President, Human Resources
Silver Star Brands

The outcome for Silver Star’s executive team has been even greater focus and alignment on their strategic path going forward, for both the team and the organization. The use of the enVision Alignment[™] process and the enVision.360[®] multi-rater feedback survey has led to enhanced relationships, commitment and performance for all at Silver Star Brands.



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