

WORKFORCE HORIZONS

Planning Tomorrow's Workforce Today

Louisiana Department of Civil Service

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RESULTS OF WORKFORCE PLANNING SURVEY

In October, 2006 the Department of Civil Service sent an online workforce planning survey to Human Resources Directors of major state agencies to assess what agencies are currently doing in workforce planning as well as identify major concerns, issues and needs.

For tabulation purposes agencies were grouped into three categories – General Agencies, Medical Agencies, and Colleges and Universities. A total of fifty surveys were sent and thirty-nine returned for an overall response rate of 78%. The results are summarized below by topic.

Major Workforce Planning Issues: All categories of agencies agreed on the top workforce planning issues being

- ◆ Large number of retirements in key positions within next 5 years
- ◆ Loss of institutional memory or vital knowledge due to retirements
- ◆ Need for training of current employees for career advancement
- ◆ Predicted scarcity of applicants and employees with needed skills

Impact of Retirements and Turnover:

Agencies split on this issue with 41% overall considering it to be serious to very serious and 41% saying it would have little impact. Significantly, 18% of agencies indicated they have not determined the impact of potential retirements. A similar split occurred with respect to non-retirement turnover.

Components of Workforce Planning

Currently Being Done: There was a significant difference here by agency category. Whereas 82% of General Agencies have identified key positions likely to be vacated within five years only about 40% of medical agencies and colleges and universities have done this vital step. The main activity agencies are doing is implementing training for employees and processes to develop pools of applicants.

The most frequent types of training being used are fairly consistent across agencies: 1) sending employees to outside seminars (82%), 2) online computer based training and webinars (74%), and 3) formal classroom training by agency trainers (69%).

Recruitment and Retention: In response to the open-ended question “What is the biggest problem your agency will face with respect to staffing within the next five years,” agencies mostly listed hard-to fill jobs which varied greatly from agency to agency. Of especial concern at hospitals and War Veterans Homes is recruiting of Registered Nurses. Recruiting of skilled trades especially in the New Orleans area post-Katrina is difficult for all agencies and particularly colleges and universities. The common hard-to-fill jobs for General Agencies are Fiscal, Accounting and Information Technology Professionals and Managerial / Supervisory level jobs. Other frequently cited problems were

- ◆ Budget constraints or cutbacks
- ◆ Inability to compete with private sector salaries, bonuses and other compensation (particularly critical for medical, scientific and engineering jobs)
- ◆ Retirement of senior management or persons with key technical knowledge not easily transferred or replaced
- ◆ Insufficient base pay
- ◆ High turnover due to conditions of work (shift work, travel, overtime, etc.)

Training Desired: The most frequent request was for training in job profiling. The emphasis seemed to be on using job profiling for identifying competencies to create an applicant pool, employee development and leadership development.

Other areas of desired training mentioned were:

- ◆ Skills assessment testing for employee development and determining training needs
- ◆ Developing criteria and methods for selecting employees to participate in leadership development
- ◆ Successful recruiting and retention techniques
- ◆ Mentoring

The Department of State Civil Service is in the process of developing a Job Profiling seminar, with plans for follow-up workshops to be conducted by our Staffing division that will provide more individualized assistance. In addition, our Staffing Division is developing an assessment to help agencies identify employees with leadership and management potential.

Vital Data Needed: Many agencies indicated that they did not need any vital workforce planning data that they were not already getting. The most common need expressed was for assessment of employee skill levels for training and career development purposes. That is in line with the request for training in job profiling mentioned previously. Also 80% of medical agencies indicated they needed a report on retirement eligibility of employees.

WORKFORCE PLANNING MAXIM OF THE DAY

“Management is nothing more than motivating other people.” – *Lee Iacocca*

THE MANAGER'S ROLE IN WORKFORCE AND SUCCESSION PLANNING – NEW CPTP COURSE

CPTP is offering a new course entitled “Manager’s Role in Workforce and Succession Planning.” The course is aimed at middle and upper managers. The goal of the course is to introduce concepts related to workforce and succession planning and describe the role managers should play in the process. It is a one –day course. By the end of the course, students should understand the need for workforce and successions planning, know the basic components of the process, and know the steps managers can take to support the effort in their own agencies. Example forms and checklists are provided to assist managers in applying workforce and succession planning. A sample Succession Planning policy is also provided.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

“The important thing is not to stop questioning.” – *Albert Einstein*

HOW TO CREATE AN ACTION PLAN FOR RETENTION

What should you do if retention is an important issue to you? Here are a few steps suggested by management author and consultant Ron Zemke to get you started on the right track¹:

1. “Find out what your employees think. You can use a survey instrument that is designed to get the information you need or focus groups run by a professional facilitator.

2. Communicate the results of the survey to employees and let them know what actions you are taking. If you don’t report back the results with an action plan, employees will think you didn’t listen. Make sure you understand what is important to them.
3. Coordinate with your HR and/or training resources. Many of the suggestions made here are more easily implemented with the assistance of those groups.
4. Get employees involved. If recognition efforts need improvement, form a team to address the issue. Give them a budget and some guidelines and let them get going.”

¹Ron Zemke, Performance Research Associates, Inc website
www.socksoff.com/gensatwork/

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Purpose: The purpose of the Workforce Horizons is to educate readers about workforce planning issues and best practices, inform them about upcoming Civil Service workshops and training related to workforce planning and to provide practical job aids to assist agencies with workforce planning.

Comments and submissions: We welcome questions about workforce planning and suggestions for improvements to the newsletter as well as submissions of articles about what your agency is doing in workforce planning. Questions, comments, and requests to be added to the distribution list for the newsletter should be sent to the editor.

Current and Back Issues are accessible under “Workforce Planning Newsletter” in the HR Reference section of the Civil Service web page at www.civilservice.louisiana.gov