

WORKFORCE HORIZONS

Planning Tomorrow's Workforce Today

Louisiana Department of Civil Service

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USE THE O*NET AS A WORKFORCE PLANNING RESOURCE

The U. S. Department of Labor has created an Online Information Network called the O*NET program which provides occupational information on hundreds of jobs nationwide. The database is available to the public at no cost. The O*NET's strong points are its comprehensiveness, standardization and level of detail. It covers the full range of jobs in the public and private sector. It is also periodically updated to add new emerging jobs and additional requirements associated with those jobs such as new knowledge, skills or abilities resulting from emerging technologies.

It can be a great starting point for doing workforce planning or finding standardized descriptors of tasks and job requirements. Information is categorized into job characteristics and worker characteristics. You can enter a job title or occupational category and access a standardized task list for the job and

other standardized descriptors of job requirements such as knowledge, skills, abilities, work values and interests. There are several categories of descriptors. Each of these descriptors is further subdivided into numerous elements that can be used as tools to evaluate jobs.

Labor market information is also provided on O*NET integrating data from various sources by means of collaborative efforts with organizations such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Defense, Career One Stop, the U.S. Bureau of the Census, and the Employment and Training Administration.

WORKFORCE PLANNING MAXIM OF THE DAY

“It’s not enough that we do our best; sometimes we have to do what’s required.” – Sir Winston Churchill

Below are some definitions of descriptors with an example of each taken from the O*NET Online database:

Knowledge: Organized sets of principles and facts applying in general domains

An example of a knowledge is – English Language – “Knowledge of the structure and content of the English language including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition and grammar.”

Skills: Developed capacities that facilitate learning or the more rapid acquisition of knowledge; developed capacities that facilitate performance of activities.

An example of a skill is Social Skills – “a developed capacity to work with people to achieve goals.” Included within “Social Skills” are sub-categories such as Service Orientation – “actively looking for ways to help people.”

Abilities: Enduring attributes of the individual that influence performance

An example of an ability is Deductive Reasoning – “the ability to apply general rules to specific problems to produce answers that make sense.”

Work Activities: General types of job behaviors occurring on multiple jobs

An example of a work activity is Organizing, Planning, and Prioritizing Work — “Developing specific goals and plans to prioritize, organize, and accomplish your work.”

Interests: Preferences for work environments or outcomes

An example of an interest is Conventional – “Conventional occupations frequently involve following set procedures and routines. These jobs can involve working with data and details more than with ideas. Usually there is a clear line of authority to follow.”

Work Values: Specific needs that are important to a person’s job satisfaction.

An example of a work value is Achievement — “Occupations that satisfy this work value are results oriented and allow employees to use their strongest abilities, giving them a feeling of accomplishment.”

Work Styles: Personal characteristics that can affect how well someone performs a job.

An example of a work style is Independence — “Job requires developing one’s own ways of

doing things, guiding oneself with little or no supervision, and depending on oneself to get things done.”

For more information on the O*NET you can access the two websites below. In my opinion, the sites could be a little more user-friendly but the tremendous amount of information available makes it well worth spending time exploring them.

To access the most comprehensive occupational information go to the O*NET Resource Center at <http://www.onetcenter.org/>

The O*NET Resource Center provides a link to O*NET Online, a web-based application at <http://online.onetcenter.org/> that allows you to enter a job title and get a profile of descriptors for that job including tasks, knowledge, skills, abilities, work values, etc.

IMPROVING EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION

Employee motivation is a key element to any organization’s success. When employees lose their motivation the organization suffers. So how do you get employees energized, enthused and productive?

Here are some pointers from Allbusiness.com¹.

Build a foundation – Employees need to feel they are a part of something important. Tell them about the history of the organization, what it stands for and its vision for the future. Ask employees about their expectations and career goals. Show them how they are a part of it all.

Create an open and positive environment – Keep office doors open. Let employees know they can approach you with concerns. Make all employees feel worthwhile and important. Don’t play favorites.

Recognize accomplishments – Be generous with praise for large and small contributions.

Keep your promises – Follow through and do what you say. This is what gains employee trust

and support. Failure to do so breaks faith and creates distrust.

Match tasks to talents – Assign tasks that capitalize on an employee’s strengths. Allow them to build their confidence by being successful so they will then be willing to go on to bigger and tougher projects.

Educate employees – Provide in-house career development to improve professional skills. Allow employees to attend seminars and workshops related to their work. Encourage them to attend classes paid for by the organization if possible.

¹Adapted from “Ten Tips on Improving Employee Motivation.” July 26, 2007. www.allbusiness.com

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"An effective leader is not someone who is loved or admired. He or she is someone whose followers do the right things. Popularity is not leadership. Results are."- Peter Drucker

HIGHER HEALTH INSURANCE FOR SMOKERS

As health care costs continue to rise, employers in the public and private sector are looking for ways to curb the insurance costs and shift a greater proportion of the burden of expense to employees whose lifestyle choices contribute to poor health and greater use of health benefits. Some states favor a positive approach using wellness programs and incentives but there is a growing tendency to consider penalties. Below are some public sector initiatives in this area reported in Workforce Management²

Alabama A \$20 monthly surcharge applied to state workers if covered employees or spouses report themselves as tobacco users.

Georgia state employees and public school teachers will pay an extra \$40 per month for coverage if they or their dependents admit to using tobacco products in the previous year.

Pennsylvania - Montgomery County in Pennsylvania is attempting to change its application process to prevent the hiring of smokers.

South Dakota since 1997 has had different health premium structures for smoking and nonsmoking state employees; smokers currently pay \$30 extra per month.

West Virginia State employees and retirees in West Virginia are required to sign a "Tobacco Affidavit" certifying that they are tobacco-free in order to obtain discounts on health and life insurance premiums.

Most public sector employers are using self-reporting by employees to determine whether they smoke but many private sector companies are beginning to use urine and breathalyzer tests particularly as a basis of excluding applicants for initial hire. Smokers are not the only persons being targeted. The Obese may be next.

² “States Hit Public Employees with Smoking Surcharge.” Workforce Management, reprinted from Business Insurance (May 23, 2005)

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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