



Program Title: Marketing HR Change for the State of Louisiana

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NASPE Rooney Award Nomination
Innovative State Human Resources Management Program
Marketing HR Change for the State of Louisiana

It is the responsibility of the Louisiana Department of State Civil Service to provide processes and policies that enable state agency managers to fill vacant positions with highly qualified applicants in a timely fashion and in accordance with legal and professional standards. Over the past several decades, the State of Louisiana has been moving toward a more decentralized model with regards to staffing, delegating more responsibilities to our individual user agencies in order to empower them and create a more efficient system within which to attract, develop and retain a productive and diverse workforce. We have moved from the certification of the top three names to hiring from the top 5 groups then to certifiable minimum hiring scores (generally set at the top 15% of scores) which gave agencies ready access to a broader pool of prescreened applicants. Further delegation occurred after 2002 through the use of the QUEST (Quality Express Staffing) process and Direct Hire Agreements whereby applicants applied directly to agencies who then screened applicants to determine eligibility for consideration in hiring and promotion. These processes allowed more rapid hiring and increased the availability of applicants for both specific jobs and agencies included in these methods.

As we moved slowly toward greater delegation, we remained cognizant of the demands that this additional work would place on agency human resources staff members and declined to proceed with full delegation until we could offer the tools needed to accomplish this work. The implementation of the LA Careers Online Application and Tracking system provided the means to proceed with full delegation. Through the use of this online system, agencies are able to post vacancies, receive and process applications electronically, and track the entire hiring process in one place. Furthermore, through the use of various functionalities in the system, agencies can efficiently screen and assess applicants and later report on actions stored in the system.

While the Louisiana Department of State Civil Service (DSCS) and many human resources employees viewed this as an exciting opportunity for growth, we realized that there were many levels of experience, training, and acceptance among the members of the human resources community. Change is never easy. We knew that in order to be successful, we would need to reach out to all of our users to keep them informed of changes and new processes which were being implemented and to include their ideas as much as possible in order to have buy-in and win their support of the new system. To achieve these goals, DSCS embarked on a multi-faceted approach to communicate with our HR users so that we could provide them with the information they need to successfully perform their work in a decentralized system. In so doing, our goal was to promote the benefits of our new system of hiring which offered simplification of rules and policies, a consolidation of the methods used to post and fill vacancies, and the provision of resources and tools to use in completing this work.

1. This approach began with agency visits by Staffing employees to agency HR offices. By gathering information on the work processes and needs at each agency, we were able to make decisions and configure the system to accommodate the majority of our users. Next, we completed a total revamp of the two chapters of Civil Service hiring rules to make them more streamlined and easier to understand. The Staffing portion of the HR Handbook, used by agency personnel as a resource to carry out their duties, has likewise been updated into a more user-friendly format that follows the new rules in sequence and explains the policies and procedures associated with each rule. Since implementation of LA Careers, Staffing has issued twelve LA Careers Bulletins as a quick method to inform users about LA Careers issues that arose, which were well-received by users. During the course of training for the LA Careers online system, we developed Quick Sheets which are concise, step-by-step instructions to accomplish specific tasks during the posting and hiring process. Quick Sheets have been added to the HR Handbook and posted on the Civil Service website so HR users have ready access to these valuable job aids. To assist in minimum qualification screening, the Staffing Division created the Admit Note Database, an online source of various definitions and documented qualification decisions which have been made over the past 25 years. This information provides guidance to HR staff members when screening applicants. Finally, Staffing holds Biweekly User Conference Calls and Webinars to provide ongoing training and communication with HR users statewide. In these calls, conducted through "Go to Meeting," agency HR staff are able to speak directly with DSCS Staffing division employees so that we may all partner to share information and best practices and discuss questions/concerns that may arise. Through this forum, DSCS is able to discuss and demonstrate system functionality

that agencies may need assistance with as well as gather information on how we may better serve our users in completing their work and meeting their goals.

2. Agency visits began in March 2008 to gather information from HR offices and begin promoting the positive benefits of the new online LA Careers system which was implemented on February 16, 2009. The use of the Admit Note Database, Quick Sheets and Biweekly User Conference Calls continues at present and is ongoing.
3. The LA Careers system was implemented to provide a central location for the posting of State government jobs to simplify the application process for job seekers. With it, came the total delegation of the hiring process to Louisiana state government agencies. In order to manage the transition from a somewhat centralized process, this program was developed to communicate with our users, provide them with the tools and resources they need to function in the delegated environment, and facilitate an ongoing partnership between DSCS and our users to help them successfully fulfill their new responsibilities.
4. We feel that this program is new and creative because it is a multi-faceted approach, incorporating various established methods of communication into a comprehensive campaign to successfully market and implement change in the way that Louisiana State HR staffs perform their work. We were able to move state hiring from a paper process to a computerized process statewide beginning in February 2009. At its one year anniversary, we find that state agencies are successfully posting their vacancies, processing applicants through the system, and filling vacant positions in a timely manner.
5. The initial start-up cost for marketing the change included staff resources, travel costs associated with training the HR community, promotional items including creation of the LA Careers logo, GoToWebinar subscription fees and office supplies needed to train users and

produce newsletters. Travel expenses incurred while the staff were out training HR personnel around the state totaled \$6,771.49 and office supplies/promotional items totaled approximately \$2000 with an additional \$1000 fee to create the LA Careers logo. One FTE was devoted to the project and several other members of our staff were assigned duties as needed that totaled about 15 - 25% of time spent on the job. No additional staff was hired for this project. In addition, the State purchased a subscription to GoToWebinar to provide our users with the LA Careers Bi-weekly User Calls. This subscription fee is \$948 annually.

6. The only continuing operational cost is for the annual subscription (\$948) to GoToWebinar that we use to host the LA Careers bi-weekly user calls.
7. This program continues to be funded through monies allocated to the agency's operational budget by the State of Louisiana's Office of Planning and Budget.
8. This program originated with a two-prong effort in the implementation of a new online application system and the revamp of two chapters of Civil Service Rules that deal with hiring.
9. While other states have implemented similar segments of our program (such as a new computer system or rule changes), our situation was unique in that we introduced so many changes at one time. Not only were we changing the mechanics of the way human resource offices were to process their work from a paper to an electronic system, we also fully decentralized the hiring process across the board. For the first time, agency HR staff would be posting and processing applicants for all classified State jobs. This major alteration in their duties and responsibilities warranted a far-reaching approach to keep them informed and gain their support of what we were doing, which is why we developed a comprehensive method to communicate and market our efforts to them.

10. We have been constantly monitoring the success of this change through the use of surveys, audits of our agencies' hire actions and call volume to the DSCS Staffing division. One of the most measurable indications of the program's success is the decrease in hire action errors made by agencies. We have conducted bi-weekly audits of hire actions since April 16, 2009. Our recent audits have shown a dramatic decrease in the number of errors made since implementation. We recently asked our HR users to respond to a survey about the benefit of our bi-weekly user calls and how confident users felt about using different parts of the new online application and tracking system. Of those respondents that indicated participating in our bi-weekly user calls, 49% found the calls to be either very or extremely beneficial. In addition, the confidence level of our users has increased dramatically with the majority of respondents indicating they felt extremely confident using the system as opposed to only moderately confident at this time last year.
11. The program has changed its focus since inception from telling users the change is coming and preparing them to master the basics of system operation to now helping the HR community become more efficient in its use of the LA Careers system. We have changed the format of our bi-weekly user calls from providing only instruction on basic system functions to sharing agency best practices, offering advanced training on interpreting minimum qualifications, helping agencies come up with applicant ranking procedures and demonstrating the reporting capabilities of the system.