

Staff Development Grant Final Report

North Hennepin Community College

Project: Job-specific orientation process

Description: This program will help supervisors orient new employees to their position and will supplement what the school is already doing to generally orient new employees to the campus.

Project leader: Sue Appelquist, Chief Human Resources Officer

Award: \$5,000

Project Re-cap:

North Hennepin hired a project manager to conduct a gap analysis of current new employee orientation/on-boarding procedures. In addition, the manager interviewed over forty (40) managers, supervisors, and staff members to find “hidden” processes, best practices, and suggestions for improvement. The project manager has use 140 of the 160 hours allocated in the grant. To-date, results include:

- a comprehensive report that was presented to the NHCC Executive Management Team providing a summary of the gap analysis;
- a process map that begins with the hiring process through the second year of employment (see Appendix A);
- a revised employee activation form that is currently being set up in an online format to interact between governing offices, the supervisor, and the employee;
- and finally, a new initiative proposal submitted through the NHCC fiscal year 2009 budgeting process for continuing and expanding the project to take a more holistic approach that will help create a “retention aura” to our new employee orientation and training program (see Appendix B).

Impact:

The impact of this project has been quite exciting and has generated a great deal of interest amongst the managers and supervisors. In addition, this project builds on our AQIP efforts with the Trust and Respect Committee: improving employee retention, getting new employees up-to-speed more quickly within their departments, and increasing satisfaction and productivity – ultimately benefiting our students.

Subsequent to the project manager’s presentation to the NHCC Executive Management Team, which stressed the need to expand this project beyond its original goal, we were encouraged to request new initiative monies and incorporate the project into the college-wide FY09 Action Plan. Based on that request, the project manager will continue his work between now and October 2008 by:

- introducing the NHCC value system into our position descriptions and job postings;
- expanding the Employee Activation form that will include an interactive e-mail deliver system of tasks associated with all aspects of employee orientation and training;
- creating “starter kits” for both employees and their supervisors;
- filming a web-streaming HR Development series for “need to know” training; and
- improving employee information on our local network drive, website, and intranet site.

Sequence of events and timeline:

Cabinet Meeting between 1-2 hr presentation by project manager on June 13:
Overview of employee training mapping process with a focus on gathering core qualities terminology, finalize mission statement, develop role playing, behavioral questions, rating sheets, discussing the concept of position outcome assessment.

Prior to the meeting an e-mail is sent to all departments focusing on interest in establishing mentor programs, web based "ask the expert" mechanism, as well as establish the types and frequency of professional development that offices would be seeking for the job titles within that office. The e-mail will offer that I come to individual dept. meetings to frame or that this could happen independently at the office level with results reported back to me.

June 2008

- Universal Governing office procedures (Facilities Mgt, IT, Safety and Security, Telephony: Area Admins, Maintenance) mapping completed and incorporated into employee activation form and linked to the PD hire process with links to HR letter notification process as well.
- Employee Packets, Manager Hire Kits developed
- Filming of HR Development series as linked to webstreaming started (at least a few complete, as completion of this as a group may extend into the summer)
- Groundwork content of Employee Activation form laid out and work on it by tech person at least started

July 2008

- Conceptualize general training to govern hiring committee process as it relates to core quals, mission, questions
- Training on developing structure on site mgt of websites, Pdrive, Enet new incarnation so that there is conformity of these areas as it relates to employee training.
- Training on the Encouragement initiative
- Employee Activation form complete, immediate pilot conducted with any new hires that has occurred in this timeline

August 2008

- Presentation put together by project manager that is an overview of this entire process for perhaps an all college event, all above is complete.

September – October 15, 2008

- System is fully implemented, and a pilot runs through this entire period of all new employees, fine tuning, changes, review of process

Reflections:

As a result of the gap analysis, the most important thing we learned was that we need to take a more holistic approach to orienting and retaining employees that will advance the mission and values of North Hennepin Community College.

We learned we need to start at the hiring process to introduce the NHCC value system and incorporate those values into our position descriptions and job posting. Prospective employees want to know what an organization is about. If we are deliberate in our efforts we are communicating volumes about the quality of being an NHCC employee, and subtly putting out there the type of employee we expect. This ups the caliber of employee we will attract and a “retention aura” is created.

In tandem with that effort, we learned we need to address the “functional” needs of each position long before a new employee’s first day, i.e., facilities, IT, telephony, safety and security, etc., thus reducing unnecessary stress to the employee and creating a welcoming atmosphere. This is an area that has been problematic for many years and needs greater organization. Many new employees have experienced difficulty with office set-up, computer and phone delays, and lack of good initial contacts with questions.

Finally, we learned that managers and supervisors do not always feel capable and competent to review all the necessary information to their new employees. They are well able to train on department and job-specific duties, but do not have the same comfort level on topics such as Code of Conduct, 1.B.1 Non-discrimination policy, safety and security, data privacy, and other topics that have campus experts. Creating starter kits for employees and their supervisors along with the filming of the HR development series on those “need to know” subjects will allow managers and supervisors to focus more on departmental and job-specific training along with developing a good working relationship with their new employee.