

Benchmarking Report 2009

Workforce and Succession Planning

**Workforce and Succession Planning
2009 Benchmarking Committee Survey
IPMA-HR**

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Workforce and Succession Planning – Benchmarking Committee Finds Still Rare in the Public Sector

Workforce and succession planning in the public sector appear to be gaining momentum, albeit very slowly. In 2004, 36 benchmarking participants said they had formal workforce plans in place. In 2009 that number went up to 67 – not quite double, but still an impressive increase.

The results are from the 2009 IPMA-HR Benchmarking Committee survey on workforce and succession planning. The committee, which was created in 1998, conducts an annual survey on a topic identified by the members as important.

Despite the increase, the overall number is still shockingly low. Given the attention to strategic workforce planning in the past several years by the Government Accountability Office (GAO)¹ and by organizations such as the Conference Board², CPS Human Resource Services³ and IPMA-HR⁴, we would have expected more organizations to have developed plans in the five years since the last report was completed.

The survey was sent to over 8,000 IPMA-HR members, and 310 responded, with only a quarter of those reporting formal plans. More than 600 people responded to the 2007 and 2008 benchmarking surveys, which leads us to believe that the overall response rate to the survey was lower than normal because people who did not have formal plans did not open the survey.

When asked why they did not have a formal workforce plan in place, most respondents said that they lacked resources. One hundred and seventy survey respondents answered the question about barriers to workforce planning, and the most popular choice was insufficient staff (67%). The next most frequent choice was “preoccupation with short-term activities” (64%), followed by lack of funding (42%), lack of executive support (32%) and restrictive merit system rules (21%).

These results are similar to those in 2004 when the top two barriers were identified as preoccupation with short term activities and insufficient staff to work on planning, followed by lack of funding. What these barriers tell us is that workforce planning is not a priority. Agencies are not making time or money available for workforce planning. Although we did not ask the question, the reason for this is likely that agencies do not see the positive value of planning. The benchmarking committee specifically asked survey

¹ HUMAN CAPITAL: Key Principles for Effective Strategic Workforce Planning, United States General Accounting Office Report to Congressional Requesters, December 2003. GAO-04-39.

² See the Conference Board’s working group on implementing strategic workforce planning and the resource guide available at <http://www.conference-board.org>

³ Building the Leadership Pipeline in Local, State, and Federal Government The Second in a Series of Research Studies on Leading Issues in Public-Sector Human Resource Management, Dr. Mary B. Young, 2005, <http://www.cps.ca.gov>

⁴ In addition to the 2004 Benchmarking Study, IPMA-HR developed the Workforce Planning Resource Guide for Public Sector Human Resource Professionals: <http://www.ipma-hr.org>

respondents to identify the positive results of planning. The positives are there and can outweigh the costs of establishing a plan.

Workforce Planning – Design, Implementation, Success

In the 2002 Workforce Planning Resource Guide for Public Sector Human Resource Professionals, developed by IPMA-HR, workforce planning is defined as:

The strategic alignment of an organization’s human capital with its business direction. It is a methodical process of analyzing the current workforce, identifying future workforce needs, establishing the gap between the present and future, and implementing solutions so the organization can accomplish its mission, goals, and objectives.

There are four steps in the IPMA-HR generic model⁵ of workforce planning.

1. Scan of the Environment or a SWOT analysis where Strengths (S), Weaknesses (W), Opportunities (O) and Threats (T) are examined
2. Supply and Demand Analysis
3. Gap Analysis which compares information from the supply and demand analysis to identify differences between the current and the future organizational workload, workforce, and competencies.
4. Action Plan

Workforce planning is important because changing demographics and an aging workforce are expected to reduce the overall number of workers in the future. While the recession of 2008 and 2009 may have slowed retirements, the impact of reductions in force and reduced hiring is likely to be felt shortly after the economy recovers. Agencies with a large number of retirement-eligible employees combined with already lean staffs, will likely find themselves scrambling as an aging population places increasing demands on public services.

Most of the plans are in their infancy: Twenty-six organizations said that their plans are less than 2 years old, 28 said that their plans are between 2 and 5 years old, 8 said that their plans are between 6 and 10 years old and only 4 said that their plans are 10 or more years old.

The City of Virginia Beach, Virginia was a pioneer in public workforce planning. Fagan Stackhouse, HR Director for the city, highlighted the importance of workforce planning and says that it “has been a vital tool in sustaining a quality workforce while achieving the City's Vision for the future.”

Most respondents said that their plans were developed entirely in-house, but a few used a

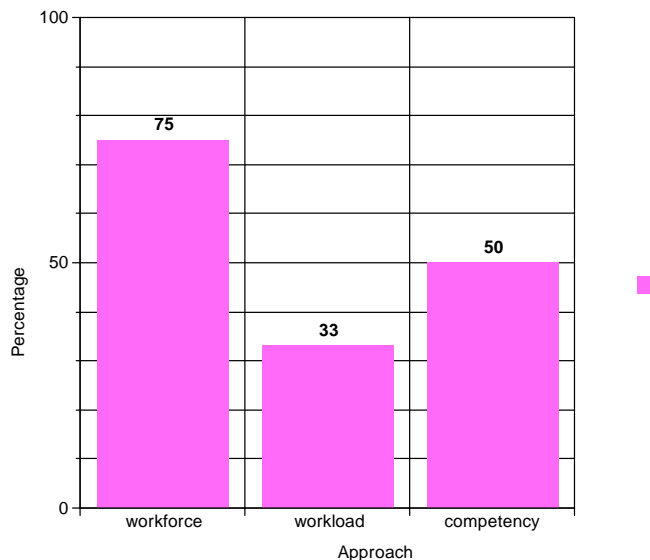
⁵ Thirteen respondents said they used the IPMA-HR workforce planning resource guide to develop their plans and nine indicated that they used the generic workforce planning model.

combination of in-house expertise and outside help. No one said that their plan was developed entirely by an outside firm. More than 90 percent of respondents said that central HR was involved in developing the plan; 30 percent said that the HR staff in each department was involved and just over 20 percent said that they had outside help.

The HR department in Pierce County, Washington, took a different approach to workforce planning and joined with their IT department to create a model plan that can be adapted by different agencies or departments. So far, only the IT department has had a chance to use it and they have had success. The process helped leadership to plan for the future by updating job classifications with better-defined skill requirements and to provide more focused training.

There are many different ways to approach workforce planning. The IPMA-HR resource guide describes three.

- **Workforce approach** – examines the current workforce and occupations and projects the number and characteristics of jobs and the number of employees needed to fill them at a specific point in the future
- **Workload approach** – focuses on the amount and type of work the organization anticipates handling at a specific point in the future, and uses this information to project the number of resources (people and skills) needed to perform that work.
- **Competency approach** - - identifies sets of competencies aligned with the organization’s mission, vision, and strategic goals. This approach assumes the organization has already considered workforce and workload and can focus not only on the number of people, but also on the competencies that employees must master for organizational success.



Three-quarters of the organizations reported using a workforce approach to developing their workforce plan, half said they used the competency approach and slightly more than a third reported using the workload approach, with a few indicating “other.”

Respondents were asked to select all of the approaches used, so the number adds up to more than 100 percent.

Staffing: Most organizations report dedicating between one and five staff (full-time equivalent positions) to workforce planning (38), with 20 saying fewer than one, and five dedicating six to 10 FTEs, and six organizations more than 16.

Survey respondents said the following types of planning are combined with the workforce planning process

Strategic Planning	59 organizations
Budget Planning	45
HR Planning	35
Strategic Staffing	33
Affirmative Action Planning	19
RIF Planning	16

When comparing the survey results from those who said they were satisfied with their workforce planning process versus those who said they were unsatisfied, one factor jumped out: the link between strategic planning and workforce planning.

Of the 31 satisfied organizations, 29 said they combined strategic planning with workforce planning. Only nine of the 17 organizations who said they were “unsatisfied” included strategic planning with workforce planning. While the difference (nearly all satisfied, slightly more than half unsatisfied) may not be great enough to state definitively that strategic planning is important to the success of workforce planning, it is an indicator that it might be helpful.

Respondents were asked what elements are included in the workforce plan. From the chart below, it is easy to see that training and development is a frequent part of planning, followed by succession planning. Recruitment, competencies, classification and selection and staffing are also common.

Again, the results are similar to 2004 when training and development was a key component along with recruitment, competencies and classification.

Training and development	80%
Succession planning	73
Recruitment	66
Competencies	65
Classification	64
Selection and staffing	60
Retention	54
Internal forecasting	54
High turnover occupations	46
Compensation	46
Skills gap analysis	46
Detailed statistical demographics	42
Performance	40
External forecasting	39
Worklife issues	35
Diversity and affirmative action	35
Generational issues	32
Benefits	31
Reporting	24
Special problems with low-grade employees	15

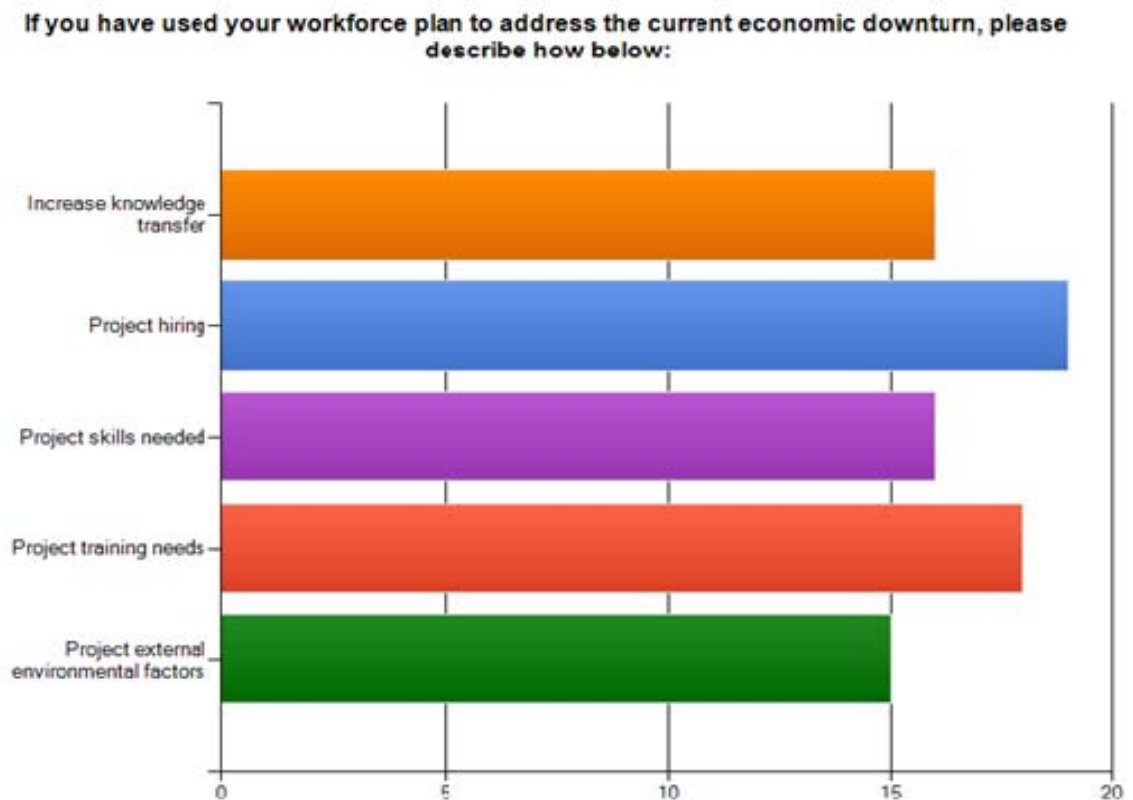
In terms of automation, most used an agency database (44 organizations) while only five reported using a commercial database and 13 said they used a reports generator.

Most said that their systems are not part of integrated human resource information systems (HRIS) – (49 organizations) while 14 said that they were. Of the 14 organizations who said that their systems were part of an HRIS, 8 of those reported being satisfied with their systems. Of the 49 who said they were not, 21 said that they were satisfied with their systems.

Economic Downturn and Planning

External forecasting would be one reason to have workforce planning and the committee members wondered how many of those with plans were using them to address the current economic downturn. Twenty-eight organizations, just over 40 percent of those answering the question, indicated that they did use their plans for this purpose, while 30 organizations had not and another 6 were unsure.

Workforce planning to address economic downturn:



Twenty six organizations said that they changed their plans as a result of the downturn. Many indicated that they adjusted hiring and recruitment projections as a result of budget cuts and fewer retirements.

Measuring Results

Thirty-eight organizations with workforce plans said that they evaluate the results. Most do it annually or on as-needed basis. Thirty-one organizations said that they were satisfied with their workforce plans, 17 said that they were not and several organization said that it was too soon to tell.

Succession Planning

Succession planning is more common than workforce planning with 98 organizations reporting that they engage in succession planning.

Common elements of a succession plan include:

Identifies organizational needs and looks internally to fill them	89 organizations
Includes some type of leadership development program	81
Identifies Individuals for promotion	65
Identifies organizational needs and looks externally to fill them	55

Of those who said that their programs include some type of leadership development, participants said that individuals are selected by the following methods:

Identified by top management	50
They apply to a program and all are selected	25
They apply for the program and there is a competitive selection process	37

Thirty-two organizations said that they evaluate their succession plans and most either do it annually or as-needed. Fewer than half of the survey respondents (40 organizations) said that they are satisfied with their succession plans, 32 said that they are not and the remainder did not answer the question.

Some of the positive results of succession plans identified by participants include:

- The ability to develop a strong pool of internal candidates
- Knowledge transfer
- The new leaders are known in the organizations
- Many leaders have been phased in
- Robust supply of internal candidates
- The “right” people are getting into the “right” jobs
- Higher retention
- Rewards good employees
- Employees are excited to be involved
- Leaders are already familiar with the business
- Able to fill top positions without a significant gap
- Realistic job preview

Barriers to succession planning include the following;

Preoccupation with short-term activities (89 respondents), lack of staff (78), lack of executive support (52), lack of funding (49), perceived lack of need (43), restrictive merit system rules on hiring, promotions, etc. (34), insufficient marketing effort (9).

City of Charlotte, North Carolina

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Describe the workforce plan:

The planning was done by individual work groups. There is not one overall plan for the entire organization.

Who was involved in the workforce planning process?

Generally, a workforce planning project involves three HR staff people: the consultant for the group doing the workforce planning, the organizational development and learning consultant for the group facilitates the process, and I have been present as the workforce planning content expert.

How long did it take?

Our process design calls for six meetings. In reality it takes 8-9 meetings.

How did the process get started?

The workforce planning Charlotte has done grew out of a collaboration between HR and the other key businesses. The group worked diligently to put meat on the bones of the organizational balanced scorecard objective of Recruit and Retain a Skilled and Diverse Workforce. A picture of the workforce that identified what the organization needed to prepare for (this was 2003) was developed. Workforce planning flowed out of that work some time later.

Was it HR-driven or by an elected official?

No. Neither. It was a collaboration of HR and the business units.

What are the elements of the plan?

In its most simple form, the plan is an analysis of the current workforce vs. the workforce needed in the future to get the work done. The process involves a

future scan to see what obstacles/challenges/opportunities the City faces regarding the workforce, citizen service, technology or compliance (among other things). Charlotte looks at these things in relation to what we need to produce. The City's balanced scorecard is the guide.

Please describe your positive results.

Supervisors and managers always talk about what they learned about and from their staff from this process. The employees feel energized about taking a hand in their work future. Work groups usually gain some on resource allocation. Sometimes you get benefits you did not anticipate. Once we had a recurring structural building issues resolved through workforce planning. The process allows people to talk and get issues on the table.

What are some of the lessons learned?

It is difficult to get people to commit to a process that takes 6 to 8 meetings plus doing homework.

What would you do differently?

Offer a menu of workforce planning options from full blown projects to smaller less time intensive options.

What advice do you have for others starting the workforce planning process?

Start small. Do a pilot project.

Clackamas County, Oregon City, Oregon

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Describe the workforce plan in place

The program is about one year old and Clackamas County is just starting to produce some strategies from the program. The “Succession Planning Guide” is an overall strategic planning guide that was developed in the spring 2008 to outline the approach the county would take in workforce planning.

The plan document covers the demographics of the county and its departments and outlines the phases of workforce planning through the use of department ‘design teams.’ This is a model used by FutureDecisions (out of Sacramento, CA) who provided workforce planning training for public agencies (through CPS). They attended the training and it has served as their foundation approach.

The HR department is also working on two other initiatives, one linked to succession planning for the Planning Division that has faced a large number of retirement eligible employees, many with long tenure. The other initiative is staff development for a department has struggled with developing employees for advancement.

Both the programs are still in the draft stage – but getting closer to implementation. They are targeted strategies developed by each design team to address what the individual department views as their own unique challenges and future workforce gaps.

Karen developed the Workforce Planning Guide to set the foundation of how the program would work. She worked on the guide between March and June 2008 (research, data collection, refining, etc.). She then presented the guide via a presentation to the top managers at the county (about 50 people) to introduce workforce planning. After the presentation she began working with three design teams from three different departments that requested they be the first to pilot the program. She began working with the teams in July 2008.

How was the process driven?

It was driven by Karen's Director, the Director of Employee Services. The Director attended training on workforce planning through CPS. Upon returning she pitched the idea to the County Administrator. She got approval to dedicate a position to workforce planning. Karen had been the recruitment manager for 10 years and was looking for something different in the field of HR so she volunteered for the position and was selected.

What are the elements of the plan?

The strategic workforce planning guide discusses the formation of a department specific 'design team' that works through phases of evaluating the environment, identifying key positions, evaluating what gaps will occur in the future and brainstorming strategies to address the gaps. The guide shows potential areas for strategies, but specifics on what is developed is left to the team. Karen has been the HR staff to the team to lead them in their evaluation and planning strategies.

How often is it updated ?

They haven't updated the workforce planning guild yet but they are thinking about it. They expect the phases of the planning process to remain constant, but the demographics will change and each department that participates will review their own unique environment to come up with strategies that address their immediate and future workforce gaps. They haven't yet implemented strategies so they haven't been in a position to keep those updated.

Do you measure the results & if so, how?

They are still struggling with measuring results. Karen wants to see if they can come up with some measurements particularly with the Finance Staff Development program. Some of the potential measurements include: how many employees request career planning; how many development opportunities are created and offered to employees; what percentage of employees who participate will receive advancement in the following __ years, etc.

Describe the positive results

Feedback on using the team concept to explore the workforce and develop strategies has been very positive. The teams have benefited from reviewing their work

environment and looking at future changes through environmental scan processes, including a SWOT analysis. The teams have commented on appreciating the honest discussions that come out of looking at one's work environment and be given the opportunity to suggest new processes. The teams seem excited about finding new ways to address workforce processes (example: development of staff for advancement rather than waiting to hear for a retirement and competing in an open posted job).

What are some of the lessons learned?

They are still struggling with how to get the design teams through the evaluation phase in an efficient manner. The three teams both took 8 – 12 meeting to complete the phases identified in the workforce planning guide. It is valuable but it takes a lot of staff resources.

What advice do you have for others starting the process?

Start slow, build momentum. Karen is glad they started with three teams and she is only building three strategies. Any more (with other workload and HR projects beyond WP) would have been too much at once. It will be easier now that tangible products are coming out of the teams that started their program. Now they can show what can come out of the efforts and energize other county departments to start workforce planning.

Gwinnett County Government, Georgia

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How many employees work on workforce/succession planning?

No one is formally dedicated to process, but there are 3- HR Generalists assigned to various departments and they support each other as a team, Kenneth Poe has served in a lead role, many key managers involved in the process.

Describe the workforce plan in place

Several years ago it was brought to the attention of all of the various departments of the large number of employees who were eligible for retirement. HR provided numerous reports that outlined the eligibility and projections, as well as outlined the recruitment frequencies needed for testing cycles for example with police and fire to assist in planning efforts.

During this process they anticipated a large number of retirements that over time did not prove to be true. They had also planned for key management retirements and developed succession plans for several of the anticipated retirements. When the economy began to decline the employees nearing retirement decided to continue working. As a result this year they have used their workforce plan to assist in a County-wide Reduction in Force (RIF) effort.

They tried to create attrition by offering a retirement incentive program and had some positive results with about 70 employees electing to retire. However, many of the folks who decided to retire were also in positions that were identified previously to be included in the RIF. They have eliminated 100 vacancies, and 250 more positions are in the process of being eliminated due to the economic impact of their County's current financial position. Property taxes dropped significantly, which lowered their revenue stream, growth slowed, they had previous built a number of new facilities and developed parks that they could no longer afford to maintain and operate. The workforce plan they developed had to be kicked into full gear before it was really developed and initiatives immediately acted upon.

Was it HR driven or by an elected official?

It was driven by the County Administrator and accelerated by decisions made by Commissioners- Elected Officials

What are the elements of the plan?

A new Business Plan Model was developed to address the economic challenges they were faced with and it includes a Staffing model (organization chart). Core functions, priorities and needs were identified in every area of the government. The Staffing model was then developed to support the Business Plan establishing new guidelines that were incorporated into budget process.

How often is it updated ?

They are creating their first one now, and will plan to have it updated annually with budget.

Do you measure the results & if so, how?

Through the budget process and they also use a Balanced Scorecard which is used to measure results.

Describe the positive results

Systematic approach to justify budget needs, assisted in determining where to cut positions based on business model priorities.

What are some of the lessons learned?

Don't do a Workforce Plan at same time as a budget crunch. The time constraints based on the immediate budget crisis increased the time needed to complete. An outcome during the process was a change for new hires indicating they can only go into defined contribution plan, where they previously had a defined benefit plan. They learned that many employees' investments had a direct impact on their decision to retirement. They felt making a change to the retirement benefits would help offset some of their financial decisions.

What advice do you have for others starting the process?

Have the Workforce plan completed before other topics become the driving force in developing their plan, such as what happened to their County with the economic downtown.

Los Angeles County, California

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How many employees are dedicated to workforce planning?

Three FTEs total developed the plan and materials, however, employees from HR, CEO, line HR, and line management are involved from each department.

How did the process get started? Was it HR driven or by an elected official?

During the initial 2001 rollout, it was a combination of HR and CEO driven strategic plan.

What are the elements of the plan? There is a 5-phase model

How often is it updated ?

Every few years. The plan going forward is to update at least every 2 years.

Do you measure the results & if so, how?

We measure and track the plans that are put forth by line departments. During the initial year (2001), we did survey the effectiveness of the strategies per job classification that was determined to have a high potential for retiree turnover. Updating the program every few years has permitted us to monitor how the projected retirements have occurred. We have noticed an increase in the average years of age and service at time of retirement.

Describe the positive results

Raising awareness to the pending retirement problem. Having a solid plan and process in place. Gaining an understanding of the trends of retirements across departments that have lead to strategies to help ensure a healthy eligibility list is ready to permit hiring. Being aware that the County of Los Angeles is not as bad off as other government agencies in relation to the effect of retirements.

What are some of the lessons learned?

- Need management's support
- Need funding
- Obstacles of operating in a civil service environment

- Needs to be a dedicated process with dedicated staff
- Forecasting is an effective approach to help understand retirement trends
- It takes skilled individuals with competencies in many areas of HR, project management, communication, and business to effectively run a program of this nature

What would you do differently? What advice do you have for others starting the process?

- Be realistic in what classifications that you are willing to fund development and change.
- Do not rely on recruitment as the answer to fill all vacancies.
- Have strong employee development and testing programs to develop skills and truly evaluate who actually have/cultivated them.
- As with all change efforts, obtaining management support is paramount. Also ensuring that employees are shown care in not just their development, but also in respecting the earned knowledge of those individuals who are close to retirement.

Strategic Workforce Planning - Summary & Recommendations

Overall, the design of the Strategic Workforce Plan (SWP) was effective. Department representatives understood the Guidebook, Workbook (plus sample completed workbook), department-specific data reports, data report interpretation documents, and reporting back forms (plus sample completed forms). The system itself performed well.

However, further discussions and more consultation with departments about how to utilize the information and tools within the SWP documents as it applies to their own department specific data (i.e., Workbook information and data reports) to evaluate their current state of readiness to address the high turnover due to retirement is needed. Additional consultation with departments to help them identify the classifications that “needed action” or to identify new classifications.

Other constraints on program implementation may have included:

- An aggressive time-frame to complete the work
- A competing priority with the County’s strategic goals that were launched at about the same time
- Increased communication and feedback with line management
- A need to fully understand the imminent turnover due to retirement, and the ramifications on departmental functions if not prepared to overcome this obstacle
- A need for more meaningful oversight by DHR to ensure work submitted by departments is thoroughly analyzed and completed
- More buy-in of the program by line HR

Potential Solutions

The underlying focus of the proposed solutions centers on DHR's accountability in conducting reviews, and line department HR accountability in conducting a thorough analysis of the data and selecting, developing, and implementing strategies.

- Require Administrative Deputy to attend the SWP Information Session with the Department HR Manager and an additional HR person (two HR people need to attend because on more than one occasion a department's attendee left the department, and no one remaining had an understanding of the project).
- Include a signature line on all forms for both the Administrative Deputy and Department HR Manager to ensure that both have reviewed the plans before they are submitted.
- Require departments to complete and submit a copy of the SWP Workbook. The Workbook is the organizational analysis piece that sets the stage for the interpretation of the department's data reports within the context of the department. In addition, require all department staff who participated in completing the Workbook either sign it or have their names and titles listed. This was a major problem encountered during the last administration, as only a few departments completed this important piece of the SWP.
- DHR would be required to review each Workbook and consult with departments to discuss any issues, if needed.
- DHR review each plan submitted (Forms 1-3, evaluation of identified problem classes and recruitment, development, and retention strategy forms), and consult with each department to discuss their course of action, if needed.
- Departments develop an action plan for each strategy that they plan on implementing and submit it to DHR for review.
- DHR develop a more comprehensive method to evaluate the effectiveness of the department's strategies. Last administration's method adhered to the directive to keep the evaluation simple and quick; however, it did not properly evaluate the quality or effectiveness of the implemented strategy.
- Strategy implementation progress reports could be initiated after six months to remind departments of their intended mission.
- Collect feedback on the process of the SWP via a survey administered to line-department personnel. This will uncover areas where to improve in conveying information, procedures, their needs, etc.

The following are additional measures to enhance the SWP program:

- Update the strategies listed in the SWP Guidebook by augmenting currently listed strategies with new information and add new methods (recruit, development, and retention).
- Identify a new and improved case study for the SWP Guidebook.
- Provide information on conducting exit interviews.
- Provide additional recruiting, development, and retention resource information (e.g., HR-related articles).
- Initiate the development of a central database of recruiting resources to assist departments to quickly locate appropriate recruiting sources and develop an effective

recruiting plan.

- Offer consultation sessions to assist departments in completing their reporting back forms.
- Provide additional department-specific reports comparing last administration's problematic classifications to their current condition/state to determine the change.

Outstanding Issues

The following is a list of other factors that may affect the successful implementation of this program:

- Decentralized HR model places much of the burden on each department's HR to complete the work in order to meet performance standards.
- Limited funding to provide departments with the necessary financial support that may be required to implement the best strategy(ies).
- Limited time and staff expertise to perform strategic workforce planning to meet program standards.

National Institute of Standards and Technology

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Describe the workforce plan in place:

It is an overall human capital strategy, fairly high level, with aspects of smaller-scale workforce planning.
Is it in writing

How did the process get started?

It was started in 2004

Was it HR driven or by an elected official? Some of both- President of the United States and an Appointee, the Human Capital Director of NIST

What are the elements of the plan?

Three part process: 1-Determine the mission critical positions. Assessment was completed to determine the Mission Critical positions needed for example “Scientists”; 2- Identify the positions that are hard to fill jobs; 3- Opportunity for target diversity, as a business reason.

To fulfill an Executive Order from then President Clinton - Workforce that mirrors the Workforce of America. President Bush dovetailed this directive in addition to Strategic Planning. Their efforts were looking at a 3 year programmatic plan, so it was developed in 2004 looking 5 years ahead, by 2007 the period became shorter.

In summary the WFP included what is needed for the future, what are they doing now, can they do something different and who are they hiring to fill these difficult to fill positions. A drill down approach was used by identifying five key difficult to fill positions and the underrepresented ethnicity for each position, along with emerging retirement pressures. Thirty-eight percent of the total permanent workforce was age 51 or older when they began WFP. Due to the high percentage of retirement-eligible staff, NIST established succession planning as a key management objective. Their succession planning included job rotation and exposure to key responsibilities and needed skills set, followed by competitive process to fill the vacancy since it involves a Merit System. Thirty-six percent eligible for 2010 retirement, haven't actually retired

How often is it updated?

Should be annually, currently being updated.

Do you measure the results & if so, how?

Diversity, HR customer satisfaction, organization outputs and outcomes. An annual Human Capital Accountability report was also used as a means of monitoring progress.

Describe the positive results

Diversity was improved; ability to plan was also improved. Capability to plan beyond the short term horizon of filling an immediate vacancy changed to looking ahead and anticipating vacancies. Directly benefited from more outreach with other organizations. More resources were directed to strategic recruiting and outreach. HR customer satisfaction improved, and stayed higher than any other bureau at the Dept of Commerce.

What are some of the lessons learned?

Partnerships with research units were key and positive aspect of their WFP efforts. They did not have a good connection with budget, less successful if planning efforts doesn't have money to do the things they have planned. Recruitment did have some funds allocated for attendance at job fairs and other outreach efforts, which helped that initiative. They formed a very positive Partnership with Dept. of Civil Rights to help with their diversity initiative. The Dept. of Civil Rights funded their attendance at conferences for example and assisted with recruitment of minorities for the critical positions.

City of Virginia Beach, Virginia

Contact:Fagan Stackhouse
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How many of your employees are dedicated to workforce planning

One individual's job in the Human Resources department is dedicated to workforce planning. However, each individual department has workforce planning teams that spend part of their time dedicated to workforce planning. The types of employees vary by department but they are often closely related to those in the HR function.

Who was involved in the process, how long did it take?

In 1999, a 25 member committee was developed and worked toward creating the workforce planning model used today. The committee benchmarked other agencies to get an idea of how workforce planning is done. From there, the committee created their own model. The workforce plan took approximately 1.5 to 2 years to create.

How did the process get started? Was it HR driven or by an elected official?

The HR department drove this initiative.

What are the elements of the plan?

The workforce plan consists of a 4 step model. The first step involves roles and responsibilities. The second step involves collecting data. The third step involves data analysis (gap analysis) and the fourth step provides action items.

How often is it updated ?

Departmental plans are updated annually.

Do you measure the results & if so, how?

The process has not been quantified. Departments are currently in the phase of implementing action steps to address identified organizational and individual gaps. The results will be measured through annual performance evaluations, process improvements, and through the evaluation of services and programs.

Describe the positive results

Departments are revising their strategic plans, restructuring divisions and units, realigning key positions and reviewing hiring practices.

What are some of the lessons learned?

Because the process of developing a workforce plan is long, strategies should focus on key gaps. Workforce planning and development is and will continue to be a challenge.

What would you do differently?

Take a narrower approach to the project. This agency focused on every department. Done over again, they would have focused attention on fewer departments and expanded as time progressed.

What advice do you have for others starting the process?

Make sure that management is onboard with the project and not simply providing lip service. The success of the workforce plan may hinge on their support. Continue to build a deep bench. In other words, keep training and developing personnel so that when people leave (voluntarily or through retirement) skills and information are retained.

Office of the New York State Comptroller

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Describe the workforce plan in place

The workforce plan is built off of a baseline of information about the organization that includes current openings, levels of openings, jobs filled, years of experience of present employees, an assessment of competencies and skills we believe will be critical in the future, analysis of gaps in skills and competencies, review of position titles and series – do the series and titles reflect the needs of the organization, a review of the minimum requirements for hard to fill positions, etc.

Describe the positive results / lessons learned

The workforce plan is reviewed annually, but when there is an administration change or if there is turnover at the top of the organization, priorities get shuffled and/or changed and sometimes the review of the plan gets bumped, but you get back to it eventually or something changes that makes it a priority again.

A few things came out of the workforce plan process that has been helpful – one was a realization that technology would become increasingly important in recruiting going forward. It is always hard to find accounting graduates that want to work for the State, so getting our positions and organization out there is a priority – getting visibility via Google and other hiring sites and reviewing where we recruit from so that we are getting visibility and attracting applicants. We've done a better job utilizing technology to create visibility for our organization and positions.

Another was realizing that we needed to create a new series and title under “Business Analyst;” recognizing that titles change over time and competencies change over time – so we created the new series to get at those competencies and create a position that fits the needs of the current organization.

We recognize or anticipate that there will be a gap in our organization/skill level between the Baby Boomers and the Millennials, and that when the economy improves there may be a shortage of available talent to fill that gap. We started strategizing around how we will fill that gap and how we will attract key talent. One thing we did was change the minimum requirements for our entry level auditor title by broadening the qualifications including other degrees besides just Accounting since we are willing to provide on-the-job training.

My advice to people just starting a workforce plan would be to really assess your organization and create a good baseline of information for use going forward. That will be critical to the survival of your workforce plan and the steps you need to take as a result of the plan – then do the research on plans, workforce trends, etc... and go through the exercises to create the plan. Understand that the plan will be adjusted over time due to changing factors.

Board of Water Works, Pueblo, Colorado

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Describe the workforce plan in place

Is it in writing?

Yes but only in PowerPoint form

Who was involved in the process, how long did it take?

Executive Director, 2- Directors, 1- HR Manager, the process has been on-going since 2005

How did the process get started? Was it HR driven or by an elected official?

Driven by Elected Board because our Executive Director is nearing retirement.

What are the elements of the plan?

Strategic Planning, budgeting, communication with employees & union, modifications to benefits.

How often is it updated ?

Reviewed as retirements have occurred and annually with budget.

Do you measure the results & if so, how?

Only in terms of FTE's, and demographic data

Describe the positive results

Open communication with workforce, strategic planning, staged implementation over time as events have occurred.

What are some of the lessons learned?

The process should be formally documented.

What advice do you have for others starting the process?

For our organization succession planning along with workforce planning was necessary. The only turnover we are faced with is retirements. The State requirements for water certification has made it somewhat challenging to build our own bench of newly certified employees, particularly because it is difficult to recruit new employees with the required certification.

Pierce County, Washington

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Pierce County does not have a county-wide program. Instead, it has developed a model process that agencies or departments may use. The model was developed by the HR department in coordination with the information technology (IT) department.

The county does not have a dedicated workforce planning staff. If a department decides to engage in workforce planning, the department would take the lead, and HR would provide support in workforce analysis (e.g., providing workforce statistics, conducting an employee survey) and in developing and carrying out the resulting plan.

Describe the workforce plan in place

The process was initiated by the leadership of the IT department, which was concerned about building and maintaining the workforce needed to carry out core functions, such as geographic information systems (GIS) and software development.

The IT department worked with the HR department (the director and an HR specialist) to develop a model process and apply it to the IT department. Development and application were concurrent, and took about 2 years. [The HR Director notes that the process would take less time now that the model has been developed.]

What are the elements of the plan?

The process, as described in the model, has 6 steps:

- (1) Analyze the existing workforce to develop a baseline;
- (2) Identify core functions;
- (3) Identify competencies essential to the core functions;
- (4) Assess risks;
- (5) Create a strategy (identify actions) for succession and continuity; and
- (6) Execute the strategy—align policies and practices.

The specific actions will vary; they may include recruiting, classroom training or cross-training, updating job descriptions and classifications.

How often is it updated ?

As needed; there is no formal schedule for reviewing and updating a plan.

Do you measure the results & if so, how?

The primary measure is organizational performance: is the organization able to effectively carry out its critical functions? An organization could, if desired, identify specific measures or indicators to track; they would depend on the risks and strategies in the plan.

Describe the positive results

The process has not been used in other departments yet; economic conditions and budget pressures have reduced attrition and resources available for training, recruitment, etc.

For the IT department, the process helped department leadership plan for the future. HR changes included updated job classifications (including better-defined skill requirements) and more focused training. The process can help department leaders and employees have more productive discussions about performance, training, and career development.

What are some of the lessons learned?

Suggestions for organizations:

- Be flexible; make changes to the process (and strategies) as needed. Adapt in response to changes in the environment, mission, and funding.
- Keep the process simple. A simple process that is usable, and results in constructive steps, is better than an elaborate, costly process.
- Communicate. Workforce planning is not merely a technical exercise; the social aspects are critical. The process should not be HR-driven; it's important to get "buy-in" from both leaders and employees. Actions such as identifying core functions, defining competency, and surveying employees on their retirement intentions can generate fear and resistance. The process and its intent must be communicated in advance.
- Start with the mission and core functions. That keeps the process focused and helps managers understand the process and its value.
- Focus on functions and skills instead of positions. A "big picture" approach is more flexible than a position-centered approach. Also, focusing on functions, instead of individuals or positions, can minimize concerns about job security and fairness—a common concern in public sector organizations.

Washington County, Stillwater, Minnesota

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Who was involved in the process, how long did it take?

This was started before the economic downturn. Kay gave a presentation to the department heads on a draft plan approximately 1 ½ years ago (from June 2009). Their initial focus was on the number of people eligible for retirement but that changed with the economy, then started focusing on retention and knowledge transfer. So initially it was a succession planning tool.

Now they use it along with exit interviews as a tool to retain people and deal with the effects of lay offs. They analyze data using surveys conducted after 1 month, 1 year and exit interview surveys. They want to know why people come to Washington County and why people leave Washington County.

How did the process get started? Was it HR driven or by an elected official?

Kay presented it to the department heads, left them with materials and summary data that she and her staff prepared. Data included how many people might leave if eligible. They took into consideration the demographics from the past, including areas where people work until into their 70's and other work areas where retirement occurs when staff are in their 50's. She gave a copy of the workforce planning tool kit to the department heads and supervisors and had them contact their HR representative to cover the material in depth. This is optional, not a requirement and the material is presented as a tool kit for leaders to more effectively deal with staffing changes.

How often is it updated ?

We have not updated it yet because we just started, about a year and a half ago.

Describe the positive results

This started as succession planning and became another document. People aren't retiring at the same age as in the past. They are modifying as they are going. They try to get information from employees as early in their appointment at the county as possible and understand what makes people want to stay and become engaged and why they are leaving.

What would you do differently?

Be flexible, think about the culture and your entity. Determine if you want to use this as an initiative or a resource tool kit.

About IPMA-HR

The International Public Management Association for Human Resources is an organization that represents the interests of human resource professionals at the Federal, State and Local levels of government. IPMA-HR members include all levels of public sector HR professionals. Our goal is to provide information and assistance to help HR professionals increase their job performance and overall agency function by providing cost effective products, services and educational opportunities.

About CPS Human Resource Services

CPS is a self-supporting public agency providing a full range of human resource services to the public and nonprofit sectors. We have unique expertise in delivering HR management and consulting services, employment testing, assessment services, and applicant tracking software to government agencies throughout North America. We provide organizational strategy planning models and systems to assist agencies in the recruitment, selection, and development of employees. Headquartered in Sacramento, CA, CPS has offices in Washington, D.C. and Bethesda, MD.

About the IPMA-HR Benchmarking Committee

IPMA-HR developed the following definition for benchmarking: A comparison of similar processes across public and private organization to identify best practices to improve organizational performance. The characteristics and attributes of benchmarking include measuring performance, systematically identifying best practices, learning from leading organizations, and adapting best practices as appropriate.

IPMA-HR's benchmarking goals: identify, measure and share the best practices of leading HR organization. Information will be available so organizations can compare their practices to the benchmark HR organizations and identify opportunities to improve their own organizations.

The primary purpose of the benchmarking project is to provide human resource practitioners with tools, models, skills, methods, and data to improve the effectiveness of their human resource programs for their customers. This is not an awards program, but a chance for everyone to learn and share information.

