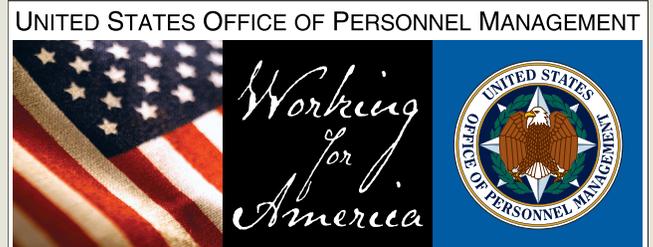




UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

CAREER PATTERNS CASE STUDIES

July 2007



AGENCY: *Department of Navy*

CHALLENGE: Recruit approximately 238 quality medical professionals for Bureau of Medicine (BUMED) positions as quickly as possible.

BACKGROUND: As part of the Department of Defense military to civilian conversion effort, the Department of the Navy had to recruit and fill 238 medical positions in an expedited manner. The Human Resources Service Center, Northeast (HRSC NE) was charged with the recruitment effort and was asked to develop a nationwide recruitment plan to ensure its success. Since many in the medical profession had little or no understanding of the opportunities available in the Department of the Navy (many candidates still do not realize the Department of Defense has more than 700,000 civilian positions!), the HRSC also had to plan an education campaign to apprise candidates of Federal employment in general and of the benefits of working for the Government. The campaign also covered how a candidate's work would contribute to national security through their support of wounded warriors, and of military members and their families. The HRSC wanted to make the application process as easy as possible to enable busy professionals to apply for the positions with little effort.

SOLUTION: *Develop and Implement a "Boutique" Recruitment Strategy*

Boutique Recruitment uses a targeted, specialty recruitment effort for a given occupation/recruitment situation. Boutique recruitment is commonly used in the private sector, with great success. It focuses on an analysis of the targeted occupation to: identify both passive and active candidates (passive candidates are those who are not currently seeking employment; active candidates are those who are seeking employment); the job characteristics most likely to attract the candidates; and innovative methods for reaching these candidates, especially the passive ones, to gain their interest in the positions. This style leverages contracts with private sector companies to access applicant databases and potential applicant pools to generate interest in the position vacancies.

Using this methodology, the HRSC, along with subject matter experts, conducted an analysis of the medical profession, what attracted these professionals to accept job offers, and how best to use these attractors to bring quality talent to the Department of the Navy, in short, a Boutique Recruitment approach for the medical occupation.

The DON focused on locating mid-career medical professionals at the GS-13/14/15 levels. Through a google search, they identified appropriate websites/publications in which medical professionals would be interested. Then they contracted with a number of these to use their on-line boards, place print ads in their journals, and procure other services which may prove useful in both the passive and active applicant search process.

These included:

- Career Builders web site
- Healthy Careers website and job board
- Pharmacy Week publication
- American Family Physicians Publication
- Journal of American Dentistry
- Journal of Prosthodontics
- Dental Workers Job Board
- American Academy of Family Physicians Job Board and Posting Service
- PEDJOBS publication and job board
- APPA News Magazine (Pediatricians)
- Craigs List

The DON also used additional venues to identify candidates such as:

- Retired military members
- Exhibits at Annual Conferences
- Current DON contractors
- Database Mining (e.g., Navy and OPM resume data bases)

The HRSC placed print ads in a number of the journals identified above, soliciting candidates and emphasizing how their medical skills would be used in support of our nation's defense. They also deployed an innovative approach of sending post cards to passive candidates based on information obtained from their Google search. This approach, although innovative, did not, however, produce the desired results and most likely will not be used again.

Communications with the potential applicants stressed a number of DON attractors. These included: generous benefits program; recruitment bonuses; malpractice coverage; and an excellent leave program. Applicants were also drawn to the DON mission, a mission focused more on patient care than on billing; a mission supporting our nation's warriors, and ultimately our nation's defense.

To facilitate the application process, the HRSC used the DoD Direct Hire Authority (DHA); where the authority was not available, the OPM DHA was used. Candidates were directed to the appropriate application source and were assisted in every step of the application process. The HRSC kept in constant contact with the applicants through e-mail and telephone, letting them know they and their skills were important to the Navy mission. The value placed on the applicants and their skills was never in doubt, and was in and of itself, an attractor.

RESULTS: To date, the HRSC has hired medial professionals for 173 of the positions. Nine positions have been cancelled and recruitment is ongoing for 56 positions.

NEXT STEPS: The DoD and the DON are exploring pursuing and marketing additional attractors to further enable recruitment and retention of the medical talent needed in the Department. These include:

- A new pay structure for physicians and dentists
- Part-time and flexible work options
- Referral bonuses

LESSONS LEARNED:

- Comprehensive advanced planning, with a strategic, results- oriented focus, is key
- Tracking progress of efforts through monthly status reports keeps focus on the deliverable
- Return-on-Investment (ROI) analysis results in prudent expenditure of funds, current and future, on only those recruitment sources with a payoff. For example, the postcard initiative, although innovative, did not garner the desired results and will not be used again
- Assignment of an "Account Executive" to oversee project results ensures accountability and results
- Focused, varied recruitment sources for targeted occupations is essential to success
- Marketing of Federal benefits, malpractice coverage and stressing mission alignment proved to be superb attractors/motivators for employment

Contact: Karin Clark, DOD (Navy)
Supervisory Human Resources Specialist
karin.clark@navy.mil

AGENCY: *Department of Homeland Security*

CHALLENGE: Department of Homeland Security (DHS)-Wide Proactive Recruitment Strategy

Using Career Patterns as part of a DHS-wide proactive recruitment strategy (to include a target diversity strategy and outreach to veterans)

BACKGROUND: The DHS Career Expo was an initiative designed to contribute to a primary DHS Human Capital Operational Plan goal to hire and retain a talented and diverse workforce. This corporate event evolved from individual component recruitment programs designed to recruit diverse applicant pools to DHS Mission Critical Occupations. For example, ICE deployed a successful recruitment campaign which generated over 20,000 applicants and placed over 8,000 candidates in the pipeline awaiting vacancies. The Secret Service developed a National Recruitment Strategy to increase representation of minorities and women in the applicant pool for law enforcement and support positions through FY 2011.

For its first-ever Career Expo, the Department's challenge was to attract a broad and diverse candidate pool with the right knowledge, skills and abilities to support critical DHS programs and overall transformational efforts. The Expo was one of several Corporate recruitment events targeted to reach three primary audiences: General (e.g., President's Management Fellows, Annual NY Times Event, and DHS Career Expo), Law Enforcement (e.g., Women in Federal Law Enforcement and National Law Enforcement Explorer Conferences), and Diversity Groups (e.g., League of United Latin American Citizens, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People).

As vacancy announcements often supplement highly visible and labor-intensive recruitment events and are the predominant mechanism through which applicants obtain information about positions, they must be made clear and enticing. In practice, vacancy announcements are frequently hastily constructed with limited consultation between the HR office and managers since timeliness metrics often trump the focus on qualitative outcomes such as diversity, succession planning, and competency gap identification.

SOLUTION: *Integrating Career Patterns into the DHS Corporate Recruitment Strategy*

As part of DHS's effort to take a more corporate and strategic approach towards its human capital program objectives, including recruitment and hiring, the agency deployed its first Career Expo on May 8, 2007. The Career Patterns Guide provided invaluable insight on how to target specific applicant sources. DHS is leading various other corporate recruitment initiatives which effectively integrate Career Patterns. The DHS Career Expo provided a unique opportunity

for the public to see all of the major components in the same location and learn about DHS jobs. Visitors attended informational workshop, Veterans and Student Outreach Stations, and spoke to DHS professionals about careers and the work environments. The Expo attracted over 1,200 potential applicants from various student, military, and work experience backgrounds.

In addition to spearheading corporate participation in targeted recruitment events, the Office of Chief Human Capital Officer (OCHCO) has worked with the Partnership of Public Service to develop applicant-centric vacancy announcements which effectively market the DHS/Component mission and accomplishments, identify work attractions and flexibilities, highlight commitment to public service, appeal to targeted audiences, and explain job benefits.

RESULTS: *Targeted recruitment strategies which effectively incorporate Career Patterns scenarios*

Department-wide Career Expo

- The Expo attracted 300 potential applicants to the Veterans Outreach Station and 360 to the Student Outreach Station.
- More than 55 participants attended each of the two workshops on “How to Apply for a Federal Government Job.”
- In total, the Department now has a data base of 1,242 job seekers, who have expressed interest in all Components and in all types of jobs.

Enticing Job Announcements

- The OCHCO worked with the Partnership of Public Service, senior HR personnel, subject matter experts, and managers from each DHS Component and Headquarters in developing vacancy announcement templates which market the Component/DHS mission, recommend ways to eliminate excessive bureaucratic verbiage, and incorporate Career Patterns. HR Specialists now have a user-friendly tool to engage hiring managers in the development of clear and enticing vacancy announcements.
- The Career Patterns Tool helped identify recruitment attractors, such as enticing mission statements highlighting commitment to public service and HR programs appealing to targeted applicant pools. This information has been used by DHS Components and Headquarters to develop vacancy announcements, recruitment flyers and/or radio ads to attract specific talent groups.

NEXT STEPS: *Incorporating Career Patterns strategies into the workforce planning process.*

DHS will be issuing guidance on Workforce Planning by July 31, 2007. The Department will incorporate Career Pattern strategies into the Workforce Planning process to develop strategic solutions to filling positions with the right talent. Additionally, the 2005-2008 Department Workforce Plan outlines several human capital strategies for recruiting talented individuals to fill current and projected skills gaps in Mission Critical Occupations:

- Develop an effective recruitment program to create a diverse and high-performing talent pool
- Establish a DHS-wide entry level employment program to develop high potential college graduates for DHS contract specialist positions
- Implement tailored outreach efforts to address anticipated shortage of Intelligence Research and Operations professionals

LESSONS LEARNED: Career Patterns strategies are being used by departmental and Component HR staffs to create more enticing recruitment materials and have been easily assimilated into corporate recruitment events and vacancy announcements. The Career Patterns Analytic Tool provided a quick solution to integrate job and environmental attractors into a strategic recruitment process. The Career Patterns Guide is a valuable tool in facilitating dialogue between hiring officials and HR staffs in creating creative and targeted recruitment materials.

Contact:

Ian C. Pannell, DHS Chief, Human Capital Office
Corporate Recruitment Program Manager
ian.pannell@dhs.gov

AGENCY: *Department of Agriculture*

CHALLENGE: The USDA Human Capital Plan

USDA's workforce is comprised of 9 mission areas, 26 agencies and approximately 98,000 employees. The Department's challenge in applying the Career Patterns Guide was the size, scope and complexity of USDA's programs and its workforce

BACKGROUND: USDA has always been committed to its workforce who provides leadership on food, agriculture, natural resources and related issues based on sound public policy, the best available science and efficient management. In this 21st century, USDA is facing several workforce challenges in meeting its goals and objectives. The USDA Human Capital Plan lays out the strategies to meet these challenges while ensuring a high performing, diverse workforce. Implementation of the Career Patterns initiative has proven to be a valuable tool to meeting USDA's recruitment goals.

SOLUTION: *Integration of Career Patterns into Department wide HR Processes*

- USDA selected its mission critical occupations to implement the Career Patterns strategies. The Career Patterns strategies assisted USDA agencies in:
 - Identifying appropriate applicant pools and attractors for specific positions;
 - Building environments to attract specific applicant pools; and
 - Designing vacancy announcements as the vehicle to market USDA thus attracting the target audience.
- Building environments is a key component in applying the Career Patterns Guide. In order to market USDA in the best light, agencies are not only covering the duties of a position and identifying the basic qualifications on vacancy announcements, but describe:
 - The organization and mission and why an applicant would want to work there.
 - The benefits of working for the agency (i.e. telework, amenities and services available at the work site, leave, transit subsidies, etc).
 - Job locations and surrounding areas and a listing of available websites for an applicant who may be considering relocation.

For example, the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) has identified a critical shortage of DVM/Ph.D candidates for Veterinary Medical Officer positions in ARS. In order to address this shortage, ARS has developed a competitive educational program. Candidates for this program will become full-time, paid employees of ARS while enrolled in a full-time Ph.D program with an accredited

university. If selected for the program, ARS pays for tuition, books and lab fees. Once students receive their Ph.D, they must agree to work for ARS for a full three years.

RESULTS:

- Using the Career Patterns approach has given USDA agencies a consistent strategy to successfully fill vacant positions, through the identification of appropriate applicant pools and attractors. Using this approach, vacancy announcements are designed to market USDA.
- The Career Patterns approach has enabled HR Specialists to engage managers and selecting officials in the recruitment process.
- Career Patterns strategies provided a more focused approach to the way in which USDA recruits for vacant positions.

NEXT STEPS:

- Integrating Career Patterns strategies into the succession planning process.
- Incorporating the Career Patterns approach to all recruitments, enabling USDA to compete to attract and retain talented candidates.
- Building environments to attract a wider range of potential applicants.

LESSONS LEARNED:

- Integrating Career Patterns strategies did not require an entire change to the current recruitment process. During the review and implementation of Career Patterns strategies, it became apparent several USDA agencies were using marketing strategies similar to what is prescribed by the Career Patterns Guide.
- Although agencies have tools for building environments to attract applicants, there is still work to be done in the areas of pay and compensation.
- By using the Career Patterns strategies, HR Specialists and managers give more thoughtful consideration, at the front end of the recruitment process, to the way they want to fill positions and to attract an applicant pool.

Contact:

Mary Jo Thompson, USDA
Director, Office of Special Projects
MaryJo.Thompson@usda.gov

AGENCY: *Department of the Interior*

CHALLENGE: Integrating a Competency Based HR Process with Career Patterns

Developing a strategic approach to hiring, including integrating competencies and marketing statements into vacancy announcements

BACKGROUND: The Department of Interior (DOI), Bureau of Reclamation's Upper Colorado Region has developed a competency-based human resource (HR) process called the Right Person Profile. The Right Person Profile relies on competencies to develop HR programs including: recruitment, performance management, classification, employee development and workforce planning.

The Bureau's challenge was applying the process to "real life" hiring situations. This included using competency-based tools to write position descriptions, vacancy announcements and individual training plans.

SOLUTION: *Integrating Career Patterns into the Right Person Profile toolkit*

The Career Patterns Guide provided insight on how to target specific applicant pools. By adding Career Patterns strategies to the toolkit, HR Specialists were able to develop vacancy announcements with a clear description of the skills needed, as well as additional information to attract the right talent, including the environmental features and flexibilities.

RESULTS: *Targeted vacancy announcements with information to attract identified Career Patterns scenarios*

Recruitment plans and Career Patterns strategies are used to develop targeted vacancy announcements.

Recruitment Plan:

The Right Person Profile process includes HR specialists developing a Recruitment Plan with selecting officials prior to a position being announced. This discussion includes identifying the desired recruitment source (i.e. Merit Promotion, Delegated Examining, Career Intern etc.) and takes into account under-representation and diversity goals.

Adding Career Patterns:

Prior to the Career Patterns initiative, vacancy announcements were prepared based on past recruitment history and/or methods used to "cast the widest net." HR Specialists used the Career Patterns Analytic Tool to engage hiring managers with the development of position descriptions and vacancy announcements. The Career Patterns tool helped identify recruitment attractors,

HR policies and programs appealing to the targeted applicant pool. This information was used to develop vacancy announcements to attract specific talent groups.

NEXT STEPS: *Incorporating Career Patterns strategies into the workforce planning process*

The Bureau's current workforce planning model consists of a series of risk assessments evaluating the agency's mission critical positions, as well as, those positions which may become vacant in the coming years. High risk positions - those identified to likely involve a hiring gap - are reviewed and a strategic solution is developed to address the possible shortage. The Bureau of Reclamation is incorporating Career Patterns strategies into the workforce planning process to develop strategic solutions for filling positions with the right talent.

LESSONS LEARNED:

Adopting Career Patterns strategies did not require an across-the-board change to the current program and was easily assimilated into a strategic recruitment process. The Career Patterns Analytic Tool provided a quick solution to integrating competency requirements and job/environmental attractors in a vacancy announcement. The Career Patterns Guide is a valuable tool to develop strategic recruitment material.

Career Patterns strategies were used by the HR staff to discuss strategic recruitment with hiring managers. As a result, managers were able to convey a better picture of the talent they wanted to recruit and the HR specialists were able to develop targeted vacancy announcements.

Contact:

Roger Slater, DOI, Bureau of Reclamation, Upper Colorado Region, Manager,
Human Resources Division

rslater@uc.usbr.gov

AGENCY: General Services Administration

CHALLENGE: *Developing a Strategic Approach*

Developing a strategic approach including human resources principles, policies and programs to leverage in recruitment, workforce development and retention efforts

BACKGROUND: The General Services Administration (GSA) has identified four mission critical workforces: Acquisition, Realty, Information Technology, and Financial Management as vital to accomplish the core GSA mission:

GSA leverages the buying power of the Federal government to obtain the best value for taxpayers and our Federal customers. GSA exercises responsible asset management. GSA delivers superior workplaces, quality acquisition services and expert business solutions. GSA develops innovative and effective management policies.

GSA focuses on mission critical workforce needs in terms of recruitment, development, performance and retention.

In FY 2006, GSA created an Acquisition Workforce Steering Committee (AWSC) to address the human capital needs of the acquisition workforce. The AWSC is chaired by the GSA Chief Acquisition Officer and includes representatives from service and staff offices including the Chief Human Capital Officer, and regional offices. The AWSC has been addressing the recruitment, retention, and training needs of the acquisition workforce. This workforce is confronted with the following challenges:

- In addition to the wave of baby boomers becoming eligible for retirement over the next five to ten years, the market for experienced, federal contracting workforce is highly competitive. GSA continues to lose considerable experienced talent due to retirement and transfers to other federal agencies.
- There is a highly competitive labor market for acquisition skills. Given the complexities and specialized requirements of the occupation, we have too many agencies chasing too few fully trained employees. GSA, along with other federal agencies, needs to continue to replenish and retain the newer acquisition workforce.
- Government-wide acquisition certification and qualification requirements impact workforce recruitment efforts, particularly at GS-13 and above. GSA is working to pursue individuals with private sector and other public sector experience and ensure Clinger-Cohen compliance.
- Business needs and customer requirements continue to evolve, requiring increased workforce agility in staffing and other human capital areas to respond effectively to these needs.

- There is a change in the expectations of the applicant pool. Applicants, particularly at the entry-level, have different employment expectations including work environment, benefits and longevity.
- Federal entry-level salaries are lower than the private sector, especially in large urban areas. While career ladders assure movement to higher income levels, new employees often react negatively to the first year's salary at GSA versus other non-Federal offers.

One of the most demanding challenges for GSA is to hire and retain a competent acquisition workforce.

SOLUTION: *Appointing Authorities*

GSA hires new employees in several ways using a variety of appointing authorities. For the GS-1102 Series, most employees are hired at the entry level, particularly through the Federal Career Intern Program (FCIP), or as a transfer from another Federal Agency. In some years, the hiring and separation actions for employees transferring to and from one agency to another can be close to 50% of the actions. In the past, GSA has also used authorities such as the Presidential Management Fellowship Program.

GSA is also identifying opportunities to leverage the use of employment incentives, including student loan repayment program as both a recruitment and retention tool; and considering other intern programs.

Career Patterns – Identifying and Hiring the Right Applicants

GSA is using OPM's scenarios (groupings of potential employees) based on factors such as age and experience to assess different motivations, expectations and work attractors. For the majority of GS-1102 specialists hired by GSA, the Student, New Professional and Mid-Career Professional scenarios apply.

RESULTS: *GSA was able to develop a detailed recruitment and retention tool for the HR staff and hiring managers covering the acquisition workforce.*

- This tool provides examples of flexibilities, attractors, and training - combined together - to effectively meet GSA workforce needs.
- GSA is also piloting the use of standardized announcements and applicant screening tools to improve the quality of referrals.
- GSA will continue to identify and address areas of improvement for both recruitment and retention.

NEXT STEPS: *Develop additional recruiting and retention tools using Career Patterns strategies*

- GSA plans to expand its incorporation of Career Patterns into its workforce planning process and develop additional recruiting and retention tools for other mission critical and hard-to-fill positions.
- GSA plans to continue to pursue additional strategies aimed at both recruiting and retaining the acquisition workforce. Many of these strategies will be based on employment motivators and detractors.

LESSONS LEARNED:

- The Acquisition Workforce Hiring, Development and Retention Tool is an effective tool to assist GSA managers and leaders with ensuring the development of a comprehensive strategy for improving recruitment and retention for the acquisition workforce.
- The tool incorporated Career Patterns information in a more focused, practical manner for GSA hiring managers and human resources professionals.
- Implementing the Career Patterns initiative in this manner - by making it relevant to our human capital challenges - has been meaningful to our workforce and to our hiring managers.

Contact:

Kim Sasajima, GSA,CHCO.CHM
Director, Human Capital Strategic Planning
kim.sasajima@gsa.gov

AGENCY: Nuclear Regulatory Commission

CHALLENGE: Develop Strategic Recruiting

Utilize the "Highly Mobile" career pattern scenario to develop a strategic approach to recruiting, training and retaining secretarial talent

BACKGROUND: In 2006, Secretarial support was identified as a critical need at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC) headquarters location in Rockville, Maryland. Exit analysis was conducted, which showed secretaries were more likely to leave the agency as compared to technical professionals. With this in mind, NRC decided to utilize the "Highly Mobile" Career Patterns scenario to develop a strategic approach to recruiting, training and retaining secretarial talent.

SOLUTION: *Improving the recruitment and hiring process by reducing the time it takes to review and select*

NRC used Career Patterns and information from the exit analysis to develop a strategic approach to attracting secretarial talent. The HR staff cross-referenced the information from the exit analysis with the information included in the Career Patterns Guide to develop a comprehensive list of work attractors for this group. The talent pool NRC wanted to attract included candidates who were identified as "highly mobile." The HR staff decided to focus on improving the recruitment and hiring process for this position by reducing the time it took to review and select them.

The agency decided to address this issue from two perspectives: recruitment and training.

Recruitment

Several enhancements were suggested and adopted after reviewing the traditional approach to secretarial recruitment.

- Reformat vacancy announcement
 - NRC targeted candidates with a high school degree and 3 or more years of related Secretarial experience. The Secretarial positions were restructured agency-wide, to hire secretaries at the GG-6 level with promotion potential to GG-7. This allowed for career growth, and decreased the number of secretaries leaving the agency for their next promotion. NRC also promoted its generous pay and benefits package, along with its flexible work schedule in vacancy announcements.

- Subject matter experts developed a library of multiple-choice questions to evaluate a variety of skill areas while easing the application process for the candidate. Additionally, the vacancy was structured to be self-rating, so the best qualified candidates were quickly determined.
- Streamlining the Interview Process
 - The agency held two secretarial events during the fiscal year. The first was a Secretarial Open House held on November 18, 2006. The Open House was advertised in local newspapers, and the results were outstanding. There were 223 out of 235 attendees interviewed, which resulted in approximately 50 offers for employment.
 - The second event was a Secretarial Invitational, which was held on June 9, 2007. There were 41 candidates invited for interviews, and 28 were highly recommended for positions throughout the Agency.
 - Both events were held on Saturdays, to reduce the likelihood the applicant would need to miss work at their current job; to offer free parking at the metro parking lot across from NRC headquarters; and to take advantage of lighter traffic conditions occurring on the weekend. The open house and invitational events also allowed NRC to significantly improve the speed of the selection process.

Training

A task force was created to develop an agency-wide Secretarial Qualifications Program, to assure secretaries acquire the knowledge and skill necessary to perform their jobs. The proposed coursework and timeline were piloted in early 2007, and were approved at the May, 2007 NRC Human Capital Council meeting. The agency-wide secretarial training program will also promote professional development and networking opportunities, which are attractors for the identified group of talent.

Contact:

Susan Salter

Team Leader, Recruitment Team

Susan.Salter@nrc.gov

AGENCY: State Department

CHALLENGE: Strategic hiring in the Civil Service

Implementing and incorporating similar Foreign Service strategic hiring and recruiting methodology into the Civil Service hiring and recruiting plans

Major challenges include:

- Research done while implementing the Foreign Service recruitment plan found many viable candidates did not understand the Department's mission, or realize it is a Federal entity.
- The majority of the civil service mission-critical positions and workforce, including the recruitment and human resources offices, are headquartered in Washington, D.C., which makes reaching and educating candidates living in other parts of the country about the Department and its mission, a great challenge.
- The Department has limited funding allocated toward recruiting for the civil service. To make the most of the available funding and to reach the largest audience, the Department is planning to revise its website to include "Career Patterns" type marketing information.
- Additionally, recruitment for the Foreign Service is housed and centrally located within the Bureau of Human Resources. However, staffing activities for the civil service is decentralized among many bureaus. Thus, the new effort will involve much coordination and buy-in from bureaus outside of the central human resources offices.

BACKGROUND: Over the last year, the U.S. Department of State successfully implemented OPM's Career Patterns requirements including expanding recruitment strategies for the Foreign Service through robust and intensive recruitment initiatives. The Department personnel, with the assistance of third-party marketing and advertising contractors, completed extensive market research, developed detailed needs assessments, identified targeted audiences and determined strategies in order to attract the right candidates.

The U.S. Department of State's recruitment strategy is based on a high-tech and high-touch approach. Specifically, through targeted marketing communications, potential prospects, which are both qualified and interested, are identified. Customized messaging is delivered to these prospects who, in turn, indicate a desire for additional information or follow-up.

Recruiters and Diplomats-in-Residence are asked to personally contact those who inquire. They also represent the U.S. Department of State through activities covering a wide variety of targeted groups, universities, professional and constituency organizations. In addition to recruiter outreach and an intensive marketing communications program, our efforts include a wide variety of current

employees, retirees and volunteers who travel to events and talk to potential candidates about the processes to become U.S. Department of State employees.

The U.S. Department of State plans to focus on and incorporate the same strategy in attracting candidates for the civil service. As with the Foreign Service, the Department will utilize methods outlined within the criteria for Career Patterns in order to attract the right people for the right job with the right skills.

Additionally, HR will spearhead an effort to coordinate marketing communications and outreach efforts for all bureaus. Similar to consumer organizations who market various brands under one umbrella brand, e.g. Proctor and Gamble, Pepsi Cola Company, Hershey Foods, and May Companies, the Department will embark on a project to add sub-brands to its current, highly recognized employer brand. Sub-brands will be developed for all bureaus, which actively recruit, and will result in communicating a consistent message and image of the U.S. Department of State as an employer of choice.

SOLUTION: The Department has begun to implement and incorporate several strategic hiring and recruiting tactics currently used by the Foreign Service. The major strategies are:

- Educate the public about State's mission prior to the actual recruitment.
 - Provide brief overview of State's mission in the job announcement. This will assist in providing the general public with a basic understanding of State's mission prior to recruitment.
 - Update job announcements to include marketing statements based on research done with Career Patterns and other marketing efforts targeting specific groups of talent.
 - Continue discussions with specific bureaus which have special and unique criteria and work requirements and develop customized recruitment strategies and branding for those bureaus.

RESULTS: The Department of State recognizes and implements OPM's Career Patterns approach in all aspects of its employment marketing communications and outreach efforts. The research included extensive sessions with focus groups, which provided feedback the Department's employment branding campaign specifically:

- Represents a creative and innovative approach to recruiting.
- Speaks to the intellectual nature of our target audience by telling an interesting story in just a few lines of what their life could be like as an employee.
- Stories touch on both personal and professional aspects
- Research shows an affinity for travel and world affairs is almost universal among our target audience, so this campaign emphasizes both by

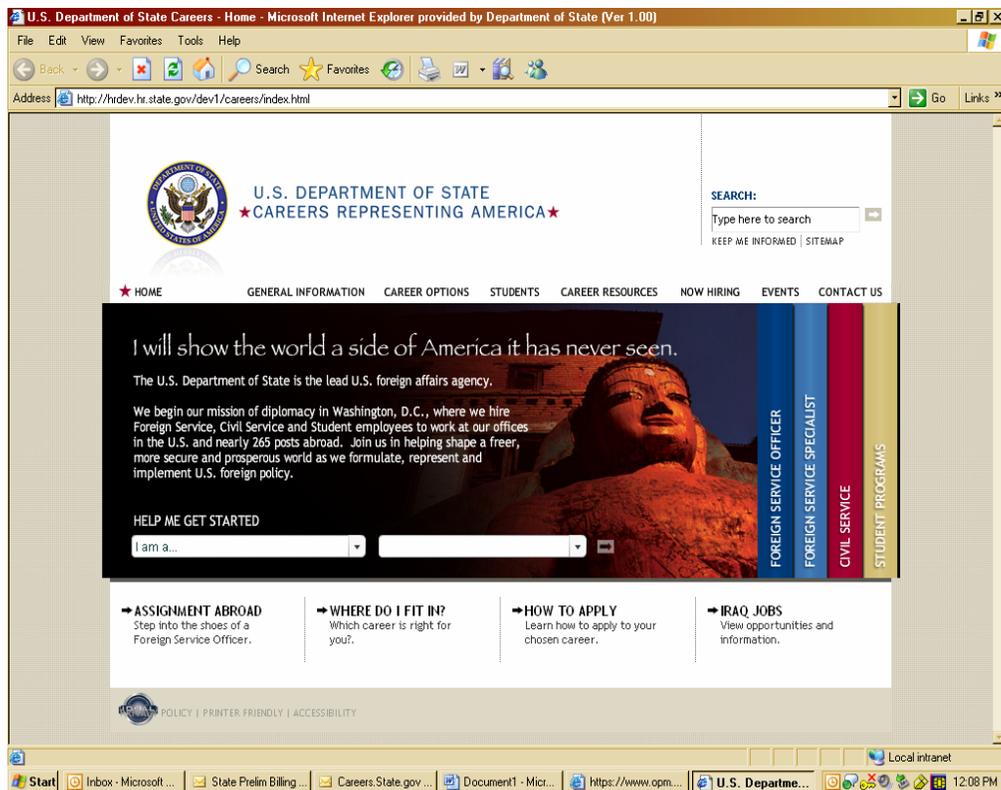
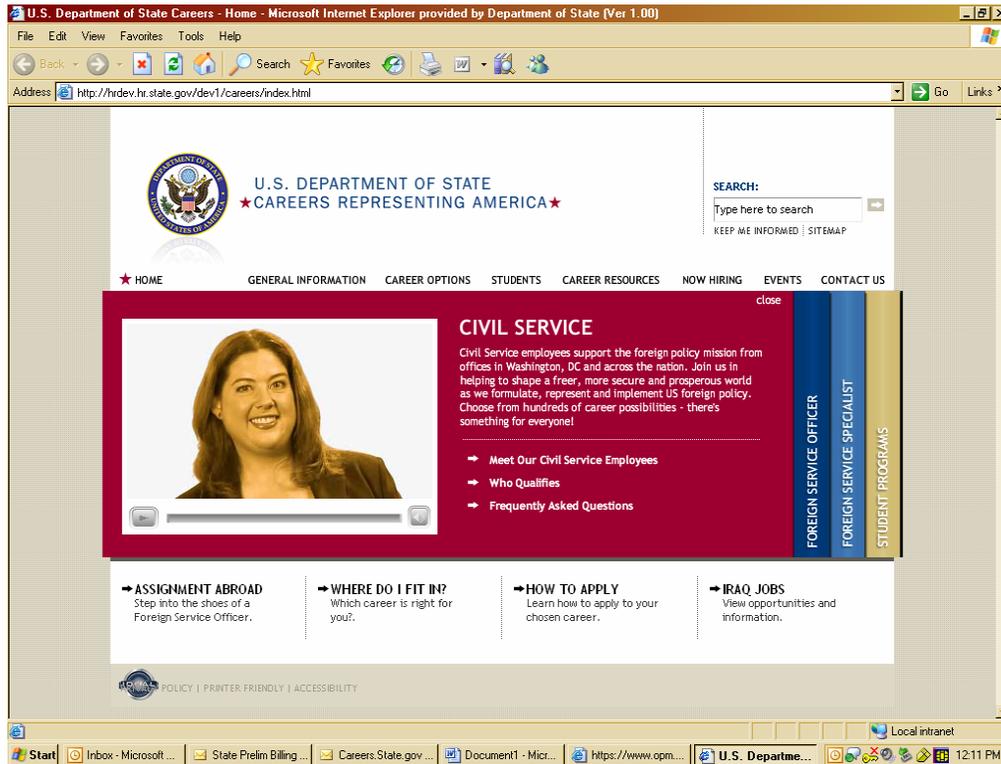
creating a realistic scenario into which the reader can project himself or herself.

- This campaign piques the interest of the audience with captivating imagery and a rich story but then directs them to the website for more.
- The imagery is fresh and subtle yet captivating to this intellectual group. Like the headlines, it piques interest and invites them to find out more.

Based on feedback from the focus group and other research, the Department has successfully begun to incorporate core values and work attractors of Students, Entry, Mid- and Senior Level Career Professionals in job announcements.

- Developed a revised website to inform the general public of the opportunities and benefits of working at the Department.
 - Develop and implement marketing strategies to attract the best and brightest civil service employees by introducing itself as the "Employer of Choice" through actively marketing its mission, identifying workplace attractors, highlighting positive stories of those civil Servants who work here, creating linkages between our new and revised website (incorporating OPM's Career Patterns requirements) and job opportunities within the Department, and listing Federal benefits, as well as those specific to State.
 - The Department launched its newly improved and revised website located under Careers.State.gov on July 16th. This new site includes links to actual job opportunities within the agency. One of the main focuses of this new website is to attract candidates by allowing a user-friendly applicant tool to maneuver in searching for job opportunities within the Department, gain insights into our corporate culture, become better informed about benefits offered and provide work attractors specific to State.
 - The new www.careers.state.gov website redesign was launched on July 16, 2007. The employer branding campaign was fully implemented, in addition to streamlining and improving the user's experience so they can get the information they need and/or seek quickly and easily, the Department also included new content areas and features helping communicate identified Career Patterns scenarios and continue to help position the agency as an employer of choice.

➤ Pages from redesigned website:



NEXT STEPS: In continuing to implement OPM's requirements of Career Patterns and further expand the implementation of more hiring and recruitment strategies used by the Foreign Service, the Department plans the following:

Short Term Recruitment Goals

- Include links from actual vacancy announcements to careers.state.gov
- Educate the HR community & our hiring officials on utilizing improved strategic approaches to creating vacancy announcements in order to attract viable candidates
- Continue to obtain testimonials from State employees as a recruitment tool, and as a means of enhancing and improving morale among current staff, which will hopefully also aid in retaining employees for the long term
- Collect and obtain data regarding the effect of the new website campaign on hiring and recruiting
- Establish a dedicated working group among bureaus and central HR personnel to continue recruitment strategies

Overall Recruitment Goals

- The U.S. Department of State will have an identifiable brand as an employer of choice recognized by our targeted audiences.
- The process for recruitment and hiring will be transparent, timely, efficient and user friendly.
- The U.S. Department of State will have recruitment and hiring processes competitive with those of the private sector.
- Applicant diversity will reflect national professional workforce demographics and meet the skill needs of the U.S. Department of State.
- Education of the HR community will continue through monthly HR Senior Specialist Forums; Personnel Interagency Exchange Quarterly sessions and coordinated training sessions for hiring officials and senior management.
- Maintain ongoing working group dedicated to focus specifically on recruitment strategies and assurance of consistency of recruitment activities throughout the agency.

Long-Term Site Goals

- Communicate positive brand attributes of the U.S. Department of State as an employer of choice.
- Increase education and awareness of opportunities with the U.S. Department of State with key target audiences.
- Improve the overall user experience on the careers.state.gov site.
- Attract and inform candidates as well as help develop relationships with them.

- Incorporate new content and features at regular intervals to keep the site fresh and informative.
- Create sub-brands for individual bureaus in alignment with overall Department branding.

LESSONS LEARNED: The Department has documented the following lessons in implementing the huge campaign to incorporate OPM's Career Patterns for the Foreign Service:

- Technology proved to be an effective tool in identifying viable candidates, however, the need to utilize the high touch recruitment approach is certainly necessary. In other words, automation is definitely an effective tool within the recruitment process, however, the human touch is necessary in order to really attract and win over good candidates.
- A good plan or strategy is necessary in determining recruitment activities. Agencies must be familiar with not only its' need, but also, the potential for filling vacancies.
- An agency must have dedicated resources, both personnel and funding, in order to focus on and be truly successful in this effort.

Contact:

Marcia Savoie
Department of State, Office of Civil Service Personnel,
Deputy Director
SavoieMA@state.gov

AGENCY: Department of Veteran Affairs

CHALLENGE: Meeting hiring requirements using retired leaders and administrative technical experts

Developing a strategic approach to ensure knowledge of retiring workforce is transferred to remaining employees

BACKGROUND: The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is increasingly facing a crisis where high quality health care and services to veterans will be compromised due to retirements of senior leaders and technical experts. VA is losing its experienced workers to retirement at a faster rate than we can transfer their knowledge to remaining employees.

At the end of 2006, 56% of Medical Center Directors were eligible to retire. By the end of 2013, 92% of Medical Center Directors will be eligible or will have taken regular retirement. The Associate Directors, their likely successors, are in many cases retirement eligible as well, providing serious challenges for a smooth transition into such a critical leadership position.

By the end of 2013, 65% of Associate Directors will be eligible or will have taken regular retirement. It is also projected between now and the end of FY 2013, about 86,500 (41%) of Veterans Health Administration (VHA) employees will be eligible to retire and 49,609 (24%) will retire.

Numerous realized losses in leadership positions will result in a serious gap and raises the question of whether there is a sufficiently qualified and experienced applicant pool to fill the void. Specifically, 90% of Senior Executives (SES), 79% of Chiefs of Staff and 81% of Nurse Executives will be eligible or will have taken a regular retirement by 2013. Many VA leaders and technical experts do not have the time within their multiplicity of responsibilities to mentor or teach others to the degree needed in the organization.

According to an article published in the AARP magazine entitled *Reimagining America*:

“Older retirees tend to experience their later years in more traditional fashion: living on Social Security, a pension (if they are fortunate), and savings. Many spend their time relaxing or traveling if they can—but very few hold down a full-time job or continue their careers. Younger retirees and baby boomers, on the other hand, are looking for something very different. Both these groups view retirement as a transition of lifestyles rather than the abrupt end of a job; a new opportunity rather than the conclusion of a career. Nor do they necessarily view any particular age as the end of an active life, including work. Indeed, nearly 70% of boomers report they expect to continue working in their retirement”.

The business of health care and services for our nation's veterans is a complex, important and essential endeavor. Knowledge of health care, organizational culture, and Federal mandates are among the critical skills which must be possessed by leadership and program managers. When many leaders and technical experts retire almost simultaneously, the productivity and coordination of activities and services are adversely impacted as along with the day-to-day management of the health care business for veterans. The number of retirement eligible employees in the VHA, and VA overall, is unprecedented, representing the largest cohort in VA's history.

VA faces continuity and succession concerns due to the downsizing and reductions in hiring in the 1990's, as well as the abolishment of certain training programs which contributed to succession planning within the organization. An example of this pattern was the elimination of the Associate Director Training Program from 1996 until 2002, when the Executive Career Field (ECF) Candidate Development Program began. As a result, there was no pipeline to prepare employees for the responsibilities of Medical Director for those many years.

As VA's succession plans mature, its leadership and mentoring programs will have sufficient numbers of carefully-selected and well-trained leaders at all levels. But training for a complex mix of competencies takes time. The current and near-term retirement eligibility of so many critical knowledge workers places VA at risk of not having the resident expertise to ensure continuity of quality services to veterans and their families.

SOLUTIONS:

Using Career Patterns strategy to retain and rehire employees in mission-critical positions

Integrate the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) Career Patterns initiatives into VA's succession plan to create maximum flexibilities in addressing serious workforce and succession planning challenges. VA requested delegated authority to approve reemployment without reduction in annuity on an as-needed basis to provide stop gaps in the form of known and trusted VA retirees who possess the needed expertise for a given situation.

Provide incentives to employees who are eligible to retire to return on a short term, limited basis to VA while succession plans mature

Request authority to approve waivers of salary offset for civilian annuitants within the designated occupations hired on a temporary basis for the purpose of the transfer of knowledge, training, mentoring and accomplishment of short-term projects.

Delegation will be for a period of 2 years from date of approval and will give VA authority to approve waivers for temporary employment of up to 12 months in duration.

RESULTS: *Request for delegated authority to approve employment without reduction in annuity for up to 250 leadership positions and administrative technical experts*

Retired VA executives and technical experts have extensive knowledge of the organization which cannot be found through the utilization of consultants. Employing annuitants will eliminate the time required by VA staff to orient and educate consultants. Without exception, VA annuitants already possess the specific knowledge required to efficiently and effectively accomplish the tasks and projects. Hiring annuitants will result in significant savings of dollars as well as valuable time. Additionally, the VA retirees chosen would be “known quantities” with proven track records of success in the organization.

NEXT STEPS: *Incorporating Career Patterns strategies into the workforce planning process*

VA is continuing to address the impending retirement wave by reviewing and developing additional strategic solutions to address possible shortages. This includes examining its workforce and succession plans to further incorporate Career Patterns, noting where recruiting and hiring will need to focus on non-traditional talent pools to fill mission-critical vacancies left by retirees. VA is the second largest agency in the Federal government, serving veterans throughout the country. With over 130 medical facilities and over 40 veterans' benefits regional offices, use of retirees who have a track record of high performance would allow VA to be nimble in responding to leadership training needs. Reemployed annuitants would help fill the gap as teachers with extensive knowledge of both their subject matter areas as well as knowledge of the Department.

LESSONS LEARNED: Career Patterns strategies provided useful methods to identify multiple non-traditional talent pools to meet VA's emergency hiring needs to address serious workforce and succession planning challenges.

Contact:

Joanna Hartis , VA Affairs
Human Capital Development, Planning and Outreach
Joanna.hartis@va.gov