

Effective Workforce and Succession Planning for California's IT Workforce

2016

Welcome...

The California Department of Technology's Office of Professional Development is pleased to offer this updated compilation of tools, advice, case studies, and recommended strategies for implementing a workforce and succession planning program within your department.

With approximately 900 employees, the majority of whom occupy information technology-related positions, our department is committed to trying new and innovative ways to recruit, develop, and retain the next generation IT workforce. We are also dedicated to finding new methods for growing our current staff and implementing effective workforce and succession planning strategies for the future. We are happy to share our successes (and challenges) associated with these endeavors.

In most cases, the practices and recommended techniques discussed in this Guide were developed, tested, and executed in-house by the Office of Professional Development's IT Workforce Planning Unit, a small group tasked with recommending viable solutions for departments statewide to address their workforce and succession planning issues. However, we recognize that departments vary widely in size and have therefore offered some alternative methods to suit a larger organization when appropriate.

Our updated version includes expanded discussion on a variety of topics, including mentoring/training, recruiting the next generation workforce, and job fair/outreach best practices. In addition, it addresses three new initiatives implemented within the last year: our 2015 Departmental Retirement Risk Assessment, our New Employee Orientation, and our Annual Training Plan.

We hope this collection of tools provides some assistance to you in addressing your unique issues related to workforce and succession planning. Visit us at http://cio.ca.gov/OPD/wp/it_workforce_planning.html to access an automated version of this guide as well as all supplemental materials referenced within or to locate contact information for any of our IT Workforce Planning staff.

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Introduction

Over the past five years, the Department of Technology has made a concerted effort to research, identify, and implement solutions for our specific challenges related to workforce and succession planning. Intended for anyone assigned to this task, our Guide encompasses projects and initiatives which are the result of these efforts. As new projects are completed and new lessons are learned by our staff, it will be periodically updated. Currently, it includes:

- Advice for starting a workforce/succession planning program;
- Tips for conducting effective research to determine where to focus workforce/succession planning efforts within your IT workforce (or any workforce), developing a plan, and implementing solutions;
- Case studies outlining specific projects completed by this department pertaining to workforce/succession planning, our lessons learned, and best practices;
- Tips for effectively recruiting and hiring the next generation workforce;
- Suggestions for retaining your workforce through effective workforce/succession planning strategies; and
- A repository of our workforce and succession planning efforts is located at the end of each Section from various projects and initiatives, including templates, examples, models of presentations, proposals, and toolkit items.

If we have learned anything, it is that there is no “one size fits all” solution to workforce and succession planning

The majority of these materials were developed to assist first and second line supervisors/managers and have an IT slant. However, anything included herein could be adjusted to accommodate different audiences.

One of the most important lessons we have learned within the Department of Technology is workforce planning techniques usually cannot be applied as part of a “one size fits all” process. What may work for one particular division may not work for another based on their internal culture, politics, and services provided. Therefore, a variety of ideas from which to choose has been provided.

Finally, it is important to realize that workforce/succession planning issues are not a specific staff's (or unit's) “problem” to solve—they are the department's issues to

acknowledge, address, and provide active and continued sponsorship and support. Therefore, we recommend your role be to provide guidance, assistance, consultation, training/tools, and advice for how supervisors/managers can actively engage and resolve their particular issues.

This Guide honestly discusses our experiences associated with workforce and succession planning. While some efforts have been successful, others have presented more of a challenge—in both instances, our unit has learned a great deal. As you will hopefully see, even small steps can have a positive impact on your department.

Section 1: The Basics of Workforce Planning

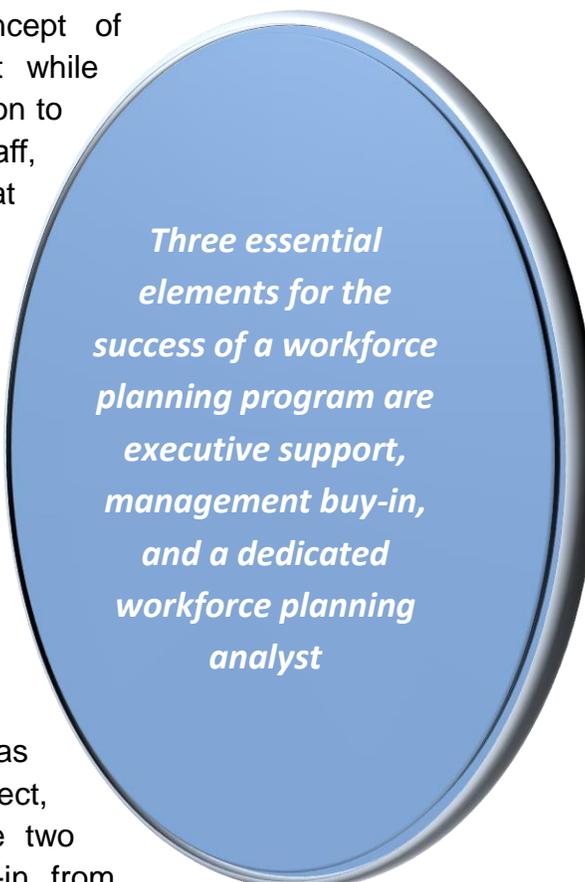
Is There a Difference Between Workforce and Succession Planning?

The California Department of Human Resources (CalHR) defines workforce planning as “having the right number of people with the right skills in the right jobs at the right time...it is the business process that aligns staffing with the strategic missions and critical needs of the department. It also forecasts the department's future workforce needs to ensure your department will continue to have a talented competent workforce.”¹

While this definition also applies to the concept of succession planning, the key difference is that while workforce planning focuses on these goals in relation to what are commonly referred to as “rank and file” staff, succession planning focuses on ensuring that supervisory/managerial staff are trained and ready to assume future leadership positions. Specifically, the process involves identifying and developing current employees with the potential to fill key leadership positions, identifying competency gaps, and developing strategies for addressing future needs. It also “assists management in tapping into the institutional knowledge that would be lost due to retirement and general attrition.”²

What Are Some Initial Dependencies for Workforce and Succession Planning Success?

One of the most important lessons our unit has learned is that for any program, initiative, project, and/or best practice to be successful, there are two critical dependencies required. The first is buy-in from *several* levels of staff, and the second is time. While every department's culture is unique, we recommend you have the following:



Three essential elements for the success of a workforce planning program are executive support, management buy-in, and a dedicated workforce planning analyst

¹ CalHR Statewide Workforce Planning Unit, “What Is Workforce Planning?” 2013, <http://www.calhr.ca.gov/state-hr-professionals/Pages/workforce-planning.aspx>

² CalHR Statewide Workforce Planning Unit, “Five Workforce Planning Facts Your Department Needs to Know—Today,” 2013

- **Strong and active executive support.** This cannot be overemphasized. Ideally, there should be at least one individual at the executive level who not only believes in your program's mission (especially if it requires considerable change, time, and participation from supervisory/managerial staff), but who will also provide some level of interest and participation in its success. Without this, you risk apathy, lack of involvement, and even possible resentment from an impacted division (or divisions).
- **Buy-in from impacted first and second line supervisors/managers.** Without this, your program will be much more difficult to implement since these individuals are key to the success of your program. They are the ones who will likely be asked to perform the basic tasks associated with your program's initiatives. At the very least, they will need to ensure certain practices or procedures are being implemented such as knowledge transfer via senior staff and retired annuitants (RAs), mentoring and cross training new and seasoned staff, etc. Your ability to present these tasks as being in their best interest is critical ("What's in it for me?").
- **Staff who also believe in its value, particularly your staff closest to retirement.** While your supervisory/managerial staff will generally be tasked with ensuring your projects and initiatives are carried out, their most seasoned staff will likely be the ones who are expected to do the majority of the implementation, especially your RAs. This can be challenging if it has been your department's practice to use RAs to retain their normal workload rather than perform tasks related to workforce planning and knowledge transfer.
- **Time to implement successfully.** While there are many departments which are becoming well known for their efforts and accomplishments related to workforce and succession planning (Franchise Tax Board and Department of Healthcare Services are two of them), you may discover that workforce planning is not an easy "sell" within your department. Unlike an outage, its impact is often not felt immediately, so the practices associated with it may be shelved for later when things are "less busy." You may find that the staff who you most need to assist you with its implementation are close to retirement themselves and have limited interest in the long term success of the department.

For these reasons, your efforts will require extremely good analysis and preparation prior to execution. For example, what may initially seem like a good idea for your department may not be such a good fit once you conduct some research—you may find you do not even have as big of a problem in a particular service area that you initially suspected. (This was the case with one initiative implemented within our department, discussed within [Section 3, “Case Study 1: The OTech Outreach Program”](#)).

If your department has a Strategic and/or Workforce/Succession Plan, these are two critical documents that will require careful review as they will identify your department's goals and challenges. If you are fortunate enough to have both of these documents, you will likely have a clear idea of your department's awareness of and dedication to issues pertaining to workforce and succession planning.

Finally, in order to secure buy-in at multiple levels, you will likely need to have carefully written proposals and business plans for specific initiatives which effectively address reasons for implementation. While time consuming to develop, these documents will answer questions, illustrate the specific issues within your department, spell out dependencies, responsibilities, and elements needed for success, and show your level of dedication.

Common Examples of Good Workforce/Succession Planning Practices

There are many ways to address workforce and succession planning, some of which are easier to execute than others. Some of these approaches have been implemented (or tried) within the Department of Technology, some are being considered, and others are still in the planning stages. Below are some common examples, many of which will be discussed in Sections 2-5:

Common Practices Associated with Workforce Planning	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce/succession planning training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring programs, formal or informal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating knowledge repositories (tacit and explicit) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending job fairs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging cross training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach to local entities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting internships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competency-based recruitments

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Onboarding programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fostering communities of practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job shadowing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff intake assessments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training & Development Assignments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued employee development and training through vehicles like an Annual Training Plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Employee Orientation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retirement Risk Assessments (ideally completed every 3-5 years, depending on department size and available resources)

Section 2: Developing Your Workforce Planning Program

First Steps

As with any program, there are some key steps involved to better ensure success. Regarding workforce and succession planning, this means conducting a gap analysis and needs assessment. The data you collect will allow you to assess your department's issues, determine the level of urgency associated with those issues, and present some feasible solutions. For example, you may assume that a particular subsection of the IT workforce is experiencing issues but may discover this is not the case. Or, the opposite could be true—your assessment could expose issues you had not thought of or would not be privy to unless you were part of the division, such as professional territorialism or information hoarding.

There are various ways to determine these factors, and the discussion below presents the first three steps in the process.



- 1) **Thoroughly review your department's Strategic and Workforce/Succession Plans.** If you are fortunate enough to have both of these documents, they will provide a strong insight into your department's goals, challenges, and level of commitment to workforce and succession planning. You will likely be directed to proceed with research based on their contents. (If your department does not have a Workforce Plan, you can develop a modified version based on your research, much like the suggested model described in #4 below.)
- 2) **Assess your organization and determine risk.** The following strategy was used within the Department of Technology to conduct a gap analysis and determine divisions with the greatest retirement risk potential. While it is admittedly somewhat labor-intensive, it provided a clear snapshot of which divisions were anticipated to have the biggest issues related to workforce/succession planning and provided our Unit with a sizable amount of relevant data.

A: Determine Years of Service/Age Demographics

Enlist the support of your Human Resources Branch to provide information pertaining to each staff's age and total months of state service. Or, contact the State Controller's Office and request a Service Credit Report which can be generated through their Management Information Retrieval System (MIRS). Based on this data, use a system which assigns a risk factor to each person in terms of how long you can reasonably expect them to work before retiring. An easy method is to color code each IT staff on your organizational chart or create an Excel spreadsheet for this purpose. Below is a simple chart to identify retirement risk:

Red = Highest Risk	Pertains to staff who are 55 or older with 20 years or more of state service
Yellow = Medium Risk	Pertains to staff who are 50-54 years old with 15+ years or less of state service (give or take a year or two)
Blue = Moderate Risk	Pertains to staff who are 50 or older with approximately 5-7 years of state service (generally your displaced private sector workforce)
Green = Low Risk	Pertains to staff who are 50 years old or younger with less than 15 years of state service

Of course, there is no perfect system—people retire early or work long past their expected retirement for a variety of reasons. Issues related to elder care, personal health, departmental transfers, or financial issues are all common variables which encourage or delay retirement. Also, you may find that some staff do not neatly fit into one specific category. For example, a staff may have 20 years of state service, but is only 45. In this case, the staff would be labeled a “green” due to the likelihood that s/he would not retire immediately or in the next 2-5 years due to age. Or, a staff might only have 10 years of state service, but is 63. In this case, the staff was labeled a “red” due to the fact that s/he could retire at any time now that Social Security is available.

If feasible, this system is a place to start in terms of assessing your workforce in an objective, big picture sense. It is also a system which is easy to break down for an executive audience in a graphical format and effectively shows departmental impact if left unaddressed.

B: Conduct Interviews with Supervisors

Once this demographic data has been compiled for each section of the department and/or the IT Division(s), approach the leadership/CIO with your findings and secure permission to conduct further research. Make sure your statistics show the big picture impact for the targeted IT service areas and for the department as a whole.

Next, schedule one-on-one interviews with supervisors/managers (as many as possible) to gather information which will help fill in the “unknowns.” At minimum, attempt to meet with the most respected subject matter experts (SMEs) within the targeted service area(s). These will likely be a combination of first and second level supervisors/managers, depending on your organization. From interviews, you may discover there are significant issues related to hoarding, poor knowledge transfer and cross training, etc. You will also learn the nature of the work conducted within the impacted service areas and how this may be contributing to workforce planning issues.

For example, interviews with supervisors/managers within many of our Mainframe units uncovered challenges related to recruiting new talent. Specifically, supervisors/managers indicated that applicable curriculum is no longer taught at the college level. Also, the nature of our platforms is extremely complex and many functions reportedly take years to learn, which can be discouraging for newer staff (or even a deterrent). These and other variables would not have been discovered without additional research.

Please see the document [“Sample Topics and Questions for Supervisors and Managers”](#) for examples of topic areas and questions that may assist you with your research.

Interestingly, you may discover that issues initially described as being tied to workforce and succession planning are actually disciplinary or performance-related, which would need to be redirected to Human Resources. An additional benefit to conducting one-on-one interviews is it allows you to develop good relationships with the same staff you will likely ask to participate in your solutions.

Depending on the size of your organization, individual interviews may not always be practical. In order to cover more ground in less time, focus groups of 4-5 supervisors/managers at once can also be effective depending on your

culture (preferably all from the same Branch or Section). However, you will not receive as much data, and some participants may not be comfortable sharing information in front of their peers.

Surveys

In addition to one-on-one interviews at the supervisory/managerial levels, a practical, user-friendly mechanism like Survey Monkey could also be leveraged to gain data from your executive staff. While interviews should provide you with much-needed insight regarding tactical issues, your executive staff can address the issue from a strategic perspective.

To provide even greater insight, rank and file staff can be surveyed to gain their thoughts/feedback regarding a variety of issues related to workforce and succession planning, such as onboarding, informal mentoring, training availability, and knowledge transfer practices (or lack thereof). For a list of potential survey questions which could be asked at the executive and rank and file levels, please see the document [“Survey Questions for Use in Larger Organizations via Survey Monkey or Other Automated Programs.”](#) (This document also provides potential survey questions which could be used at the supervisory/managerial levels if interviews are not feasible or practical.) Or, for a sample survey template which addresses a variety of questions pertaining to workforce planning, gap analysis, and core competency identification, please see the [“Workforce Plan Questionnaire.”](#)

Surveys or focus group interviews can help you get the information you need to develop a “Snapshot” of your organization’s demographics and knowledge transfer challenges

Yet another avenue for gaining insight from your rank and file staff are to review departmental exit surveys. These surveys may provide specific reasons for attrition within certain IT service areas. Depending on how the data is compiled, you may also be able to see trends which verify (or even contradict) information you have gathered from your supervisory/managerial staff.

3) **Look for trends and gaps and document your findings.**

Once you have gathered your data through whatever process is most practical, analyze, assess, and present your findings to executive management and/or your CIO. There are several ways this can be done, depending on the size of your organization and its culture. For some departments, a high level presentation which provides a clear “snapshot” of the department’s risks, needs, and recommendations associated with workforce planning may suffice. For others, a more detailed written report may be required.

In the Department of Technology’s case, our Unit was tasked with compiling data and presenting it to divisions deemed to have the greatest impending retirement risk present rather than create a formal report. As a result, several short presentations were developed to create awareness at different levels. Statistics outlining the department’s overall retirement risk was presented to executive management to create buy-in for the OTech Outreach Program, an initiative discussed in greater detail in [Section 3: Case Studies](#). Once approval was secured, subsequent high level presentations were delivered to supervisors/managers within divisions where retirement risk was especially high. These presentations were used in lieu of a formal report and were division-specific to create a better sense of awareness and urgency. Samples of these presentations can be found at the end of [Section 3, “Case Study 1: The OTech Outreach Program.”](#)

If it is not feasible to meet with specific members of executive staff as discussed above, (or is simply not practical), the data can be compiled and distributed as part of a formal Workforce Report to executive management. A report of this nature would generally include data pertaining to the current “state of the department” from strategic and practical perspectives. Your Report could provide a thorough breakdown of key demographic data, such as percentage of executive/supervisory/rank and file staff potentially close to retirement, a divisional breakdown of retirement risk, specific service areas most at risk, and positions identified as most difficult to fill.

If you are fortunate enough to have received feedback via interviews and/or survey results, this could also be incorporated to address various issues related to workforce/succession planning, such as level of participation in knowledge transfer/management best practices, inhibitors, and recommended initiatives based

on your findings. This document could serve as a baseline for beginning your own workforce/succession planning program.

For a detailed discussion of a recently completed retirement risk assessment, see “[Case Study 3: 2015 California Department of Technology Retirement Risk Assessment](#).”

Next Steps

Once the data gathering and analysis steps are complete, it is time to determine which initiatives are most important and write a proposal for implementing solutions.



- 4) **Write a proposal for an initiative.** Once you have determined some gaps and key issues related to workforce/succession planning within your department and have gained support, consider writing a proposal for whatever project or initiative has been deemed most critical by executive management/CIO. The necessity of this will likely be determined by the scope and departmental impact of your project/initiative. This document should make a strong business case for implementation. Proposals can take many shapes based on departmental preference, but, in general, most will include the following:

- An introduction which discusses the problem and its potential impact on the department if not addressed;
- The proposed concept and scope;
- An abbreviated overview of the proposed business plan, which includes position funding, the proposed process, and assessment (return on investment);
- A discussion of the benefits/advantages of the project or initiative; and
- A conclusion which makes a final “sell” for the project or initiative and provides a call to action.

If your proposal requires significant involvement from the division's supervisory/managerial staff, it is a good idea to vet your document with some respected individuals within the service area before final submission—ask for

their thoughts on the logistics of what you are proposing, gauge their temperature regarding how well they think staff will react, etc. This advice can be invaluable when you attempt to secure buy-in.

See the [“Office of Technology Services Proposal: Mainframe University”](#) for a sample.

- 5) **Submit your proposal to the impacted division's executive team (or any applicable parties), for approval.** This can be done a few ways—either by attending an executive management meeting and making a “pitch” to the group or making a pitch to an individual division's executive team, depending on the scope of your proposal. In any case, this buy-in is critical, so plan carefully. Your presentation should include a high level overview of your initiative and specific details regarding how it will affect the impacted division(s). The goal is to instill a sense of urgency and show executive staff why they should have a vested interest in the problem. Visuals work particularly well to illustrate this—pie charts, graphs, brief PowerPoint slide shows outlining the problem and proposed solution can all be effective communication methods for executives.

Finally, emphasize that you will need their active support and sponsorship for the initiative to work. The most desired outcome is that your project or initiative will be eagerly championed by a specific executive who has a vested interest in your project or initiative's success. Sponsorship generally includes such tasks as sending emails on your behalf which show support and request (or even require) their staff's participation, identifying your SMEs and requesting their assistance, and attending events where applicable to show their support.



- 6) **Begin the implementation process.** Once buy-in and sponsorship have been secured at the executive level, create a business plan for your proposal's initiative. The level of detail required will depend on the initiative. While it may be tempting to skip this step, there are many reasons why a business plan is valuable—it will keep you focused, it can be used as a reference piece or touchstone, and it clarifies to management their division's

roles and responsibilities. If possible, recommend using a small pilot group to test your project or initiative's effectiveness so you can more easily work out any kinks or issues before implementing on a larger scale. Below is a suggested model for what to include in a business plan of this nature:

- A clear indication of the targeted customer, the proposed sponsor(s), the project manager/coordinator, and the objective;
- A brief needs assessment and justification summary which outlines the problem within the department/targeted division(s);
- The proposed concept and what this includes (scope, etc.);
- A discussion of the variables included in the project or initiative's execution. Also discuss how return on investment will be measured (i.e. focus group interviews, follow ups, data compilation, etc.)
- A discussion of possible obstacles associated with the project or initiative;
- A discussion of dependencies for success;
- A discussion of funding resources required;
- Target launch dates/milestones associated with the project or initiative (if possible); and
- A conclusion which reiterates the importance of the project or initiative and requests approval to proceed from the appropriate parties (may or may not be needed depending on departmental preference or scope of initiative).

Once your business plan is approved by stakeholders, begin the research/implementation process and use your plan as your baseline. The Department of Technology's OTech Outreach Program, which is discussed at length in [Section 3: Case Studies](#), addresses how workforce planning staff implemented a department-wide training program and includes the short business plan submitted for executive approval. A critical component, the business plan provided staff with the authority to proceed with this initiative and begin implementing solutions. A sample business plan can be found within the [Sample Documents for Section 3: Case Studies](#).

Sample Documents:

[Sample Topics and Questions for Supervisors and Managers](#)

[Survey Questions for Use in Larger Organizations via Survey Monkey or Other Automated Programs](#)

Workforce Plan Questionnaire

Section 3: Case Studies

Below are discussions of three large projects implemented by the Department of Technology to address issues related to workforce and succession planning. *Case Study 1: The OTech Outreach Program*, provides an overview of a project which was developed to serve any impacted service areas within the department. *Case Study 2: Mainframe University*, provides an example of how our Engineering Division worked collaboratively to address its unique recruitment and retention challenges in some of its Mainframe service areas. *Case Study 3: 2015 California Department of Technology Retirement Risk Assessment*, provides a discussion of the methodology used to identify service areas within our department deemed most critical in terms of potential retirement risk and knowledge loss. All proposals, business plans, executive presentations, training materials, and interview questions can be found following their case studies.

Our research revealed that at least 35% of OTech's workforce would retire in the next 5-7 years. The Outreach Program was developed to address this issue by creating a variety of tools, techniques, and templates that were practical and user-friendly.

Case Study 1: The OTech Outreach Program

The OTech Outreach Program was developed to provide awareness of specific issues related to workforce and succession planning. Statistical data gathered in 2010 pertaining to OTech indicated that 46% percent of staff, both rank and file and managerial, were age 50 or older; of that 46%, $\frac{3}{4}$ were eligible to retire within the next five years, assuming they wished to retire with 20 years of state service. Translated, at least 35% of OTech's workforce would need to be replaced in the next 5-7 years.

In response to these statistics, workforce/succession planning staff proposed the development and delivery of three training modules aimed at assisting OTech's supervisors/managers with taking ownership of their issues related to workforce and

succession planning by providing practical, realistic solutions. Staff developed a basic business plan which was approved by Human Resources and an executive sponsor, and data was collected pertaining to every staff's age and months in state service. A color-coded risk category was assigned to every employee within the department to determine which service areas had the highest level of risk for retirement. See [page 11](#) for an overview of how to conduct this kind of research.

This analysis showed distinct areas of concern within certain divisions. As a result, a training program consisting of three modules was designed to address the following topics:

- ✓ **Retirement Risk Assessment.** For the first module, supervisors/managers would be provided with data showing which staff were anticipated to have the greatest retirement risk within the next five years based on age and months in state service. This "snapshot" would be used to allow supervisors/managers to conduct their own gap analysis/needs assessment within their units.
- ✓ **Knowledge Transfer and Management.** The second module would provide a host of tools, techniques, and recommended methods to implement effective knowledge transfer/management within their units. It would also incorporate any best practices currently being used within their division which their peers might find useful.
- ✓ **Recruiting, Managing, and Retaining the Next Generation Workforce.** The final module would educate supervisors/managers on the most current research pertaining to wants/needs/expectations of the next generation workforce and ways to compete with the private sector to attract and retain them.

For divisions considered to have the highest level of retirement risk within, staff prepared statistical data and an executive briefing which was delivered at targeted divisions' executive management meetings. The intent was threefold: 1) to establish the problem and show the overall divisional impact if not addressed; 2) to provide a brief overview of the training's content; and 3) to secure buy-in to deliver the training. To customize the training as much as possible, the presentation also requested permission to interview all first line supervisors within impacted divisions to determine their unique workforce planning needs and challenges.

Once executive support was secured, additional presentations were delivered to first line supervisors. This ensured the goal of the Program was communicated

accurately, that the benefits of attending were clear, and the purpose of upcoming one-on-one interviews prior to training delivery was conveyed.

Interviews were conducted and data was analyzed by staff. The training modules were customized as much as possible to include best practices from their peers and tools which would be particularly helpful based on existing gaps and needs. Workforce planning staff delivered all three modules to several divisions, and partial components were delivered to others based on their particular needs.

Based on student feedback, an additional training module focused on onboarding tools and practices was added to the curriculum and has been delivered several times within the Department.

Given the nature of the training and the role of workforce/succession planning staff (consultation and guidance, not regulation), there was no formal return on investment process implemented. Instead, staff periodically contacted supervisors/managers to see if additional assistance was needed.

Advice/Lessons Learned:

Buy-off is key. While it may seem to be “overkill” to deliver several presentations to various management levels prior to delivering training, this was a critical component of the process. It helped ensure stronger attendance and better interview cooperation once the intent and goals of the Program were clearly communicated. Also, it was critical to show supervisors/managers how divisional issues related to workforce/succession planning would impact them if nothing was done.

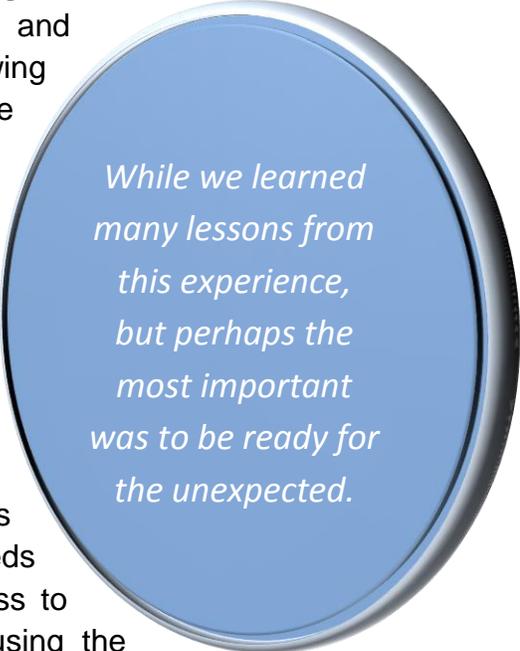
Customize whenever possible. While it is certainly less time consuming to develop a one-size-fits-all training program for your department, you will likely discover that some issues are present within one division, but they may not exist to the same extent elsewhere. For example, interviews revealed some clear “hoarding” tendencies within one division, but not in another. Therefore, this topic was addressed in greater depth for the division in need. Your audience will also certainly appreciate your efforts to take their issues into consideration and provide them with a unique experience. Also, interviews revealed some interesting best practices regarding knowledge transfer/management which were incorporated within that particular division's training module.

Spread out the program and deliver in small, meaningful chunks. This was a method that seemed to be especially appreciated by our technical audience and was a key “selling” point. Rather than incorporate games and activities, the Program

promised to provide as much content as possible in the least time necessary. No session was more than 2.5 hours in length, and only one session per month was scheduled. Classes were limited to around 8-10 students to allow more participation. This format definitely ensured greater buy-in and attendance from staff.

Provide a myriad of tools. Students appreciated the variety of tools provided within the Program. The more you can incorporate to suit various management styles and personalities, the better. Examples of tools the Program provided were Knowledge/Skills and Training Inventories that could be completed by both supervisors and their staff, a Cross Training Plan, a Professional Development Questionnaire and accompanying Action Plan, a Job Shadowing Agreement, a Mentoring Agreement, etc. (See the Sample Documents at the end of this Section for examples/templates.)

Provide class time to complete relevant tasks. Most supervisors/managers are extremely busy. While it would have been ideal to send them data and ask that they come to class with it completed ahead of time, this was not a practical approach for this department. Instead, rather than require students to assess their staff and determine retirement gaps/risk/needs before class, significant time was allotted in class to quietly complete this task without distractions using the methods provided. Gaps and needs were shared in class and suggestions were made, ensuring students were adequately prepared for the upcoming session on knowledge transfer since they now knew what their problem areas were. Once they developed a complete snapshot of their staffs' skillsets, they also had a vested interest in attending the next training module.



While we learned many lessons from this experience, but perhaps the most important was to be ready for the unexpected.

Be ready to learn the unexpected and adjust accordingly. Initially, we expected to find that most divisions were not doing much in terms of knowledge transfer/management and that every division would need this training in full. However, our interviews revealed that while this was true for some units, it was not universally the case. In fact, we learned that some supervisors had already implemented effective practices. For example, some had established a strong culture of sharing through the use of repositories for documents of historical significance, processes, procedures, etc. Other supervisors had successfully

fostered a mentoring culture among their staff so new staff were effectively onboarded.

We also learned that while there was some retirement risk present within a service area, supervisors insisted their issues were not so much related to recruitment, retention, and knowledge transfer as they were to some performance and personality issues. In the cases of units and/or service areas which had these kinds of issues, we did not feel supervisors could benefit from the entire Outreach Program. Instead, either partial components of the Program were offered or a recommended plan for addressing their service area's issues was provided. Supervisors/Managers seemed to appreciate that our staff was willing to customize a solution for them that was most suitable.

Sample Documents:

Securing Buy-In and Conducting Research: Materials Used for The OTech Outreach Program:

[OTech Workforce and Succession Planning Outreach Program: Executive Briefing](#)

[Presentation to Secure Executive Support for the OTech Outreach Program](#)

[Executive Presentation to Secure Division Support: OTech Outreach Program, Statewide Telecommunications and Network Division](#)

[OTech Workforce and Succession Planning Outreach Program \(Business Plan\)](#)

[Workforce Planning Interview Questions for Supervisors/Managers: The OTech Outreach Program](#)

Training Modules, Tools, and Templates Used for The OTech Outreach Program:

[Session 1: Identifying Retirement Risk and Assessing Future Needs \(PowerPoint\)](#)

[Employee Skills Snapshot \(Blank Template\)](#)

[Employee Skills Snapshot: Sample](#)

[Session 2: Implementing Knowledge Transfer and Management \(PowerPoint\)](#)—This example includes how to incorporate interview feedback into a session and provide tailored solutions within a training session

Knowledge/Skills and Training Inventory: Supervisor Assessment (Blank Template)

Web Consulting Services Knowledge/Skills and Training Inventory: Supervisor Assessment (IT Sample)

Knowledge/Skills and Training Inventory: Self-Assessment (Blank Template)

Web Consulting Services Knowledge/Skills and Training Inventory: Self-Assessment (IT Sample)

Cross Training Plan (Blank Template)

Session 3: Understanding, Recruiting, and Managing the Gen Y Workforce (PowerPoint)

Professional Development Questionnaire

Professional Development Action Plan (Blank Template)

How to Formulate Successful Behavioral Interview Questions

Behavioral Interview Questions for the Next Generation Workforce

The following documents were used as part of The Outreach Program (Modules 2 and 3) and our Onboarding Training Module (discussed in Section 5):

Mentoring Relationships and Mentoring Agreements: An Overview (Module 2)

Mentoring Agreement Template (Module 2)

Retired Annuitant Expectations Template (Module 2)

Job Shadowing Agreement Template (Module 2)

New Employee Onboarding Plan Template (Module 3)

Onboarding Your Staff: Sample Emails (Module 3)

Sample "Welcome" Letter from Division Branch Chief (Module 3)

Onboarding Checklist: Pre-Arrival (Module 3)

Onboarding Checklist: First Day (Module 3)

30-60-90 Day Check-in Interview Questions (Module 3)

The Mainframe University Program is an example of an internally developed workforce planning initiative where the impacted division assumed ownership, worked together, and produced a highly effective and respected solution.

Case Study 2: Mainframe University

For years, specific service areas within some of OTech's Mainframe units had complained of recruitment difficulties, challenges with making knowledge transfer part of the culture, and the retention of long term staff due to the extremely complicated nature of the workload. Also, subject matter experts felt training offered by outside vendors was not adequate in preparing staff to deal with the unique intricacies of the department's Mainframe environment.

With this in mind, some members of the Engineering Division's management proposed the creation of an internally developed solution which would attract new talent and provide a customized training program using its retired annuitant (RA) staff. The concept was approved and enthusiastically supported by the division's Deputy Director in fall 2011, and a subject matter expert (SME) was assigned to work with the department's Workforce and Succession Planning Consultant to assist with implementation and oversight.

The Consultant was tasked with the following: 1) to solicit suggestions and feedback regarding how Mainframe University should be implemented as well as determine workforce/succession planning issues within each service area; 2) to use this feedback to determine a practical, viable method for executing an internal training solution; 3) to create a business proposal/roadmap for the division; 4) to assist division staff with its recruitment and implementation; and 5) to periodically follow up and measure progress/success.

The Consultant began by conducting a risk assessment of every staff within the Mainframe service areas. Each staff was assigned a colored-coded risk level (or a combination of these) based on their age and months of state service. This provided a snapshot of which units had the highest percentage of staff at risk for retirement. (See page 11 for an overview of how to conduct this kind of research.)

Individual interviews were then conducted with every Mainframe supervisor to obtain their thoughts and feedback on how the training solution should be implemented as well as acquire information regarding what their specific issues/problems were related to workforce/succession planning. Group or individual interviews were also conducted with Mainframe's Section and Branch managers.

Once feedback was compiled and assessed, the Consultant wrote a detailed proposal outlining a solution which was reviewed and approved by key members of the division. Due to the complexity of the program, a small pilot group of six candidates was recommended for the first installment.

The goal of the Mainframe University Program was to fill six permanent positions at the Associate SSS or SSS I levels. Vacancies were given to Mainframe units deemed to have the greatest retirement risk within, and a competency-based recruitment approach was used. A new JOB template was also designed to include graphics and verbiage that would appeal to the next generation workforce in particular. In addition, a Recruitment and Implementation Plan was written by the Consultant to provide impacted supervisors with additional details regarding the recruitment, selection, and assessment of prospective students.

Selected candidates were assigned a mentor within their units and spent eight weeks in a "boot camp" setting learning the unique components of OTech's Mainframe environment.

Using IBM curriculum which was procured by the Division at no cost, RAs customized and taught curriculum in a traditional classroom setting. Computer-based training (CBT) licenses were also procured by the Division to provide additional hands-on training for three years. Students were given periodic status reports regarding their progress by their instructors. Once the classroom component was completed, staff were rotated back into their units full-time with additional training provided, as needed.

Key variables for success included having a strong proposal which outlined responsibilities, using a small pilot group, assigning a mentor for each student, and conducting several focus group sessions to acquire feedback on the Program.

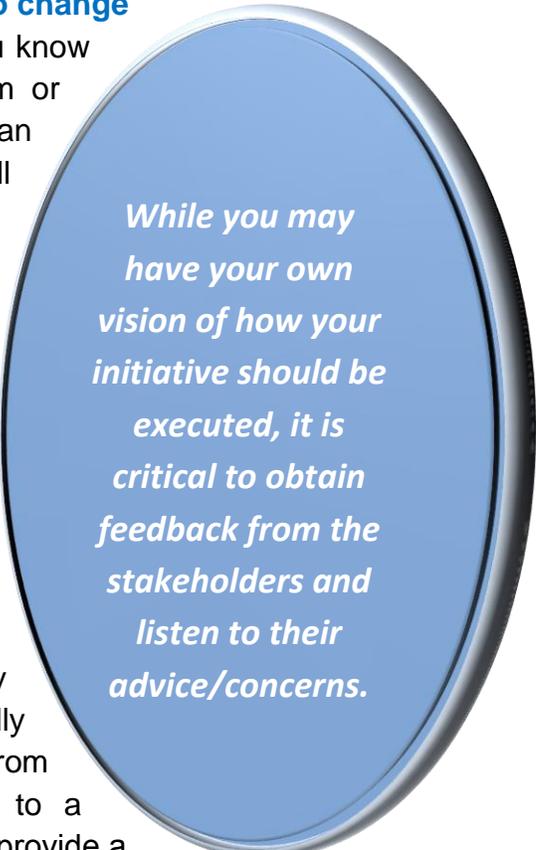
To measure return on investment, three separate focus groups were conducted by workforce planning staff with students at the six, nine, and 11 week marks to acquire their feedback, assess the effectiveness of the Program, and make recommendations for improvement. This feedback was compiled and presented to the Deputy Director, instructors, and the students' supervisors for their consideration. Feedback was consistently positive, and all six staff initially hired to complete the Program remain within the Division's Mainframe units.

Due to the success of the Program, several more rotations of Mainframe University have been offered to internal staff to assist with cross training across silos, etc.

Advice/Lessons Learned:

Listen to what staff have to say and be ready to change your vision.

As the Consultant, you may feel you know what the best course of action is for a program or initiative. Or, at the very least, you may feel you can pretty easily predict what managers will and will not want. However, it is strongly recommended that interviews be conducted with the parties directly involved with your program's implementation and success, (and not just the most vocal ones). In the case of Mainframe University, though it was initially assumed management would generally support a particular method, interviews revealed there were some distinctly different opinions regarding how the Program should be executed. As a result, the Consultant's challenge was to provide a solution which made as many supervisors happy as possible. To do this, the proposal was carefully crafted to incorporate as many suggestions from supervisor interviews as possible and adhere to a "middle of the road" approach which attempted to provide a program with which everyone could be happy, or at the very least, live with. A proposal which made a concerted effort to secure supervisor buy off rather than execute the Program's concept as originally envisioned by the Consultant was instrumental in meeting various milestones involved.



While you may have your own vision of how your initiative should be executed, it is critical to obtain feedback from the stakeholders and listen to their advice/concerns.

Enlist at least one champion for your program. This cannot be overstated and is critical for any program where numerous variables are involved and multiple staff must cooperate with one another. As the Consultant, while you may have fostered good working relationships with people, you are likely not an “insider” within the division and will probably not understand the workload, divisional needs, politics, and culture.

To address these issues, one of the most senior and respected supervisors within the division was assigned to help the Consultant accomplish tasks, such as work with RAs to oversee curriculum development and implement content suggestions, request that the Deputy Director approve certain components on the Consultant's behalf such as classroom facilities, etc. A second respected SME was also enlisted to select and procure the CBT component, provide critical content feedback, etc. Finally, a RA who strongly believed in the program's concept was enlisted to oversee course development and enlist the services of his peers to teach the curriculum.

Without assistance from key divisional staff who helped ensure the Program remained on track and leveraged long-developed personal relationships to secure trainers, the Program would have been extremely difficult, if not impossible, to implement.

Start small. This Program was a high profile initiative for the department which required the input, assistance, collaboration, and cooperation of many individuals to ensure its success. Therefore, the Consultant strongly recommended the Program start with a small pilot group to better gauge the Program and make adjustments as needed. This was a wise decision given the sheer volume of applicants (around 100) and its impact on the hiring process. It also allowed for better focus group participation which revealed some simple “fixes” to the Program which would make it even stronger.

Allow the Division/Branch to own and implement the program--don't micromanage. Essentially, impacted divisions should take ownership of their workforce and succession planning issues. Admittedly, it can be difficult to “let go” of a program you have worked hard to implement (and maybe even conceived yourself). However, divisions will gain the most satisfaction and long term mileage from solutions where they take ownership. In the case of Mainframe University, the Consultant was careful to remain mostly in an advisory capacity and “timeline monitor” unless specific help was requested by the Division, such as with overseeing

the recruitment component. Instead, most tasks were directly assigned to division staff to execute (with the help of the Program's champions, of course).

Graduating class of the initial cohort of Mainframe University



Sample Documents

[Workforce Planning Interview Questions for Engineering Branch Supervisors](#)

[Office of Technology Services Proposal: Mainframe University](#)

[Mainframe University Recruitment and Implementation Plan](#)

[Job Opportunity Bulletin for Mainframe University](#)

[Mentoring Agreement: Mainframe University](#)

[Instructor Assessment: Mainframe University Program](#)

Case Study 3: 2015 California Department of Technology Retirement Risk Assessment

Background:

In 2010, Workforce Planning Staff conducted its first retirement risk assessment for the organization. The assessment's goal was to determine which service areas were in most need of training related to workforce and succession planning and to provide executive management with some big picture "snapshots" of the organization in terms of impending retirement risk.

To simplify the process, some simple parameters were used to assign a color-coded risk "level" to every staff within the department, which are discussed here. Once risk levels were assigned, each staff was highlighted as being either red, yellow, green, or blue within organizational charts, and one-on-one interviews were scheduled with various levels of management across the organization. The purpose of these interviews was to gauge the level of workforce planning best practices currently in use, to determine areas which were problematic in terms of recruitment and retention, and to identify specific issues that were inhibiting good workforce planning efforts, such as knowledge "hoarding." (For a more detailed discussion of how to conduct this kind of research, [see Section 2: Developing Your Workforce Planning Program.](#))

The data compiled from the risk assessment and these interviews served mainly as the basis for The OTech Outreach Program training initiative, which is discussed in Case Study 2 found [here](#).

Current Risk Assessment:

In January 2015, IT Workforce Planning staff conducted a second departmental retirement risk assessment to provide an updated "state of the organization" in terms of retirement risk and to determine what service areas could benefit from additional assistance/training related to workforce and succession planning.

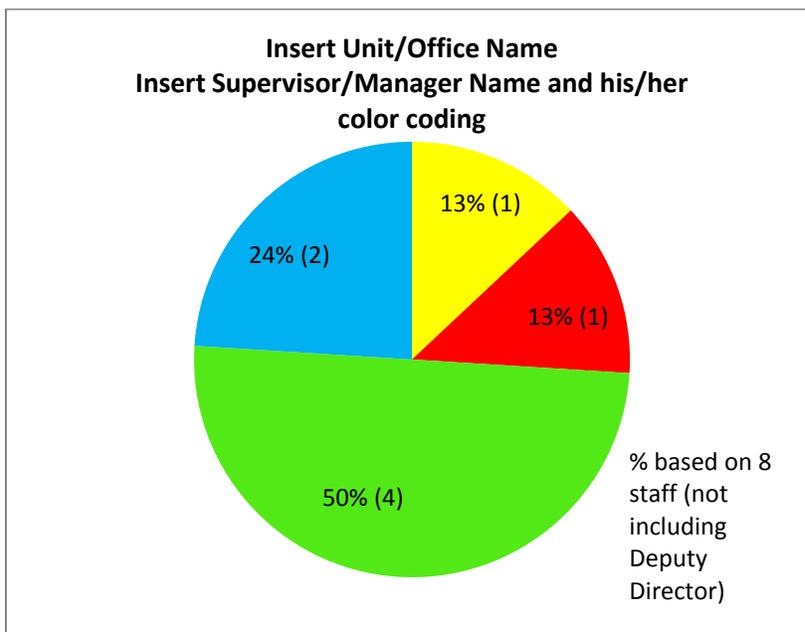
The same parameters and method were used to identify retirement risk potential as in 2010. Since extensive interviews had already been completed in 2010 (and since there had not been much management turnover), it was deemed unnecessary to do this again.

These results were compiled and analyzed, and a short presentation was delivered to the department's Director/State CIO and to executive staff. It addressed the following:

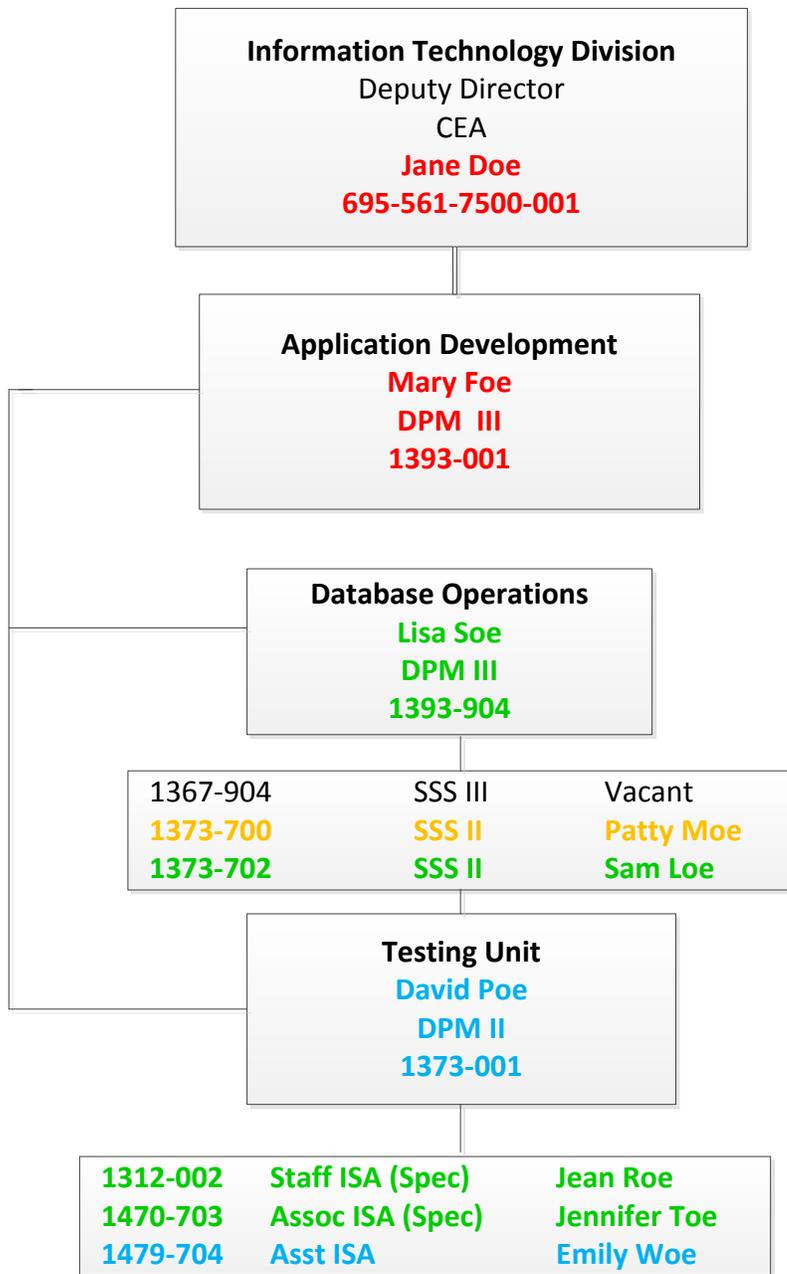
- The methodology used (and its inherent limitations)
- Some “big picture” statistics pertaining to the department overall (percentage of red, yellow, green, and blue staff within the department, within the Office of Technology Services specifically since it is such a large component of the organization, and within the CEA/Exempt populations)
- A request to meet Deputy Directors over some specific service areas which showed the highest retirement risk potential to discuss results and determine if assistance could be provided

Once approval was secured, Deputy Directors over each service area were sent a brief explanation for how the data was collected and the parameters used, their Division/Office's results in graphical format as well as a corresponding color coded organizational chart. For larger divisions, this included a breakdown of staff within *each* section/unit to illustrate areas with the greatest risk potential. Below are examples of how this data was conveyed:

Sample pie chart breakdown illustrating the predicted retirement risk within their service area:



Sample Organizational Chart provided to a Deputy Director illustrating the overall “picture” of their service area:



If a particular service area did *not* appear problematic in terms of impending retirements, a meeting was offered to discuss results. For service areas which *did* include large “red” areas, staff met with Deputy Directors to see what had changed

since the last retirement risk assessment approximately five years ago and if OPD staff could assist with their unique workforce planning issues.

Meetings were held with Deputy Directors most impacted by retirement risk, as well as several other service areas who simply wanted to discuss their results further. Any action items were thoroughly documented and are currently being addressed by OPD staff.

Advice/Lessons Learned:

Be honest and upfront about your method's limitations. There is simply no way to predict with complete certainty when any individual will retire. Therefore, an assessment of this nature should only be viewed as a general snapshot of an organization and definitely should be conveyed as such. Our staff found that our executive audience was receptive to the methodology when we provided this disclaimer while still explaining the overall benefits to the organization.

Use a simple method to illustrate data. Executive management is extremely busy and simply do not have time to pour through pages and pages of written data. To capture and maintain the attention of your target audience, we strongly recommend using simple, *visual* formats to convey your data. Pie charts, bar charts, and color-coded organizational charts all lend themselves well to illustrating this kind of data. Color-coded organizational charts like the sample provided above were particularly effective in showing a division or service area's overall "big picture" in terms of retirement risk; we found that executive management was especially receptive to seeing data in this format.

Conduct follow-up interviews. Our staff found these to be extremely beneficial for a few reasons. First, they revealed a great deal regarding what had changed (and remained the same) within certain service areas in terms of challenges, dynamics, and even politics which were improving (or inhibiting) good workforce planning practices; second, they allowed staff to meet with some new members of executive management and educate him/her about our services/ways we could assist; and third, they resulted in the creation of three new training modules currently in development for internal staff which might not otherwise been identified.

Ultimately, though a bit time consuming, interviews of this nature foster good working relationships with management and create awareness of workforce/succession planning best practices.

Section 4: Recruiting and Hiring Your Next Generation

Facing the State's Unique Challenges

As IT staff continue to retire from state service, departments must find creative and cost effective ways to compete with the private sector for new talent.

Examples of challenges specific to state recruitment efforts include the following:

- **Competition with the private sector.** This has been a continual problem for IT supervisors/managers within state government since there is often more money to be made within the private sector. Some examples of positions which have been reportedly difficult to fill include IT project managers, IT security, Mainframe staff, and mobile application developers.
- **Marketing/advertising which is not “sexy” (Google versus Government):** Outside of state service, many potential applicants are unaware of what kind of work our classification titles perform. Rather than incorporate verbiage and marketing/advertising techniques which mimic the private sector, most departments still use Job Opportunity Bulletins (JOBs) which generally consist of duties and expectations and little else. Some departments have made a concerted effort to appeal to those outside of state service through their JOBs, websites, and/or marketing materials, such as CalPERs, Franchise Tax Board, Department of Social Services, and Department of Parks and Recreation. However, many departments have not implemented changes in these areas.
- **Lengthy recruitment/hiring processes.** Though the state requires specific processes to ensure fair hiring practices, they are not employed to the same extent by the private sector. Despite attempts to streamline the exam and application processes, many potential applicants remain confused or frustrated by the typical length of time associated with recruitment/selection. Nowhere has this been more apparent to our workforce planning staff than

career fairs, where students are often surprised to learn of the hiring process involved to enter state service in contrast to the private sector and/or how the exam ranking system works.

- **Some cyclical bad press about State service.** Layoffs, furloughs, and costly IT project delays/failures are all topics which have been covered periodically by the media, giving the state the reputation of being, at times, unstable and ill-equipped to deal with its infrastructure.
- **Less time for onboarding, training, and mentoring.** Most supervisors/managers in state service are “working” supervisors. As a result, many may find it challenging to successfully allot time for proper training, mentoring, and extensive onboarding.

Most of these issues will likely continue to exist in state service simply by virtue of fixed pay scales, processes, and general workload. However, there are other areas that can be addressed by departments even with limited resources.

Recruitment and Hiring Suggestions

There are numerous ways your department can improve its recruitment and hiring practices. According to the National Association of State Chief Information Officers (NASCIO), “it is estimated that a full 86 million millennials will be in the workforce by 2020—representing a full 40% of the total working population.”³ As these individuals enter the workforce in growing numbers (along with the displaced Generation X workforce), it is critical the State incorporate more efforts to remain competitive with the private sector. Below are some relatively simple suggestions that can be implemented even with limited resources (as was the case with our department). Where possible, samples for the practices suggested below are located at the end of this [Section](#).

While the State will likely always experience challenges in competing with the private sector for the best applicants, there are progressive and cost effective steps departments can take to be more competitive.

³ NASCIO, “State IT Workforce: Facing Reality with Innovation, 2015 President’s Initiative,” http://www.nascio.org/publications/documents/NASCIO_StateITWorkforceSurvey2015_WEB.pdf

Start with your marketing materials/outreach efforts. The following are some ideas your department may consider:

- **Revise your JOB template.** In researching hundreds of job ads placed on Monster.com, Dice, Careerbuilder.com. and jobs.com, we have noted very specific and calculated language regarding how the private sector attempts to appeal to Generation Y. The most innovative companies sell the position and their company's culture through their verbiage, graphics, and even short video testimonials. For example, our research found that most job advertisements for positions in the technical arena include the following language (or some combination thereof) within their advertisements:
 - ✓ The promotion of green practices;
 - ✓ That the applicant will do "meaningful" work (how one defines "meaningful" can certainly vary);
 - ✓ That they will be an important/relevant team member;
 - ✓ Commute time/ease of commute (if your department is located near Light Rail, if you offer carpool/vanpool opportunities, etc.);
 - ✓ That there is flexibility within the position (telework, flexible schedules); and
 - ✓ That there is potential career growth through training and development opportunities.

Also, within most ads, very "you" centric language is used throughout (i.e. what *you* will be doing, and how *you* will grow/benefit from working here).

Interestingly, our findings coincide with the 2014 article, "What Millennials Want in the Workplace (And Why You Should Start Giving It to Them)" where the Intelligence Group lists these statistics regarding the wants and needs of the next generation workforce:

- 64% indicate it's a priority for them to make the world a better place;
- 72% would like to be their own boss, but, if they do have to work for someone else, 79% would want their boss to serve more as a coach or mentor;
- 88% prefer a collaborate work-culture rather than a competitive one;
- 74% want flexible work schedules; and

- 88% want “work life *integration*,” which isn’t the same as work-life *balance*, since work and life now blend together almost seamlessly⁴

(For an interesting overview of the concept of work-life integration versus work-life balance, see the article, “Work-Life Integration: The New Norm” at <http://www.forbes.com/sites/danschawbel/2014/01/21/work-life-integration-the-new-norm/>.)

In response to this research, seven new JOB templates have been implemented, one for each of our service areas. These new templates include graphics and language which attempt to appeal to the next generation workforce and have been stripped of most of the typical verbiage used in state recruitments. Instead, a brief overview of the services provided and duties to be performed are discussed. The duty statement is provided as an attachment rather than serve as the majority of the JOB’s text.

For a more thorough discussion of best practices and recommendations pertaining to younger generations, see our training module “[Understanding, Recruiting, and Managing the Gen Y Workforce.](#)”)

- **Secure a modest budget.** Many tools and practices can be developed and implemented inexpensively. Depending on your department, you may be able to secure limited funding to assist in your efforts. In our department’s case, though funding was extremely limited, we were able to procure some basic materials, such as updated software to develop marketing materials like brochures, pamphlets, and posters for career fairs.
- **Consider using different websites in addition to VPOS.** Based on recruitment challenges within a specific service area, the Department of Technology has piloted advertisements on Monster.com to reach a wider recruitment base. For \$285, your department can post one advertisement for 60 days. Human Resources discovered there were some benefits and challenges to using a private recruitment website. Final recruitment results revealed a bit of a mixed bag: while we reached a wider audience who may not have previously considered state service and we received a respectable number of “views” and submissions, we found there are inherent challenges involved in attempting to fit the state’s recruitment processes within a

⁴ Rob Ashgar, Forbes Magazine Online, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/robashgar/2014/01/13/what-millennials-want-in-the-workplace-and-why-you-should-start-giving-it-to-them/>

mechanism more tailored to the private sector. If your department does choose to use a pay-for-service recruitment mechanism, we recommend doing the following to ensure success:

- ✓ Research how private sector ads are written for comparable positions and make note of specific verbiage used to entice potential applicants. Include this sort of verbiage in your ad, and use graphics if possible.
- ✓ Use a job title more in alignment with the private sector. Classifications used within state service are generally unfamiliar to the private sector. While you may be recruiting for a Data Processing Manager II to perform project management functions, using this title will not elicit strong results. Instead, use IT Project Manager or something similar that describes the position's major functions.
- ✓ Create your job advertisement thoughtfully and clarify that applicants must first take and pass an online exam *before* applying. Provide a direct link to the online exam system and provide the name of an analyst who can address applicant questions regarding this process.

Regarding verbiage, Monster.com recently compiled a list of the top 30 IT keyword phrases used by job seekers. Incorporation of these terms should increase your number of "hits." They are

1	IT & IS*	11	Data Analysis	21	C++
2	IT	12	SQL	22	Server
3	SAP	13	.Net	23	Web
4	Quality Assurance	14	Network	24	Programmer
5	Information Technology	15	Software Engineering	25	Web Developer
6	Java	16	Business Intelligence	26	Wireless Communications
7	Technology	17	Cobol	27	QA
8	Help Desk	18	Data Analysis	28	Software Engineer
9	Software	19	C#	29	Wireless
10	Oracle	20	Cisco	30	Infrastructure

*Information Technology (IT) & Information Systems (IS)

Also, some of the most popular IT “buzzwords” job seekers searched for included *cloud*, *big data*, *virtualization*, *mobile apps*, and *cyber security*. If possible, try to include these terms in your job descriptions, if applicable. If your staff are outside the IT realm, choose buzzwords common to their occupation or profession.⁵

- **Conduct outreach efforts.** Job fairs and opportunities to present at local colleges are excellent avenues for networking and providing awareness/explanation of state recruitment/hiring processes. While some job fairs can be pricey, others are relatively cheap or free. Job fairs for local community colleges/state universities are generally priced around \$100 and are held several times per year. However, contacting their career services department, indicating that you represent a government agency, and requesting a price reduction due to a limited budget will often result in a significant adjustment or even a fee waiver altogether.

Some cities/counties also sponsor periodic free job fairs, such as Sacramento's Tri County Job Fair, which is usually held in the spring or summer. Our staff has found that this job fair in particular draws a wide mix of potential applicants, from new college graduates to highly experienced consultants looking for more job security with the state.

Still other job fairs are sponsored by private entities, such as the *Job Journal*, and are more costly. You may also find that conventions tailored for your IT staff are an appropriate avenue for recruitment. Whatever your department's budget, there should be something you can attend.

It is worth noting that when attending job fairs within local colleges/universities in particular, we highly recommend educating students about the state's student assistant program since it is far less daunting in terms of the



Even with a limited budget, your department can attend local job fairs to recruit new talent and educate the public about state service.

⁵ Paul DeBettignies, “Is Your Job Ad Telling the Right Story?” (Webinar) <http://vimeo.com/91654467>

application process. We have found that students are extremely interested in this program and are generally not aware of its existence. A brochure outlining the requirements for the program, pay scales, and websites which post student assistant opportunities can be found [within the Sample Documents for this Section](#).

Another way to recruit new talent and create awareness is to contact local colleges and offer to provide training on how to enter state service. When delivering this kind of presentation, keep in mind that the process is often highly intimidating (and confusing) to outsiders; therefore, we recommend emphasizing that “exams” are experiential, results are automatic, and ranks can be easily checked online. We have found that it is best to keep a presentation of this nature as short as possible rather than feel compelled to explain too many acronyms and intricacies of the process.

Also, if possible, try to customize your presentation to the audience. For example, if you are educating students within an IT setting, highlight some common classifications for which they are eligible, the typical functions associated with each, pay scales, and overall benefits of joining state service.

A copy of a sample presentation our staff delivered to an IT audience is provided within the [Sample Documents for this Section](#).

- **Update/upgrade your marketing materials.** While your department may have limited funding for promotional materials, there are a variety of documents you can provide as part of your outreach efforts. Examples of materials you can develop (or ask your Marketing staff to assist you with) include:
 - ✓ Print outs of minimum qualifications for IT positions (Systems Software Specialist, Programmer Analyst, Information Systems Analyst, Data Processing Manager)
 - ✓ Print outs of the actual tests to help demystify the “exam” process
 - ✓ A sample of a completed state application which highlights particular areas which can impede an applicant’s success if not completed correctly
 - ✓ Pamphlets which explain your department’s mission, vision, goals, etc. or a handout outlining the benefits of entering state service in general
 - ✓ Brochures which provide a good sales pitch for specific IT classifications for which you are recruiting

- ✓ Fact sheets which explain the student assistant program and application process

Also, we strongly recommend taking an exam analyst and a laptop computer with you to your outreach efforts to demonstrate the exam/application process. Our experience shows that while many people *think* they understand the process and ranking system, they could benefit from clarification and assistance in this area. Yet another helpful tool to bring is a print out from the California Department of Human Resources' (CalHR) webpage which provides links to YouTube videos that demonstrate how to take an exam, apply for jobs, resolve session expired messages, and recover passwords. This information can be found here:

<http://www.calhr.ca.gov/pages/job-seekers-video-tutorials.aspx>.

Sample Documents

New JOB Templates (7):

JOB Template: Administration Division

JOB Template: Customer Delivery Division

JOB Template: Engineering Division

JOB Template: Headquarters

JOB Template: Operations Division

JOB Template: Information Technology Services Division

JOB Template: Statewide Telecommunications and Network Division

De-Mystifying State Service: How to Find and Apply for Positions (PowerPoint presentation used to explain the State's exam/hiring Process. Presentation is geared towards an IT audience.)

Sample Marketing Materials for Job Fairs

Career Opportunities in Information Technology and Data Center Services (brochure)

Work as a Student Assistant for the State of California (pamphlet)

[The Systems Software Specialist Series \(pamphlet\)](#)

[The Information Systems Analyst Series \(pamphlet\)](#)

[How to Find and Apply for Jobs in State Service](#)

[Sample Completed Std 678 Application](#)

Section 5: Long Term Retention and Growth

The Difference Between Orientation and Onboarding

Good onboarding practices are crucial for growing and retaining staff. While appreciated by all new employees, for younger generations, it is absolutely *expected*. Workforce and succession planning staff may find that supervisors/managers think onboarding and new employee orientation are identical. However, there are some distinct differences between the two practices, as outlined below:

TYPICAL ORIENTATION	ONBOARDING
Transactional focus and goals (i.e. completing paperwork, acquiring badges, setting up computer, etc.)	A process in which new employees are assimilated into the workplace and given the tools and knowledge they need to become successful in their new job
Less than one week	Includes first year
Owned and executed by a designated division	Integrates multiple functions and individuals (supervisor, trainer/lead staff, training, etc.)
Addresses benefits and provides a departmental overview for the employee	Addresses all new employee needs over a long term period through giving and acquiring feedback, etc.
Employee is a passive attendee	Employee is an active participant with a vested interest in success
Yields new hires with completed paperwork and some basic information	Increases the likelihood the new employee will become productive, engaged, and remain with the organization ⁶

Implementing a New Employee Orientation (NEO)

Developing, organizing, and implementing a formal NEO can be a daunting process. There are often numerous stakeholders involved, it is time consuming to create (and update) materials, and coordination among various presenters can be challenging.

⁶ Booz, Allen, and Hamilton Consulting Group, "Getting On Board: A Model for Integrating and Engaging New Employees," 2008, <http://www.boozallen.com/media/file/GettingOnBoard.pdf>

In the case of our department, while we had several false starts, we had not had a formal orientation since 2008. However, in November 2014, thanks to strong executive support/sponsorship, the department launched a revised NEO. The 1-day session is now delivered every 3-4 months (or as needed), and provides the following:

- An executive overview of how the department functions (who we are and what we do, the names (and faces) of key individuals within the department, who are our customers, etc.) followed by a Q&A session;
- An overview of key information related to facilities services (the nuts and bolts of everything from how to check out state vehicle to how to rent a room);
- An overview of how to navigate our Intranet;
- A presentation by our Service Employees International Union (SEIU);
- A presentation from our Security Division regarding best practices;
- A presentation by our Human Resources Branch; and
- A presentation by our Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) manager

The session concludes with the opportunity to tour our 43,000 square foot datacenter. This “Raised Floor” area houses the department’s servers and Mainframe systems, integral components of our business.

At the conclusion of each NEO, attendees are sent an evaluation survey requesting their feedback. It is worth noting that the information consistently rated as being most valuable to them in their new positions are time/interface with executive management, and the information provided that is relevant to facilities, security, and our department’s online intranet.

Beyond the NEO: Some Best Practices for the First Year

It is important to emphasize to supervisors/managers that while their department’s orientation process will acquaint their new hire with the basics of the organization, good onboarding is a long term, interactive process. In fact, the most successful onboarding starts *before* the staff even begins work. Therefore, it is helpful to present these practices in terms of stages—pre-arrival, the first day, the first week, the first 90 days, and up until the first year is completed. Essentially, it is an ongoing process supervisors/managers must embrace to be fully effective.

Even if it is not feasible to implement a formal onboarding program within your department, there are many ways to educate supervisors/managers on how to properly onboard staff. The Department of Technology has developed a training

module on successful onboarding practices which includes a variety of tools from which to choose. Below is an overview of many of the best practices/techniques which this training addresses in greater detail:

Pre-Arrival:

- ✓ **Contact the new employee prior to his/her start date.** Supervisors/Managers should be encouraged to do this several times. Examples of practices include sending a welcome letter from their Branch Chief, inquiring if the new staff has any questions, offering to provide a tour of the facility and/or introduce them to their peers.
- ✓ **Assign a mentor within your unit.** While this relationship can be formal or informal, staff selected to fill this role should possess the required knowledge, time, and interpersonal skills to help your new employee acclimate to the department and learn its processes and protocols. Additional discussion on how to incorporate mentors within your organization can be found on [page 49](#).
- ✓ **Use a pre-arrival checklist.** Providing a thorough checklist for supervisors/managers can greatly assist in ensuring that new staff feel welcome on their first day.

The First Day:

- ✓ **Use a first day checklist.** Like the pre-arrival checklist, encouraging supervisors/managers to use a checklist of required tasks for the first day will help ensure the new staff is prepared for their position.
- ✓ **Schedule a 1:1 meeting.** Ideally, this first meeting will educate the new staff regarding their role in the organization, clarify supervisor/manager expectations, and go over the duty statement. However, this meeting should not be solely about rules and expectations. Instead, supervisors/managers should use it as an opportunity to get to know their new staff, reinforce that they are doing work that is meaningful to the organization, and demonstrate commitment to their success.
- ✓ **Introduce staff to key players and show them around.** New staff should be introduced to the entire unit, their trainer, their Branch Chief (if possible), and their Personnel Specialist in particular.
- ✓ **Take the new staff out to lunch, or arrange for a special lunch with the entire unit.** This will help to establish a sense of belonging and camaraderie among the team.

The First Week:

- ✓ **Have regular check-ins.** These do not have to be formal, scheduled meetings. Simply verifying that the new hire is acclimating to the position and addressing their questions demonstrates a vested interest in the employee's success.
- ✓ **Provide small assignments.** As soon as possible, new staff should be given assignments/tasks which will allow them to contribute to the unit and/or department.
- ✓ **Develop a New Employee Onboarding Plan.** A plan of this nature includes a clear roadmap for the employee and clarifies expectations/goals from the supervisor/manager. Ideally, it includes specific milestones, formal and informal training wanted/needed, and support available. It is also a very appealing strategy to engage younger staff who have often been raised to appreciate benchmarks and "leveling up" through their various experiences with gaming, social media, school testing, etc. Essentially, mechanisms such as this will measure their progress in a tangible, visual way and *show* them that they are successful in their new position. It also serves as a convenient way for supervisors/managers to document their new staff's development along the way (or lack thereof), simplifying the probationary report process later on.
- ✓ **Provide opportunities for job shadowing.** Experienced staff can be a vital component of the onboarding process—they are likely the ones new staff will rely on most to help them acclimate and adjust. Encouraging supervisors/managers to assign job shadowing opportunities can help new staff better understand the business of the organization, inspire interest in their position (or positions that are part of their promotional path), etc. If your department prefers to clarify the intent and scope of a job shadowing assignment, a simple agreement can be used between the impacted parties. A sample template can be found within the [Sample Documents for Section 3, "Case Study 1: The OTech Outreach Program."](#)

The First 30-90 Days:

- ✓ **Complete timely probationary reports.** Supervisors/Managers should clearly outline their staff's successes or challenges and discuss ways to address them.

- ✓ **Schedule weekly meetings.** Ideally, these meetings can be used to discuss the employee's progress with their Onboarding Plan, issues they are having, how well their training partnership is working out, etc.

Up to the First Year:

- ✓ **Pay attention to unit dynamics.** Do staff appear to get along? Is your new staff fitting in? How helpful are staff to each other when needed? How deep are knowledge silos? Are there any "hoarders" impeding the success of your new staff?
- ✓ **Continue to have regular meetings.** Ask for and provide consistent feedback which is constructive. Be accessible.
- ✓ **Complete final probationary report and an Individual Development Plan (IDP).** Ask staff where they want to be five years from now, what their career interests are, and what training they want/need to perform more effectively.

This onboarding training module has been delivered several times within the Department. The support materials used are located at the end of [Section 3, "Case Study 1: The OTech Outreach Program,"](#) since they were also used as part of this training.

Ultimately, whether your department decides to utilize a formal or informal approach, most attempts at mentoring are better than none at all.

Trainers Versus Mentors: What's the Difference?

There are some distinct differences between trainers and mentors. While trainers are used to instruct a new staff in how to complete the day-to-day tasks associated with his/her work, a mentor's role should largely involve passing on critical tacit knowledge within the organization, helping the new staff acclimate to the department and successfully navigate its internal politics, and motivating them to be successful in their careers. Also, while a trainer's role is generally short-term, a successful mentor/mentee pairing can last much longer, depending on the relationship.

Using Mentors:

It is important to acknowledge that every department is unique in its ability to implement mentoring into the organizational culture. You may find it is relatively easy to secure the resources and necessary sponsorship to execute a highly organized, formal mentoring program within your department. Or, you may discover this is not feasible or practical.

Whatever your department's organizational culture or limitations, supervisors/managers can still use mentors within their units to grow staff and facilitate knowledge transfer. For example, in lieu of a highly coordinated program which requires administration and oversight, supervisors/managers could be encouraged to select senior staff within their units who are capable and *willing* to mentor less experienced staff. Using a simple mentoring agreement can help clarify roles and responsibilities and instill a greater sense of overall accountability. This approach worked well with our Mainframe University candidates due to the highly structured nature of the program. If your department encourages the incorporation of mentoring agreements, there are definite benefits to doing so.

Essentially, the mentoring process is valuable to both the mentor and mentee—it helps onboard new staff, it encourages knowledge transfer, and even helps prepare your senior staff for supervisory positions. Retired annuitants are also excellent candidates to provide mentoring as they possess a great deal of tacit knowledge. To ensure retired annuitant staff perform this function, departments may wish to outline specific expectations which include this responsibility. If your department chooses to use an agreement, it should identify:

- The names and roles of each party
- The goals of the partnership
- The target length of the relationship
- The planned frequency of contact
- The target length of planned meetings or contact (daily? weekly?)
- The method(s) of contact (one-on-one meetings, emails, phone, etc.)

In the Department of Technology's case, while agreements have worked successfully within some units, our interviews revealed that this kind of formality would not be as well received within other service areas (or was not needed) due to supervisor style, unit culture, and/or effective practices already in place. In these cases, more informal mentoring relationships have been encouraged. We also

remind supervisors/managers of their roles as mentors and the importance of this function in supporting and retaining their staff.

Essentially, the best mentoring practices support necessary knowledge transfer and business needs within your Branches, Sections, and Units with similar business functions. If you choose to implement a formal mentoring program, we recommend thoroughly taking the “temperature” of your department regarding this issue via interviews, surveys, focus groups or a combination of these. You may find there is a distinct lack of mentoring within some or all of your service areas. Or, you may learn of some excellent best practices that could be shared via training you could develop and deliver internally. You may even discover a complete lack of interest among staff or willing sponsors. Ultimately, whether your department decides to implement a formal or informal approach (or a combination of both depending on varying circumstances or culture), most attempts at mentoring are better than none at all.

Located within the [Sample Documents for Section 3, Case Study 1: The OTech Outreach Program](#), the handouts “[Mentoring Relationships and Mentoring Agreements](#)” and the “[Mentoring Agreement](#)” blank template are two examples of support documents created to help managers/supervisors define parameters and responsibilities for both the mentor and the mentee.

Analyzing Exit Surveys

Departmental exit surveys can be extremely insightful regarding why staff choose to leave an organization. While there are many benign reasons why employees leave a particular department, ranging from a more desirable location to childcare accommodation, there are some reasons which specifically pertain to workforce/succession planning. Examples to watch for include:

- Lack of onboarding, assimilation into the organization
- Lack of training, knowledge transfer, cross training, support
- Boredom with workload/lack of a challenge, or feeling overwhelmed/ill prepared for position
- Lack of promotional opportunities, career development
- Weak relationship with first line supervisor, lack of mentoring/access/interest in employee's success
- Issues related to organizational culture (e.g. lack of communication, employee engagement)

In addition, watch for trends within specific service areas in terms of where there appears to be the highest attrition and why this is the case.

The Importance of Training and Employee Retention

All our workforce and succession planning efforts have emphasized the importance and value of *continued* training, not just within the first year as part of the onboarding process. Therefore, we recommend opening and continuing a dialogue on this topic through whatever avenue best suits your organization to determine current and future needs. Examples of common methods include focus groups with key members of management, surveys, or even informal one-on-one conversations with various levels of management when the opportunity arises. Examples of possible discussion topics include:

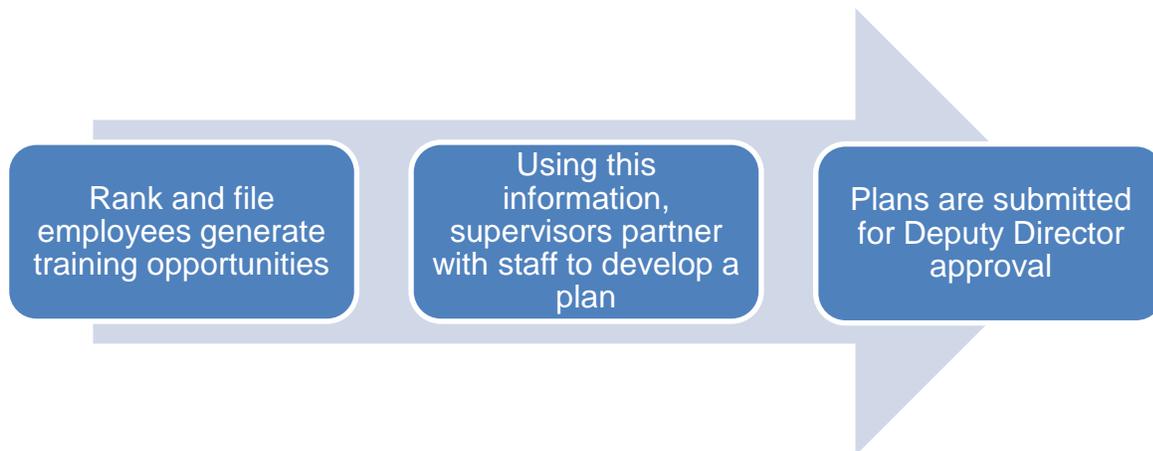
- General core competencies required for unit staff
- Critical hard skills most lacking and requested training topics
- Critical soft skills most lacking and requested training topics
- Additional hard and soft skill training topics requested (nice to haves)
- Skills that will be needed in the future (and accompanying training)
- Supervisor/Manager training needs

Other excellent resources to consider are your department's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) coordinator and any other Human Resources personnel who routinely interact with management and are privy to challenges they are experiencing. These individuals will likely have valuable insight into what soft skills training in particular could be helpful that relates to workforce/succession planning.



Based on your findings, whether formal or informal, you may wish to partner with the appropriate staff to coordinate training sessions on most requested topics, particularly in the soft skills arena (or even develop training modules yourself, if possible). The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Magellan Healthcare offers a wide variety of courses in many soft skills areas that may be useful to your IT staff and has a master agreement with the State.

Yet another method is to incorporate an Annual Training Plan. This practice was implemented within the Department in spring 2014. It requires all managers/supervisors to submit a form which documents the anticipated job required training needs of their staff for the next fiscal year. It is submitted to our IT Workforce Planning Unit for documentation, tracking, and analysis. Below is the general workflow associated with the process:



There are several key benefits to using an Annual Training Plan, as outlined below:

- **It helps maintain a skilled workforce.** While the intent of the Plan is to develop core competencies of employees in IT functional areas, it also sends an important message about the Department's commitment to the *continued* growth and development of our staff.
- **It eliminates redundancy.** Completing and submitting paperwork of this nature eliminates the need for multiple contracts for the same training; instead, service areas can often work together to leverage one contract to train multiple staff, saving time and money.
- **It helps identify critical knowledge gaps and training needs within the entire organization.** Our IT Workforce Planning staff assess submissions each year to identify trends and gaps regarding training needs. This knowledge assists our Training and Education Center in determining which contracts to procure that will assist the greatest number of staff.

A sample of our Annual Training Plan Form (TECH 411) and our Approval Route Slip can be found within the [Sample Documents](#) for this Section.

Finally, when appropriate, workforce/succession planning staff can also remind supervisors/managers to use the probationary report and Individual Development

Plan (IDP) processes as avenues for documenting recommended or required training for their staff based on their desired career path, goals, and even supervisor/manager needs. In an attempt to suit various management styles, our Unit has created additional tools which encourage supervisors/managers to meet with their staff and clearly outline short and long-term training needs/goals. These tools are intended to supplement, not replace, the probationary and IDP processes.

Specific documents our Unit has created are:

- Knowledge/Skills, and Training Inventories (both staff and manager versions)
- Cross Training Plan
- Professional Development Questionnaire
- Professional Development Action Plan
- New Employee Onboarding Plan
- 30/60/90 Day Check-in Interview Questions

Sample Documents

Executive Presentation Handout to Secure “Buy In” for our Onboarding Training Module

Everything Matters: Onboarding Your Staff to Avoid “New Hire Remorse” (PowerPoint)

Annual Training Plan Form (TECH 411)

See the [Sample Documents](#) Section at the conclusion of Section 3 for all tools and templates provided as part of this training.

Conclusion

Good workforce and succession planning requires time, dedication, resources, and, often times, patience. Quite frankly, it is no easy task, and may not even be on a department's immediate "radar" in terms of commitment. However, it is an important issue that is worth fighting for as the Baby Boomer generation continues to vacate critical IT positions and the next generation workforce takes their place. That being said, even with limited resources, good work can still be accomplished. With a solid Workforce Plan, projects/initiatives which are in the department's best interest and communicated as such, and strong partnerships with your IT supervisors and managers, progress can certainly be made.

If you have questions pertaining to any aspect of this Guide, our staff are happy to discuss and/or meet with you to assist in implementing a workforce and succession planning program within your department, no matter the scope. Questions can be directed to Jennifer Hamman at 916-431-3609 or at Jennifer.hamman@state.ca.gov.