

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Transforming Recruitment and Hiring Processes

Project Overview & Results

Background:

Initial Assessment (2013 – 2014)

In 2013, CDC's Chief Operating Officer sought the Academy's assistance to help the Human Resources Office (HRO) improve its services to customers.

The Academy's initial study was completed in February 2014.

- The study's goal: Provide a set of implementable recommendations to help drive performance improvement in the HR processes of CDC.
- The study team's recommendations:
 1. Build trust by establishing proactive customer relationships.
 2. Reengineer the hiring process to reflect CDC culture.
 3. Develop/enhance staff competencies and build expertise.
 4. Develop a strategy and focus to guide HR improvement efforts.
 5. Institute a workforce planning or annual staffing plan process.

CDC asked the Academy for assistance in implementing the recommendation to reengineer the hiring process to reflect CDC culture.

Background:

Detailed Analysis 2014-2015

From June 2014 through March 2015, the Academy's charge in support of "reengineering the hiring process" was to:

- Document the existing hiring framework.
- Collect data and develop a comprehensive, improved process.
- Recommend and pilot the improved hiring framework.
- Develop materials to ensure that HRO staff understood the revised framework.
- Recommend performance metrics to continually assess the new hiring framework.
- Conduct a "training of trainers" on the pilot and the final new hiring process.
- Identify critical changes in HRO and CDC culture needed to implement and sustain the new hiring process.

Based on HRO and CDC's Customer Review Board(CRB) advice, in November 2014 the project was extended until September 2015 to allow 9 months for implementation, piloting, and evaluation.

- Initially this included 8 "Quick Wins" and 5 "pilot" areas...later modified to 9 Quick Wins and 3 pilot areas.
- Customer Satisfaction became a separate, overarching area for the initiative.
- Federal Management Partners (FMP) joined the team to focus on job analysis and assessment question development.

CDC's Transformation: Partnering to Win (P2W)

Goal: Improve CDC's ability to recruit and hire the right people at the right time with the right sets of experience, knowledge and skills. Improve the quality of recruitment and hiring outcomes. Improve customer service and satisfaction.

CDC's objectives

- Reduce recruitment and hiring cycle time while maintaining the highest quality of associated work products.
- Produce quality certificates which contain an appropriate number of high quality applicants resulting in better hiring decisions.
- Enhance customer service through improved recruitment and hiring outcomes that are consistent with civil service laws, regulations, policy and processes. "Start with YES."

The Academy's project objectives

- Support CDC efforts to design and implement plans to permanently transform their recruitment and hiring processes and HRO's customer service orientation.
- Help HRO better understand what success looks like and how to achieve and measure it—qualitatively, quantitatively and in the eyes of their customers.
- Help CIOs better understand the partnership roles of leaders, management officials, selecting officials, subject matter experts, and others involved in the cultural and qualitative change in the recruitment and hiring process.

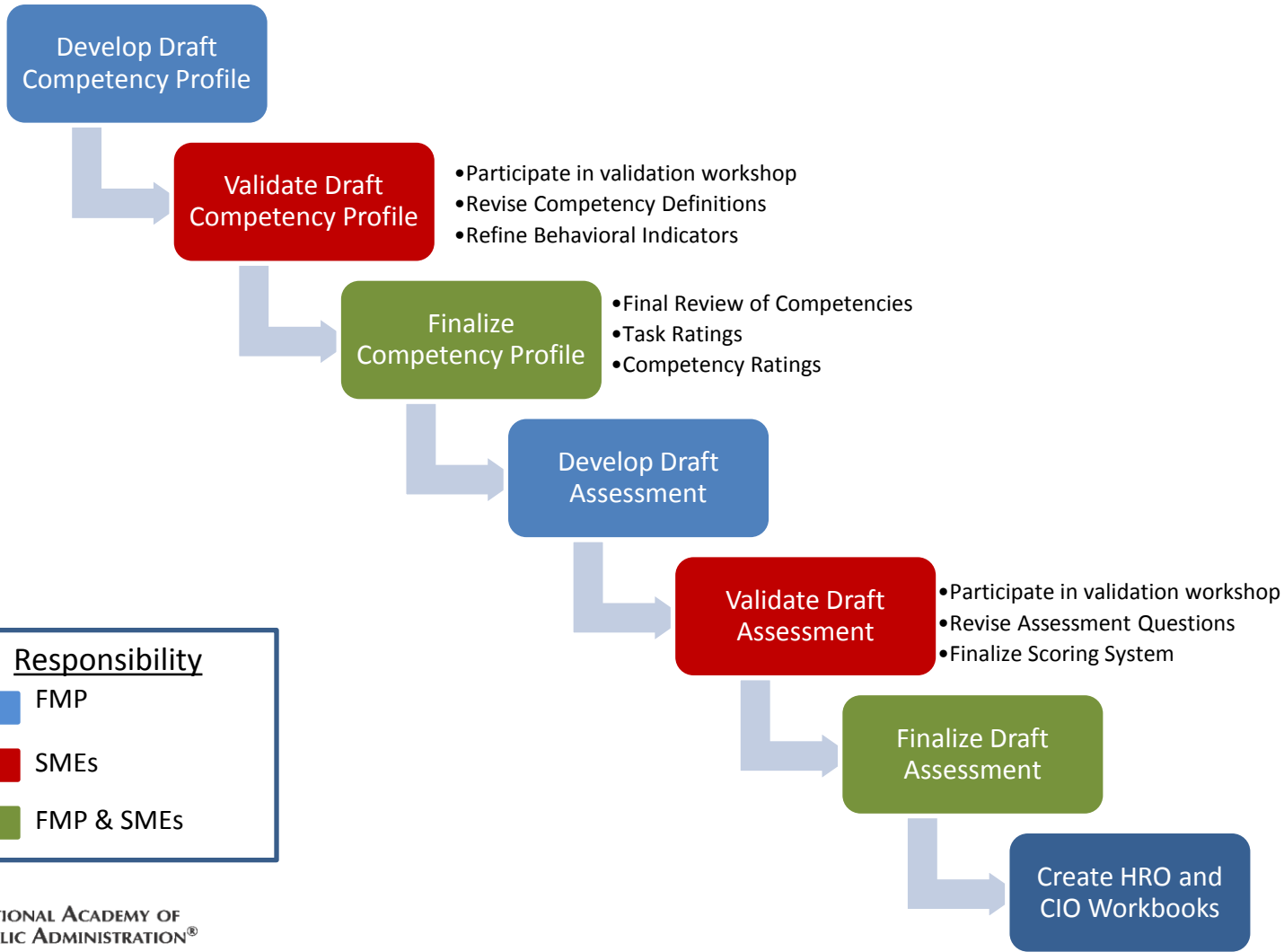
Executive Summary and Recommendations

In November 2014, HRO and three pilot Centers, Institutes, and Offices (CIOs) were selected to test an integrated set of revised policies and procedures to recruit well qualified applicants in a more efficient and timely way. Fundamental changes tested by the pilots:

- Use competency-based assessment tools to evaluate candidate credentials.
- Strengthen the involvement of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) in assessment tool development, reviewing candidate self-assessments, and recommending adjustments to self-assigned scores if the resume does not support the scores.
- Revise recruitment/hiring policies and procedures to provide a more flexible and responsive set of tools designed to substantially improve the quality of candidates available for selection.
- Adjust HRO-CIO interactions through face-to-face consultations on recruitment and hiring needs including a more significant role for the selecting official.
- Use the CRB as the forum for HRO and CIO leaders to work together to identify and resolve complex hiring and recruitment issues and needs.

The initial results of this integrated set of changes show significant promise for improving recruitment outcomes and HRO-CIO working relationships. Time to hire was reduced from 104 days to 72 days. SME involvement contributed to better assessment questions and the identification of well qualified candidates. The working relationship between HRO and its customers continues to improve.

CDC's JA and AQD Process with Pilot Areas: Piloted with 3 CIOs

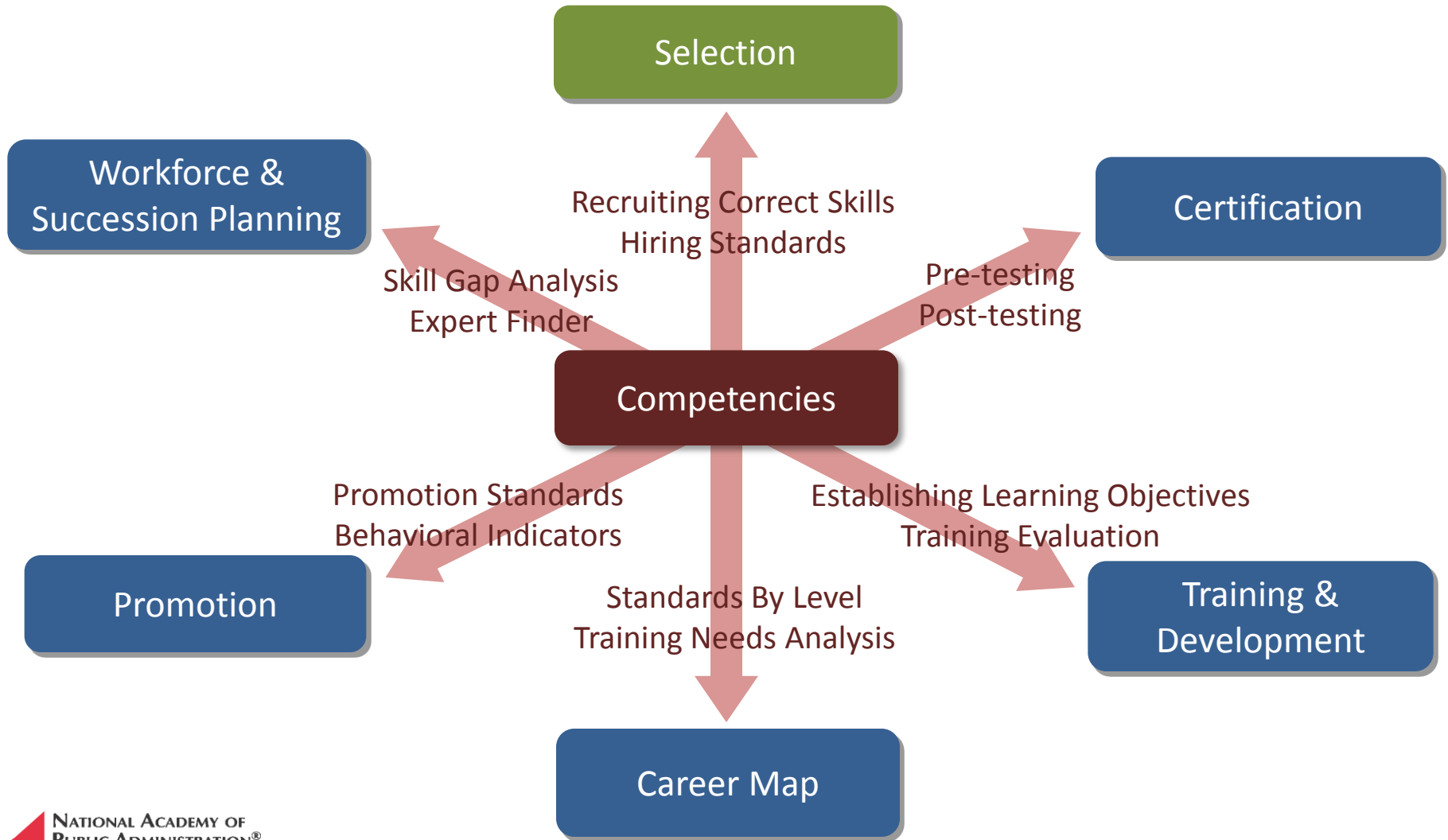


Key Success Factors

Continued Collaboration with CIOs & SMEs

Leveraging Existing Content

CDC's Recruitment and Hiring Process with Pilot Areas: Rationale for Competency-Based Assessment



Summary of the 9 Quick Wins

	Quick Win	Status
1	Streamline classification	IMPLEMENTED
2	Strengthen the role and use of SMEs in recruitment and hiring processes	PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED
3	Redesign the HRO website to improve access to information	PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED
4	Develop and document best practices for CIO Management Officers	UNDER DEVELOPMENT
5	More effective use of Open Continuous job announcements	IMPLEMENTED
6	Facilitate direct hire “name requests” of candidates in approved job series	IMPLEMENTED
7	Develop assessment question development expertise	PENDING
8	Improve timeliness of Certificate Quality Reviews (QR)	PENDING
9	Implement an administrative “processing hold” for recruitment	IMPLEMENTED

Recommendations

To support recruitment and hiring reform, the team recommended the following:

Title	Recommendation
<i>HRO and CIOs Should Continue to Collaborate on Transition to Competency-Based Job Analysis and Recruitment</i>	Complete transition to a competency-based recruitment system; expand the use of competencies throughout all of the components of the CDC personnel system.
<i>Develop HRO and CIO Staff Knowledge Needed to Understand and Use the Competency-based Recruitment system</i>	Develop and provide training for HRO and CIO staff which ensures fundamental understanding of competency-based recruitment, and the analytical, communications, and consultation skills required for successful implementation.
<i>Continue to Strengthen Current and Build Future Relationships with CIOs' Subject Matter Experts</i>	As part of the rollout, continue the analysis of remaining job series/occupations in an inclusive and data-driven manner, using this as an opportunity to educate HRO servicing teams and the CIOs on the nature of competency-based job analysis and recruitment.

Recommendations (Cont'd)

Title	Recommendation
<p><i>Update HRO Policies, Procedures, Assessment Tools, and Job Aids, As Needed</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the level of effort and skills needed (e.g., Industrial Organization (I/O) Psychologists) to maintain and enhance competency-based job analysis and candidate assessment tools (such as the automated competency workbooks). • As needed for the next 2-5 years as CDC implements all facets of its hiring reform, HRO and the CIOs—through the CRB—should review policies, procedures, competency workbooks, and related tools to ensure they reflect current information needs.
<p><i>Support CIO Efforts to Streamline Procedures and Processes as They Convert to the competency-based recruitment system</i></p>	<p>Each CIO chief management official should lead the effort within the CIO to align the internal CIO program processes to the competency-based recruitment system.</p>
<p><i>Improve Customer Service to Improve Customer Satisfaction</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to emphasize customer service and to monitor, report and act on customer satisfaction data. • Provide training to each HRO service team and to CIOs. • Ensure teams have adequate resources to actively support CIOs; look for ways to streamline processes.

Recommendations (Cont'd)

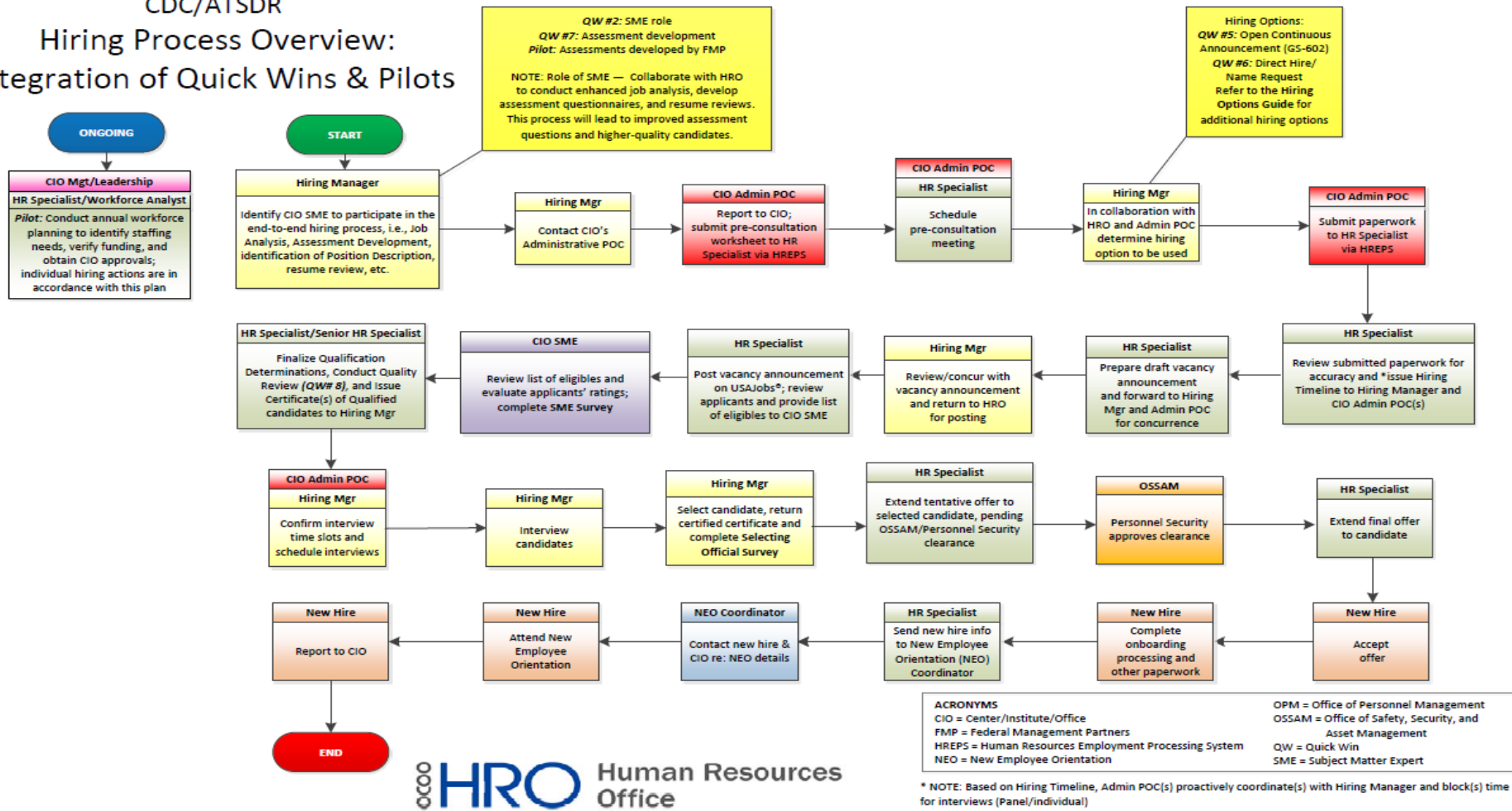
Title	Recommendation
<i>Sustain a Culture that Supports Successful Recruitment and Hiring Reform</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In partnership with the CRB, develop a mutually agreed upon set of actions to continue to develop and sustain a culture that supports successful recruitment and hiring reform. • Continue to use the personnel research psychologist or another external culture change expert or organization to work with HRO and the CIOs to further enhance culture change efforts.
<i>Integrate a Robust Communications Program</i>	Continue all of the communications mechanisms currently in use.
<i>Implement CDC-Style Workforce Planning</i>	Meet the customers “where they are” in terms of their workforce planning goals and needs.
<i>Strengthen the CRB</i>	The CRB should be strengthened, developed, and nurtured in order to meet the new rollout challenges and provide continuing advice on human resources issues.

Recommendations (Cont'd)

Title	Recommendation
<i>Continue Evaluation and Reporting</i>	In order to measure progress toward rollout goals, qualitative and quantitative data should continue to be collected, analyzed, the results reported, and used for action.
<i>Use a Phased Rollout Strategy</i>	Use a phased rollout strategy and process to maximize the likelihood of success.
<i>Provide Temporary Support to HRO During the Phased Rollout of recruitment and hiring reform</i>	Provide sufficient contract support and/or additional full-time equivalent (FTE) to HRO to support successful phased implementation of the recruitment and hiring reforms.

CDC/ATSDR Hiring Process Overview

CDC/ATSDR Hiring Process Overview: Integration of Quick Wins & Pilots



Project Evaluation

Primary Metrics and Goals

Reduce Time to Hire:
(days from job requisition (JR) initiated until initial offer made):

- CY 2014 Baseline: 104.8 days, on average.
- CY 2015 Target (only for pilot CIOs and job series where job analysis/assessment question development is completed): 80 days, on average.

Improve Quality of Applicants:
(job requisitions returned with no selection due to applicant quality)

- CY2014 Baseline: 6.6%.
- CY2015 Target (for pilot CIOs and selected job series only): 5% or less.

Improve Customer Satisfaction:

- Goal: At least 80% of respondents to HRO's Customer Satisfaction Survey report they are overall "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with HRO's services.

Evaluation Approach

- Defined data to be collected for evaluation purposes in implementation plans.
- Developed data collection forms; developed structure for routine, regular reporting of status and results to HRO Leadership and to CRB.
- Starting April 1, 2015 prepared Monthly Report Cards showing available data about primary metrics, and status of Quick Wins and pilots; shared with HRO, CIO and CRB members.
- Project-end data collection to supplement data collected on forms included interviews with HRO leaders, pilot CIO leaders, CRB members, and pilot HRO team.

Time to Hire Results

Metric: Reduce Time to Hire (days from job requisition initiated in the Human Resources Employment Processing System (HREPS) until initial offer made):

CY 2014 Baseline: 104.8 days, on average

CY 2015 Target (only for pilot CIOs and job series where job analysis/ assessment question development is completed): 80 days, on average.

Results*:

- Because only a few job actions were processed by the date of this report, progress toward meeting the time-to-hire metric cannot yet be fully assessed. Data available now cannot be assumed to represent the “steady state” until new procedures, such as automated workbooks, are tested, refined, and firmly in place.
- However, as of September 18, results show for JRs in the pilot:
 - For 26 hiring actions, the average time in pre-consultation was 4.7 days, compared to 19.3 days in CY 2014.
 - For 26 hiring actions, the average time in classification was 1.7 days, compared to 9.4 days in CY2014.
 - For 24 hiring actions, the average time until the vacancy announcement was issued was 4.9 days, compared to 20.4 in CY2014.
 - For 16 hiring actions, the average time to have the certificates issued was 9.3 days, compared to 25.7 in CY2014.
 - For 7 hiring actions, the average time to have the certificate returned was 6.8 days, compared to 24.9 in CY2014.
- Preliminary indications are that “front-loading” the job analysis and assessment question development activities, increased emphasis on strategic decisions during pre-consultation, and increased use of standard PDs may contribute to reduced time-to hire. Sharing certificates of eligibles may also be a factor in reducing time.
- Expectations are that increased development of annual staffing and recruitment plans and other forms of workforce planning may further reduce overall time-to-hire, as well as have other benefits.

** Data as of September 2015*

Quality of Applicants Results

Metric: Improve Quality of Applicants (job requisitions returned with no selection due to applicant quality):

CY2014 Baseline: 6.6%

CY2015 Target (for pilot CIOs and selected job series only): 5% or less

Results*:

- Because only 7 selections have been made, and some of those just as this project period ended, progress toward meeting the quality-of-applicants metric has not yet been assessed.
- Response to the quality of the applicant pool for the first selection, however, was positive. Evidence is that multiple selections were made from that selection certificate, an indication that the certificate included multiple high-quality candidates.
- Based on limited results from interviews and survey results, two other activities (“Better use of 602 Open Continuous announcements” and “Direct hire name request”) appear to be viewed positively by hiring officials as having the potential to more expeditiously fill selected positions with highly qualified individuals.

** Data as of September 2015*

Customer Satisfaction Results

Metric/goal: At least 80% of respondents to HRO's Customer Satisfaction Survey report they are overall "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with HRO's services.

Results*:

- Cumulative results from the HRO Customer Satisfaction Survey from January through mid-September 2015 show that 68% of respondents report overall being "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with HRO services. (HRO-wide data cannot be connected to changes in satisfaction specific to Quick Wins or pilot activities.)
- HRO has a senior leader who is tracking the responses and data from the Satisfaction Survey closely, including open-ended comments provided by customers filling out the Satisfaction Survey and comments from others providing direct feedback.
- Further, HRO leaders report that direct customer engagement and feedback and unsolicited kudos from customers about CSO staff show that they generally are headed in the right direction in meeting customer needs. As part of the pilot's focus on customer service, pilot HRO team is modeling a new approach to customer service.
- Interviews with the leads of the pilot CIOs show appreciation for and satisfaction with this intensely customer-centric focus of pilot HRO team, and concern about sustaining and expanding that customer-centric focus throughout their Centers and to other CIOs.
- Pilot HRO team members themselves believe the customer-centric approach cannot be expanded to more CIOs or even all functions they normally will perform for CIOs without significant additional resources.

** Data as of September 2015*

Final Analysis

CDC has a complex and continually evolving recruitment and hiring landscape that requires adjustment to respond to known and emerging health threats in the United States and throughout the world. Its recruitment and hiring policies, procedures, and approaches must be flexible enough to appropriately respond.

CDC contracted with the National Academy of Public Administration to assist in the analysis of issues and solutions. Preliminary work was completed in February 2014; additional support on which this document reports took place from May 2014 through September 2015.

Over the project's 18 months, CDC's Human Resources Office, in partnership with its Centers, Institutes, and Offices, has designed and tested new approaches to recruitment and hiring that are yielding well qualified candidates within an acceptable timeframe.

Expert Advisory Group Advice & Guidance

- **Anita Blair**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Human Resources and Chief Human Capital Officer
- **Steven Cohen**, Consultant; former Executive Advisor, Booz Allen Hamilton; former Senior Policy Advisor to the Director of the Office of Personnel Management
- **Toni Dawsey**, former Chief Human Capital Officer, National Aeronautics and Space Administration
- **Gail T. Lovelace**, former Assistant Administrator/Chief Leadership Officer and former Chief People Officer, General Services Administration
- **Reginald F. Wells**, Deputy Commissioner of the Social Security Administration's Office of Human Resources.

Every Academy project and study team is assisted by a group of subject matter experts to help assure the most successful project outcomes

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