Water Utility Workforce Development Training Workbook

Strategies for finding and keeping quality staff

Smart Management for Small Water Systems
Introduction

People are definitely a company’s greatest asset. It doesn’t make any difference whether the company’s product is cars or cosmetics (or water). A company (water system) is only as good as the people it keeps.

Mary Kay Ash, Founder of Mary Kay Cosmetics, Inc.
You need the right people...
With the right skills...
In the right roles.

Human Capital

People are your most valuable assets

Can you keep up with the changing demands in the water industry?
Workforce Planning
Self-Evaluation

1) Which of the following best describes the workforce planning efforts in your system?

☐ Our system has a formal organization-wide workforce plan approved by the governing body, chief elected official or chief administrative official.

☐ Our system has a formal organization-wide workforce plan developed and used by the Human Resources office.

☐ Our system has an informal organization-wide workforce plan developed and used by the Human Resources office.

☐ Departments are required to develop workforce plans.

☐ Our system does not conduct central workforce planning.

2) Which of these workforce data categories does your system collect?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Category</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demographics (e.g. gender, race, ethnicity, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age distribution of current workforce</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skills of current workforce</td>
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<tr>
<td>Competencies of current workforce</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average years of service of current workforce</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time to fill vacant positions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employee performance levels</td>
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<td>Turnover rates</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use a third party</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

3) Which of these workforce planning and analysis activities does your system conduct?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Yes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retirement projections</td>
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<tr>
<td>Competitiveness of compensation strategies</td>
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<td>Recruiting plans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inclusion of a human resources section in system’s strategic plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Planning and analysis activities continued</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Developing</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short-term staffing needs (1 year or less)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Long-term staffing needs (more than 1 year)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identification of high-potential employees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identification of critical hiring areas</td>
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<td>Identification of key positions within the government</td>
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<tr>
<td>Succession plans</td>
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<td>Training plans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workforce gap analysis</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

4) Which of these workforce training or employee development activities does your system conduct?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Yes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal cross-training programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Formal mentoring</td>
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<td>Leadership development programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Management development programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual development plans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual development gap analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rotational work assignments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identification of organizational competencies</td>
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<tr>
<td>360-degree evaluations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide money for external training (e.g. to cover conference fees, course registration, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervisory training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Formal Coaching</td>
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</table>

**LIST 3 CRITICAL POSITIONS IN YOUR SYSTEM**

1) 
2) 
3)
Facts are 20 times more likely to be remembered if they are part of a story. So you probably won’t remember this one.

Know Your Audience
Visuals Speak
Use Humor
Make it Meaningful

People ARE going to tell stories about you whether you want them to or not. Choose which ones they tell.
Bob McDonald, CEO Procter and Gamble
WHY WORK IN WATER?

**Environmental Stewardship**
Environmental protection appeals to job seekers

**Public Service**
water is vital to communities—everyone wants work that matters

**High Tech**
new technologies improve efficiency & appeal to younger workers

**Stable Employment**
communities will always need water = job security

**Good Salary**
high skill level & training = higher pay range

**Professional Development**
industry changes = opportunities to learn new methods, tools & technologies

**Professional Organizations**
opportunities for networking, training & mentoring

**Advancement**
opportunities to move to larger systems or into managerial positions

**Union Representation**
provides employee protections & networking

**Small Town Living**
unlimited benefits—short commute, low cost of living & many more

What is your water industry recruitment campaign message?
Recruiting

Recruitment Checklist

- List the knowledge, skills & abilities your system needs
- Have, or be open to, updated technology
- Determine your systems flexibilities (ex: schedules, communication, etc)
- Develop a recruitment marketing plan
- Assess compensation levels—are they attractive?
- Have a plan for retention

by 2020, Millennials will make up 50% of the workforce

WHO ARE MILLENNIALS?

Born 1980-2000

71% want meaningful relationships with their co-workers

75% want to work in a job where they can make an impact

42% want to work for a company that has a positive impact on the world

45% consider flexible working more important than pay

Millennials Value...

89% check emails outside of work hours

Opportunity

Dedicated to Larger Purpose

Role in the “Big Picture”

Work-Life Integration

Collaboration

Positive Feedback
WHERE TO FIND GOOD EMPLOYEES

- Employee Referrals
- Social Media
- Professional Organizations
- Local Groups or Associations
- K-12 Outreach Programs
- College, University or Technical School Outreach
- Citizens’ Academy Programs or Tours
- Veterans Programs

Recruitment Exercise—*Hot Topics / Cool Ideas*

Who will you target?

How will you target them?

Who & what do you need?
**Job Descriptions**

**Water Plant Operator – Russell, KS**

**SALARY RANGE: $13.24 - $18.75**

The Water Plant Operator is an entry-level, rotating shift position involving semi-skilled work in connection with water filtration and pumping to provide safe drinking water to the City. An employee in this position is responsible for learning the operation and filtration equipment and direct supervision, analysis of field samples, collecting and testing water samples, adjusting chemical feed equipment for proper operation and general maintenance of the water plant. Work follows prescribed procedures and is reviewed regularly by the supervisor.

Requires a high school diploma or G.E.D. and a valid driver’s license. The employee is required to obtain and maintain at least a Class I Water Operator Certification after one year in the position. Must be a resident of Russell County within 6 months of hire date.

The applicant chosen will be subject to a pre-employment assessment and drug screening.

Applications and a complete job description are available at the Russell City Building ● 133 W. 8th St. ● P.O. Box 112 ● Phone (XXX)XXX-XXX or at [www.russellcity.org](http://www.russellcity.org). Position open until Friday,

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**Water Treatment Plant Operator—Northwest Territories, Municipal and Community Affairs**

**Purpose of Position**

The Water Treatment Plant Operator is responsible for the water plant in order to ensure that residents have safe and clean water in accordance with federal, territorial and municipal legislation, policies and standards.

**Scope**

Reporting to the Public Works Foreman, the Water Treatment Plant Operator maintains the water plant. This includes maintaining the water sewer treatment plant facilities.

The delivery of safe and clean water is vital to the safety and health of the community. Failure to provide adequate services will jeopardize the health of the community. Failure to meet federal, territorial and municipal legislation and water quality standards will significantly jeopardize the health and well-being of residents and may result in liability for the municipality. Failure to deal with residents and the public in a courteous and respectful manner will lead to complaints concerning municipal services.

**Responsibilities**

1) Maintain the water treatment plant systems in order to ensure the availability of a clean community water supply
   
   - **Main Activities**
   - Maintain the treatment plant systems
   - Maintain and operate the filtering and chemical treatment processes
   - Inspect, service and repair components of the water treatment plant including water...
How could one of the job descriptions on page 10 be rewritten to incorporate the messaging and recruitment concepts from today?

Water Plant Operator – (Insert your system name here)
Retention

Recruitment
Compensation
Evaluation
Training
Employee Focus

NOTES

Evaluation = Expectation Conversation

⇒ Continually tell staff about good and poor performance
⇒ Be sure staff knows how and what will be evaluated
⇒ Set challenging AND attainable goals
⇒ Staff’s goals should align with organizational objectives
⇒ Keep an open mind about the staff’s future goals

Training

Invest in Staff Training to Retain Them

Offer in-house training  Fund recertification
Send to conferences  Incentivize training

Recognition is the #1 way to improve work motivation and employee engagement!
What to Transfer

- Institutional knowledge
- Technical know-how
- Tips and habits
- Internal and external relationships

Knowledge Transfer

Methods

Work Teams
Job Shadowing—hire before retire
Mentoring
Desk Manuals—Videos
Databases
Cross-Training
Overlapping Positions
Professional Organizations

Retention & Knowledge Transfer Exercise —

*If I Knew Then...What I Know Now...*

If you could go back in time, what 3 pieces of advice would you go back and tell yourself during your first year on the job to help you in your career field?

How could you share these 3 things with new hires within the first 6 months?

How would you evaluate mastery during or by the 1st year evaluation?
Before companies (water systems) can start thinking about their succession plans, they have to understand their jobs.

Sharlyn Lauby, HR Bartender

### Avoid Pitfalls

- Keeping it secret
- Underestimating talent within
- Not valuing the “soft skills”
- Not holding managers accountable
- Considering only upward succession
- Expecting employees to self-identify
- Not offering training
- Producing too many candidates for too few spots
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Today</th>
<th>Future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge—Skills—Abilities</td>
<td>Knowledge—Skills—Abilities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Gap Analysis**

- **Workforce Demand** (Desired State)
- **Workforce Supply** (Current State)
- **Workforce Gap** (What Your Need)

What’s missing? Can you handle the gap with professional development or training?
If you remove one of your employees, what gaps open up?
You have options: reorganize duties, provide training or hire.
Workforce Development

Carryout

What are we doing well?

What could we improve?

In the next 3 months, I will _____________________________________________
______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________
to improve _____________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________.