

Welcome Aboard

Rosalind Mitchell

Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC)

February 4, 2019

Problem Statement

Why does the recruiting process from job posting to on-boarding take on average 60 days to complete?

The Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) is the largest state agency in South Carolina employing more than 3500 people committed to improving the quality of life of all residents by promoting and protecting the health of the public and environment. The agency's services and functions fall under Public Health, Health Regulations, Environmental Affairs, Ocean and Coastal Resource Management and these areas are further broken down in more targeted bureaus expanded across all 46 counties of the state. As the primary agency governed by the state to protect the environment, each of the services provided are essential to the health of the residents who live here, therefore it is crucial that we maintain a workforce committed to our mission. Position vacancies that go unfilled past 30 days creates hardship not only for our other employees, but also within the communities we serve.

Within DHEC, it is crucial to fill positions with the right candidates, in a time frame that is cost effective and lessens the time that a position remains unfilled. Currently it takes an average of 20-30 plus days from closing of an initial job post to the hire date of a qualified candidate. In the online article at <https://thevetrecruiter.com> "This is How Long the Hiring Process Should Last (and Why)", the author states..."it's imperative that once the A-level candidates have been presented and are officially part of the hiring process, the process should move with a health sense of urgency". The author further advises that when it takes longer than four weeks to offer jobs to the best candidates, a company risks losing those candidates to other employers.

Data Collection

Collecting data for this project will allow us to see where we can make improvements in our current recruiting and hiring process. The Lowcountry Positions Management spreadsheet has been used to track vacancies since 2013 and includes all positions that have been vacant at least once since that time. The spreadsheet outlines dates for vacancy, post open and end, interview, offer, and finally, new employee start date. We will also use NEOGOV to gather information for this project.

Data Analysis

Current State: The state purchased the computer application NEO GOV for applicant tracking and recruitment, which drives the recruitment life cycle such as creating requisitions, exam plans and job postings, candidates apply for job opening, evaluating candidates, placing candidates on eligible list, referring candidates to hiring managers, completing interviews and hiring task, and filling requisitions. Although this is a good recruitment tool, our current process of job postings, evaluating applicants, interviews, offers and on-boarding is completed with a combination of using some of the modules within NEO GOV, Share Point, and printing and emailing documents between departments. This method is costly, inefficient, and delays filling open positions.

This process of combining some automation with printing and emailing documents extends our time to hire to 30 plus days. Prior to submitting a job posting request, current vacancies must be reviewed in program area; identity appointment type, South Carolina Enterprise Information System (SCEIS) position number, and funding for the requested vacancy. A breakdown of each function (by recruitment tracking spreadsheet) and the time it takes to complete is as follows:

1. Appointment types – Full-Time Equivalent (FTE), Part-Time FTE, Temporary Grant, Temporary Hourly, Per Visit
2. SCEIS position number – Eight (8) digits and begins with a “6” (for exempt, 61001234)
3. Office of Human Resources – assigns SCEIS number for Temporary Hourly positions
4. Funding – Consult with your program area’s/regions budget/finance approver to identify the PAIS budget number(s), PAIS fund number(s), and the percentages(s)
5. Update/Reclass Position Description (PD) to meet position’s needs, if needed (use PD Guide as a reference)

PD must be signed by supervisor prior to receiving approval from the Office of Human Resources.

6. Submit PD to HR Designee prior to requesting the posting if updates are made. HR Designee will forward the updated Position Description to the Classification and Compensation team for approval.
7. Requesting a position and posting the job takes (4) days. The hiring manager will input posting request information into the position request form.
8. Program area’s chain of command (Region Health Director) approves request; request routes to Office of Human Resources for final review. Office Human Resources gives final approval to post via email. Office of Human Resources then posts the position on NEO Gov job site.
9. Applicants apply and are held until the position closes, this takes (10) days. When position closes, Human Resources forwards qualified application to Hiring Manager.
10. Applicant’s information is screened, copied, and emailed to hiring managers for review, (information is also notated to a tracking spreadsheet), which is a two (2) day process.

The Hiring Manager reviews applications, verifies college transcripts, professional licenses, certificates, etc. (if required)

11. Human Resources submit current and former DHEC employees' names to the Employee Relations team by email to confirm interview eligibility **PRIOR** to scheduling interview, takes (2) days.
12. Hiring Manager submits interview questions to HR Designee for approval by the Office of Human Resources. Hiring Manager receives approval to use interview questions, takes (2) days.
13. Hiring Manager schedules interviews and selects a diverse panel to conduct interviews (a second round of interviews may be conducted, but is not required, takes (3) days.
14. Selecting the hiring team and scheduling interviews, takes (3) days.
15. Results of the interviews and copy of the paper application is sent back to Human Resources, (via courier), takes (3) days.
16. Scores are double checked on the candidates interviewed, background checks are requested through central office on the top candidate, and a 10-year driving record is requested from the top candidate as well, (this is a manual process), 3 employment references are conducted by the hiring manager, which could take up to (5) days.
17. Human Resources requests justification on the top candidate from the hiring manager in order to prepare the salary action form for signature, takes (3) days.
18. Regional Health Director sends approval of salary to human Resources (Manually) takes (1) day.
19. Human Resources types the salary action form and forwards it back to the Budget Administrator for budget approval (Manually), takes (2) days.

20. Regional Budget Administrator approves and then send signed salary action form back to the Regional Health Director (Manually), takes (1) day.
21. Regional Health Director approves and sends signed salary action form back to Human Resources (Manually), Regional Human Resources Office submits the approval to the Central Office in Columbia addressed to the Class Comp Director for approval (Manually-this includes scanning the entire applicant's packet) which consist of Employee Hire/Employee Hire/Salary Action Form, Candidate's Application, College Transcripts, professional licenses, certifications, etc. (if required), Employment Reference Check Forms, Criminal Background Check approval email from Human Resources Central Office, Ten (10) year driving record requested from candidate (if applicable), copy of Job Posting, Interview Log for Hiring Managers, Organization Chart of program area with vacant position highlighted, completed ID Badge Form, takes (2) days.
22. Class Comp Director then sends the approval back to Regional Human Resources for an offer to be extended to candidate (Manually), takes (2) days.
23. Human Resource Specialist extends a verbal offer to the candidate and confirms verbal acceptance and start date (via phone), takes (2) days if the offer is not countered by the candidate, if offer is countered by the candidate it could take up to (3) days.
24. Human Resources emails the official written offer letter to the candidate for a handwritten signature. Candidate emails the signed offer back to Human Resources, take up to (2) days.
25. Hiring Mangers notify internal candidates on non-selection and Human Resources sends candidate information regarding New Hiring Process, takes up to (2) days.

26. Human Resources starts the On-Boarding and Hiring Process (Automated)

27. Human Resources shreds all applicants interviewing tools and applications that were not interviewed for the position (Manually)

This entire process according to the data collected takes on an average (52) days to complete.

The industry standards indicate that the hiring process should take between 20-30 days.

Implementation Plan

Desired State: Use NEO GOV to its fullest potential using all the modules within the software.

Incorporate the entire recruitment process on-line, reduce the time and cost it takes to fill a position by more than half. Human Resources should have the ability see the applicant progress through the hiring process with NEO GOV. The following should be automated and completed

On-Line:

- a. Quality Control completes request for position, request is sent for approval, and job posts automatically once the last approver signs off. (This should be done automatically using a hierarchy email process).
- b. Applicants apply to position, and the position closes automatically on the close date.
- c. Applicants file should be immediately forwarded to Hiring Managers for review.
- d. Applicants not moving forward should be sent a disposition email.
- e. Applicants moving forward should be scheduled for interviews and results recorded to applicant's file.
- f. Human Resources should get notification of applicant's status throughout the hiring process.
- g. Reference Checks should be completed.

- h. Request for offer should go through an automatic approval process with Human Resources being the final approver (steps 12-17), in the current state should be done automatically using a hierarchy email process).
- i. Submit formal offer letter to the applicant and have him or her accept the offer electronically and sign a hard copy on first day of employment.
- j. On-Board and hire Candidate into NEO GOV.

Implementation

Train all hiring managers to use NEO GOV to reduce the time it takes to hire qualified candidates. In late 2018, all Human Resources staff members were given access and trained on how to post jobs using NEO GOV. As this is only a fraction of what the tool can do, it was determined that using all modules of the system was overwhelming to most staff members. To make the transition from “spreadsheets” to automatically posting jobs and hiring applicants using an automated system, management decided to train employees using a phase in method. This approach will allow employees to train and use certain section of NEO GOV, gain proficiency in those areas, and then move on to the next module.

Evaluation Method

To measure the effectiveness of this process, we will track jobs posted, total number of applicants who apply, and the time it takes to hire them. This information will be compared to the same data collected last year. The results will allow us to identify how, and if automating our process, has saved time from posting to hiring a qualified applicant.

Next, employees will be interviewed, asked for feedback on the automated system, identify pros and cons of the system, and how to improve our current process. An anonymous survey will be created, which will cover areas such as ease of use, redundant information entry, and suggestions for improvement.

Lastly, we will seek feedback from the applicants' perspective. We would like a detailed account of the applicant's experience completing the online application and any recommended feedback for improvements. Gathering this information can be collected in a couple of ways. Once the applicant has completed his/her application, they are redirected to an online survey or applicants that are hired could be asked to complete a written survey. The logistics of how the survey will be administered is still being worked out.

According to Glassdoor in the article Fast Company, "344,250 interview reviews in six countries submitted anonymously to Glassdoor between February 2009 through February 2015 and designed to study the interview process from the job seeker's perspective, according to Glassdoor's chief economist Andrew Chamberlain PhD, who asserts that there has been little research done...from the candidate's perspective."

Summary and Recommendations

Automating the recruiting process for DHEC will reduce the time it takes to hire qualified applicants for open positions. Eliminating copying and emailing applicants' information and/or sending information via courier will also reduce time and cost.

To achieve this, I would recommend the training of all staff, such as the Regional Leadership Team, Site Supervisors, and Team Leads to use NEO GOV to its fullest potential. Once a job has been approved, it will then be forwarded to the appropriate department for posting. This

allows the departments to receive, evaluate, and disposition applicants that are only applying to positions posted for that department. This makes the hiring process more manageable and the time it takes to move an applicant through the recruiting process to the next step of interviewing more efficient. Shortening this process will not only save time and money but will also have a positive impact on the applicant.

In a conversation with Judy Burton, an associate who creates and trains on recruiting systems like NEO GOV, she stated that “trends in recruiting points to applicants wanting a stream lined application process with a faster response time, consistent communication with the employer, and a system that is user friendly.” The importance of the applicant experience is also supported by an article written by Kristna Martic (2019), which states that “candidates who had a positive candidate experience in your recruiting process will more likely accept your job offer, reapply in the future and refer others to your company. On the flip side, a negative candidate experience can cost you more than a few candidates. It can even lose your company large sums of money.”

Implementing these changes to our current recruiting process should reduce the time to hire by at least 10 days. Finally, the new process will allow us to hire qualified candidates for open positions in a time frame that is both process and cost effective. Candidates will have a positive application experience which includes continual communication about their status. Furthermore, implementing these changes will reflect positively on who we are at DHEC, the culture of our working environment as a company that cares about its potential employees, and commitment to our mission. “To improve the quality of life for South Carolinians by protecting and promoting the health of the public and the environment.”

References

History of SCDHEC, n.d., accessed February 2019 from
<https://www.scdhec.gov/about-dhec-history>

Judy Burton, Consultant/Trainer for Visibility Software, personal communication,
December 2018

Why The Hiring Process Takes Longer Than Ever, 07/15/2015, accessed January
2019 from <https://www.fastcompany.com/3048421/why-the-hiring-process-takes-longer-than-ever>

This is How Long the Hiring Process Should Last (and Why), n.d., accessed January
2019 from <https://thevetrecruiter.com/this-is-how-long-the-hiring-process-should-last-and-why/>

15 New Recruiting trends You Should Implement in 2019, Kristina Martic,
9/24/2018, accessed December 2018 from <https://www.talentlyft.com/en/blog/article/87/15-newrecruiting-trends-you-should-implement-in-2019-updated>

South Carolina Department of Health and Environment Control, Wikipedia,
accessed February 2019 from
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Carolina_Department_of_Health_and_Environmental_Control