TRACKING TRAINING

FOR THE

BUREAU OF UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANK MANAGEMENT

CERTIFIED PUBLIC MANAGER PROJECT

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Introduction

This project was created specifically with the Bureau of Underground Storage Tank Management (Bureau) in mind. The Bureau is within the Department of Health and Environmental Control. Although created for the Bureau, it could easily be adapted to the specific needs of any other office. There are no explicit agency goals to track training; however, there are implicit agency values for competent and professional staff. The project goal was created with the implicit nature of the values of customer service and teamwork in mind.

PROJECT GOAL : Design a useful system for tracking personnel training and the associated cost. Implementation is planned by July 1, 1998.

"Desired state" - The basic aspect is to have an effective and useful tool to track personnel training taken and needed and its associated cost. By creating a list of training taken by all Bureau staff, a Training Request form, and a central location for available training information, Bureau management will be in a position to make decisions on approving staff training and costs, anticipated costs for the training budget for the next fiscal year, and proposed individual training plans.

a. By creating a Training Request form, Bureau management can keep track of what training, training funds and related costs (i.e., transportation, food, lodging - if applicable) has been requested and approved.

b. By establishing a system to review past training and look at future training needs of staff, management can properly budget for anticipated training costs.

c. By creating a listing of staff and the training they have taken, Bureau management and staff have current information of what training has been taken.

d. By using the information compiled for the listing created above, the Training Coordinator can identify staff who have not taken required training or who may be available for a training course that has had a last minute open slot.

e. By creating a central location to compile and store information about DHEC-provided courses, other training courses, training catalogues, and a list of videos and cassettes available for loan by different offices in DHEC, Bureau management and staff have a central location to go to look for training information.

f. With the above information, a training plan could be created for Bureau staff.

The following information would be input into the system - name of individual, name of course, date(s) taken, contact hours, who (organization) gave training, cost of training course, related costs (transportation, food, lodging).

PROBLEM STATEMENT: Information on internal and external training courses taken by staff not readily available to staff or managers for training or budget decisions.

Problem - There has been a historic problem with categorizing and tracking of training provided to staff by the agency. Internal training opportunities are tracked at the agency level, but due to the variety of disciplines employed and duties performed, this tracking mechanism is not nearly as comprehensive as needed to be an effective management tool. Specific issues include the need to budget for and approve training, categorize the types of training and its subsequent tracking, and monitor training availability and training needs. While the problem doesn't strictly apply to a specific agency goal, it does fall within the area of an effective management tool to achieve the agency's mission and goals. Concerns include:

a.   There is no regular process or form to request and approve training and any associated cost.

b.   There is an inability to properly budget for anticipated training needs through the year.

c.   There is little knowledge of what training, by title and category type, has been taken by Bureau staff.

d.   There is no process set up to see who in the Bureau has or has not taken certain required training.

e.   There is no complete listing available of courses, provided or contracted by DHEC to be provided, that can be reviewed by staff.

Several areas were looked at regarding a system of how training is tracked and available to managers and staff.

1. DHEC as an agency - The Office of Quality Management (QM) inputs the data into a DHEC Training Database on the network from a class attendance sheet for all classes provided by QM. In addition, they also input data into the database from forms submitted by individuals for training taken outside of QM. A separate form must be submitted for each person for each course taken. A list of all the people in the Bureau who have taken a specific course can be obtained within a minimum of 1 week. [Why this will not work for our Bureau just as it is: The basic concept is what our "desired state" is, however, our Bureau takes more than 50 % of its training outside of QM. There is more time consumed to fill out the required form (1 form per person per course) than is necessary to submit data to be keyed into the DHEC Training Database; the ability to quickly produce a list of staff who have taken a particular training is not available; and cost information is not part of the database.]

2. The Environmental Quality Control Deputy area within DHEC - This area is closest to the type of work and training that many of our Bureau staff take (environmental). At the Directorate level, only the required United States Environmental Protection Agency training and special Directorate requirements are tracked for all staff. For the majority of training taken, needed, or requested it is primarily the responsibility of the supervisor to keep up with training (taken or needed) of their own staff. [Why this will not work for our Bureau just as it is: This process doesn't have a central point to list all training taken or a consistent system for training approval.]

3. The course "Staff Development Methods for Managers" - The training course and the booklet provided were and still are very helpful for the manager and how they create a learning environment, manage their staff in regards to training, and recognize when/if training is needed. The course and booklet have good information regarding the manager's role in training, creating a learning environment, evaluating the effectiveness of training, and recognizing when or if training is needed. These points are all helpful to me in my role as a manager and as being part of a Bureau. [Why this does not provide the information or help that I need to accomplish the Project Goal: As indicated above the information is very helpful to a manager but does not provide a guidance or format of how to create a system of record keeping or budget tracking for the Bureau.]

4. Literary search - There are a number of books and articles on training. A literary search was done. After reading some of the items that at first appeared to be in the area of my project, there were no books or articles that provided specific information from which relevant data for my project could be drawn. However, it was all very informative.

CAUSE ANALYSIS :

A) The following factors have contributed to the problem, stated earlier. They were identified through observation, interviews, and brainstorming:

-- External training (events not offered by DHEC) are not tracked by QM;

-- The QM list cannot be accessed in order to sort or manipulate data in order to provide training information requested by Bureau management;

-- The training information from QM is not able to be provided in a timely manner for the whole Bureau when needed;

-- The Bureau management needs a way to manage or plan for training and related expenses;

-- When last minute training becomes available there is no turn-key mechanism to identify the person in need;

-- The Bureau has grown in number of staff and budget considerations.

B) Force Field Analysis:

Positive Forces	Negative Forces
-- training opportunities	-- miss required training
-- easily identifies all training taken by staff	-- low priority
-- easily identifies training needed by staff	

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

A) After the problem was defined and the current situation was compared to the "desired state,"

-- A Training Request Form (see last page of project document) was created.

-- A master training list is being created of all training taken by the Bureau staff. The information will be compiled into a spreadsheet that can be easily updated, sorted, and manipulated to provide information to Bureau management for decision-making purposes. The information in the Training list will be (individual's) Name, Course Title, Date (of last day of course), Contact Hours (with the instructor), Provider (of the training), Type (four options -- professional certificate; academic; in-service/continuing education; desired or optional training), and Cost (of training). The list will be able to be sorted by (individual's) Name or Course Title. This information would be incorporated into a standard operating procedure for training (see appendix A).

-- A central location for all training flyers and catalogues is established for easy access of information of known training available to the staff and Bureau management.

-- To determine how to address the problem

      -- interviews were held with managers and staff

      -- several versions of the training request form were created and revised

      -- brainstorming was done

      -- listen to the customer -- the user

-- When all query needs are defined, the spreadsheet will be institutionalized as a computer program usable to all staff in the local area network.

B) 1) Potential obstacles to goal:

-- Information is not available

-- Lethargy

-- Responses from staff - "I don't know what classes I took", "I took the same classes as [name], just write those down for me", "It doesn't matter to me, just put down ...", "I took all the following classes - ....(very long list)"

2) Methods to overcome them:

-- Persistence

-- Patience

-- Managers involvement and incentive for the individual - getting management buy-in so that employee's learn that if managers make training decisions based on faulty input, that individual responsible for the lack of input may suffer a delay in receiving training opportunities.

-- Communication - two way discussions with the managers and staff who would both provide and use the information.

C) Potential resources of information:

-- Training data of DHEC-provided classes in the QM database

-- Individual staff training records of non-DHEC training taken (if available)

D) Time line and project plan

-- Gather list of training already taken by staff -- Fall 1997

-- Create Training Request Form -- 12/97

-- Develop a standard operating procedure regarding training -- 12/97

-- Start using the Training Request Form -- 1/98

-- Create master training list of training taken by staff -- 3/98 (and update it monthly)

-- Training budget needs defined by Bureau management -- approx. mid May (annually)

-- Evaluation of new training and tracking system -- 5/98

-- Institutionalize master training list into a computer tracking system -- 6/98

-- Budget cycle starts -- June (annually)

-- Revise training request form, standard operating procedure, and/or training tracking system, instructions, and/or process -- as needed

E) Tools

-- Training Request Form

-- Brainstorming with staff

-- Interviews

-- Computer programing

F) Resources required and estimated costs

-- All resources to set up the training tracking system are in-house and there are no additional costs or resources required.

EVALUATION METHOD:

The following is the proposed evaluation method to measure the project outcomes.

When:

Evaluate the training and tracking system at least two months after the process has been implemented and after the next training budget request is due to the Bureau Director -- whichever is later. The training budget request information must include required and desired training needs and is due prior to the end of the fiscal year. Programing to be completed by June 1998.

How:

By direct questioning of the people who use, fill out, or key in the training request forms and those who use, track, or monitor training taken and/or needed. Programing activities involving information technology personnel.

What questions asked:

Has the system been useful?

Have the lists been useful?

Has the training request form been useful?

Are you satisfied with the training lists and information available? Are your needs being met?

How is the information being used?

What do you find useful? What is not useful?

Is more information needed?

Is the format appropriate? What other format would be more useful?

What can be done to make the system better or to improve the form?

Who questioned:

Bureau Director, Division Managers, Section Managers, administrative staff person, and

various bureau staff.

Questions to myself:

Has the system done what I envisioned it to do?

Have the customers needs been met?

Have the original objectives been met?

Was the information used to determine a training budget for the year?

Lastly:

After the above information is obtained, the data gathered is analyzed to determine what,

if any, changes need to occur to improve the system or form used. Check the original

objectives against the outcomes.

Measurements:

How many staff are in the Bureau and would provide training information about

themselves?

How many supervisors need the training information for budget and/or training decision purposes?

How soon after training is taken is the required information given to the training coordinator?

Trial run test:

Run a test with several managers before the budget cycle in the early part of May.

See if the information provided is what is needed.

Obtain feedback.

Use the information/questions listed under "How", " What questions asked", and "Who questioned".

Direct programing after all of the above.

APPENDIX A

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE:

TRAINING

1. The Training Request Form is completed by the requester and all appropriate signatures and approval are obtained.[Front and back, as needed -- the back side of the form is for out of state travel expense information, if training is out of state.]

2. Determine if the training is DHEC-provided.

    -- If the training is DHEC-provided, go to step 8.

    -- If the training is not DHEC-provided, go to step 3.

3. The appropriate administrative staff person registers the requester for the non-DHEC provided training. A copy of the Training Request Form is marked "REGISTERED" and given to the Division Director or Section Manager. The original form is given to the Administrative Section Manager for tracking purposes.

4. Determine if Out-of-State travel is required.

      --If Out-of-State travel is required, go to step 9.

      -- If Out-of-State travel is not required, go to step 4.

5. The requester takes the training.

6. The staff person gives the Administrative Section Manager either a copy of the certificate of training or the following information in written form: name, name of course, date(s), hour(s), training provider, cost to DHEC if applicable.

7. The Administrative Section Manager or administrative support staff inputs the training data into the Training database with the information from step 6 above.

8. The requester registers themselves for the DHEC-provided training. Go to step 5.

9. The Standard Operating Procedures for Travel Arrangements, go to step 5.

D H E C

PROMOTE PROTECT PROSPER

South Carolina Department of Health
and Environmental Control

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TRAINING REQUEST

Name _____ Date _____
    (If more than one name, then attach list of additional names)

Course Title _____

Date(s) _____ Provider _____

Cost _____ per person Total training Cost _____

Any other costs involved?_____ If so, what is the total? _____

Training Type _____

       (Four options -- professional certification; academic; in-service/
       continuing education; desired or optional training -- see
       Administrative Services Training Guidelines for definitions.)

Any leave required? _____ If so, when? _____

Reason for training _____

_____

_____

Please provide additional justification as needed.

Approval:

Supervisor _____ Date _____

Bureau Director _____ Date _____
(if cost involved)

NOTE:
1. Original to Administrative Section Manager (ASM).
2. Requester makes training or registration arrangements, unless cost
involved. If cost involved, then give administrative staff person (training)
a copy of the training request and the information to do the paperwork -
registration and financial request for payment .
3. Upon completion, remember to give ASM a copy of the certificate or your
name, course title, date(s), who (organization) gave the training, and contact
hours.
4. If out of state training is being taken, then complete the out of state
travel request.