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**Hidden Talents:**

**Identifying the Knowledge, Skills and Resources of Our  
Employees**

Certified Public Manager  
Project

Submitted by  
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Human Resource Director

## **Project Goal**

Develop a process to identify "hidden talents," those unknown employee knowledge, skills and resources and design a plan to share the information regarding these untapped resources that exist within the South Carolina Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services (DAODAS) by the end of December, 2001.

## **Problem Statement**

The South Carolina Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services, a cabinet department of the Governor's office, is charged with the mission of providing quality services to prevent or reduce the negative consequences of substance use and addictions. The Department reports directly to the Governor and is responsible for advising the executive branch of state, the General Assembly and other state agencies regarding alcohol and other drug abuse issues. Recognizing the need for direct services for the general public, as well as for specific high-risk groups, DAODAS offers a wide array of prevention, intervention and treatment services through a community-based system of care. Although the services are coordinated at the state level through DAODAS, the department in turn subcontracts with 34 county alcohol and drug abuse authorities to provide direct services to the citizens in all 46 counties of the state. Each year more than 50,000 people in the state receive direct intervention and/or treatment services through the county authorities. In addition, these local agencies coordinate thousands of prevention activities each year that reach people of all ages. Since their creation in 1973, the county authorities have provided intervention and treatment services to more than one million South Carolinians and touched the lives of millions of additional individuals and families through the many prevention activities coordinated by this system. In order to accomplish its mission (APPENDIX- Mission), DAODAS employs approximately 100 staff members.

The department is organized into several different sections including: administration, programs and services, communications and external affairs, management information resources and finance (APPENDIX -Organizational Chart) and each section is overseen by a deputy director:

The division of labor may include many diverse projects that are coordinated both within the same section and often with overlap between various sections. It is often challenging to coordinate the communications so that each of the employees within a respective section, are aware of and understand the individual projects and initiatives managed by their co-workers in other sections. As a result, employees are typically not aware of all of the resources available to them within the department and there are times when consultants or trainers are hired to assist with initiatives that existing DAODAS staff members have the expertise and knowledge to fulfill.

Upon reviewing the information contained in the mission, core values, guiding principles and overarching goals of DAODAS, it is evident that this problem statement is aligned with the agencies goals. The mission refers to the "provision of quality services," while under the guiding principles..... "provide statewide leadership"; "work collaboratively"; "value its employees by providing recognition and professional development in a supportive working environment" are mentioned. It also states that agency employees will be team workers and proactive (APPENDIX Mission).

When individuals decide to pursue employment at DAODAS, many applicants attempt to match their background and qualifications with a specific job announcement. The closer the fit between the applicant and the vacant position, the more likely the applicant will qualify and have an opportunity to interview and gain employment.

During the application process both the applicant and DADOAS staff members may be wearing "blindness," therefore only focusing on the knowledge, skills and background required for the advertised position. In preparation for the initial job application and interview the applicant may update their resume to highlight their talents that most closely fit the specific position which they are applying for at that time.

If this is the case, the applicant concentrates on their employment history as it relates specifically to the position for which they are applying. Meanwhile the employer is reviewing the application and resume, determining how the applicants may qualify and fit into the department based on the position as advertised. With this scenario, the end results in the hiring of a well qualified employee with a wealth of knowledge, information, skills and experience some of which remains unknown to the new employer. As a result, many qualifications and experiences are not recorded and if not discussed during an interview will remain unknown. If the employee is hired, these unknowns become hidden talents.

As a result, in many cases newly hired employees come to work with knowledge, skills and resources which are unknown to the agency management, including the employee's immediate supervisor. It may help to use the analogy of a toolbox when thinking about this issue. When a new employee arrives for their first day of work, they come with their toolbox. It contains all of the knowledge, skills and resources that the individual has accumulated throughout their personal and professional life. In the majority of cases, for most employees only the tools related directly to the job they were hired for are taken out of the "tool box" on a regular basis. Sometimes they are shared, but in many situations they are not. Unfortunately, unused tools often get "rusty," especially those that are not related to the employee's current job responsibilities. Although they may not relate to the job duty, these hidden talents may indeed fit very well into the overall goals and objectives of DAODAS; especially as they may relate to other sections of the department. Because this may benefit projects and services that are within another section, this increases the chances that they will be overlooked. As a result, untapped resources are overlooked for years, and often may never even be discovered.

The guiding principals of DAODAS (APPENDIX- Mission) list six separate "values." Of those, three are directly related to the problem statement and as a result, make the connection between the department's overall goals and the problem statement. These are written as follows – "DAODAS employees will be: team workers; proactive and effective communicators."

If more employees shared their hidden talents this information would, in turn encourage effective communication, this would in turn yield more proactive planning, which could lead to general improvement in moral and a general environment in support of teamwork.

At DAODAS I have experienced three examples that clearly illustrate that this problem exists:

(1)

Last year, I received a “challenging” phone call on our information and referral line.

Although not designed to be a hot line, occasionally we do receive “crisis calls.” This caller was very concerned. Although I could not completely understand her, I could tell by her tone of voice that something was wrong. Unfortunately I was not able to assist her because she was speaking very quickly in Spanish. Recently in a staff meeting I learned that a co-worker spoke Spanish; a well kept secret!

(2)

Several months ago a co-worker approached me with a training request. She informed me that many employees in the county offices had expressed an interest in attending an Access computer training. I shared that we had two basic options: subcontracting with a qualified trainer who could come to DAODAS and train on our computers, or subcontracting with a computer training company in the Columbia area, and those employees in need of the training meet at this location. She informed me that she herself was capable of providing the training. In turn this would save time in the planning process and money for the trainers fee. I was not aware of her level of expertise with the Access software program, her training skills or her genuine interest in training.

(3)

Following a recent meeting with a group of employees, a co-worker approached me to share some information. After a brief discussion, I learned that in a prior career she worked in the banking industry and had experience as a trainer. I soon learned that she had experience leading a training on a topic that I was interested in bringing to our department, “Effective Business Communication Skills.” What a discovery, now we will not have to go outside the agency to hire a trainer for this training topic, another hidden talent.

A great opportunity exists for the human resources department to work closely with the education and training section. As a result DAODAS employees will become aware of the wealth knowledge, skills and resources that are available among our current staff members. If we had some type of inventory of the hidden talents of DAODAS employees and a process for sharing the information collected the project would be well underway.

### **Cause Analysis**

A number of factors within the department actually contribute to the problem. Of particular importance are the following: due to the nature of the "alcohol and other drug business" the concept of confidentiality is deeply rooted. As a result, employees personal lives are very personal. In addition, at the present time there is no structured process for gaining access to employees overall knowledge, skills and resources . Also, due to ongoing gossiping (hall talk), inconsistent and inaccurate information about employee hidden talents are often shared among employees; sometimes the information is valid, however only a select few will ever gain access to this information. Although there are many opportunities for interaction between individual sections within the department, this is not common during the regular workweek. The only regularly scheduled activity that brings employees together from different sections are the county site visits. At this time, employees from different sections travel together for a day or two to provide onsite technical assistance to a respective county agency. As a result, DAODAS employees get to spend more time together than usual in work related and social (traveling in the same vehicle and/or eating meals together as a group), situations than the majority of the employees who are not participating in the site visits.

Most meetings and planning activities are attended primarily by staff members from their respective sections. As a result there are limited opportunities to share resources between section employees on a regular basis. At the present time, the department does not have any plan that promotes or supports cross-training . Therefore, employees spend very little time discussing their respective job functions with other employees so in turn another opportunity for employees to learn about each others talents is lost.

As a result of this lack of identification and sharing, DAODAS employees are often alienated and miss out on tremendous opportunities to provide support to fellow employees and/ or contribute to the overall goal of the department through their knowledge, skill and resources. In addition, there is also a cost-benefit component to this issue. Until we have truly assessed our employees and have a thorough understanding of the overall knowledge, skills and resources of the department as a whole, it is certain that we will continue to spend money, and subcontract for services that we may have access to within the department.

There are several barriers that may impact the implementation process, these include: (1) limited support for implementation by key stakeholders; (2) a lack of interest among employees to serve on the workgroup; (3) a limited level of interest in the overall initiative among DAODAS staff members; (4) lack of ongoing feedback from the focus group members, due to either attendance problems or reduced interest; and (5) lack of support for the monthly evaluation process questionnaire from workgroup group members.

Although each of these potential barriers could seriously jeopardize the implementation plan, each could be addressed. Any indication of limited support by key stakeholders indicates the need for additional information and face-to-face meetings. This would provide an opportunity for increased knowledge and education about the overall benefits of the initiative. This would be accomplished in a group setting with the offer to meet individually; a general overview would be provided with time set aside for a question and answer session.

During the CPM project planning meeting I discussed with a colleague the overall focus of my project. At that time he asked me to briefly explain to him what I was planning to do for my CPM Project; I explained that I was concentrating on the issue of "hidden talents," the unknown knowledge, skills and resources that employees bring to the job. We agreed to go through the Covey process of asking why five times. I believe that this activity provided me with additional information to assist with the project (APPENDIX- Ask Why 5 Times).

### **Employee Focus Group**

In order to gather additional information beyond the three examples that I personally experienced, three employee focus groups were completed. In order to collect the data regarding the hypothesis concerning , “hidden talents, an attempt was made to gain a random sample of DAODAS employees (approximately 10 % of the overall workforce). These employees were brought together for informal focus group to explore these issues and the actual and potential impact on DAODAS employees.

The purpose of the focus groups was two fold (1) to gain an understanding from other employees their believes and knowledge regarding hidden talents and, (2) to gather the specific information on how they learned of employees hidden talents, what those hidden talents are, and the value of knowing this information about other staff members.

As a result of the feedback received through the focus group, specific guidelines were recommended. For example, the names of the employees will not be shared with anyone, nor will their specific responses to any of the questions (APPENDIX-Focus Group). In addition to the focus groups a one-to-one meeting with the HR directors was scheduled. This key stakeholder meeting was critical not only to the project planning, but is also very important for the implementation plan at which time the HR director and DAODAS management team, will be more involved.

### Data Collection

In addition to the information that was informally collected which actually led to this project, three focus groups, and a key stakeholder interview with the Human Resources director (APPENDIX – Interview) were arranged for more formal data collection. During the process, a group of randomly selected DAODAS employees were identified to participate in one of three scheduled meetings. Data collection will be ongoing throughout the planning and implementation of the project. This will begin with the distribution of a voluntary employee survey (APPENDIX- Employee Survey).

Throughout the planning process the information collected will be kept confidential. After implementation is approved focus group members will be invited to serve on the workgroup which will coordinate the data collection.

To initiate the focus group, I sent an e-mail to all DAODAS employees explaining the purpose of the focus group and asking for volunteers to participate. As a result, 15 employees representing a diverse representation ( a range of employees from new to those who have been with the agency over 15 years)of the department responded that they would be willing to participate.

(APPENDIX – Organizational Chart). Employees outlines in red are those who agreed to participate in the focus groups.

### **Implementation Plan**

The table that follows clearly illustrates the activities, methods, resources required, and time frames for the proposed implementation plan. Upon completion of the project and graduation from the CPM program, a follow-up meeting will be scheduled with the Human Resources (HR) Director to continue the discussion of the first phase of implementing the project. The HR Director will be provided with a copy of the completed project for review.

A workgroup will be formed, comprised of the director of education and training, three members from the original focus group along with three other DAODAS staff members will be recommended by their section’s deputy director with input from the HR director. This contribution from key stakeholders will be critical to gaining ongoing support for the implementation. Throughout the implementation plan the workgroup will provide ongoing summary feedback to the HR director, who in turn will share information about the process with all DAODAS staff members on a monthly basis through interagency e-mail.

**TABLE 1**

Activity	Method	Resources Required	Timeline
CPM Graduation	Completion of all CPM requirements	-----	May, 2001
Follow-up Meeting with	Discussion and presentation of full project	Copy of CPM Project and Implementation proposal	June, 2001

HR Director			
Meet with Agency Director	Discussion and presentation of proposal for approval to implement project	Executive Summary of CPM Project Paper and Brief implementation proposal And timeline	June, 2001
Activity	Method	Resources Required	Timeline
Follow-up meeting with focus group members	E-mail to representatives from original focus group to give them an implementation update	Meeting room reserved Executive Summary for implementation plan	June, 2001
Announcement to all DAODAS staff members	E-mail to all staff members with attachment including orientation to proposed plan as a result of the CPM project	Support gained from the focus group participants and key stakeholders	July, 2001
Identification of implementation 7 member workgroup	Focus group members identify three members to serve on workgroup Staff e-mail to supervisors and managers inviting them to submit three additional names for workgroup	Confirmation from three focus group members and three additional staff members First meeting- of monthly meetings	August, 2001
Development of staff assessment tool	Workgroup members designed draft assessment tool	Meeting room reserved	August, 2001
Review of Assessment Tool by HR Department	Share hard copy and e-mail attachment for review and comments	DADOAS shared computer system	September, 2001
Workgroup Meeting	Monthly meetings of workgroup with summary/ minutes presented to HR director for comment and distribution	Meeting rooms reserved. Identify recorder to take minutes at all meetings.	September, 2001
Distribution of employee survey	The survey will be voluntary and distributed via e-mail. The workgroup will determine a benefit for employees who submit completed survey	Distribution of survey on DAODAS shared computer system	September, 2001

Activity	Method	Resources Required	Timeline
Develop process of collection and storage of data	Workgroup meeting; design database; gain approval from key stakeholders and workgroup	Staff input from researcher/evaluator in the DAODAS MIR section	September, 2001
All Data Collected	Surveys, assessment tools and focus group meetings	Development of all instruments	October, 2001
Designed process for sharing information collected	Development of database	DAODAS computer system and staff support from the MIR section	October/November 2001
Implementation of Phase 1 completed	Successful implementation of timeline and first phase of plan. Evaluation report submitted to key stakeholders and workgroup members.	Evaluation summary	December, 2001

### **Evaluation Method**

Both process and outcome evaluation data will be collected throughout the implementation plan of the project. In order to effectively monitor the process, ongoing feedback will be collected through the implementation workgroup and from other DAODAS staff members. The workgroup, comprised of seven staff members will include the director of education and professional development (Joel Urdang), three members of the original focus group, and three additional staff members. Workgroup meetings be held monthly until the implementation of the phase 1 is completed. Each meeting will conclude with the distribution of an evaluation form for each member to complete. The purpose of this process is to collect information on a regular basis, encourage accurate communication, and the ongoing collection of data which will allow for continual process improvement. This in turn will lead to a more structured implementation plan with ongoing feedback that will be used for modifications as needed. In addition, the minutes from each meeting will be shared with the HR director. This will provide general feedback to key stakeholders as this information will be shared monthly through the HR director to the management team. With management team approval, the minutes will then be available to all staff members on a regular basis. This component of the evaluation plan will ensure that key

stakeholders within the agency see the information first, and become familiar with it before it is shared with all staff members through brief monthly updates on the implementation process.

Ongoing evaluation summaries will be provided to both the HR director and the agency director, the two key stakeholders during the implementation plan. They will provide suggestions regarding any modifications that may need to be made in cooperation with guidance from the workgroup. Once the project is underway and implemented additional evaluation measures will be undertaken.

In order to measure the outcome of the efforts related to the plan, the overall effectiveness will be measured utilizing the following approaches:

- (1) A tool will be designed to determine if the program is actually being used by employees. A feedback system will be developed to identify the usage rate of both the assessment to identify the hidden talents as well as the database that identifies the skills, knowledge and resources and their availability.
- (2) A second outcome evaluation tool will be developed for use with supervisors and managers. On six month intervals information will be collected from employees to determine the overall effectiveness of the project since implementation. This information could be collected using one or more of the following strategies: survey questionnaire, one-on-one individual meetings and/or small focus groups. The purpose of this tool would be to measure if there are actually any benefits that can be identified as a result of the implementation and use of the project.

This comprehensive evaluation plan will provide: (1) sufficient information to determine the overall effectiveness of specific implementation strategies, (2) ongoing information and feedback that would support making modifications to the implementation plan throughout phase 1, and (3) a comprehensive picture of the overall utilization rates and specific changes identified among DAODAS staff members as a result of the project.

### Summary

The focus of this project, the identification of employee "hidden talents," the unknown knowledge, skills and resources of state employees is a unique opportunity for DAODAS. The data collected through the focus groups and interview clearly indicates that there is tremendous interest and support for implementation of the project. I am confident that other key stakeholders will share in the excitement and support the effort.

Phase 1 of the implementation plan will focus on the professional hidden talents of our employee population. Based on the interest shown during the focus groups, I anticipate that a Phase 2 plan will be considered after the first year. This phase would include the more personal and non-work related hidden talents of our staff. These related issues were discussed in detail in each of the three focus groups.

The information collected throughout first phase will be shared with DAODAS employees. After the completion of the first years evaluation, I will be releasing an executive summary of the project to other state agency human resource directors for their review and comments.

#### NOTE:

The appendices that follow are included to support the information provided in this paper. Anyone interested in more information regarding this project should contact Joel Urdang directly at (803) 896-5561.

**APPENDIX 1**  
Ask Why 5 Times

1. Why don't we know about the "hidden talents" of DAODAS staff members?
  - At the current time, there is no process in our organization, either within or outside of the human resources section to identify these talents.
  - No one ever asks employees about what they can contribute to the department above and beyond their current job responsibilities.
  - No one asks specific questions regarding skills and resources beyond what is listed on the employees resume.
  
2. Why don't we just ask employees about what skills and talents they may possess that could contribute to the overall goals of the agency?
  - It is not really a part of any employees job responsibility to gather this information
  - During the past five years (my tenure) with DAODAS no one has ever looked at this issue.
  
3. Why don't we take the time?
  - With all of the other more important employee issues at work this is low priority
  
4. Why is it a low priority?
  - Maybe no one has ever even thought to look into this issue
  - Perhaps no one has every brought up the issues prior to this time in any structured setting
  
5. Why do we only focus on the employee's current job description?
  - Good question, sometimes we forget that we bring a whole personal and professional background to the job, much of which may not even be related to our actual job functions although they could contribute to the overall goals an objectives of the department
  - It is really a shame that our employees are not given an opportunity to voluntarily share information about their skills and talents that may be of importance and value to the department.

**DAODAS Employee Survey**

**DRAFT**

The information being collected through this survey is important to the overall goals and objectives of DAODAS and will be used in the development of a new process to identify employee "hidden talents;" the knowledge, skills and resources that employees have, that may not be known which could be of value to the department.

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. How many years/ months have you been employed at DAODAS?  
  
\_\_\_\_\_ years/ months
  
3. If given the opportunity through a structured process, would you be interested in sharing information about yourself, including your professional knowledge, skills and resources that might be of value to the department?  
  
Yes  No
  
4. How would you suggest this information be gathered and/or shared with other staff members?
  
5. Prior to coming to DAODAS, did you ever worked for another SC state agency?  
  
Yes  No   
  
If yes, which agency(s) and for how many years?
  
6. Do you believe that there are DAODAS employees who, if given an opportunity might be willing to contribute to sections within the agency other than the section in which they are employed?
  
7. Do you personally have any "hidden talents," which you are not using at this time, which you believe would be helpful to the overall mission of DAODAS?  
  
Yes  (go to #8)  
  
No  (go to #10)

8. Would you be willing to share your "hidden talents" with the agency, or would you prefer not to get involved?

I would like to share my hidden talents ( go to #9)

I would prefer not to get involved (go to # 10)

9. Please take a few minutes and describe your hidden talents and briefly explain how you could contribute to the overall goals and objectives of DAODAS:

Hidden Talent(s)

Contribution to DAODAS

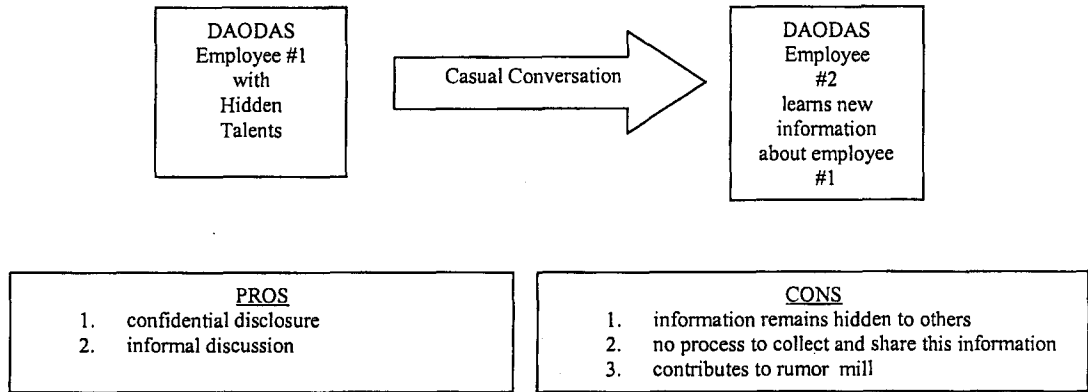
10. There are a number of strategies that could be utilized for collecting information regarding the hidden talents of DAODAS employees. Please check below those that you would like to see implemented at DAODAS (participation in any of these strategies would be voluntary):

- pre-employment assessment as part of job interview
- employee assessment three after employees begin work at DAODAS
- ongoing opportunity for employees to submit this type of information to the human resources office on their own timeframe
- annual employee assessment for all DAODAS employees
- other – please describe

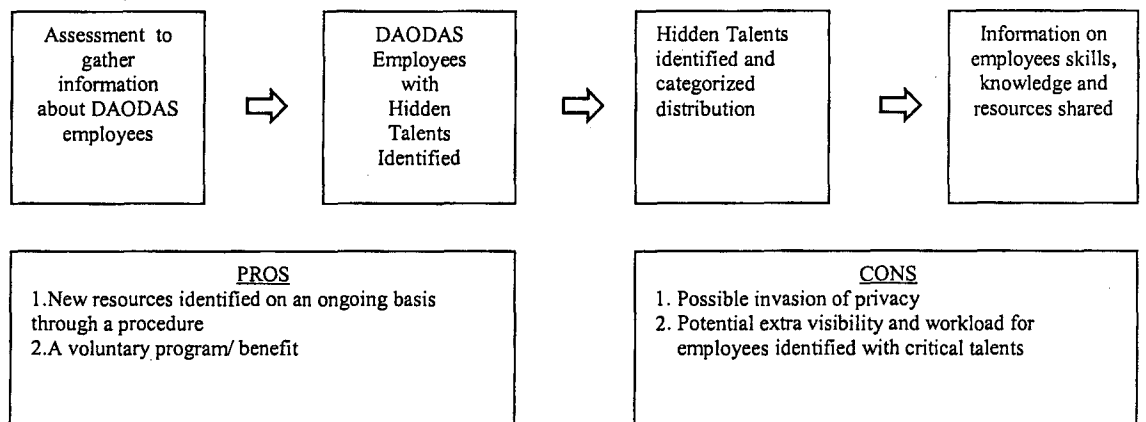
11. If you have any suggestions for the implementation of an assessment that would provide a process to collect information on employee skills, knowledge and resources, please explain below:

**APPENDIX 3**  
Information Flow

Current Flow of Information



Possible Flow of Information



## APPENDIX 4

### Mission

## South Carolina Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services DAODAS

### **Mission**

To ensure the provision of quality services to prevent or reduce the negative consequences of substance use and addictions.

### **Core Values**

- Respect
- Integrity
- Dedication

### **Guiding Principles**

- Addictions are a preventable and treatable disease.
- The citizen-client is always the priority.

The Agency will:

1. provide statewide leadership and assistance on substance use and addiction issues.
2. work collaboratively with the provider system and other partners.
3. foster the special relationship between DAODAS and the 301 provider system.
4. collaboratively ensure to the citizens of South Carolina an internal provider system of accountability.
5. value its employees by providing recognition and professional development in a supportive working environment.

Agency employees will be:

1. mission-focused.
2. professional.
3. culturally competent.
4. team workers.
5. proactive.
6. effective communicators.

### **Overarching Goals**

- Clients in treatment achieve sustainable recovery.
- Citizen attitudes and behaviors leading them to:
  - refrain from use (abstinence).
  - refrain from abuse
  - reduce harm

CPM  
FOCUS GROUP FEEDBACK

The purpose of the focus group was to gather information from the staff members of DAODAS regarding the theory of the "hidden talents." In order to implement the process, an e-mail was sent out to all DAODAS staff members simultaneously to determine the level of interest in participating in a focus group. Although the e-mail was very general, it did state the activity was in reference to my CPM Project and was not directly connected to any DAODAS effort at this time.

The e-mail invited people who were interested in assisting me with my CPM project as a member of a focus group to please respond. Upon getting the responses I set up three different focus groups during the work hours at different times so as to minimize any potential barriers to attendance. I had planned to complete the focus groups within a week with one group scheduled each day. Each focus group was scheduled for 75 minutes and those who were interested could choose from one of the following three times: 8:30 – 9:45 a.m.; 1:00 – 2:15 p.m. or 4:00 – 5:15 p.m. All of the information collected was compiled into one general summary which follows.

Each group began with a brief introduction. During this time I explained the role of the focus group as it applies to my CPM project. In addition, I provided a general overview of the CPM program and my timeline and overall experiences to date. Several people asked questions specifically related to the CPM program, other questions were very general and /or agency specific.

In the general overview and introductions I introduced my hypothesis that I believed that each employee comes to work with "hidden talents." Each person was asked to introduce themselves and mention one or two of their hidden talents, either personal or professional, that no one in the room knew about them at this time. For several participants this proved to be challenging, however most staff members were very comfortable with this process. Before the conclusion it was obvious that the staff members had hidden talents and each person at the table was surprised by some of the information we learned about our co-workers.

I led the focus group questions and facilitated the resulting discussions and dialog. The formal questions were as follows:

1. *Do you agree with my hypothesis that employees have both personal and professional "hidden talents?"*

With the option of responding yes or no, all focus group members responded to this questions by saying, "yes."

2. *Do you believe that by discovering hidden talents among our staff that we could improve employee moral as a result of identifying and sharing those personal hidden talents that may be of interest and benefit to others in the department?*
3. *Do you believe that by discovering hidden talent among our staff that we could design a process to share the information with the possibility of adding to the overall knowledge base of our agency, thereby allowing us to increase our services without increasing staff (this could be particularly important during these lean budget times).*
4. *Are you aware of any employees here at DAODAS who have hidden talents?*

## FOCUS GROUP FEEDBACK SUMMARY

### Are you aware of any hidden talents among our employees here at DAODAS?

(Note: In two of the groups participants requested the hidden talents of employee spouses be included, so they are...In addition, several participants recommended that we not discuss their personal issues at all)

### Talent

- Staff members who are in recovery from alcohol and other drug addiction  
(confidentiality issues will apply to these staff members)

- Foreign languages
  - Spanish
  - Dutch
  - French
  - German
  
- Military background including retirees- transport  
(helpful during recent agency relocation)
- Counselors/ Therapists (some in private practice)
- Athletics/ Sports
  - Aerobics
  - Walking and Running
  - Golf
  - Biking
  - Canoeing and Kayaking
  - Softball
  - Basketball (Professional)
- Bird watching
- Nursing
- Physical therapy
- Chiropractic
- Home builder
- International travel experience
- Teachers/ trainers
- Musicians/ singers
- Law enforcement
- Potential for car pooling
- Radio/ disc jockey
- Drama/ theatre/ movies
- Clergy
- Arts and crafts
- Gardening
- Genealogy
- Seamstress/ sewing
- Mary Kaye sales
- Interior decorating
- Advertising agency experience
- Vegetarianism
- Food and nutrition knowledge

- Animal lovers (Dogs, cats, etc)
- Previous employment with the county service delivery system
- Scuba certified
- Water Safety Instructors (WSI) /Lifeguard
- CPR and First Aid certified

**If we discover “hidden talents” can that lead to an improvement in morale?**

- contributing to the department and fellow employees may help people to feel better about themselves
- being appreciated by the organization and co-workers
- increase camaraderie among employees
- hidden talents are usually something you like to do therefore makes you feel better about yourself
- makes you a happier person/ employee – this can be contagious
- in state government there is limited social interaction, therefore lowered morale
- this needs to be a “bonding vehicle” – consider that the employee relationships are important in the bonding and the use of hidden talents
- employees will be interacting to help each other
- first identify the hidden talents, share that information, this in turn could benefit the agency – if the information that is collected is open to be shared by the employee who submits the “data”
- management could take advantage of the information collected, this could be a sensitive issue/ area
- there are unforeseen benefits and pitfalls of this issue- the interactions are more complicated than initially believed
- work related and non-work related, it could be connected to \$\$\$\$

**Does discovering hidden talents improve the overall agency and lead toward its mission?**

- General feedback indicated that YES this is so
- Take a survey of hidden talents, convert to database and set-up with key words for access.

**How do you learn about the hidden talents at DAODAS?**

- by “accident” while speaking with the co-worker directly
- while preparing for the holiday/ Christmas party.....sharing roles
- employee meetings
- “whine and cheese party”
- on site visits – usually while having supper together at night or while traveling in the car
- in this focus group
- observations
- identified over time through no planned process
- in the employee break/ lunch room
- at the present time there is limited social interaction due to the design/ physical layout of the building
- the radio
- softball team
- after work
- breaks/ smoke breaks
- ask for it

- e-mails (announcements about staff members)
- newsletters
- full staff meeting announcements
- informal social conversations
- gossip
- the “rumor mill”

**How can we gather information regarding hidden talents at DAODAS?**

- after hiring, through a meeting and survey with the human resources staff
  - Perhaps with a simple questions like, “what else would you like to be known about you?”
- the collection of their “data” would be voluntary, employees may choose not to participate and that would be OK
- consider surveying all staff – this would be less personal, less threatening, therefore could possibly gain more information – e-mail could be sent out to solicit responses
- Put a team together to develop/ design a staff survey
- Survey could be done by e-mail
- Request “personal and professional” hidden talents – not everyone has professional talents that they can/ or want to share
- Include hobbies and interests
- Reference other jobs; past employment history
- Include DAODAS disclaimer.....personal use at your own risk.....professional not obligated
- Include a reference network that goes beyond hidden talents – resources that employees are familiar with to be shared
- Send out a questionnaire by e-mail, this will imply voluntary participation and allow staff members to take the time to complete it, or just delete
- Collection of data could be accomplished on the job through small interactive group meetings- this way people get to meet each other, share and interact.....each group would need a facilitator
- ID a social event for sharing, this could help to eliminate any barriers to participation
- Always ask the question, do you want you talent known to the DAODAS public?

**How often could this information be collected?**

- 1 – 2 times/ year would accommodate staff turnover and related staffing interests
- any employees hidden talents should be able to be added and/or removed as requested by that employee

**How could the information be shared/ utilized after it is gathered?**

- design a database (current staff members could assist) that would have a “key word” search
- available to all DAODAS staff members on a shared drive
- one staff member could enter all data and maintain the information

**APPENDIX 6**  
Interview

**Interview with DAODAS Human Resource Director**

- (1) Do you agree with my hypothesis that DAODAS employees have personal and professional “hidden talents?”

Response Summary

Absolutely.

- (2) Do you believe that by discovering hidden talents among DAODAS staff members that we could improve moral?

Response Summary

Yes, I believe that we could improve moral by allowing employees to serve as a resource to the department. This would lead to a greater sense of contribution by employees. In turn we would be building a true team concept, going against the we vs. them, thereby building relationships. There aren't really any negatives associated with this concept. At the present time we don't encourage this opportunity. We need to create an environment that is conducive to this approach to help employees feel accepted. As a result we will be demonstrating a willingness to help fellow employees, thus improving moral.

- (3) How do you currently learn about DAODAS employee hidden talents?

Response Summary

There are only a few ways that I hear of these issues including, word of mouth, networking, the times when employees volunteer to share this type of information, and sometimes it is included on a resume.

- (4) Do you have any ideas on how we can identify employee hidden talents?

**Response Summary**

It is important to involve others, consider designing a “workgroup.” Make a presentation showing how we plan to implement the process and include folks with different backgrounds from different fields. The process on identifying hidden talents could be a part of the job interview. This could include general questions, which would allow applicants an opportunity to show creativity and innovativeness and a willingness to contribute to the overall benefit of the department. Questions may include - What are your ideas, or do you have any other knowledge skills or resources that we have not already discussed that you believe would be of benefit to the department? If so, please tell us how they would benefit. Again this could provide details regarding the applicant's creativity, innovation and enthusiasm. If the interview process came down to two final candidates, this process could create a safe environment for sharing and provide the information that could identify the best candidate.

**(5) How do you suggest that we collect information on the hidden talents of our current employees?**

Response Summary

This question could be presented to the "workgroup." Providing the information should be voluntary for DAODAS employees. We need to be clear as to why we are doing this so that employees understand why and where and what the information they provide is going to be used for within the department. Perhaps this whole concept could be tied into the employees EPMS. On the DAODAS computer/shared drive, we could provide an assessment tool that all employees would have access to at any time. Based on their comfort level they could submit the information at their leisure; when they felt most comfortable with the process.

**(6) After collecting the information on hidden talents, how do you suggest that we share it among DAODAS employees?**

Response Summary

Employees need to be told upfront early in the process that the information they provide will be shared. We could set up some sort of database by codes. Employees could search for in-house talent by typing in a keyword search. This could be connected to training topics and trainers who are identified. All employees would have access to the database and it could be used for different purposes. Perhaps there is a way that this could be tied into career development once we identify talents and gaps employees could share and grow personally and professionally.

**APPENDIX 6**  
Organizational Chart  
(attached)