

Monday's Service Champion is the Georgia Department of Transportation

Committed to moving people and goods through the State in a timely and efficient manner, the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) is now moving applicants even faster through a new tool to fill its job vacancies. GDOT has recently been designated a Super User of the State's Applicant Tracking System (ATS), a new recruiting and selection tool named Team Georgia Careers (TGC) that went live February of 2015. Recent metrics have shown GDOT has had more requisitions and resulting hires so far than any other State entity that has used TGC. So, how have they been so successful?

Previously, GDOT used an internal manual recruiting system that only allowed the agency to post and advertise jobs. Because they received thousands of applications each month for review, GDOT was looking for a system that would provide a more efficient procedure and allow them to do it all...post, track, and report. When the Human Resources Administration (HRA) announced the State would have an enterprise applicant tracking system, they decided that was the answer.

GDOT volunteered to be part of the TGC start-up process. Dana Kilpatrick, GDOT's Recruitment Manager, participated in an Agency Advisory Group with HRA for nine months, both before and after implementation. Ms. Kilpatrick provided valuable feedback that assisted with development of TGC throughout the implementation project. She was also one of the agency representatives who attended and tested the functionality of the tool during prototyping, and then returned to attend TCG Train the Trainer sessions. Ms. Kilpatrick subsequently trained the GDOT recruiting staff in the functionality of the tool. GDOT implemented the tool immediately when it was launched and fully embraced TGC.

All positions, including vacancies open only to internal candidates, are posted at first on TGC. GDOT recognizes that the tool offers a positive experience for applicants. They can apply online, even using a smartphone, and can keep informed up to the minute of where they are in the hiring process. For highly specialized positions that could benefit from posting on other recruitment sites, TGC has the flexibility to allow recruiters to feed the vacancy announcement to certain outside sites.

One of GDOT staff's favorite features of TGC is the ability to screen applicants by requiring them to answer questions included with the vacancy announcement. HR staff partner with hiring managers to develop these questions, which help them identify which applicants are most qualified (on paper) for a vacancy. The analysts become subject matter experts and share tips and information with each other on a daily basis as they build their cadre of screening questions. Ms. Kilpatrick says, pre-screening questions are a "godsend" since they also increase hiring efficiency as they allow GDOT to quickly eliminate unqualified candidates.

What was the primary selling point for TGC? Monica Ivey, HR Director says, "Our goal is to streamline the hiring process. The system allows us to do that." GDOT finds the ability to prescreen applicants by electronic means, rather than the slow process of paper review, a huge benefit of the tool. It also allows the agency to be able to automatically send status notifications to applicants to cut down on phone calls and other time consuming inquiries. A big advantage is that the analyst can send candidates that meet the minimum or preferred qualifications to hiring managers sooner.

The tool also allows for less paperwork from a transaction standpoint as everything is done electronically. During the recruiting and selection process, GDOT uses individualized templates for notifications from interview invitations, to job offers, to on-boarding requirements. Furthermore, the ability to integrate with PeopleSoft HCM for system onboarding is a plus.

GDOT now advances candidates all the way through the TGC selection workflow. Completing the cycle from requisition to on-boarding has made a difference in time management and efficiency. The ability to know where a candidate is in the hiring process at any time and if he or she has applied elsewhere in the State has been extremely helpful. It is a bonus to have access to resumes of skilled applicants that might be a good fit at a later date.

According to Ms. Ivey, TGC “saves time so the staff can focus on what’s more important. Analysts are now more focused on the strategic process for finding the best and most qualified candidates.” TGC enables GDOT to ask and answer the following questions:

- 1) What is my primary source of talent of the job posted?
- 2) Am I attracting quality talent? (ACE candidates)
- 3) Is my talent pool healthy?
- 4) Should I target a new talent source (perhaps a social media change) or a new demographic to improve talent provided to hiring managers?
- 5) How well am I servicing hiring managers? (Time-to-fill)

GDOT will be able to validate the quality of their hires through TGC when it conducts performance evaluations on the staff and monitors turnover in the positions filled.

Ms. Ivey attributes GDOT’s success as a Super User of TGC to the HR team’s efforts. “They were willing to take the risk and embrace the system as a team. They trained together and shared experiences.” But the HR Analysts added that no matter how excellent the team, without the leadership behind it, they would not succeed.

Who should use TGC? GDOT HR staff encourages other entities that are hesitant to use the tool to become educated on the tool and “at least try it.”