



APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 3, 2019.** Please include this application form with electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact Gage Harter.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Powhatan County

Program Title: Flywheel Team Energizes Organizational Development

Program Category: Organizational Development

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Theodore Voorhees

Title: County Administrator

Signature: 

Nomination for 2019 VACo Achievement Award

This application is submitted on behalf of the Powhatan County “Flywheel Team” for their work in the area of Organizational Development. The work described in the application started in 2017 and is a continuing project of leadership development, employee engagement, performance management and teamwork for Powhatan County.

Challenge

Following an executive leadership change in 2017, a need for capacity to address organizational development, systems, training, leadership development, and employee engagement was identified. As a small local government, no existing staff resources were available and dedicated to the mission of organizational development. There were no regular county-wide programs in these areas and no framework of governance to make sure development was occurring on an enterprise level. Few departments and offices within the County have the opportunity, funding and time to address the needs of not only their office, but also other departments. In order to implement a model that suited the needs of various offices, there needed to be buy-in and collaborative thinking that could connect the dots of underlying issues to develop relevant solutions. This need for innovative problem-solving created the basis for what would become known as the Flywheel Team.

Named after a concept in Jim Collins’ seminal work Good to Great, County Administrator Ted Voorhees formed a group of individuals from each office that were willing to step into a leadership/innovation group to collaborate on ideas and initiate programs to address these

issues. The nine member group ranges from less experienced to experienced and from supervisory to non-supervisory across various county functions. The “Flywheel Concept” is about changing the mindset of how something that seems impossible can be turned into movement with speed, and move the impossible towards an achievable goal. It describes how driving a new strategy is like getting a huge flywheel into motion. Initially, there is no movement – many people think that the strategy is absurd – it is almost impossible to imagine the flywheel at speed. But with consistent and focused effort, small results get the flywheel moving. They appear small and trivial initially, but create the credibility to move to more ambitious results. As more and more results accumulate, more and more people throw their weight behind the wheel and the momentum of the flywheel builds and builds. This was the very concept that the Flywheel Team was enacted to do by starting with small steps and working to create solutions to problems that would achieve larger organizational goals.

Powhatan’s Flywheel Team has been successful in achieving many of the goals sought by the County Administrator for organizational change and innovation. Throughout the formation of the team there have been five different organizational projects accomplished and more in the works.

Performance Management/Strategic Planning

The County held a strategic planning workshop for the Board of Supervisors on December 7th, 2017. The major goal areas identified by the Board included the implementation of an economic development program, expanding access to broadband, improving quality of life services (Fire & Rescue, Library and Recreation) and promoting housing choice. Additionally, support from the Board was received to embark on a journey to implement performance-based budgeting as way to hold the organization accountable for making progress in each of these goal

areas. Performance metrics were developed by Flywheel Team members in conjunction with relevant departmental stakeholders. This included forming a committee to break the measures down to different departments that could provide the data to address the current and future measurements. This effort became the foundation for performance-based budgeting in the County. By modeling how to create performance metrics and a reporting scorecard, the Flywheel Team had a hand in the formation of the steps taken to transition all County departments from a line item-based budget to performance-based.

Organizational Values

Another identified opportunity from the Board of Supervisors strategic planning session was to develop organizational values that would address the County as a whole and could be incorporated into all areas of the organization. Adoption of these values started with employee nomination of values to be considered as part of the annual “all-hands” health benefits meeting. After ranking and sharing definitions with employees through county-wide email, those suggestions were then taken to a voting platform during a County employee picnic where employees were given the opportunity to vote for their top three values. Values such as teamwork, innovation, passion to transparency and more were voted on. The final tally resulted in the following employee-generated list of core organizational values which are now being incorporated into performance evaluations and the annual employee recognition event:

- Integrity
- Positive Attitude
- Teamwork
- Customer Service
- Accountability

Employee Engagement Survey

A survey aiming to assess the temperature of employees and their work environment, and their level of engagement and satisfaction with their work environment was also initiated by the Flywheel Team. A sub-committee of employees was formed to develop the questions and then turn the execution over to the entire Flywheel Team. This survey resulted in identified areas of success, as well as areas of opportunity for improvement, which overall revealed highly appreciated and valued employees. The Flywheel Team evaluated responses, condensed the results and is planning a roll-out and celebration of the project in June, 2019.

Enterprise-wide Training

The team debated the most important topics of best workplace practices, as well as the basics of human resources requirements. After discussing and researching various options, the Flywheel Team decided to pilot a training in Lean Management in spring of 2018 to gain experience in offering a county-wide development opportunity. The response by the more than 30 employees who attended was very positive, which supported further development of this concept. Polling departmental leaders revealed a need for training in areas such as ensuring a respectful workplace and customer service. Through the Flywheel Team, an enterprise-wide training program was developed for FY2019. After consideration of different proposals from private and public entities, the team choose to enlist the help of Chesterfield County's Learning & Performance Center to administer two separate County-wide trainings on Customer Service and Respectful Workplace. Both trainings were scheduled and executed by the team within four months' time with successful participation from nearly 80% of the workforce from various departments throughout the County.

Employee Morale Boosters

Throughout working on various projects through the Flywheel Team, the team also focused efforts on celebrating milestone achievements. Small gatherings for employees were planned to recognize the participation and achievements of projects. One larger example is the re-formed County Picnic for employees which incorporated the organizational values project and offered an opportunity for everyone to relax and engage with other colleagues and their families. The result was a well-appreciated event attended by over 100 employees. The June 11th celebration of the results of the employee engagement survey is another event being planned by the Flywheel Team as a way to bring employees together to hear the positive outcomes of an organization's efforts.

Conclusion

Through the Flywheel Team's efforts, the level of employee engagement has resulted in positive results for the organization's development. The commitment of the group has led to productivity, innovation and collaboration from departments of varying workload and purpose to come up with attainable goals that benefit the organization as a whole. Where no dedicated organizational development capacity existed before, and without adding new staff, Powhatan County now has employees aligned toward a common purpose of developing our workforce and our organizational capacity for innovation and performance. The key to successful organizational development is engagement of employees to become more than just an employee, but rather a part of the organization that values the employee's experience. The work done by Powhatan County in the past year shows the commitment and dedication to improving the organization and developing models that are sustainable for the future.

This model is one that is attainable and adaptable to other localities who wish to incorporate various members of the organization to achieve desired goals. The formation of a varied group of colleagues who take on tasks in an engaged fashion create an open dialogue for problem-solving and genuine ideas. This speaks to more than just organizational development as a whole, but also teambuilding and succession planning through leadership development within the organization.

Executive Summary

A need for capacity to address organizational development, systems, training, leadership development, and employee engagement was identified following executive leadership changes in Powhatan County. As a small local government, no existing staff resources were available and dedicated to the mission of organizational development. This need for innovative problem-solving created the basis for what would become known as the Flywheel Team.

Named after a concept in Jim Collins' seminal work Good to Great, a group of individuals was formed to collaborate on ideas and initiate programs to address these issues. The nine member group ranges from less experienced to experienced, and from supervisory to non-supervisory, across various county functions. The "Flywheel Concept" describes how driving a new strategy is like getting a huge flywheel into motion. Initially, there is no movement – many people think that the strategy is absurd – it is almost impossible to imagine the flywheel at speed. But with consistent and focuses effort, small results get the flywheel moving. They appear small and trivial initially, but create the credibility to move to more ambitious results. As more and more results

accumulate, more and more people throw their weight behind the wheel and the momentum of the flywheel builds and builds. This was the very concept that the Flywheel Team was enacted to do by starting with small steps and working to create solutions to problems that would achieve larger organizational goals. Powhatan's Flywheel Team has been successful in linking Performance Management with Strategic Planning, developing Organizational Values through employee input, creating and deploying an Employee Engagement Survey, identifying and implementing an Enterprise-wide Training Program, and organizing Employee Morale Boosters to enhance employee engagement and appreciation.

Brief Overview

As a small local government with no existing staff resources available and dedicated to the mission of organizational development, Powhatan County's Flywheel Team, a nine member cross-departmental group of employees from different levels within the organization has been successful in achieving many of the goals sought by the County Administrator for organizational change and innovation. Throughout the formation of the team there have been five different projects accomplished in the areas of linking performance management with strategic planning, developing organizational values through employee input, creating and deploying an employee engagement survey, identifying and implementing an enterprise-wide training program, and organizing employee morale boosters to enhance employee engagement and appreciation. Without adding staff, the Flywheel Team has shown how employees can use creativity, partner with others, and innovate to develop their organization and fellow employees.

DESCRIPTION OF POWHATAN COUNTY

Originally settled by French Huguenots in the early 1700s, Powhatan County was created by The Virginia General Assembly in 1777. The County was named in honor of the Indian Chief Powhatan, father of Pocahontas. Located in Virginia's Central Piedmont between the Appomattox and James Rivers, Powhatan is 20 miles west of Richmond and is a short drive to perfect.