

## **Hill Oakland Collaborative Job Links**

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Community Partner, Daryl Daughtry

### **1. The Consulting Situation**

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#### **About the Organization**

Mission Statement: *The Hill-Oakland Workforce Collaborative exists to promote and sustain high quality employment, training, and career development services that benefit lower income individuals and employers for whom they work.*

Hill-Oakland Workforce Collaborative Job Links (Job Links) is an organization that was established in 1989 by Oakland Planning and Development Corporation and Breachmenders Inc. to address the needs of the unemployed, under-employed, and under served citizens in their communities. Job Links has grown to become an employment resources center of choice for many job seekers inside and outside of the Oakland and Hill areas. Job Links currently receives funding from Pittsburgh Partners for Neighborhood Development (PPND), City of Pittsburgh and a grant through the Howard Heinz Endowment. The main focus of Job Links is to assist job seekers in obtaining stable solid jobs mainly in the Medical/Health field.

Darryl Daughtry is the Executive Director of the Hill-Oakland Workforce Collaborative Job Links. Under him, there are six full-time and two part-time employees, as well as one part-time Community Service worker.

#### ***Facilities***

Job Links provides a variety of services for job seekers so that they may be able to compete in the local and regional labor market. Job Links has a career navigation program designed to assist job seekers with not only searching for a job but also gaining skills in order to help find a better job. For instance they offer the following programs:

- Computer Fundamentals I and II (introduce students to the world of computers)
- Keyboarding
- CPR
- Medical Terminology
- Adult Basic Education (helps students strengthen their skills in reading, writing, and math)
- Healthcare Employment Access Program (HEAP) ( focuses on one-on-one career development, placement and retention)

In addition, HEAP maintains communication with local health care employers. Job Links also focuses on helping non-native English speakers gain entry into the workforce. There are classes where they can learn English as a second language and familiarize themselves with the cultural dynamics of the American society.

#### ***Staff***

Job Links employs six full-time and two part-time employees, as well as one part-time Community Service worker. Most employees are comfortable with the software they use daily, primarily for email and word-processing purposes. More specific computer use is noted below:

- Darryl Daughtry is the Executive Director of the Hill-Oakland Workforce Collaborative Job Links, and oversees all Job Links programs. His computer use is fundamentally email and web use, and word processing, and at times he also assists with some of the classes such as CPR.
- JoAnn Fountain is the Career Coordinator. She is in charge of meeting with job seekers and talking to them about their career options based on their current skills.
- Linh Quach is Programming Coordinator of HEAP. She assists community individuals who expressed an interest in seeking employment in the health care industry. She usually uses MS Word and Access in her daily projects.
- Tonia Suber-Parker is the Program Coordinator of HEAP. She usually uses MS Word in her daily duties.
- Christopher M. Kendell is the Program Coordinator of Special Contracts. He usually uses Microsoft Access in his work.
- Doug Penhallegon is the Education Coordinator of Job Links. He also gives intensive academic instruction for job seekers interested in obtaining their GEDs. As far as computer skills, he has a solid technical background. He is familiar with MS Office and even has some web page designing skills.

## **Current Technology Status**

### ***Technical Environment***

Job Links currently has a small computer cluster in the basement of their office. There are about seven computers in the cluster. These seven machines all are 1.2 GHz machines. They all have CD-ROM and floppy drives. All the machines run Windows 95, and are equipped with the Microsoft Office Suite. Other software, such as Mavis Typing Tutorial, is installed as needed. All computers are networked to a Linux server. In addition there are three other machines used upstairs. Two of the machines are used at the receptionist desk. They both run Windows 98 and are equipped with Microsoft Office Suite. Daryl Daughtry also carries a notebook computer, which he primarily uses at work. Mr. Daughtry uses programs such as Internet Explorer Outlook and MS Office on his notebook. In addition he has recently connected his notebook computer to the internet by using wireless connection. There is also a printer and fax that is used in the receptionist area.

### ***Technical Management***

Job Links's website (<http://www.cdpn.net/joblinks.html>) was created and is maintained by the FREEdLANCE Group. Employees first attempt any other technical support, and if they are unable to solve the problem, Danni Okonowo, who is the systems administrator, is contacted for technical support. In addition, Danni Okonowo also teaches the Computer Fundamentals classes on Wednesday and Monday. She usually comes to the office three days of the week. In addition, Daryl Daughtry helps with dropping wires and Danni Okonowo assists with setting up and maintaining the computers at Job Links. Mrs. Okonowo is responsible for upgrading and installing new software as well as backing up the computers at Job Links. In addition, there are problems concerning viruses on the computer. There is no protective software at the moment, which can protect against computer viruses on the machines and on the internet. A full backup usually runs weekly every Friday.

### ***Technology Planning***

Creating a lasting technology plan is one of the goals of this partnership, as the organization is working on expanding their use of technology. Primarily Daryl Daughtry, who is the Executive

Director of Job Links, would be ultimately responsible for the planning, budgeting and implementation of a technology plan.

### ***Internal and External Communications***

All of Job Links' computers are on a network and currently connect to the Internet through a DSL modem on a single second phone line. There is peer to peer file sharing and in addition there is only one email that is currently utilized by the staff ([joblinks@opdc.org](mailto:joblinks@opdc.org)). Daryl Daughtry has his own email account as well ([darryl\\_daughtry@hotmail.com](mailto:darryl_daughtry@hotmail.com)). In addition, Mrs. Okonowo has set up Outlook email accounts for the Job Links staff but they are not being used at the moment. As far as internal communication, the staff of Job Links can contact each other by person or by oral communication through their desk telephones. When contacting Job Seekers, the staff of Job Links either mails them information or reaches them by telephone, where the first line is used.

### ***Information Management***

At Job Links, there is no internal financing that the staff is responsible for. All financing is maintained by an accountant from OPDC([Oakland Planning & Development Corporation](#)). At the moment, there are databases for each of the projects the staff works on. There is not a centralized database that conglomerates all the other databases' information. The databases usually contain information about different job Seekers, who are involved in one or more of the Job Links programs.

### **The Consulting Focus**

#### ***Task 1: Developing and Implementing Cross Training Skills Plan for members of the Job Links Staff***

##### ***Task:***

The staff members of Job Links are dependent on the use of computer software, such as Microsoft Office, to carry out their daily tasks. It is important that certain staff members of Job Links be trained to use components of this software to be able to handle different office duties. In addition to the present software being used, all staff members will be able to utilize the basic features of Microsoft Outlook. The consulting task at hand is to develop certain staff members' capacities as far as handling relevant features of different packages, and identify ways that staff members can fine tune their technical skills and integrate Microsoft Outlook into the Job Links work environment.

##### ***Approach:***

The initial stages of this training plan will vary between staff members, as all are at different stages of understanding. This cross training plan is a reasonable goal as there are few staff members who are in need of much technology training. The approach to this task is as follows:

- Approach selected staff members and note their computer use and any areas in which deeper understanding could be helpful
- Create training plan based on weaknesses in computer knowledge (ex: using templates in Microsoft Word to build multiple resumes for job seekers)
- Assess and identify certain staff members of Job Links who are in need of improving upon their technology skills weaknesses
- Understand what skills exactly these staff members need to learn
- Work out times with staff members so that special group or one-on-one sessions can be arranged between them and other staff members, the CP or consultant.

- In addition, work with CP on learning the different useful features of Microsoft Outlook that will be useful to the Job Links work environment.
- CP and consultant demonstrate necessary basic features of Microsoft Outlook to staff members.

Using this new found knowledge, the staff of Job Links will be able to utilize Outlook features to suit their office needs.(ie. All staff members using Microsoft Outlook calendar system)

***Impact:***

Organization:

Employees with better understanding of the how technology is used in the organization will be a benefit to the organization. In addition to more efficient use of the current databases and Office software capabilities, some staff members might better understand the potential of the computer they are using.

Staff:

All staff undergoing technology training will be more satisfied with their understanding of the technology they are using at their job. Staff will be more confident on software they do not use daily for job and in addition will be to assist each other in solving any computer software problems they may encounter. Lastly, they will be more aware of what can be accomplished using the technology that they currently have. As a result of achieving these outcomes, the staff of Job Links will be able to utilize technology in a more efficient manner to better serve the clients of Job Links. The CP will be able to use his knowledge of Microsoft Outlook to carry out his executive tasks in a more orderly way. For instance, the use of the calendar feature will help in scheduling many appointments the CP has. In addition, the CP will be able to share his knowledge of Outlook with other staff members so that the staff altogether will be able to use this software to their benefit. Some of these benefits will help them as a staff communicate faster and more efficiently than by just using oral communication. In addition, individual staff members will be able to improve upon/fine tune their knowledge thus far as well as gain additional skills that come with being able to handle many software packages. These staff members will also be able to share their skills and knowledge to other staff members including the CP at Job Links. This will also be beneficial to staff members as far as being able to demonstrate their technical skills to their colleagues by using their oral communication skills.

Internal and External Communications:

External communications will be unaffected. Internal communications may improve as the staff becomes more accustomed to the features of Microsoft Outlook. However, as the office primarily uses phones to communicate internally, no significant changes may occur.

## **2. Outcomes and Recommendations**

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***Task 1: Developing and Implementing Cross Training Skills Plan for members of the Job Links Staff***

***Task***

Hill-Oakland Collaborative Job Links relies on computers to carryout its core mission: providing services to job seekers in the Oakland District and the rest of Pittsburgh area. In order to make Job Links a successful organization, each of the staff members has to carry out their duties to the

best of their abilities. While it is necessary for each staff member of Job Links to be proficient in his or her own individual job, it is also important for staff to be knowledgeable of each others tasks, some of which require certain computer software. Some topics could use explanation such as the capabilities of Microsoft Office and Outlook. In addition, it is better if staff members work together and are able to share their skills and knowledge to each other (including the CP at Job Links). This will also be beneficial to staff members as it will allow them to demonstrate their technical skills to their colleagues by using their oral communication skills. This type of improved computer understanding would benefit the organization. The staff will be more confident on their computers, and more able to carry out their job functions, such as entering and managing client data.

The consulting task at hand is to develop certain staff members' capacities as far as handling relevant features of different packages, and identify ways that staff members can fine tune their technical skills and integrate Microsoft Outlook into the Job Links work environment through a training plan. The initial stages of this training plan will vary between staff members, as all are at different stages of understanding. This cross training plan is a reasonable goal as there are few staff members who are in need of technology training.

### ***Outcomes***

Both the consultant and the community partner sat down and assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the certain staff of Job Links. They selected staff members and noted their computer use and any areas in which deeper understanding could be helpful. Following this, the consultant and Daryl Daughtry created a training plan that would have staff members, including the community partner and consultant, work either one-on-one or in groups to facilitate learning. While this task is not yet completed, progress has been made as far as training a few members of the Job Links staff to work with certain relevant software packages. Unfortunately, the consultant was not able to work with some of the staff members because of scheduling conflicts on both ends. However the individuals who worked with the consultant have expressed greater understanding of how to format Microsoft Word reports, use help menus, and utilize software wizards to build documents from templates. They will now be able to slowly incorporate their new knowledge into their work duties. For instance, the Job Links receptionist can use Microsoft Word resume templates to build resumes instead of manually constructing a new one each time a different job seeker needs one.

In addition, the consultant and community partner were able to come together and work through the basics of Microsoft Outlook. By learning these basic features, the community partner has been able to utilize these skills in his work and demonstrate these basic skills to the rest of the staff at Job Links. These skills include such actions as setting up an Outlook account on the computer or sending email with attachments. Also the community partner is now able to utilize the special calendar feature within Microsoft Outlook. Since the staff, other than the CP, all have desktop computers, once the community partner explains this feature to them, they will be able to use the Outlook calendar on their own computers. Through this feature, the staff of Job Links, including the community partner will be able to better arrange their schedules, meetings, and appointments with Job Seekers. In addition, by using the calendar feature, the staff of Job Links will not have to use paper schedule books to make appointments. By the end of the year, all the staff of Job Links will just utilize Microsoft Outlook calendar to configure their schedules.

### ***Evidence of Sustainable Expanded Capacity***

Job Links wants to ensure quality service to its Job Seekers. In order to add to their technical knowledge, they are committed to working with this plan as close as possible to achieve their goals. Their commitment to the continuation of this plan has been shown through:

- Certain members of Job Links have been able to use Microsoft Office better. For instance, Tracey, the Job Links receptionist, now can use Microsoft Word resume templates as opposed to making one from scratch every time a new Job Seeker needs a copy.
- The community partner is now knowledgeable in the basics of Microsoft Outlook and can use this program to better organize his daily meetings and appointments at Job Links.
- Through cooperative learning, the staff of Job Links is now able to incorporate Microsoft Outlook's features (such as email and the shared calendar) into their job routines. For instance, if a change to a staff member's schedule needs to be made, the receptionist can now use the updating feature in Microsoft Outlook's Calendar to make quick changes to the staff members calendar and not have to orally inform him or her of this change.

### ***Recommendations***

If the training plan cannot be completed within the time frame of the partnership, I would recommend that the community partner take efforts to complete it. The community partner can work in groups to facilitate in helping other staff members improve upon their technology skills. Different staff members can help one another in working to fine tune their knowledge of the features of the software packages they use daily so that they will be able to manage their data more data more efficiently. There are some staff members who have expressed a strong interest in this and are even willing to come on Saturday mornings to work together to improve their skills and knowledge. For instance they would both sit together and explore many other features(Notes, Contacts) in Outlook that would be useful to them to incorporate into their daily work duties at Job Links. Since there are less than 10 employees, this kind of cooperative learning will be sustainable. In one instance this can promote better relationships between the staff of Job Links by learning together. Even if new employees are incorporated into Job Links, they will be able to pick up these skills by learning from their coworkers in this fashion.

### **Additional Recommendations**

1. Use low cost but efficient anti-virus software to clean and maintain virus-free Job Links computers.

Job Links has specifically allocated a room in the basement with computers for job seekers so that they can learn and practice these skills that they pick up through classes at Job Links. In addition, the staff at Job Links use computers to carry out certain tasks such as altering job seeker resumes, keeping account of job seekers who sign up for Job Links classes and programs such as HEAP (Healthcare Employment Access Program) and many others. However, it is important that these computers be reliable and not a hindrance to learning and working. Unfortunately, all the desktop computers at Job Links are infected with many computer viruses and other troubleshooting problems. Purchasing cost efficient and effective anti-virus software will help in clearing these viruses.

The following implementation should be taken to address this issue:

- Assess what computers need to be cleaned of viruses and need troubleshooting
- Research what software would best suit the Job Links computers
- Find out how to obtain this software(though Best Buy, Comp USA etc or even online)

Online sites include:

<http://www.TechSoup.org> (which offers discounted prices on software to non-profit organizations)

- Maintain a list of the costs of different anti-virus software at online sites or stores
- Analyze what product is efficient to clean the viruses and within the budget allocated to Job Links. For instance through independent research, Norton Anti-Virus is cost efficient and has many additional features that can be utilized by Job Links. The "Corporate" edition for Norton has many valuable features. For instance, one PC can be set up on the network to automatically update virus definitions on all of the other PCs on a local area network. Since Job Links computers are connected by a local area network, this is one option that could be considered.
- If product is purchased, install and customize as needed