Regional Partnerships: Bringing Affordable Leadership Training Behind the Redwood Curtain

 Partnerships

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\*We would like to have this case study considered for an Innovation Award

Rural counties encounter many obstacles when trying to provide their personnel with opportunities for quality workplace training. Too often workplace training is compromised by a lack of monetary resources, which can undermine a county’s ability to hold an event altogether. Additionally, the small size and remoteness of most rural counties hinders their ability to bring in the prolific guest speakers enjoyed by larger, more affluent counties. One way in which rural counties are able to overcome the barriers inherent to their condition is through partnering. This case study highlights the benefits of partnering through an innovative partnership that has been forged between the County of Humboldt and its neighboring County of Mendocino.

The County of Humboldt and County of Mendocino have both identified a need to provide continued learning opportunities for their department heads and upper level managers. Historically, the County of Humboldt has lacked the financial means to provide these personnel with the same opportunities for training that it extends to its departmental supervisors through a Supervisor’s Academy and management staff through its Loretta Nickolaus Management Academy. With the new motto of “doing more with less” the County of Humboldt worked in conjunction with the County of Mendocino, pooling their resources to host their first ever Regional Training Event. David Rabiner of Rabiner Resources was select as the guest speaker based on his ability to meet the needs of both counties.

The total cost of the event was $8470, which was evenly split between the two counties. Recognizing that the need for affordable training opportunities was not unique to our counties, we offered attendance to other neighboring counties and cities at an $85 per participant rate. This provided our neighbors in Sonoma and Lake Counties, as well as the City of Ferndale, an affordable opportunity for leadership training without the costly expense of putting on an entire event. In the end, partnering resulted in 53% cost savings for Humboldt County, and a quality training event at the reduced price of $4517.

The Regional Training Event provided an opportunity for participants to expand their leadership skills and improve professional relationships with colleagues from neighboring local governments. We believe that the skills gained from this event will be manifested through reduced employee turnover, reductions in worker compensation claims, and the development of a workforce comprised of individuals who want to come to work and make a difference in their communities. Through partnering, we have expanded our ability to work with our neighbors to address problems unique to our shared region. As a direct result of this event, a network has been formed where individuals have been paired up with colleagues in other counties, cities, and in some cases in other departments in the same county to keep the lessons learned from the event alive and to form future collaborations and partnerships between individuals. Moving forward, our counties plan to continue this partnership by holding a Second Annual Regional Training Event in May 2013.

Presentation Style:

PowerPoint and video materials will likely be the primary tools utilized for this presentation. In other presentations we have had great success incorporating music that fits with the presentation’s theme as a means of energizing and lightening the mood of our audience. In addition to our upbeat personalities, we plan to utilize this method in order to create an atmosphere that is both fun and educational. We will also be incorporating one of the group activities from our Regional Training Event, which will most likely be an interactive personality assessment/team building exercise. In this activity, participants’ personality types are scored by a brief questionnaire, and then used to form teams with other participants. We feel that this activity will help highlight the beneficial qualities of our training event while providing an ice-breaking opportunity for participants to get to now one another.