Attention Employers!
Cultivating Talent in the Airport Environment

October 12, 2021

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#TRBWebinar
Learning Objectives

1. Identify how to cultivate talent in an airport organization
2. List the three major categories of talent cultivation techniques
3. Discuss how to implement talent cultivation
American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE)

1.0 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) are available to Accredited Airport Executives (A.A.E.)

Report your CEUs: [www.aaae.org/ceu](http://www.aaae.org/ceu)
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- Chair of Advisory Panel, ACRP 06-06
  Report 232: Cultivating Talent in the Airport Industry
- PM, ACRP 06-07
  Report 230: Enhancing Academic Programs for Future Airport Professionals
- PM, ACRP 06-02
  Report 75: Airport Leadership Development Program
Five Ways to Get Involved!

1. Join the ACRP IdeaHub community
2. Volunteer for a project panel
3. Prepare a research proposal
4. Answer an ACRP survey
5. Apply the research results

Visit us online: www.trb.org/ACRP
ICF Team

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Project Goal

A “playbook,” for airport leaders and managers, that will provide inspiring, tested, and readily implementable techniques to enhance talent cultivation and knowledge transfer within airport organizations.
Work Performed

Conducted Literature Review
- Reviewed literature to develop an understanding of the issues that impact the ability of the airport industry to retain individuals who can lead, guide, manage, and carry out airport-centric initiatives

Conducted Gap Analysis
- Conducted interviews and focus groups to identify challenges and barriers to talent cultivation and professional growth

Developed Strategies and Tools
- Developed strategies, or plays, that will enable airport leaders and managers to enhance talent cultivation within airport organizations
- Conducted interviews with airport leaders to understand innovative and successful workforce strategies being implemented, and developed case studies

Developed Metrics to Measure Effectiveness
- Identified metrics that airport leaders and managers can use to measure the effectiveness of each play

Developed Playbook
- Plays are broken into three workforce challenge areas: Creating an Environment that Cultivates Talent, Supporting Employee Growth, Preparing to Meet Future Needs
- Includes a Needs Assessment to help airport leaders and managers understand where the airport/organization has a need for improvement around talent cultivation
Talent Cultivation Playbook

- Designed for quick and easy application
- Can be used by airports of different types and sizes
- Addresses all levels of the organization from entry level through leadership
- Includes approaches that are tactical, strategic, and structural in nature
- Each play includes:
  - Brief description
  - Potential indicators of a need for the play
  - Detailed implementation steps
  - Success story
  - Key success factors
  - Potential obstacles and considerations
  - Additional resources
  - Metrics to measure success
  - Related case study examples

Play 1: Implement Cross-Functional Group Sessions to Promote Organization-Wide Knowledge Sharing (cont.)

**Key Success Factors**
- Increased satisfaction among participants by identifying gaps in employees’ desired or required knowledge and skills and developing the cross-functional group in a way that best addresses these gaps
- Facilitating a climate of knowledge sharing rather than knowledge hoarding by highlighting the benefits of collaboration and learning
- Encouraging participation and engagement in the sessions

**Obstacles & Considerations**
- May prove difficult to get active participation among all employees, but participation may be encouraged by highlighting the benefits of the sessions and ensuring that employees are given time in their schedules to participate
- Managers may be hesitant to adopt these sessions given the time required to organize them, but emphasizing the benefits of the sessions may help

Play 1: Implement Cross-Functional Group Sessions to Promote Organization-Wide Knowledge Sharing

**Potential Indicators**
- Experienced gaps in employees’ requested or desired knowledge
- Employees want more teamwork, collaboration, or connection with those outside of their immediate working group

**Step 1:** Establish the purpose of the communication between members
- Cross-functional group sessions may be considered training that is unparalleled in its ability to help an organization’s employees learn and share advice based on their unique experiences at the airport. A problem can be relevant to a cross-functional group session if it is a problem that is relevant to an airport and can be solved by involving employees from different parts of the organization.

**Step 2:** Define the program for cross-functional group sessions and the format of the session
- Indicate employees and their included in these group sessions.

**Step 3:** Establish the purpose of the communication between members
- Cross-functional group sessions may be considered training that is unparalleled in its ability to help an organization’s employees learn and share advice based on their unique experiences at the airport. A problem can be relevant to a cross-functional group session if it is a problem that is relevant to an airport and can be solved by involving employees from different parts of the organization.

**Step 7:** Host the cross-functional group session
- Regularly assess whether the cross-functional group sessions are meeting the needs of the employees and are helping to make changes to ensure maximum benefit and learning.

**Implementation Tools and Resources**
- Managers can use check-ins with their employees to make sure their employees are aware of the cross-functional group sessions. Personal participation in these sessions to their employee’s performance goals, and earn provide incentives for participating.
- Surveys may be used to assess employees’ desire for sessions about various topic areas, content level with participating, knowledge or skills gained through participation, and their satisfaction with the format of group sessions.
## Plays: Creating an Environment that Cultivates Talent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Play</th>
<th>Overview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implement cross-functional group sessions to promote organization-wide knowledge sharing</td>
<td>A cross-functional group session can enhance employee retention by providing employees with an opportunity to develop relationships, learn from their colleagues, and get guidance regarding problems they are encountering at work, which in turn helps them perform better and accomplish tasks more efficiently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host “learning moments” forums to share lessons learned</td>
<td>Learning moments forums can be described as formally organized and structured discussions in which employees share something they learned, a best practice they developed, or skills they utilized to accomplish a difficult goal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate Think Tank forums to promote innovation</td>
<td>“Think Tank” forums are useful for encouraging innovation amongst employees and allowing employees to have their voices heard in decision-making processes, both of which help increase employee engagement and satisfaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct group visioning sessions with employees to outline shared values and goals</td>
<td>Group visioning sessions may be described as formally organized gatherings of employees with the purpose of establishing goals to work towards as a team and values to uphold in pursuit of these goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct employee pulse surveys to understand employee attitudes about work</td>
<td>Employee pulse surveys can provide airport managers with an easy and cost-effective way to track their employees’ attitudes throughout the year.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Articulate a peer-nominated employee recognition approach to honor work successes</td>
<td>An employee recognition program is a system used to acknowledge individuals who go above and beyond when performing their job duties and deserve to have their work successes celebrated.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Plays: Supporting Employee Growth

<table>
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<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide job shadowing opportunities to broaden employee skills</td>
<td>Job shadowing provides employees the opportunity to learn about and observe the responsibilities and interactions of different jobs within the airport without transitioning from their current role.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate reciprocal mentoring opportunities to increase employee capabilities</td>
<td>Facilitating a reciprocal mentoring program is a cost-effective strategy for encouraging collaborative learning within the airport and provides employees with opportunities to engage with and learn from their colleagues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guide employees in pursuing relevant training or certifications to improve their skills</td>
<td>Managers may be able to generate a list of acceptable training opportunities for employees by consulting with the HR department or training personnel, discussing possible opportunities with other department managers, inquiring about any opportunities offered by organizations such as the AAAE or ACI, and searching the internet for any relevant programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct constructive feedback sessions for leaders to promote consistency across employees</td>
<td>Constructive feedback involves using facts (versus opinions) to support appraisals of employees’ performance, describing the impact of employees’ actions, and providing guidance for future behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share sources for publicly available developmental opportunities to promote growth</td>
<td>Providing employees with resources that may aid in their personal and professional development (e.g., online training materials, magazine subscriptions, research articles, conference or workshop materials) is a cost-effective way to encourage their skill-building and knowledge growth and to support a knowledge-sharing culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate career path discussions to share career development opportunities with employees</td>
<td>A career path is a sequence of different jobs that an employee can progress through within an organization, which can guide them and provide an understanding regarding how to reach their overall career goals.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Plays: Preparing to Meet Future Needs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Play</th>
<th>Overview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create partnership opportunities for airport leaders to engage with academic programs</td>
<td>Fostering relationships and partnership opportunities with academic programs can help create a pipeline for new talent in the airport, resolve the learning gaps that new employees may have when first entering the airport industry after completing their education, and provide current airport employees an avenue to continue their education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct “stay interviews” to learn from employees and improve employee retention</td>
<td>Stay interviews should be conducted during an employee’s tenure at the airport to help managers better understand what makes employees remain at the organization and what factors might cause them to leave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design internal internship opportunities to prepare future talent</td>
<td>Internal internships are opportunities in which employees work in a different position and/or functional area for a fixed period (e.g., 1-3 months, full year) with the purpose of developing their knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs). Employees who participate in internships can gain exposure to other career paths and pursue their career goals and aspirations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a personal career narrative to share work experiences with employees</td>
<td>A personal career narrative is a short description of why individuals selected their career or field, how they have progressed in their career, and their short- and long-term goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct futuring workshops to understand future workforce needs</td>
<td>A futuring workshop involves a thought exercise in which managers, key stakeholders, and employees describe the current trends and demands for the specific airport or the airport industry that will impact workforce needs in the future.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Putting the Plays into Practice

• **Incremental Use of Selected Plays**
  - Plays can be used as standalone techniques or combined with other plays depending on the need

• **Levels of Plays**
  - Each play contains suggested adjustments for how it can be leveled up or down as needed

• **Airport-Wide Processes and Procedures**
  - Airport-wide talent cultivation processes and procedures can be developed using the plays as a baseline and expanding the scope and stakeholders involved
**Needs Assessment**

**Purpose:** Help airport leader or manager understand where the airport/organization has a need for improvement around talent cultivation.

Airport leader or manager answers the question to identify play(s) designed to help solve their specific talent cultivation challenges.
Metrics and Metric Scorecards

**Purpose:** Provide a consistent and quantifiable approach to evaluate the impact of talent cultivation plays

- The metrics are designed to be easily understood and used, have broad applicability, and be adaptable to the needs of diverse audiences

**Metrics:**
- Time to implement
- Cost to implement
- Amount of time to realize results
- Sustainability
- Stakeholder support
- Percentage of employees able to participate
- Percentage of individuals who participated (of those able to participate)
- Supervisor perception of employee performance post implementation of play
- Percentage of participants satisfied with experience
### Metric Scorecard

All metrics associated with each play should be used together to evaluate the play, and then a new scorecard can be completed for a second play if comparison is desired.

By comparing the plays using a consistent set of metrics and anchors, airport leaders can simplify difficult decisions and articulate the costs and benefits of each approach.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric Scorecard</th>
<th>Title of Play: [Insert Play Title Here]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Metrics</strong></td>
<td>0-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time to implement</td>
<td>Over 12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost to implement</td>
<td>More than budget target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of time to realize results</td>
<td>Over 12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>One-time occurrence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder support</td>
<td>Stakeholders unaware of program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of employees able to participate</td>
<td>Up to 25% of employees can participate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of employees that participated (of those able to participate)</td>
<td>Up to 25% of employees can participate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor perception of employee performance post implementation of play</td>
<td>Decline in performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of participants satisfied with experience</td>
<td>Less than 50% satisfied</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Score:**
Case Studies

Purpose: Provide examples that airport leaders and managers can reference to see how airports have been successful in creating an environment that enhances talent cultivation, supporting employee growth, and preparing the airport to meet future talent needs.

- Each case study includes:
  - Brief description
  - Airport demographics
  - Implementation information
  - Keys to success
  - Challenges and lessons learned
  - Impact to the organization

**Airports**

- Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport
- Naples Airport
- Philadelphia International Airport
- San Diego International Airport
- San Luis Obispo Airport
Case Studies

Naples Airport Authority

Career Pathing
Naples Airport has established career paths, which outline advancement opportunities for progressive growth and leadership.

- Future trajectory added to job descriptions
- Supervisor buy-in
- Understand employee needs
- Supervisor conversation template
- Supervisor buy-in
- Increase retention rates

San Diego Regional Airport Authority

Leadership Development
The airport has a designated team devoted to developing and organizing programs that help their employees grow within the organization and as leaders.

- “Leading at All Levels”
- Career Development Program
- Executive leadership buy-in
- Use of promotional materials
- Surveys to assess program value
- Shift worker participation
- Budgetary issues
- Helps employees get promoted
- Engaged employees
Case Studies

Philadelphia Airport System

Leadership Development

The Philadelphia Airport System offers various professional development and leadership programs.

- Stars and Leads Program
- Supervisors and Management Development
- Clear objectives and outcomes
- Leadership buy-in
- Flexibility
- Time commitment
- Group projects
- Employees feel valued

Minneapolis-St. Paul Airport

Employee Recognition Program and Accountability Through Performance Management Program

The employee recognition program allows employees to acknowledge each other for exemplary performance and the airport is rolling out a new performance management program with a greater focus on accountability.

- Monthly and Annual Employee Recognition Program
- Performance Management Enhancements
- Understanding employee needs
- Measuring program success
- Implementing pilot programs
- Award limitations for public organizations
- Manager skills
- Increased expectations
- Relationship-oriented culture
San Luis Obispo Airport

Learning and Development Center

The Learning and Development Center helps shape the future workforce in an airport that generally struggles with succession planning and limited advancement opportunities.

- Learning and Development Center
- Leader and Manager buy-in
- Careful and consistent promotional efforts
- Proper communication
- Tracking organizational development
- Employees understand career paths
- Shapes well-rounded employees
Today’s Panelists

Moderator: Seth Young, 
DY Consultants

Chelsey Jackson, 
ICF

Jessica Jenkins, 
ICF

Kelly Dray, 
ICF
ACRP is an Industry–Driven Program

- Managed by TRB and sponsored by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).
- Seeks out the latest issues facing the airport industry.
- Conducts research to find solutions.
- Publishes and disseminates research results through free publications and webinars.
Other Ways to Participate

Become an Ambassador. Ambassadors represent ACRP at events and conferences across the country!

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Visit ACRP’s Impacts on Practice webpage to submit leads on how ACRP’s research is being applied at any airport.

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Other ACRP Research on Today’s Topic

Research Report 186: *Guidebook on Building Airport Workforce Capacity*

Research Report 217: *Guidance for Diversity in Airport Business Contacting and Workforce Programs*

Research Report 230: *Enhancing Academic Programs to Prepare Future Airport Industry Professionals*

Synthesis 18: *Aviation Workforce Development Practices*

Synthesis 113: *Airport Workforce Programs Supporting Employee Well-Being*

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November 16, 2021
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November 30, 2021
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