

## Service Squamish Initiative



## Human Resources



## Core Service Review





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### **Core Service Review Final Report**

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A Core Services Review of the Human Resources Department was conducted as a continuation of the District's Service Squamish Initiative. This review was conducted by Sue Matheson (Solus Consulting) and supported by the General Manager of Financial Services, the General Manager of Development Services and Public Works, the Director of Operations and the Director of Recreation. All employees currently in the Human Resources Department were interviewed as part of the review, as well as a number of Managers at senior, middle and front line levels, employees and a union representative.

The review for the Human Resources Department came after the reviews of many of the larger departments as the Human Resources team played a significant role in supporting the implementation of recommendations arising out of those reviews.

The Human Resources team plays a key role in supporting the implementation of the Service Squamish Initiative. Not only does the department support the other departmental teams in implementing their recommendations, but they support the organization as a whole in achieving its goal to become an "Employer of Choice" characterized by employees who have "passion, excitement and empowerment".

The Service Squamish Initiative specifically identified "Ensuring Strong Leadership" as a key area with the following deliverables:

- Provide leadership training and team building for the Core Leadership Team.
- Provide leadership training and team building for the full management team.
- Develop and implement a long-term succession planning strategy, including training, mentoring, and developmental objectives.
- Develop leadership competencies for all supervisory positions with the District.
- Develop HR policies and strategies to guide managers and supervisors.

As the core focus for the District was to complete the Core Service Review process, not all of these deliverables have been achieved at this time and still remain relevant and require continued focus based on the interview process undertaken as part of this review.



A Key finding of the Core Service Review was that the Human Resources (HR) Department and its team members are respected across the organization. They are seen as helpful and service-oriented with a strong mandate to support managers and employees in matters relating to their employment and employment conditions. The HR staff are regarded as very competent with the core HR departmental responsibilities. The review however indicated there is a general concern that the department is, and will continue to be, challenged in meeting workload demands. Recent restructuring within the organization has decreased the number of FTE's in the HR Department, and that, combined with a heavy administrative workload and increased needs to support District-wide recruitment, has created a challenge to the team from reaching its full potential.

The interview process also revealed a systemic lack of understanding around the role of the Human Resources Department. For example, there are mixed perceptions over what "support" from the HR team looks like (i.e. where does the role of HR start and stop in relation to the role of the Manager). There are some core HR duties and a number of organization-wide and departmental-driven initiatives that are being assigned to the HR team to lead and/or support. Moving forward, internal clients are looking for HR to provide support around both core HR duties (such as Labour Relations and Training and Development) as well as strategic support (such as employee engagement and culture). Some managers are looking to HR to provide significant levels of support in areas such as recruitment, other managers are looking to HR for tools and information enabling them to become more involved in the staffing process. The level of support wanted by managers is largely dictated by the number of exempt (non-union) staff in those departments who are available to perform tasks.

Another key finding was that the HR department processes are inefficient. For example, many of the forms are still completed by hand, as opposed to being online. Some processes reach beyond the HR department, such as Payroll, and in these cases it is not always clear where the role of the HR team stops and the role of the other departments start. Additionally, there is some question around whether the role of internal communications resides with the HR department or not.

Another function, Occupational Health and Safety, falls under the scope of the HR Department, however, current staff does not have the skills or time to ensure that this function is being performed effectively. This may be putting the District at risk as there are currently no means to track safety training, WHIMS training and other key activities that are required under this function.

When asked about the role of the HR department in the future, several of the interviewees indicated that there will continue to be a strong focus on recruitment (albeit there are opportunities to streamline that process), supporting the organization around embedding a stronger service orientation, culture work and leadership, management and supervisory training. Some managers are also looking for support around team building.

Moving forward there are a number of decisions and activities that will help the HR Team provide even greater value to the organization than they already do. It is important to note that these recommendations are not focused necessarily on “fixing a problem” but rather supporting the department moving to the next level of performance and being able to support the organization at a more strategic level.



A total of 17 individuals were interviewed as part of the Core Service Review of Human Resources. The interview questions asked were:

1. What do you see as the primary and secondary role of the Human Resources Department at the District?
2. In delivering on this role, what is the HR Department currently doing well? What areas could the HR Department improve upon? What roles are the HR Department not fulfilling that you feel are important to the success of your department?
3. When you think about how the District and your department is going to change/evolve over the next 3-5 years, what support will you require from the HR team? Is any of this different than the support that you are getting now? (i.e. new roles for the HR Department)
4. As the District moves forward with embedding a strong service orientation, what role can HR play in supporting this?
5. Given the relatively small number of employees in the HR department, do you think the District would be served by looking at different funding models for its human resourcing needs? (i.e. centralize all recruitment but have it paid by on a user basis, departments willing to pay for some services, etc.)
6. In previous organizations that you have worked, what did the HR Departments do there that supported you reaching your departmental goals? Is that different than the support you are getting here?
7. In thinking about the processes and systems that support the HR functions, what suggestions would you have that would simplify and/or streamline them? What processes need work? What processes are working well?
8. What are some of the priority issues/opportunities you would like HR to address in order to better serve the District in the coming year?

### **Positive Reputation**

The HR Department and its team members have a very positive reputation in the organization. Managers and employees alike provided supportive feedback on their experiences and generally see the department as high functioning and service oriented. This is important as the recommendations are focused on enabling the department to move to the next level of performance, as opposed to providing solutions for a dysfunctional area.

## Role of HR

There were a variety of responses to the first question in the interview relating to the primary and secondary roles of the department. In some cases responses were completely reversed (i.e. what was seen as the primary role by some managers, was seen as the secondary role by other managers and vice versa). Overall, four key areas did emerge as the “most mentioned” or “core responsibilities” of the HR Department. Five other areas were also cited as key functions for the HR Team. These are summarized in the table below:

Core HR Functions	Additional Areas of Focus
<b>Recruitment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Job evaluation</li><li>• Job descriptions</li><li>• Job postings</li><li>• Reviewing resumes</li><li>• Arranging up interviews</li><li>• Interview questions</li><li>• Reference checks</li></ul>	<b>Employee Wellness and Safety</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Attendance management</li><li>• Wellness and safety programs/training</li><li>• OH&amp;S function</li><li>• WCB</li></ul>
<b>Labour Relations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bargaining</li><li>• C/A interpretations</li><li>• Disciplinary advice</li><li>• Statutory/legislative requirements</li></ul>	<b>Employee Engagement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Morale/Culture</li><li>• Team building</li><li>• Social/fun stuff</li><li>• Fair workplace (non discriminatory)</li><li>• Employee experience</li><li>• Recognition</li><li>• Change Management</li></ul>
<b>Training and Development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Developing training programs</li><li>• Career development</li><li>• Leadership/Mgmt development</li><li>• Sourcing and delivering training interventions</li></ul>	<b>Communications</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Internal employee communications</li><li>• Leadership/manager communications</li></ul>
<b>Performance Management</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Performance reviews</li><li>• Disciplinary matters</li></ul>	<b>Policy/Processes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Documentation</li><li>• Pay and benefits administration</li></ul>
<b>Administration</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Forms for new hires</li><li>• Return to work</li><li>• Benefits</li><li>• Short and Long term-Disability</li></ul>	<b>Planning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strategic Workforce Planning</li><li>• Succession Planning</li></ul>

When asked to look ahead 3-5 years, and what support would be required from the HR Department moving forward, the following thoughts were provided:

**Support embedding service orientation (champions/leads)**

- Training
- Employee recognition for service excellence
- Communications/Storytelling
- Policy/service level expectations

**Continued focus on recruitment**

- End to end support
- Strategic workforce planning
- Attraction and retention strategies (i.e. more flexible work arrangements)

**Culture (champions/leads)**

- Team building
- Innovation/creativity

**Leadership/Management/Supervisory Training**

- Enabling/coaching/empowering managers and supervisors to resolve their own issues
- Formal training and development

**Strategic Planning**

- Facilitating the development of Departmental Plans

In addition to the broad scope of responsibilities, the managers offered varying opinions about the level of support that they need from the HR Team. Some managers want HR to perform the majority of the recruitment function. Others want HR to be continuously available as a sounding board to discuss employee and union issues. In these situations the driver behind these requests is either a lack of exempt (non unionized) staff available to perform what is typically a manager's role, or a more junior manager that requires coaching and mentoring.

Also, there is some confusion over the role of the HR Department and the role of the Payroll Department when it comes to the administration of benefits. This lack of clarity leads to confusion and an inefficient process. This is the same for WCB.

The challenge this presents is that the HR Team may be trying to be all things to all people and as a result not making the most of the limited resources in the department. Some functions listed above should be considered to be out of scope for the HR Department and others may be better suited under other departments (see recommendations).

HR Departments typically provide service in a variety of areas that all provide value to the organization. These are presented in the following diagram. Given some of the challenges

noted below the HR team appears to be providing more support around administrative duties than strategic ones. Looking for ways to automate and streamline processes and knowledge will assist the department in being able to shift towards strategic, value added tasks.



### Capacity and Skill Set

There are currently 1.6 FTE's in the HR Department, a reduction from 2 FTE's from 2006 to 2011. The previous GM for this area had a background in HR and provided support and advice around key HR areas. The new structure has an HR Manager (previously the HR Advisor) and one part-time administrative support role. The Manager continues to have responsibility for all the functions performed as an HR Advisor as well as the new managerial responsibilities. The capacity of the department to deliver the wide scope of services managers and staff are expecting, now and into the future, is being compromised. The following describes how the structure of the HR department has changed over the last 3 years.

	<u>Total FTE</u>
• 2006 to 2009 - 1 FTE HR Manager & 1 FTE HR Assistant	2.0
• 2010 to 2011 - .5 FTE GM, .6 FTE HR Advisor & 1 FTE HR Assistant	2.1
• 2011 to 2012 - .5 FTE GM, .6 HR Advisor & .6 HR Coordinator	1.7
• Current - 1 FTE HR Manager & .6 FTE HR Coordinator	1.6

Examples of the current shortage in human resources can be seen with projects / initiatives over the past few years which HR has been asked to lead or champion, for example attendance management, employee development reviews and an employee opinion survey. The program gets developed and HR plays a key role in implementing the tools, etc., but there is not enough capacity within the HR team to support the ongoing effectiveness of those programs and ensure they are meeting the goals that they were intended to meet. As well, there are some HR areas being completely ignored such as employee events and recognition.

There is some question regarding the confidence of staff to perform some of their current and potential future roles. An example of a current role would be the Occupational Health and Safety function. No one currently on the HR team has been trained in this role and there are questions as to whether this program is meeting legislative requirements.

### Technology and Processes

Much of the HR work is still being managed manually instead of having automated systems, tools and processes that would result in internal efficiencies. Examples of this include the lack of an HRIS system that would help to track training (including safety training which is a legislative requirement) provide much of the reporting that HR requires and provide ease of access to employee records, benefits administration, attendance management etc.

Technology could also be used to help track performance review schedules, probationary schedules and provide better online access to information that both Managers and employees require. This could include collective agreement interpretations, interview questions, and benefit and leave queries as examples.

Enhanced technology would also support the department in providing required reporting such as the number of employees working for the District, Managers who have attended safety training, WHIMS training, etc.

Overall streamlining and automating processes would help to reduce the administrative work for the HR Team potentially alleviating some of the capacity challenges in the department.

There are 6 main recommendations arising from this review:

**Clarify Scope and Role of HR Team**

As mentioned, there is considerable confusion throughout the organization about the role of HR. This has created a broader than ideal scope of work as well as confusion over where the work of the department starts and stops. The goal is to have the HR team provide centralized HR support and resources. Outsourcing HR to the individual departments was the model prior to 2005. However, HR cannot be all things to all departments. Clarifying the scope of the HR Team is necessary and the following strategies are recommended:

- 1.1 Clarify the scope of the HR department and assess capacity. Communicate scope of HR Department to managers and employees.
- 1.2 Clarify hand-off of work between HR and Managers (particularly around the recruitment and grievance handling processes).
- 1.3 Provide additional resources to the HR Department so an OH&S program meeting statutory requirements can be established.
- 1.4 Move full Benefits Administration function to Payroll Department (this includes vacations/holidays and leaves in general as well as short term and long term disability management). Return-to-Work and Attendance Management to stay with HR team.
- 1.5 Outsource Strategic Planning requests (these are not a frequent request but are time consuming when they occur. They are also easily purchased through external vendors).

## **Increasing Efficiencies**

There is currently a high administrative workload in the HR Department which creates a barrier to the HR department being able to provide the higher level/more strategic support to the organization. Streamlining processes, using technology more effectively, automating paperwork and clarifying hand off's to other departments would help the HR Department with capacity issues.

- 2.1 Create Orientation/Onboarding check-list with HR, Payroll and IT and ensure each department understands their role and the handoffs to other departments.
- 2.2 Explore ways to access and provide reports on employee data (i.e. sick leave, # of employees, etc.) more easily through an HRIS or other technology application.
- 2.3 Identify and implement ways to streamline recruitment function including online electronic hire form, interview questions, etc. This could include exploring "E-Recruit" or applicant tracking software.
- 2.4 Explore opportunity for electronic document management.
- 2.5 Explore SharePoint as a means of providing online tools, guidance and policies for managers and employees.
- 2.6 Capture collective agreement interpretations online (particularly the most frequently asked ones) and have management access to that part of the intranet site.
- 2.7 Automate processes that carry a high level of paperwork.
- 2.8 Implement tracking method for mandatory training for all managers and employees.

## **Develop Managerial Competency in HR Related Functions**

The HR Department regularly provides support to Managers on matters relating to the management of their employees. However, it is important for Managers to build skill and competency in these areas so that they do not become dependent on the HR Team for advice and direction. As well, in some areas of the District, there are too few exempt staff to provide coverage when a Director or Manager goes on leave; the HR Team is often asked to make decisions relating to management of staff in those areas. This requires review and a determination as to whether this is an appropriate or an advisable practice for the organization.

- 3.1 Support the Core Leadership Team (CLT) to Conduct needs assessments with Managers to identify the skills and knowledge they require to become more proficient in their role of managing employees and creating an inspiring workplace.



- 3.2 Support the CLT to develop and implement training plans for Managers in key areas of Human Resource management.
- 3.3 Support HR related training and knowledge acquisition with tools and reminders and online support.

### **Incorporate Best Practices**

The HR Department at the District provides services in a number of core areas and in many cases does so in a manner that reflects industry best practices. Incorporating complete best practices is an ongoing goal that requires time and resources. Given the resources it is reasonable that HR identify and review one or two areas each year.

- 4.1 Review Training and Development best practices and incorporate, where appropriate, into policies and processes.
- 4.2 Review Performance Management best practices and incorporate, where appropriate, into policies and processes.
- 4.3 Review Culture best practices and incorporate, where appropriate, into policies and processes.
- 4.4 Review Strategic Workforce Planning best practices and incorporate, where appropriate, into policies and processes.

### **Provide Strategic HR Support to Organization**

The review identified that there are some areas of “strategic HR support” the District requires. Once capacity and competing priorities are resolved, HR will be able to contribute greater resources to strategic objectives. In the meantime, a more collaborative approach is necessary to advance these initiatives. Given the capacity issues discussed, it has been difficult for HR to really move some of these initiatives forward in the past. Looking ahead, with the right skill set, and greater capacity, the HR Team has the opportunity to provide greater value to the District.

- 5.1 Support an annual Strategic Workforce Planning and Succession Management exercise with the CLT.
- 5.2 Support the CLT in designing and leading culture initiatives to ensure the District is evolving its culture to meet the demands of the future.
- 5.3 Support Management to coordinate events that support “team” across the organization.

### **Ensure HR Resources are Available to Meet the Current and Emerging Organizations Needs**

As capacity issues are dealt with, and the HR Department shifts to providing support to the organization in the three areas: administrative work, core HR work and strategic value added work, the members on the HR team may need to increase their own competencies as well as look at opportunities to outsource work.

- 6.1 Increase capacity on the HR team by hiring an additional full-time employee. This would bring the number of HR staff to 2.6 which is well within industry standards for the size of the organization.
- 6.2 Determine future skills, competencies and resourcing levels required to meet current and emerging demands on the HR team and develop learning plans for all HR team members to support acquisition of new skills and competencies.

The following table outlines the tasks and priorities for moving forward:

Goal	Recommendation
<b>High Priority (0-6 months)</b>	
Clarify Scope of HR Team	1.1 Clarify and communicate scope of HR Department to managers and employees.
Clarify Scope of HR Team	1.2 Clarify hand-off of work between HR and managers (particularly around the recruitment and grievance handling processes).
Clarify Scope of HR Team	1.3 Provide additional Human Resources and training to the HR department so an OH&S program, that meets statutory requirements, can be established.
Clarify Scope of HR Team	1.4 Move full Benefits Administration function to Payroll Department (this includes vacations/holidays and leaves in general as well as short term and long term disability management).
Clarify Scope of HR Team	1.5 Outsource Strategic HR Planning requests
Increase Efficiencies	2.1 Create Orientation/Onboarding check-list with HR, Payroll and IT and ensure each department understands their role and the handoffs to other departments.
Increase Efficiencies	2.3 Identify and implement ways to streamline recruitment function including online electronic hire form, interview questions, etc. (explore "E-Recruit" (online recruiting system).
Increase Efficiencies	2.4 Explore opportunity for electronic document management.
Increase Efficiencies	2.5 Explore SharePoint as a means of providing online tools, guidance and policies for managers and employees.
Increase Efficiencies	2.8 Implement tracking method for mandatory training for all managers and employees.
Develop Managerial Competency in HR Related Functions	3.1 Support the CLT to conduct needs assessment to identify the skills and knowledge managers require to become more proficient in their role of managing employees and creating an inspiring workplace.
Develop Managerial Competency in HR Related Functions	3.2 Support the CLT to develop and implement training plans for Managers in key areas of Human Resource management.

Goal	Recommendation
<b>High Priority (0-6 months) (continued)</b>	
Ensure HR Resources are available	6.1 Increase capacity on the HR team by hiring an additional full-time employee.
<b>Medium Priority (6-18 months)</b>	
Increase Efficiencies	2.2 Explore ways to access employee data (i.e. sick leave, # of employees, etc.) more easily through an HRIS or other technology application.
Develop Managerial Competency in HR Related Functions	3.3 Support training and knowledge acquisition with tools and reminders and online support.
Provide Strategic Support to Organization	5.1 Conduct annual Strategic Workforce Planning and Succession Management exercise with the District.
Ensure HR Resources are available	6.2 Determine future skills, competencies and resourcing levels required to meet current and emerging demands on the HR team and create learning plans to support the acquisition of the new skills and competencies.
<b>Medium to Low Priority (12-36 months)</b>	
Increase Efficiencies	2.6 Capture collective agreement interpretations online (particularly the most frequently asked ones) and give management access to that part of the intranet site.
Increase Efficiencies	2.7 Automate processes that carry a high level of paperwork.
Incorporate Best Practices	4.1 Review Training and Development best practices and incorporate, where appropriate, into policies and processes.
Incorporate Best Practices	4.2 Review Performance Management best practices and incorporate, where appropriate, into policies and processes.
Incorporate Best Practices	4.3 Review Recognition best practices and incorporate, where appropriate, into policies and processes.
Incorporate Best Practices	4.4 Review Strategic Workforce Planning best practices and incorporate, where appropriate, into policies and processes.
<b>Low Priority (12-36 months)</b>	
Provide Strategic Support to Organization	5.2 Support the CLT with culture initiatives to ensure the District is evolving its culture to meet the demands of the future.
Provide Strategic Support to Organization	5.3 Support management to coordinate events that support "team" across the organization.



