

VR LC Meeting
8/10/12
(videoconference)

The following information was presented by LC members from their teams on training and rewards.

Marketing:

- expanding jeans days.
- earning flex time as a reward.
- 4.5 day work weeks.
- earning logo clothing was not received warmly.
- pooling individual points for rewards seems to be a better fit for service teams.

Grand Island:

1. Draft Training plan/comments on training, in general:

A. Staff feels ATP training focus hasn't been useful in working with clients -comments from staff...they want relevant training on devices they can recommend to consumers so they can be incorporated into their everyday work lives, school or daily living activities.

-suggestions other video conference training: EAP training, benefits analysis training, a segment on motivational interviewing, QE2 demonstration (brief overview of what's coming), Transitions, for May or June staff commented that it would've been helpful to have someone discuss open enrollment/benefits with the change in providers.

-Background colors on video conferencing-*please don't use bright pink/difficult to see*

B. VRIS/Training

-Staff feel it's hard to navigate, not laid out in a logical manner, staff want it to be more direct-everything related to training to be in one place versus having to click different VRIS topics to find training related items

Examples given:

1. Staff person needed orientation flip chart in VRIS-they checked in both the information & referral and employment program manual chapters. They also did a search for "orientation" and was taken to the

purpose/policy/process of VR orientation. Staff person thought there would be a link for the orientation powerpoint/flip chart with the chapters. The orientation powerpoint or flip chart presentation was mentioned, staff thought it would make sense to have a link in that spot versus having to go to marketing materials.

2. Information on hiring was located in five different places in VRIS versus all being in one place-WHY?

-Staff stated agency should consider staff as their customers and make VRIS more specific for *employee's* satisfaction.

3. Employees and training

-Staff feel supervisors are liberal with signing off on training requests

-Staff commented it's important for all employees to attend training at least once a year to something **relevant** to each person.

-Staff didn't appreciate "seating charts" at Motivational Interviewing in Grand Island-they were told to sit where their name plaque was.

-If agency takes on a new culture ie: Motivational Interviewing-make sure the training is *sustained* and brings staff to a level of competency.

2. Rewards-Jeans

-Allow them to be worn at state staff in October, and the day before a holiday

-Staff appreciate being recognized for doing a good job

-Thank you's from Mark to staff are appreciated

3. Rewards/incentive program

-Staff commented that continuing their education or retaining certification or licensure (at staff expense) is *not* rewarded even though the agency benefits from their skills & credentials. Felt that if classes are offered in the evening that agency should be more flexible working around this instead of offering only to "flex work schedule." Employees are spending own time and financial resources to attain this with no financial reimbursement from agency.

-Staff felt like if training opportunities are there, why not be able to take work time to attend?

-Question posed "Why are some Master's programs approved and not others?"

-Staff also commented that there should be more *discussion around frontline staff attending conferences* specific to job duties as a result in successfully running a program whether it's autism, ABI, Project Search (examples listed).

-staff will continue to think about the gamification-what they would "buy" with acquired points and whether all staff would pool points or not.

-Concern expressed about having state staff prior to the Presidential election.

Norfolk Griffin: Training ideas that the Griffin team liked were: training by specialty area, additional MI training both as refresher and as an ongoing opportunity for new staff or staff who were unable to make the training, and opportunity/requirement for staff who have obtained training to share the information w/the team. Also liked the opportunity of "mini sessions" or refreshers of new staff training.

Retention Rewards that the Griffin team liked were: support of continuing ed or certifications through tuition asst./work time allowed for class or studies/VR provided training that would count towards CE's, expansion/continuation of jeans day, state staff, opportunity for flexible training, and VR bucks to purchase non-VR/Dept. of Ed related merchandise/items.

Scottsbluff: Our team felt that the draft plan for training was fine but other trainings in the area were limited. We get information on trainings from community partners and share the information at staff meetings. Once someone attends trainings then they also report the information at staff meetings. The office really liked the Motivational Interviewing Training and found the information to be relevant.

As far as rewards the team felt that jeans day could be expanded to days before holidays, and especially at state staff. VR bucks they felt could be utilized for individuals and for the group. Some of the rewards can include: VR logo clothing, gift cards, logo notebooks, and bucks to go out as a team and eat lunch together. We also discussed a formal "You Made My Day Note" for thanking others.

Norfolk Mitchell:

1. Feedback from teams on Draft Training Plan (Training Plan)

Team expressed interests in:

- Refresher Courses (i.e..Med Aspects I & II)
- Motivational Interviewing for those that were not able to attend
- Cross training amongst teams to get better respect & understanding for the other positions on each team
- EAP training (i.e..positive work experience)

2. Feedback from teams on Rewards: jeans days and incentive program (see Miscellaneous from Meeting Minutes)

- Incentive program – what things are rewarded?
 - Productivity
 - Partnership collaborations
- And then on flip side, what things are meaningful to purchase for those points?
 - Hours toward time off
- What is important to the teams and individuals?
 - Flexibility with time using discretion
- What about pooling individual points for a team reward?
 - Team outing to support "team bonding"

Omaha Dixon:

Feedback from teams on Draft Training Plan (Training Plan):

New Staff expressed some concern with timeliness of Quest training for new staff. One team member shared that she received Quest training later after other trainings, stating it would have been helpful to receive it within 2-3 months of starting. Another staff member shared that she was sent within two to three weeks of her start date which was too soon! It was brought to our attention that the Training Curriculum is established for a year in advance so dates and locations are set. Naturally VR cannot predict the number of new hires and when they start. Trainings are dependent on an employee's start date.

Staff solutions:

1. Offer Quest Training once every 2-3 mos consistently. Quarterly Quest training for new staff.

2. Develop Computer Based Training on the VRIS website. Staff could become acquainted with Quest from the beginning. It would also provide a refresher to staff who do not do some aspects of VR work frequently but are occasionally called upon to do set asides or authorizations. Tutorials can also be provided for training on other aspects of staff roles.

Ongoing Training

By Speciality Area and Individualized

LC member asked the team how often would be appropriate for individualized training. No staff offered specific numbers since so much would depend on the trainings available and how it relates to the job. It was stated by one team member that it appears that Mark is moving toward process driving policy, and this staff member indicated that therefore process should drive training. So the question might be: what is the order? Process, Policy, Training. It was noted by several teammates that the VC trainings may have degraded in terms of relevance to our jobs. For ex: ATP training or generalized training is viewed by some folks as a "filler". Training directly related to the daily roles of Placement, Specialists and Associates may be embraced more readily. Another team member found the VC trainings very helpful and stated that some staff may be too quick to pass them off as irrelevant or meaningless. Anything we learn or re-learn holds value. Bottom line regarding training: Is it mandatory or can staff elect not to attend? I had shared that Mark indicated in our LC meeting earlier this year that he does not make meetings mandatory. Some staff members are simply not comfortable with this.

2. Feedback from teams on Rewards: jeans days and incentive program (see

Miscellaneous from Meeting Minutes

- * Incentive program – what things are rewarded?
- * And then on flip side, what things are meaningful to purchase for those points?
- * What is important to the teams and individuals?
- * What about pooling individual points for a team reward?

South team staff member emphasized the importance of offering incentives to new staff who have been with the agency 1-5 years (first year involves so much training). Employees with the agency after 5 years begin to see an increase in vacation and sick time in addition to seeing retirement build, which enhances the desire to stay. New staff, however, may find it difficult to accumulate time for vacation or sick leave. Offering

flexible schedules may be a valuable incentive to maintain our energetic, innovative newbies. Since monetary incentive options, leave without pay or bonus days are limited due to NDE and Union regulations, flex time approved by VR administrators may be one option that is actually realistic in terms of incentive and/or reward. Example: A staff member may be allowed to work 1-2 weeks out of the month four 10/hour days so as to free up an additional day or two to extend a holiday weekend or fly out-of-town for a long weekend. This incentive would also interest 5 Plus Years of Service staffers, as it would offer much needed variety to some and/or allow for working in evening or on Saturdays for paperwork, client calls or client appointments.

Discussion about rewards/incentives resulted in a couple of questions being raised: Should the individual or the team be recognized? As part of the Team Experience, should individuals be rewarded? Is rewarding individuals conducive to building a team? How would individuals be rewarded in comparison to how teams would be rewarded? What would the criteria be? For teams reaching goal, how could they be recognized?

Omaha Long:

1) How do we get the word out about training? (how do people find out about the training that is out there?)

- A public forum or board to exchange training ideas
- Some staff belong to professional organizations, they could post information to a forum board for others to view
- Staff have learned about training through email or word of mouth
- The agency can get on the mailing list of job specific organizations
- The way we find out about training now is currently working
- Various professional organizations offer free newsletters, which announce trainings on various topics. This information could be shared with staff at meetings or via email. Each team member could bring info to share at team meeting or via email. I'm not sure how things would work out if only one person is providing these updates out of Lincoln.
- Staff could forward any training announcements to Cheryl (or specified party) for posting.
- Provide training for Associates so they can update skills in their specialty areas. Also an Associate committee so they can network ("pick each other's brain") about skills and training topics of interest.

2) How do we identify appropriate training?

- Not really sure. Compare it to the person's job description or role on the team. How it could benefit the team overall
- Staff would identify training that is appropriate for them, it should be job related.

3) How does VR set the training budget? (how much of a training budget do we allot to teams?)

- By FTE makes sense, but I see some issues with limits or frequency. I might like to attend trainings or more trainings might be relevant to my role than my peers.
- Perhaps the training budget will dictate how often a staff member attends out of the office training sessions. The training amount could be established for a 2-year period and a staff member could attend workshops or seminars during 1 year or roll over the money for training to year 2. Better yet, a specific dollar amt. could be set aside per year for training per staff person. The money may or may not be used during the year.
- Designate training dollars based upon the FTEs. Perhaps a starting point (for the dollar amount) would be the average amount of training dollars the team spent during the previous 1-3 years.

4) How Do We Develop a Work Group for Formalized Mentoring?

- Not sure how, but we should! Perhaps our FedEx method could be a pilot.

5) Do we Want Job Specific Training on Roles?

- Yes, with allowances for cross training.

6) How does training get disseminated to staff once an individual has attended training?

- I worry a formal requirement to present might prevent staff who are not "presenters" from attending training. I do think our team does a good job sharing information that is important.

7) How many trainings would a staff be allowed to attend?

- Maybe it could be based on the need of the team. If there were 5 eval trainings in 2012, it would make sense for the evaluator to attend all of them regardless of a cap. I am not sure a cap is necessary.

.I agree that a cap is not necessary. If the frequency of training were to negatively impact client services then it could be addressed directly with individual staff. I think staff will continue to manage their time appropriately and make adjustments as necessary.

8) Do we want to support professional licensing?

- If it is not a job requirement, I do not think VR should have to pay for training just for the sake of CEUs. If it is relevant to the position/role, I

could see VR paying or allowing the time to attend. I do not think VR needs to be responsible for finding the CEUs for staff.

- If the agency is offering training that fulfills the requirements for CEUs then continue to do so, it is helpful.

Recognition/Reward

Jeans Days and Incentive Programs

1) How do we expand Jeans day? Statewide? Training Days?

- I like the idea of wearing jeans to VR trainings/state staff. Maybe when the team makes goal, they get extra jean days? Maybe jeans before a holiday? (Like the Thursday before Arbor Day?)

- Jeans on snow days seems too inconsistent for it to be an award. It may snow in one part of the state and not the other, so some staff would get the reward that day and others would not.

I prefer to have a raise not more jeans days.

Incentive Programs—answer the following questions if NVR created an Incentives Program. Individual Bucks or Team Bucks—VR would reward VR Bucks to VR staff.

2) Would VR reward individual bucks or team bucks?

- I would like to learn more about how staff can earn merit raises.
- Want to know more about merit raises instead of an incentive program.

.It depends on the items being offered.

.If I got VR bucks, can I cash it in for time, or cash?

- Perhaps a Christmas bonus

3) What would be meaningful rewards for VR to purchase?

- It would be nice to add up rewards points to purchase an Ipad
- Reward me time to work from home

.Items from NDE (the portfolio)

4) What should be rewarded?

- What does it mean to go above and beyond? One amazing case?

Reaching goal? I am not sold on the VR bucks program...I guess it would depend on what you "cash" it in for. I would not want to be recognized by cashing 10 VR bucks to get a pencil.

.There would need to be a consistent way to determine what kinds of actions are awarded. Perhaps the teams could come up with what their team would reward. Take suggestions and vote.

5) Would teams want to pool their points to get a team reward?

- You would have to give out individual bucks and team bucks.

Kearney:

Training: like MI, problem is that not everyone has been trained in the office. As soon as all staff get trained, the better. Rewards: like team rewards. Having a job is enough. Would like birthday off. Supervisor would like someone to leave early if you've done a good job as long as it is tracked. Would like to expand jeans to a day before holiday. 4 day work week liked it. VR bucks - - hard to understand how it works. Staff don't want a doodad; would like gift certificate. FedEx Days - - have it some place else.

Omaha teams: Liked the birthday off idea.

Omaha West:

Notes about training plan:

It would be nice to have someone who would find trainings in the state for the week or month and email them to all VR staff, in case they would be interested. Identify appropriate trainings by the topic being discussed. If it is about a population I work with or service that could benefit my clients I believe that is appropriate to attend. Also a close location and no cost helps. Almost all of the trainings I attend are at no cost. It would not be an incentive to me to earn training dollars. Setting a training budget for each team could be useful, but then the office director would have to be accountable for distributing the training dollars evenly to each team member.

I don't really know much about trainings that are offered. I know I've seen those Skill Path Flyers, but that's about it.

I think there should be a set budget for trainings for staff. Obviously they would need to somehow relate to employment and disabilities.

Appropriate trainings are identified based on job duties and relevance of the training to those duties.

Our team bring in community partner each month to gain more knowledge. That is one training I would like to continue. I find out about trainings through the list serves I am a part of, through schools and ESUs. It is important that it be relevant to the clients you serve and proximity.

Notes about Meaningful rewards

Personally wearing jeans is a reward and it would be worth it to earn more days to wear them.

Like the idea of multiple jeans days

Jeans on Fridays are great! Other days would be great too as long as we're continuing to set a good example for consumers.

I like jean day, other days would be nice, especially snow days or holidays.

What is most valuable to me is time off work, even being able to leave one hour early to get home and be able to spend more time with my kids and family is a HUGE motivator.

Offering a flexible schedule would be meaningful to me.

VR bucks could be rewards for going above and beyond in the office. For example, volunteering to stay late to take a client or heading a project. The bucks could purchase things like VR shirts that you could wear to work or even gift cards. I would see this as an individual reward. Food is always good as well, pizza parties, etc.

If you are using VR Bucks- anything could be rewarded! 1 buck for something small- someone helping out with a quick fix or something small. 2 for something that took more work. 3 for something that took lots of planning. Bucks would just have to go towards things that the department has access to- pens, shirts, flash drives, whatever. We had a similar system at Duncan. We had money that we could use in the vending machines. Any employee would email HR with the person's name and why they deserved a "Way to Go" (that's what we called them) and they would receive a little "certificate" and 3 vendor bucks. Usually we would let people do up to 5 people- any more than 5 defeated the purpose. If it was a team effort- the whole team should be recognized and this was for people that went above and beyond. Teams were recognized in our monthly newsletter.

Fiscal:

1. Feedback from teams on Draft Training Plan ([Training Plan](#))

For years I have seen some staff saturate themselves with training, which makes other staff cover for them while on their training ventures. Identifying appropriate training should be key to the number of training events that one attends. Perhaps an hour limit for staff to absent themselves from their normal work hours in a given year for training purposes could be established, in order to share the wealth and the time. The limit could and should be greater for new staff. Team budgets tend to limit legitimate staff member requests, due to a few staff or expensive training ventures using up the budget. A mentoring program may be a two edged sword, and needs to be restricted to certain staff mentors.

2. Feedback from teams on Rewards:

If we really believe in the success of teams, then there is no legitimate individual award, without damage to the team. Verbal or written thanks, newsletter articles, and appreciation day activities are good.

I think the proposed Compressed Work Week/Flex schedules are a positive start on rewards. I think there is a lot of flexibility that supervisors have with staff to compensate staff for extra time staff may put in but are not eligible for overtime. However, the issue is some supervisors are generous with staff and some aren't and if that happens to be in the same office then issues arise.

I think sometimes we worry too much about the fairness issue. Comments I've heard about any of the public praising is that staff who don't get it will not be happy, so we don't do it. I think if we start doing more public things that we will get used to it and it will start to change our culture. We have to start somewhere. Will it be comfortable for everyone - no, but maybe that's okay. It may make people stop and think about their own behavior.

The jeans day and those optional dress days are not incentives for me but I understand that they are for others. I do think having it every Friday is enough. We are a professional agency after all.

Not excited about jeans. Would love flexible time and/or compressed week.

Columbus:

1. Feedback from teams on Draft Training Plan ([Training Plan](#))

Overall, most people on the team liked the training plan. One resounding comment was "new employee orientation and process" etc needs to be the first training no matter what!!!!

The team had different ideas on how to notify everyone of trainings...such as e-mails, bring info to team meetings, ask partner agencies to let us know about trainings they offer or go to, and in general learn about trainings from community agencies.

The team felt trainings are a great incentive, would like a training budget allocated for each team, and feel it is good to bring all the information learned to the team and provide copies of any handouts given at the trainings.

2. Feedback from teams on Rewards: jeans days and incentive program (see Miscellaneous from [Meeting Minutes](#))

- Incentive program – what things are rewarded? ----- See below
- And then on flip side, what things are meaningful to purchase for those points?-----See below
- What is important to the teams and individuals?-----both would be nice
- What about pooling individual points for a team reward?----- doesn't make a difference to most people

These were the rewards people preferred:

- 1) More money/more vacation (most everyone agreed with this)
- 2) Four day/variable work weeks liked by most (one person didn't see how this would serve consumers and one is not interested)
- 3) Telework-allowed for snow days especially-one person said maybe one time a month for documentation
- 4) VR Bucks- for logical items that we would really use like gift cards etc.
- 5) VR shirts
- 6) State staff if "it's good"
- 7) Leave without pay (especially have the option the week between Christmas and New Years)
- 8) Stipend for not using state health insurance.
- 9) It might be nice to have the option to donate sick hours to catastrophic leave
- 10) Some liked jeans day and some are not motivated by jeans day at all- it is not a reward

Program Team:

1. Feedback from teams on Draft Training Plan ([Training Plan](#))
Training request approvals/disapproval should be made at the team/supervisor level for –

1- No cost training only 6 - Cost and no cost training Other opinion:

Comment:

- I would only add that if the training is out of state, approval would also be needed at at state level. I like the Dept's principle of only one out of state training per year. If someone is involved in a project that may require multiple out of state trainings, I think other staff should be offered the opportunity to go in their place. This is a way of rewarding other staff who are also making contributions in the area.

What should enter into a training approval or disapproval decision? (Could check more than one choice.)

6 - Individual Performance

1 - Team Performance

4 - Attendance/punctuality

5 - Behaviors aligned with agency values

Other suggested criteria:

- Is training related to the individual's VR role/responsibilities?
- Any individual employee development plan/goals that have been identified as part of a performance appraisal.
- Does it directly impact on their job?
- Can it be something that would have positive impact on their team?
- How it relates to the person's job, how the team will operate in their absence, is each person on the team provided the same opportunities to attend trainings.

Suggestion made at the LC meeting was to add Marketing to the plan. What else should be added?

- Motivational Interviewing
- Disability policy/federal updates

How many approved training days or hours should be allowed per employee even if the training is free?

- Should be at the Office Director or VR Director's discretion, depending on the individual's role and responsibilities.
- To make it fair for all I do think there should be a limit per year. I have observed that some staff do like to go to trainings more than others. I guess I would look to industry and see how many professional days they allow per year. I do believe school districts have a set number so maybe we could consult them.

- Depends on lots of factors. Should not be a specific maximum.
- As much as the team feel is appropriate.

Should all employees be expected to complete a certain number of days or hours of training not arranged by the agency?

2 said Yes

- At least one day of training (or one training event) outside of the agency.

5 said No

- Forcing someone to do training they do not want to attend is not productive. I think we offer a lot of house training already.
- Great if they would, but should not be an expectation.

Should attending personal development training (personal communication, goal achievement, personal effectiveness, positive mental attitude, wellness, positive attitude, and handling difficult people, etc.) be allowed on agency time and/or with agency funding?

7 said Yes

- Limit to one day per year
- If consistent with the employee development goals of their annual performance appraisal. As long as it have a positive impact on their job.
- If the team feels that it is appropriate for the team/person.

0 said No.

How should a training budget be determined?

- A certain amount available to each team with possibility of some teams being able to use resources that will not be used by other teams in the state.
- If providing on going training is a value to the agency, then a set budget should be defined. I am not sure as to the amount.
- By FTEs in team.
- Yes, an amount per office.
- Consider estimated training costs in the context of the agency budget and other resources available to pay for it (TACE, grants, etc.)

How should notice of training opportunities be disseminated to staff?

- Training opportunities should be forwarded to and sent out by the training coordinator in state office via email.
- VRIS

- Through OD. If OD does not want to share with team he/she must inform Director of reasons
- Email, newsletter
- VR News, Committees, emails, possibly a Wiki on VRIS.

How do we decide whether a training is appropriate?

- Does the training relate to the person's job , how the team will operate in their absence, is each person on the team provided the same opportunities to attend trainings.
- That is a great question. Because I am not sure we always know that. It has be more than looking at the brochure coming out from the presenting organization.
- On its value to the team and agency. Topic area is related to the goals/mission/vission of VR. If the training offers a reasonable and easily understood connection to a current or planned service to be provided by VR.
- Is it consistent with agency purpose, goals and mission? Will it enhance VR staff skills in some way?

What comment or suggestion around training has this feedback form not addressed?

- Perhaps we need to look at partnerships or collaborations with other agencies or programs with similar interests, mission and staff training needs to maximize our training funds.
- I think sending people to school to earn a masters or BA should be a top priority for the agency. We should find a way to assist not only by time off from work but also with tuition assistance.
- It is my feeling that trainings should be encouraged as long as they are appropriate to the work that each person is doing, if some employees do not take advantage of training opportunities, the employees that are willing to should be allowed to use more training time/resources if they show the initiative to learn more.

2. Feedback from teams on Rewards: jeans days and incentive program (see Miscellaneous from [Meeting Mintues](#))

- Incentive program – what things are rewarded?
- And then on flip side, what things are meaningful to purchase for those points?
- What is important to the teams and individuals?
- What about pooling individual points for a team reward?

Ranking from the highest (1) to the lowest (7) the reward ideas that would be the most rewarding for Program Team members and then the most rewarding for VR staff. Below are the ranking averages.

REWARD	PROGRAM TEAM	VR STAFF
More flexible leave	2.00	1.50
Tele-work	2.00	2.00
Expand Jean Day	5.83	5.00
VR Bucks	4.83	4.17
State Staff Training Meeting	4.00	4.17
VR Employee Appreciation	4.00	4.50
Job Share	5.33	5.67

Comments:

Flex Leave:

I like it and again see it as attractive to make up for lower wages. I would like to see more flexibility in our schedule. When someone works 50 hours by Friday noon and needs to take vacation for 3 hours of leave on Friday afternoon it seems like there is no incentive to put in the extra time and work for the agency. It would also encourage Specialists to attend more evening/weekend meetings if they knew they would be compensated for it.

Tele-work:

An attractive incentive.

Expanded Jean Day:

Not a big thing to me. I wear them all weekend.

VR Bucks:

I can see unhappiness if you do not get them and someone else does.

State Staff:

No impact to me.

VR Employee Appreciation:

I think showing appreciation should be a core value.

Job Share:

If you can find two competent people.

I know we have not encouraged job sharing in the past, however I think it is something we should consider. We have lost some good staff who decided to stay home with their children, but would have continued to work part-time for VR if they could have job shared. It is not always ideal,

but with the right people it can be an advantageous rather than hiring and training new staff.

What excites you about any of these 7 reward ideas?

I see some creative ideas with the resources we have available.

4-day workweek I think would be a great idea.

What concerns you about any of these 7 reward ideas?

None

I think we need to tackle the wages first and foremost.

Idea or comment not covered by the above feedback?

I'm not sure if this was discussed or if it is possible with the current NAPE agreement. I have always wondered if staff, that are attending school in an approved degree or attend a class that will benefit their work (also approved) can be provided study time during the work week for the same amount of hours that they are in class for that week. For example, if a student were in a night class each week for 3 hours, could they use three hours during the workweek to take time to study away from work? This would provide no direct cost, just the cost of staff wages during their study time while they are working to improve their work skills. The employee and employer will receive long-term benefit at a minimal cost. My experience with awards has been negative. When individual awards were given for production in the past quality suffered and staff was doing inappropriate things to produce numbers. In addition other staff resented certain individuals getting awards they did not think were deserved resulting in poor team cohesion. Staff felt the production winners cut corners, claimed successes that were not and did poor quality work. They felt the quality case winners just documented better. There were hard feelings. I like the Thank You or Good Job from the Boss idea but only to an individual not in front of a group.

There was a research article a couple weeks ago saying people who decorate their offices are much more productive and have much less absenteeism. Maybe you should talk to leadership group about how we could promote people decorating their offices.

Lincoln: 3 teams –

TRAINING PLAN SUGGESTIONS

- Any updates on QE2
- Market trends in employment
- Brush up training for existing staff for consistency on what new staff are learning
- Specific Associate training

- Complete new staff training within the first three months versus over the period of a year (learn computer stuff up front).
- More podcasts and webinars
- Specific disabilities focused trainings that include the vocational considerations and implications (including medical treatment and diagnostic information)
- Refresher training on procedures
- Ethics trainings
- Trainings to support CRCs and LMHPs
- Cultural awareness
- Trainings on what's working in other states

REWARDS DISCUSSION

Why you would get VR Bucks:

- Individually and/or Team earned
- Successfully employed consumer
- New referral source developed
- Your birthday!
- Attendance - such as three months without using leave
- Innovative ideas that work!
- Most miles travelled for VR
- Cleanest vehicle

What you would do with VR Bucks:

- Half a day off or by the hour
- VR logo clothing (no umbrellas, caps, stickies, magnets, shopping bags or keychains)
- VR planner
- Gift cards to restaurants, green fees, movie money, snacks, gasoline, iTunes
- Jeans day card
- Lunch with Mark Schultz
- Time to volunteer in the community
- Ability to purchase State surplus items
- Spend bucks for out of office training

JEANS RECOGNITION DAYS

- Days surrounding holidays
- Week between Christmas and New Year's Day
- Your birthday

- State Staff
- Days spent within the high schools
- Days spent within the counties
- Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday

Data Center:

- Feedback regarding training:
 - I think datacenter training is mostly different from other teams. If there is money, it would be nice if each member of the datacenter team would be able to go on a 2 day training each year. (In Omaha area or so.)
- Feedback regarding rewards:
 - Please no "weeklong" celebrations.
 - Having leave flexibility is wonderful.
 - Jean days are OK, but it's nice to look professional. Fridays and maybe Holidays would be enough for me. (Are bibs/coveralls considered jeans? Because I have a sweet pair I've been meaning to bust out.)

No Email Friday Reward - this recognition would be exactly what it says. The rewarded Staff member could take a Friday off from Email so that they can focus on other responsibilities. There would be no expectations or consequences to the employee regarding Email. They wouldn't even need to launch the Email program. The same concept could be applied to or combined with iChat, or any other form of electronic communication.

Reflective Sabbatical - this recognition would be the opportunity to unplug from the office and retreat to a comfortable setting to focus on one goal, or project, or priority, without interruption and distraction.

Technical Time Out - this recognition would be the opportunity to attend a free UNL HIVE training program. The Staff member could choose or create their technical interest of choice, whether to learn about something they already use, or to explore a technology they are curious about. There would not be any specific expectation that the technology topic be work-related. HIVE programs are typically about two hours long, software coding HIVE classes are up to one-day long, all free, except for lunch.

Pat and Mark met with HR. Some ideas are outside of our ability as they are part of state policy or NAPE agreement. Ideas must come from the

Union and accepted by administration and then written into NAPE policy. VR management must take ideas to administration and then take to NAPE negotiations. There are concerns about fairness between supervisors. There are a lot of hoops to jump through. 4 - 10 hour work days, flex scheduling are within our limits of what we can do. A decision will be made by Mark and what he feels comfortable with doing. The ODs will be meeting next week and this will part of the agenda. We need input from other individuals as well. At a minimum, look at the hours you work within the week (4 - 9 hour work days and 4 hours on another day) vs. 4 -10 hour days. 4 -10 hour days was tried before and it did not go over well. Mark is willing to do some flex time before going to 4 -10 hour days but will need additional discussion.

Feedback: Ideas discussed regarding flex/compressed work week:

- In an office a staff member chose to be a .8 FTE (Wed off) - - seeing if that works. Individual decision by that staff member and team. Reducing their permanent work schedule and see if the team/consumers are served. Clients and co-workers adjust after awhile.
- If worked 4 days, saving dollars because won't travel on the 5th day.
- Have a black out day where everyone is in the office.
- Wouldn't work for everyone in every office.
- Being flexible with staff is a benefit.
- Working a different schedule one week vs. another week is not allowed.
- A staff member commented that 4-10 hour work days would be great for working parents with children in day care.
- Another staff member mentioned that 4 - 10 hour days and kids being home alone may not be what staff would like. What about survey monkey to get opinions?
- There could be scheduling issues if only 2 associates are in office if 1 wants to take leave and 1 already has the day off in their work week.
- A staff member was interested in how it would work and how we can get it done. We don't want to be penalized that it didn't work in the past.

North Platte:

1. Feedback from Team on Draft Training Plan

Staff indicated that New Staff Training is to spread out and does not meet the needs of new employees. Some staff did not get Quest training until 7-8 months after employment with the Agency. Some liked the

group training process In Lincoln enjoyed meeting others and developing those professional relationship with others across the state. One person indicated that it was good to wait awhile to start training because it allowed her time to learn some on her own and then she was able to ask knowledgeable questions at training. Another said training was to spread out seemed like it took forever to get through it.

Suggestions: Offer Quest training every few months since this is an essential part of job duties. However, they did note that QE2 appears to be much more user friendly and staff may not need a lot of training to be able to navigate the system.

Ongoing Training

All staff should be required to do a minimum of hours of training per year (at least 8hrs a year) if staff is unable to identify training OD will identify. Like the idea of team budget for trainings. Think the OD should be able to approve unless it is an out of state training. The OD should be responsible for approving trainings. One suggestion was to treat out of state trainings or pricey trainings similar to the high cost fund???? OD should be responsible for distributing training dollars as fairly as possible.

Would like to see Monthly training geared towards learning specifics about different disabilities. Enjoy doing Team building activities. Offer trainings to related to specialty areas(placement, eval etc...) via video conference. Bring in outside speaker sometimes. Motivational /Inspirational trainings would be nice. Have staff give success stories/testimonials on how they are implementing MI. Have an identified staff person that is confident in MI that can work with staff and clients as needed or with team as requested. Set up Wiki that staff can put training announcement on from across the state. Before approving a training require staff to share the conference/training information on the wiki as well as at a Team mtg. This would ensure that all staff are informed of the potential trainings and have equal opportunity to request attending.

Do refresher courses(new staff training) via video conference as identified by the team. We have done this and senior staff did find it helpful as thing have changed dramatically over the years.

Continue to utilize EAP training opportunities.

Feedback on Rewards/Incentives

The number one incentive across the board was a pay increase at least enough to be competitive with other states with comparable jobs.

Allow telecommuting one day a week as an option for people who can not benefit from the four ten hour workdays. The person would need to be available to others via lchat, email and also by phone.

Bonuses for meeting/exceeding goal.

They LOVE the idea of flexible scheduling and the four 10 hr work days for ALL Staff.

North Platte suggested the idea of, " VR bucks", which evolved into or is similar to, " Gamification." Would like to earn points for a variety of things suggestions were: meeting goal, exceeding goal, innovative ideas, the best idea that didn't work(to encouraged continued creativity and brainstorming for Fed Ex days), your birthday, years of service(on service date), the team that travels the most miles, volunteering for projects or events, serving on various committees, and going above and beyond helping a consumer or a co-worker.

What would you like to purchase with your VR bucks?

Time off, massages, movie theater tickets, airline tickets, gift certificates, work from home days, oil change, Visa Card so you can spend the money wherever you want to, gift certificate to UNL store, training of your choice(something out of state fun but, still work related), free hotel night, Six flags tickets, Zoo tickets, state fair passes, gas card, museum tickets, the Arch, the Golden Spike and a weekend getaway. The possibilities are endless!!!!!!

Some would like the Agency to assist with continuing education towards a work related degree whether it be an associates, bachelors or masters degree.

Some staff really appreciate wearing jeans and would like to have it expanded to two days a week while others do not see it as an incentive.

Bargaining (NAPE agreement changes) will take place in October.

Management and NAPE putting together bargaining changes now. Who are NAPE reps? Sue Martin w/ NDE..

Mark wants to take a measured approach to the flex/compressed work week.

Mark: If staff are given the opportunity for flex scheduling or compressed work week would it be fair to evaluate the workweek schedule change by looking at production in 6 months? LC felt "Yes."

Mark said it ultimately is his decision on the flex/compressed work week.

If any teams have any strong opinions on flex scheduling or compressed work week, please take to your OD and have them bring it to the OD meeting on 8/15. ODs will have to negotiate staff schedules and issues.

Additional comments:

- What happens if everyone wants to be gone on Friday? Rotating with staff? Make sure it's on calendars.
- Mark: What happens if OD works 4 - 10 hour day? An LC member stated that the team could manage.
- Another staff member said the team could manage as it's a planned day off in a work week. Mark: If the team is working well, then it should be okay.

Training Plan: Larry is heading up development of training plan. Larry has names of staff who expressed an interest in being on the training committee. He's looking at team budgets and consistency in training, approval for attendance, etc.

VRIS: some of you participated or heard about work group to look at VRIS: How consumer flows through the process will change drastically. VRIS has policy and procedures, QE2, and forms all together. VRIS is difficult to navigate to next steps. Some chapters say the same thing. Some chapters were eliminated. Laurie Colburn is working on the checklists. When defined, it will be put on Wiki for staff's input. Goal is to have it done by October 1. Eliminating some procedures and revising standards will be decided. Still planning on another MI training but will be a different format - - compress into 2 consecutive days which will happen before state staff.

Mark is willing to look at jeans days ideas.

VR Bucks: if we do it within the department, NDE does have some funds that we could possibly tie into. NDE wouldn't be willing for us to use own logo or criteria. We would be given NDE stuff. Could we set up our own program outside of NDE if we have private funding? NDE couldn't see why not so Mark will be exploring this further. VR won't use public funds but will use private funds. Could use gift cards, team lunches, no doodads. If

have logo clothing, could have gift card to get it done. Hopefully will have more info by next meeting.

No assignment between now and next meeting. You could get more information from ODs. Put report on Wiki.