
2017 Service to Customers Award

Public Works HR Services Team

Gabriele Bankers, Jack Davies, Lacy Gonzalez, and LaToya Linzey

Office of Human Resources

Nomination submitted by George Delaney

In late 2015, the Public Works HR Service Team was known as a tough and unrewarding place to work. To start, the leadership team did not trust HR and did not expect them to help resolve critical business issues or get involved in key decision making. The agency also had high turnover, lots of disciplinary action, and deep culture issues that had not been addressed. Despite these great barriers, a new team of fearless individuals agreed to take on the task of supporting the 1,200+ employees and 200+ leaders of Public Works.

- LaToya Linzey brings 10+ years of experience with the City and an unmatched dedication for supporting her teammates and serving her clients. LaToya's attitude that no issue or employee concern is too small to be important makes her equally adept at influencing strategy and building the confidence of front line employees.
- Gabriele Bankers has a track record for developing leaders and driving organizational change. Her positive attitude, work ethic and ability to ask powerful questions make anything possible. She is utilizing proven organizational development tools to bring Public Works to the next level.
- Lacy Gonzalez is deeply passionate about making work rewarding for all employees. She has a wonderful sense of humor and genuineness that allows her to quickly build trust and report with clients. Her energy and know-how have made her a powerful addition to the team.
- Jack Davies brings strong talent and expertise in performance of people and business to the Department of Public Works. He is an employee advocate and a developer of talent. He brings invaluable core strength in building lasting and sustained relationships and engaging leaders in conversations that move the needle.

While each of these individuals adds value on their own, it is their teamwork and shared passion for providing excellent client service which has turned them into an HR powerhouse. Everyday this team shows COURAGE by questioning the status quo and asking, "how can we do this better?". They display CREDIBILITY by understanding the business and acting as a trusted advisor for employees at all levels. They demonstrate COMPETENCE by getting involved and adding value on key strategic initiatives. Finally, they COLLABORATE to build a strong team culture and positive working relationships across the City.

Through a proactive approach and tireless dedication, this team has successfully changed the perspective of HR in Public Works from "transactional" to "true business partnership".

Some of the team's major accomplishments over the past year include:

- Strategic Engagement Program – Planned and implemented an employee engagement program with a scope and impact that is unprecedented in the history of the City; Invested 2,000 hours of employee time and 500+ planning hours (\$80,000 soft cost) in a bottoms-up effort to define strategies for making work better in Public Works; Delivered 40-page consultant-like Employee Engagement Action Plan with 18 project recommendations and

gained buy-in from Senior Leadership; Planned and executed Engagement Roadshow to communicate progress to employees across PW; The team is now being asked to provide expertise and guidance to other city agencies who are interested in implementing a similar approach to engagement

- Reduce Turnover – Helped Public Works reduce turnover to 7.7% in 2016, down from 10.7% in 2015 (28% improvement); Compares to city-wide turnover of 14% in 2016; Saved the agency hundreds of thousands of dollars in recruiting, training and productivity costs
- Less Employee Relations – Decreased disciplinary actions by 62% from 2015 baseline by focusing on accountability and creating a leader coaching culture
- Driving Innovation - Implemented key process improvements leading to increased efficiency and cost savings of \$27K+
- Leadership Retreats - Designed and facilitated 3-day Leadership Retreat with Executive Director Jose Cornejo and all Directors; Focused on implementation of employee engagement, Six Sigma/PEAK tools, and strategic objectives; First retreat for this staff since Jose was appointed by the Mayor in 2012; Facilitated 6 additional leadership team retreats for divisions across PW
- Employer Branding Video – Worked with City-wide Communications and AOR to build pilot version of City’s branding initiative; Delivered PW Branding Video to be used in employment branding, community relations and general marketing
- DPS Career X Partnership – Partnered with DPS for 3 separate on-site events to mark Public Works as employer of choice; Introduced approximately 60 high school students to PW through job shadowing and discussion of career opportunities with the City
- PW Excellence in Leadership Program – Implemented formal 9 module leadership program for all leaders in PW; Designed to provide development and learning opportunities that enhance a leader’s ability to build functional teams, lead through change and innovation, manage succession, and be a coach and mentor; Focused on building leadership bench strength and depth for the future

Despite facing huge challenges and being a brand new team working together for the first time, the PW Service Team has delivered tremendous value for their client over the last year. These enthusiastic HR professionals are now fully integrated into the business and trusted by employees and leaders at all levels. Their passion for service and ability to deliver results is truly worth recognizing.