Innovation, Value, and Creativity: A Year with Animal Care and Control

Denver’s Animal Care and Control (ACC) houses over 7,500 homeless animals a year at the new Denver Animal Shelter. ACC is also responsible for protecting the public and animals through enforcement and education related to Denver’s animal laws. In 2011, the City and County of Denver completed the new Denver Animal Shelter, the nation’s first LEED-Platinum certified animal shelter. Moving to the new shelter required much planning, but it was not until we were in the new building that we realized that our old systems were not keeping up with our new space.

After determining which areas to focus on, we held a Value Stream Analysis (VSA) to look at our administrative citation process. This process tends to get backed up and many citations go to collections because people do not pay. I was impressed with the creative and innovative approach the team took for the first administrative citation Rapid Improvement Event (RIE). The team created a customer information card for our officers to hand out in the field when issuing a citation. The card walks the customer through the citation process, where to pay, how to appeal, etc. That is not likely a solution we would have identified on our own. That the team identified the solution and how to get there in such a creative manner was really an eye-opener for all of us.

Peak allows everyone to participate, give input, and be valued as they develop solutions for problems that hinder our ability to move forward. We have moved on to another VSA and another RIE with similar results.

Invariably, we hear from the staff that they feel heard and valued as a part of the VSA and RIE processes. ACC is only at the beginning of incorporating Peak principles into our daily business but our experiences so far have been very positive.
Animal Care and Control continued

Through two VSAs and two RIEs in nine months we have identified $344,423 in soft savings. We have trained seven staff as black belts and will look to them to lead the way to integrate creative innovations for our agency. As we move forward into 2014 we intend to continue to incorporate Peak principles into our projects and systems, capturing wherever possible a process improvement component so that we are continually reviewing our systems and identifying ways to create more efficiencies and effective services for the public. We are building a more productive workforce by using Peak principles to assess and redefine our systems.

-Alice Nightengale,
Executive Director, Animal Care and Control

Black belt and Animal Control Sergeant Stephen Romero hosts Mayor Hancock on a gemba walk.

Black belt and Animal Care Supervisor Tara Morse displays standard work for the animal behavioral status evaluation process.

Customer information card from ACC’s first RIE.

Peak Academy | Leaving Behind a Better City

After 36 years with the City and County of Denver, Karen Todd, Property Tax Manager with the Controller’s Office, is retiring. Karen was part of black belt cohort 5 in January 2013. Karen volunteered to attend black belt training the same year she was slated to retire because she believes in making each day productive. In her last year of employment, she saved the City and County $16,150 through two innovations. Her 3rd innovation assumes a projected savings of $64,000.

Karen wanted to leave her colleagues in a position to flourish after her retirement. She applied to be a black belt because she believes in always taking opportunities to grow and learn. She was excited to delve into process improvement and appreciated Peak Academy’s emphasis on a worker-driven methodology.

Karen feels that hard work, dedication, perseverance, and a positive attitude are the keys to making a difference at work. She hopes her coworkers remember her as a nice person who always stood as a positive resource. Karen serves as an example of how much can be accomplished in one year, even if it is your final year on the job.
The Peak Academy continues to be surprised by one remarkable fact: innovations generated from individual black belts are outperforming Rapid Improvement Events and other team-based projects. This fact serves as proof that small, simple changes do add up over time to create the biggest impact overall.

This year Peak Academy participants demonstrated that one person actually does make a difference. Below are several black belt innovations that stood out as examples of excellence in team work, creativity, and leadership.

**Shelby Hall** from OHR facilitated a team of two and eliminated the waste in the turnover data reporting process, which reduced the wait time for the customer from two weeks to two days and resulted in $29,240 of savings.

**Bill Miles** from Public Works facilitated a team of six to perform a 6S on the parking meter repair shop. The new standard process for inventory control and reallocation meant that the team did not need to request $256,000 for parts and equipment.

**Nikki Holmlund** from the Controller’s Office worked with a team of three to streamline the grant reporting process for a savings of $2,016 and the model for a gold standard A3.

**Seth Howsden** from OED led a team of two to redesign the workplace fundamental model for a savings of $243,844.
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--2013 Black Belt Participant

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--2013 Nonprofit Black Belt Participant

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2014 Application Process

Black Belt (4.5 day Lean Process Improvement Training)
If you applied, we have your application on file and will be filling up the 2014 cohorts to the best of our ability.

Green Belt (4-hour Intro to Lean Process Improvement)
Teams interested in taking the Green Belt training as a group, please contact the Peak Academy. Individuals interested in taking Green Belt training can register through the Office of Human Resources by calling (720) 913-5628 or by emailing training@denvergov.org.

www.denvergov.org/PeakPerformance

In November the Peak Academy hosted a black belt class for the City and County of Denver’s nonprofit partners. Pictured above: Melissa Flores from Girls Inc. delivering her Ignite presentation.

Month | 2014 Training Dates
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January | 1/27, 1/28, 1/29, 1/30, and 1/31
February | 2/24, 2/25, 2/26, 2/27, and 2/28
April | 4/21, 4/22, 4/23, 4/24, and 4/25

Peak Academy | Contact Information

For Peak Academy info, training dates, how to apply, or other general questions, please contact:

Email: PeakAcademy@denvergov.org
Phone: 720.913.1645

Peak Performance Website:
www.denvergov.org/peakperformance

General ideas, feedback, questions?
PeakAcademy@denvergov.org

Process Improvement
Brian.Elms@denvergov.org

Strategic Planning
Scotty.Martin@denvergov.org