

PPS, INC.

Human Resources & Organizational Assessment Report

Live Oak Public Libraries
Board of Trustees



September 5, 2016

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Live Oak Public Libraries Human Resources & Organizational Assessment Report

Background

Pinnacle Performance Solutions, Inc. (PPS) was hired on July 1, 2016 by Live Oak Public Libraries (LOPL) Board of Trustees to conduct an independent, objective and systematic assessment of the human resources function.

PPS consultants are certified human resources professionals with a minimum of 15 years of experience. Consequently, they are qualified to render judgments on matters of human resources and leadership capability. Mr. Steve Schaefer provided the initial documentation that served as a basis for the design of the human resources assessment.

Assessment Method

The assessment method combined processes that would not only amass appropriate evidence, but also assess the underlying causes of employees' complaints such as lack of capability, cultural issues, systematic process failures and negligent management behaviors. Given that there are multiple realities of a single event, PPS consultants conducted a qualitative inquiry to understand how employees interpret their experiences and what meaning they attribute to their experiences as LOPL employees.

PPS consultants conducted 40 interviews from July 28 - August 15, 2016 with the Interim Library Director, department directors, managers, and non-managerial employees. Interviews were scheduled at mutually convenient times and conducted face-to-face at the Bull Street Library as well as virtually. PPS

consultants also reviewed the HR Policy Manual, email correspondence and personnel files to gather data related to this assessment.

Profile of Interview Participants

Race	Gender	Total
Black or AA	Male	4
Black or AA	Female	15
White or Caucasian	Male	4
White or Caucasian	Female	8
Hispanic or Latino	Male	1
Hispanic or Latina	Female	2
Multiracial	Female	1
Unknown	Female	5

Analysis Method

PPS consultants analyzed volumes of data using an inductive analysis technique to examine the data for patterns and gain insight. After notes from multiple data sources were consolidated into one document, three PPS consultants repeatedly examined and compared the raw data to identify key themes related to human resources effectiveness and organizational effectiveness. Therefore, inter-judge reliability was achieved as the data, findings, and recommendations were triangulated to ensure validity and reliability.

Findings

The Findings are presented in four sections:

- I. HR Assessment
- II. Active Employee Complaints
- III. Active Employee Investigations
- IV. Organizational Assessment

I. HR Assessment

A contemporary model for effective human resources was used to assess the HR function in the following categories: strategic HR management, governance and management systems, function management/HR knowledge, diversity, safety and health, compensation and benefits, human resource development, staffing, methods and standards of performance and HR planning/management depth. The HR department consists of Mr. Jim Stroud and Mr. Scott Pool.

Strategic HR Management

Strategic HR management is an approach to managing the long-term human capital issues; identifying and aligning resources to meet future needs of the organization; and focusing on the organization's culture, values and structure. Jim reported having 30 years of HR experience. He seems to have a solid understanding of the traditional purpose of the HR function in an organization from a tactical perspective, stating its purpose is to "have a vital role in supporting and maintaining a workplace that employees enjoy coming to everyday, support the needs of employees, hiring, training, employee relations, compensation, and benefits as well as to provide internal resources to employees." However, very few employees reported and very little evidence supports that HR is executing its role in a strategic, comprehensive and effective manner.

It does not appear that Jim is clear about the employees' expectations of HR. When asked about the employees'

expectations of HR, Jim stated, “I don’t know...make sure they get paid accurately and on time; if they have any issues, they expect HR would support a process to address those.” His uncertainty about the employees’ expectations of HR suggests that no assessment of employee expectations had been conducted.

Employees reported a number of issues with HR that when questioned about it, Jim indicated the issues were the former Library Director’s decision and he acquiesced. HR leaders must demonstrate managerial courage and influence skills to advocate for the implementation of HR best practices to engage and retain a high quality workforce.

Jim reported that HR does not have a strategic plan; therefore, there are no long-range HR plans that support LOPL’s strategy. Jim reported that the principal human resources initiatives at present are: transitioning FLSA; hosting focus groups on the subject of clocking in and out every day; adjusting the timekeeping system to properly account for meal breaks; planning staff development day; open enrollment; and the Savannah Children’s Book Festival. While these initiatives are important and represent some of the traditional functions and tactical processes of HR, the human resources function should also support the strategic management of human capital by consulting with managers about how to execute strategy, recommending improvements to work processes to gain efficiency, representing employees’ concerns to senior leaders and helping manage changes to the LOPL’s culture.

Presently, HR seems to focus primarily on routine activities that produce short-term outcomes; however, there are reports that HR poorly executes the routine activities of HR such as processing payroll and resolving employee complaints. In addition to executing effectively on the tactical activities of HR, a strategic focus would provide direction on building the foundation for strategic advantage by creating an effective organizational structure and design, healthy workplace culture, and a rewarding employee value proposition.

Recommendation

- Expand the focus of HR to include strategic human capital management processes.

Governance & Management Systems

HR governance is

“the act of leading the HR function and managing related investments to optimize performance of the organization’s human capital assets, mitigate HR risk, align the function’s priorities with those of the business and enable decision making. Governance is a systematic approach to management that enables the function to achieve strategic and operational objectives.”¹

Given that there is no HR strategy, it is unclear how the department will obtain, manage and retain the workforce LOPL needs to achieve its business strategy and goals. It is also questionable how HR intends to deliver the necessary value to the organization concerning structure, processes, people, and technology within the department. There are no performance metrics for the functions of HR; therefore, performance monitoring and continuous improvement are non-existent.

Employee files seem to be improperly maintained. According to the HR Policy Manual, “The Human Resources Director shall be the custodian of the official files”. An employee reported, “Jim asked me for a copy of my grievance because he said ‘it mysteriously disappeared from my employee file.’” Additionally, Jim was aware that an employee’s disciplinary action and letter were illegally administered; yet during his interview, Jim could not confirm that the disciplinary letter had been removed from the employee’s personnel file. He stated that he had not thought about it. This appears to be negligent management behavior that places LOPL in a precarious legal position.

¹ Mercer Human Resources

While there is a HR policy manual, policies and procedures are followed inconsistently. According to the HR Policy Manual, Section II-101.3, “All available positions shall be advertised on a Job Posting list published by the Library Human Resources staff on the Library website. Jim admitted during this assessment that all jobs are not posted; therefore, this policy is inconsistently administered. Employees perceive the job posting process as unfair. Consistent practices for job postings are a good business practice that also enhances employee engagement.

Employees overwhelmingly reported that Jim intimidates employees about returning to work while they are on sick leave. Employees also reported that they perceived Jim as uncaring as demonstrated by a non-management level employee’s statement

“They don’t have pleasant attitudes all the time. When you call them about leave forms, they don’t explain leave time to you. They only want to know when you will return to work”.

Another non-management level employee stated,

“He [Jim] made me think I had to come back to work or I wouldn’t have a job. I didn’t think I was physically or mentally ready to come back to work, but I had to have my job to take care of my kids.”

It is possible Jim could have been providing employees with a general update on their FMLA usage. If employees trusted HR more, then they may not perceive FMLA updates as intimidating and as a threat of losing their jobs.

Communications System

HR communicates via written policies, the website and newsletters. The current communication system is ineffective. Some employees reported that they learned about changes in job responsibilities when they initiated a search on LOPL’s website. Official changes in job duties should be formally communicated to employees in a timely manner. More robust communication

systems should be established to ensure employees receive frequent, timely and relevant information. Systems such as employee webcasts, mass emails and an intranet/employee portal may enhance communication, if not already in place. Refer to p.26 for more findings on communication.

Budgeting

Jim claimed that he has never seen a budget for HR. Without a department budget it is difficult to conduct short and long range planning for programs and services. HR should have a budget and LOPL financial status updates frequently enough to plan and make decisions that affect the quality of HR services.

Recommendations

- Establish a HR Council to focus on strategic, operational and functional accountabilities related to HR strategy development, overseeing rewards plans and programs, HR resource allocation, staff development and leadership succession. The HR Council would establish and use metrics to evaluate and communicate the effectiveness of HR.
- Assess and secure employee files. Transition to an electronic file system to simplify, secure and protect personnel files.
- Follow policies and hold managers accountable for adhering to organizational policies.
- Expand and enhance communication modes.
- Develop and execute a budget reporting process.

Functional Management –HR Knowledge

According to Jim, “Scott Pool has thorough payroll system knowledge; however, he has no knowledge of compensation analysis as there is no need to conduct such an analysis”. To the contrary, HR professionals need to possess in-depth knowledge of

concepts, principles and practices related to such total rewards as: retirement, insurance, compensation, retention, and benefits. Such knowledge will ensure employees receive correct information and deductions for benefits. Many employees reported errors in payroll processing. Jim also asserted that Scott has thorough knowledge of the payroll system and that most of his job is related to system support. There were numerous payroll errors that were not corrected in a timely manner. Employees also reported that they paid for benefits, but later learned they actually had no coverage.

According to information disclosed during this assessment, Scott does not have the appropriate level of experience for his current position. The email announcement that Jim distributed to all staff on December 23, 2013 concerning Scott starting as the new HR Coordinator indicated that Scott has experience in recruiting and he worked in staffing agencies. He also has experience as an events coordinator. His previous experience and high error rate in payroll processing suggest that he is not highly qualified to process payroll nor is he qualified to provide system support.

The primary concern reported for Scott Pool was his repeated violation of employee confidentiality. He was suspected of sharing confidential salary information of at least two employees; however, Jim and Scott denied such a breach of confidential information. Employees also reported that Scott is frequently rude to lower level employees, which is a violation of HR Policy III-106.5d, which mandates, "Employees shall exhibit excellent customer service to both internal and external customers at all times".

Concerning his own knowledge of HR, Jim stated that he has excellent knowledge in employee relations; however, as delineated in the following Employee Relations section, many employees reported numerous employee relations issues that were managed inappropriately and in a manner that breached confidentiality. Additionally, Jim's behavior and commentary while serving in his role created an environment of intimidation.

Recommendations:

Based on information that was shared during this assessment, Scott Pool is not properly trained or experienced in payroll and benefits administration.

- Replace Scott Pool with a certified, experienced HR generalist who would provide support and expertise in various HR programs and services.
- Replace Jim Stroud with a principled, experienced certified professional who is skilled in leading strategic HR and culture transformation.

Employee Relations

One of the primary responsibilities of HR is to counsel and advise employees and supervisors in employment related matters. Such advice and consultations may consist of disciplinary actions; interpretation of policies and procedures; and corrective action and planning. An overwhelming majority of employees who participated in the interviews reported that they do not confide in HR, nor do they seek advice from HR because Jim and Scott are widely known to breach confidentiality. A non-management level employee stated, “Jim is a primary gossiper, I knew I had to file my grievance, but I also knew that the second I filed it, it would probably be photocopied and passed around to people somewhat indirectly involved in it”. Other employees stated that nothing would happen if they talked to HR and that their grievances would be “swept under the rug”.

Additional statements from employees are as follows:

- “People talk, it’s common knowledge in the organization that if you go to him with something private, it may not be private, other people will know about it”.
- “People knew not to share private information with Jim.”

- “No one trusts HR because nothing is going to happen. You can bring it to the forefront with him but nothing will come out of it.”
- “We have zero percent trust in HR; he is not a certified HR person. Just the way they handle people. You never get help, you get sarcasm and threats. The humaneness went of HR years ago. We could never get answers. The way they treated employees was horrible.”

HR leaders must build trust and demonstrate personal, professional and behavioral integrity. They should be honest, fair, impartial, and unbiased in dealings with employees and other LOPL constituents. Modeling ethical leadership in this way builds trust and establishes credibility. Only then would employees trust that HR would properly manage their confidential information.

Employees reported that senior leaders routinely intimidated employees by summoning employees to meetings in which there were multiple senior managers in attendance to communicate transfers to different locations. Employees stated that they found this practice intimidating, but felt they did not have a voice to complain because Jim was often a participant in the meetings.

The HR Policy states, “Employees shall exhibit excellent customer service to both internal and external customers at all times”. Employees reported that Jim is negative, rude sarcastic and unsupportive of employees’ issues/complaints and that many grievances were never addressed nor resolved. A management level employee stated, “Scott, Jim, and Ed Fields are the 3 Musketeers of Negativity”. Another employee claimed that Jim made excuses for the previous Library Director's bad behavior instead of addressing it directly.

Jim reportedly asked an employee to file a complaint about a manager whom he disliked. This request made the employee very uncomfortable and destroyed any trust the employee may have

had in HR. Additionally, it is unprofessional and unethical behavior.

Recommendations:

- Appoint principled leaders of integrity in HR.
- Initiate a culture change process to reestablish an environment of trust, transparency, and support.
- Abandon the practice of engaging multiple managers to meet with a single employee.
- Establish service goals and execute roles and responsibilities accordingly. Include the goals on the performance evaluation for HR professionals.

Diversity

High performing organizations promote an inclusive workplace. Employees of LOPL reported that HR treated employees differently and sometimes disparagingly based on a number of diversity factors such as age, race, class and disability. A retired employee reported that Jim and her supervisor mentioned age would be a factor in the selection process if she applied for a position with more hours. Such comments by and/or endorsed by HR to an employee are illegal and discriminatory. The employee stated

“Jim and (my supervisor) summoned me to the branch and told me that due to my age, over 65, I would receive no benefits because I work less than 30 hours. I asked them to give me more hours. They told me if I applied for another position that is 30 hours, there would be other considerations: my age and experience. I said, I don’t think you can say that! It’s illegal!”

Several employees reported that HR treats employees differently seemingly based on class. The employees asserted that higher-level employees received more supportive and courteous responses to inquiries from HR than lower level employees. One

management level employee who observed this behavior from HR stated

“There seemed to be class distinction – they treated senior employees better than lower level employees. They would not even acknowledge people who didn’t make a certain amount of money.”

Employees reported that Jim made fun of people who were overweight and of employees with a disability. A non-management level employee stated

“Jim was very critical. He made derogatory comments about fat people and made fun of overweight people in front of employees. He also made comments about fat dripping off of people. He would walk behind employees making gestures”.

This behavior violates HR Policy III-106.5, which states, “Deviations from socially acceptable conduct during working hours are contrary to Library policy and therefore are grounds for disciplinary action or dismissal. Such conduct includes but is not limited to: using excessive or abusive profanity, obscene or derogatory language...”.

Many Black/African American employees claimed that hiring and promotion practices are discriminatory and salary inequities are prevalent. Refer to p.31 for more discussion of hiring and promotions.

Recommendations:

- Initiate culture transformation to one that embraces diversity and that values differences.
- Appoint leaders whose values align with an inclusive and diverse workforce.
- Incorporate diversity into LOPL’s strategic plan.
- Provide diversity training for all employees.

Safety & Health

When asked about HR efforts to address safety and health, Jim reported that he is responsible for worker's compensation and that Facilities is responsible for safety. Traditionally, HR has some ownership and responsibility for protecting employees from injuries caused by work-related accidents and for ensuring employees have support as related to physical and emotional well-being.

Employees reported that physical and psychological workplace bullying and threats of violence were pervasive. Research indicates that bullying occurs when there is a lack of trust of management, a poor organizational climate, higher absenteeism and turnover rates, reduced productivity, and higher litigation costs. One department director allegedly screamed and routinely used profanity when communicating with peers and non-management level employees. A non-management level employee reported that she called Jim to intervene in a tense, intimidating encounter with her supervisor. Although Jim reportedly went to the scene of the encounter, he and the supervisor engaged in a screaming exchange. Jim left the scene and told the employee he could not help her. The employee stated, "So it left me feeling hopeless...I thought HR was supposed to help me".

Another non-management level employee reported that Jim humiliated her when she fell down the stairs in the parking deck/garage. She stated,

"Jim pulled the video of the fall, he said she was looking at security cameras. He looked at the video and laughed about it. Several employees said he did it. He said very disparaging words to me, "I was fat, I was incompetent because I fell and I was a doormat for certain people".

Jim's behavior equated to psychological bullying, which is considered to be any activities such as jokingly ridiculing a

person in a harmful manner. This is an unfortunate display of unprofessional and unethical behavior.

Recommendations:

- Hire a HR Director who is committed to treating employees with dignity and respect and who has experience in developing and implementing a comprehensive Safety and Wellness program.
- Develop a culture of civility and one that does not tolerate bullying.
- Train managers to lead by example by reinforcing the message that every employee is valued, respected, and appreciated.
- Offer resilience training to strengthen employees after experiencing such a stressful work environment.
- Adopt social networking to engage employees in wellness programs.
- Offer an Employee Assistance Program, if not already in place, to assist employees with family issues, job performance problems, stress and grief.

Compensation & Benefits

HR attempted to change payroll-processing systems. The change was unsuccessful producing numerous errors in payouts and deductions. This change did not meet the employees' expectations and Jim acknowledged that numerous errors were made during the transition to the new system. Employees reported that Jim did not provide benefits properly and he mishandled their retirement inquiries. A management level employee stated, "The initiative was poorly led".

Many employees reported perceptions of salary inequities based on race. Perceptions of inequity will create morale problems because employees are motivated in proportion to the perceived fairness of the rewards received. There were also reports of salary compression, newer employees earning more than

experienced employees. A compensation study would identify and mitigate any salary inequities and compression issues.

PPS consultants requested a salary history report containing data for the past three years. As of the time of writing this report, the salary history report had not been submitted; therefore, the compensation analysis is incomplete. Regarding payroll, PPS understood there was another assessment of financial processes and payroll by a CPA in progress. Consequently, PPS consultants did not delve deeply into this topic. There may be additional Compensation and Benefits recommendations contained in the audit conducted by the CPA's audit.

Recommendations:

- Evaluate jobs and analyze salary history data to determine internal equity.
- Conduct a compensation study including job description development and/or updates.

Human Resource Development

According to Jim, training is offered to all staff on an annual basis at the staff development event. Training for current jobs is inadequate – a management level employee claimed he never received supervisory training. There were numerous complaints and concerns expressed about managers and supervisors. One manager stated that he did not receive the proper training to be effective in his role. Development programs are not offered to all employees.

Recommendations:

- Conduct a training and development needs assessment focusing on the organizational analysis, task analysis and person analysis

- Managers and supervisors with the responsibility for managing the efforts of others should be provided with appropriate learning opportunities to develop their supervisory skills.
- Establish a mentoring and/or coaching program to enhance individual career, personal and professional growth and development.
- Offer a comprehensive career planning and development program.
- Review every employee's training and development needs at least annually and establish plans to address any gaps.
- During the development of the annual budget, consider including appropriate resources to fund employee training and development.

Staffing

Employees reported dissatisfaction with the promotional and growth opportunities afforded to them. A general perception exists that hiring and promotion practices are racially discriminatory. Employees also reported cronyism given that Jim knew Scott Pool, Edgar Field and Karen Stastny from previous jobs.

Some employees claimed that awards for Employee of the Year differed based on race. They further claimed that some employees received salary increases while others did not. PPS consultants requested salary history for the past three years; however, Jim and Scott claimed they do not have access to provide the requested data and that Neil would provide it. The report had not been submitted at the time of writing this report; therefore, PPS was unable to complete this part of the assessment.

Although Jim claimed that HR has no authority to exercise control in staffing, the approval of new positions and filling of open positions, the employees reported otherwise. Many employees reported that Jim is involved in the job interviews and in employee relations meetings with the manager.

Although Jim claimed that HR does not make hiring decisions, he was involved in communicating to an Area Coordinator that a candidate other than her preferred candidate would be hired for a position. Subsequently, the Area Coordinator was asked to sign new hire forms for the candidate, but refused since it was not her candidate of choice.

Recommendation:

- Establish a process to regularly review short and long term staffing needs.
- Ensure hiring and promotion processes are fair and consistently executed.
- Address any potential key employee turnover so that LOPL's patrons continue to receive exceptional library programs and services.

Additional findings and recommendations for hiring and promotions are on p.31 of this report.

Methods and Standards of Performance

HR does not seem to have a high level of commitment to providing superior service to management and employees. A management-level employee stated, "I would ask Jim or Scott for help with payroll and they were unhelpful. Jim was so involved in other stuff he didn't do what HR should have been doing."

Position descriptions are not available for employees. When job descriptions were requested for review as a part of this assessment, Jim stated that LOPL uses job postings/ads and he would have to write the descriptions and submit them later. Job descriptions need to be current and easily accessible by the employees.

Jim has lost the trust of a significant number of employees. Employees who participated in this assessment unanimously reported having little confidence in HR as it pertains to

confidentiality, record keeping, and ethical leadership. A management level employee shared the following account, which illustrates Jim's lack of professionalism:

“One of my employees was having dental process done and Jim made a statement that she looks like a Jack-o-lantern and told me I don't need to have her on the front desk as long as she's looking that way. I said you are so insensitive and you're very wrong. Had you asked you would have known she is in a dental process right now. It was just unfair and you would not expect that out of your HR department. My supervisor knew it; everyone basically knew what was going on but nothing was ever done. We were asking who was policing the police about Jim's behavior, but no one did anything.”

When asked about his behavior, Jim claimed that he did not feel empowered to affect change because he reported to an autocratic leader, Christian Kruse. One of Jim's direct reports asserted, “Jim became so unprofessional at the conclusion of his probationary period, making faces about people who are overweight that she felt compelled to talk to Jim about his unprofessionalism”. Another employee stated,

“[Jim is] definitely the wrong person in the wrong place. He has no business working as an HR person. He wasn't personable and never got to know employees. He never came out to meet employees, he always wanted to stay in his office”.

Recommendations

- The HR Department needs to be structured and have the capacity to support LOPL with comprehensive HR programs and processes.
- Establish service standards and metrics for critical HR processes.

HR Planning/Management Depth

HR does not have a process for regularly reviewing staffing needs. HR has not conducted a management inventory to ensure that every critical function is backstopped by capable substitutes/replacements. Based on information collected during this assessment, HR does not engage in any form of workforce planning or succession planning.

There is no systematic plan for developing managers within human resources and within the overall organization. Employees reported that career planning is nonexistent. There is no evidence of management foresight regarding changes in external conditions other than an occasional salary survey. Backup plans are not documented to address any key employee leaves of absence.

Recommendations

- Engage in workforce planning to determine short and long-term employment needs.
- Conduct talent reviews to identify high-potential leaders for critical positions.
- Establish and implement career paths and career planning for all employees.

Conclusion: HR Assessment

There is a vast array of grievances, complaints, and issues stemming from inadequate leadership and execution of the HR function. Trust has eroded and employee morale is extremely low due to a number of HR practices. Most employees who participated in the interviews emotionally expressed their fears and feelings of hopelessness stating that they “had no voice” in the LOPL work environment. They found the opportunity to speak with PPS consultants to be somewhat therapeutic because “someone was finally listening to them”.

Jim was repeatedly reported to vilipend employee concerns and requests for intervention. PPS recommends a swift change in HR

leadership from the current HR employees to certified professionals who are experienced in leading strategic HR, transforming culture and building teams. LOPL urgently needs HR leaders who are principled, emotionally intelligent and who possess the leadership maturity to transform HR and LOPL.

II. Active Employee Complaints

Employees expressed myriad complaints about the hiring and promotion process, poor leadership and human resources. The following complaint occurred recently and warrants immediate resolution.

Ms. Aimee Ruth

Jim incorrectly advised Ms. Ruth concerning her retirement medical coverage. According to Aimee, Jim stated that her benefits would end on 2/29/16; consequently, she applied for Medicare. She later talked to a State health benefits program representative and learned she would have benefits through 3/31/16. Aimee stated, "Because I acted on Mr. Stroud's information, I paid for my own benefits, Medicare, prescription drug, accident plan as of 3/1/16. When I actually didn't need to do the paperwork until I left the Library. This situation, learning that I had double coverage, added to my stress level that last month before retiring."

Recommendation

Analyze the cost for double coverage during the reported time period and reimburse Ms. Ruth accordingly. In a letter to Mr. Broughton dated June 30, 2016, Ms. Ruth delineated expenses totaling \$726.

III. Active Employee Investigations

Brent Feasel

While conducting this assessment, there were employee allegations of pornographic material that Brent kept in his office. His office space is shared with his team and employees on his team disclosed to us that they have seen it. In addition, a flash drive of what appears to be Brent's files from his computer indicate that he downloaded or stored a plethora of pornographic images alongside family pictures and employee files at work on his computer.

Secondly, he was offered the Circulation Manager position, although he had no supervisory experience and limited circulation experience. SW Circulation staff reported numerous complaints about Brent's leadership.

Lastly, Brent Feasel took a leave of absence (FMLA) when his daughter was born in November 2014. He was away for 12 weeks (at least 480 hours). As of June 2016, it has been proven that he had 504 hours of sick time and 300 hours of vacation time still available. It is suspected that HR allowed him to be paid without deducting his leave time (FMLA).

Concerning Brent's management and leadership skills, employees stated,

- “Brent however brings with him a cloud of disagreement, confusion, and miscommunication. We regularly begin our weeks with half the schedule complete and a new list of things that we've done wrong. Our questions and suggestions do not get answered, and our way of doing things has changed without any warning or reason why.”
- “Communication does not happen. Brent often leaves without us knowing if he is even still in the building. Last week he disappeared for over an hour because he ‘needed a break’; by the way, the branch had been open for less than an hour.”

- “We asked to have a Circulation meeting this past January and were told it was going to happen soon. Mike and Brent had a few meetings together; however, none of us were ever invited nor did we get to hear the outcomes of these meetings. We stopped doing Delivery at the desk, but he has still not said a word about it. We are being ignored.”
- “I don't think my supervisor should have been put in a management position, he does not want it or doesn't know how. He doesn't handle small issues between staff well, doesn't handle scheduling well, what takes should take a day takes a week, terrible communicator...we had little issues, workloads being unfair, he didn't balance it out, favored someone, it was obvious to me. I don't know whole history, or what happened, it was obvious from the beginning. When she was still training, making small mistakes, working the register, Brent completely started yelling at her for not doing something correct. It was in earshot of other people circulation dept. and pages. When another peer did the same mistake a week before (and he didn't do anything).”

Brent admits that he is not trained as a manager and has not received management training while at LOPL. He appeared disgruntled and disengaged while speaking with the PPS consultant. His team does not trust his leadership and described Brent as, “just a body”. Additionally, his team reported that Brent spends a significant part of his workday on his personal smart phone, provides no direction to his employees, and does not assist the team. The sentiments from his team about his leadership and interactions reflect this as well. One employee shared that she felt he did not want to be a manager and he was in the wrong role.

Recommendations

The findings concerning Brent are unacceptable for a leader in any organization. An independent forensic assessment should be performed to determine if the information on the flash drive

matches the IP address of his computer. This would confirm the data linkage and further support the original chain of custody in how the information was obtained. The findings from the CPA review should shed light on how vacation hours are applied to Brent's leave of absence and if there was misallocation of his vacation time. Brent should be removed from his position and exited from the organization.

Robin Estes

It was reported that Robin was allegedly caught on library premises engaging in a sexual act with another employee. Before PPS arrived on site for interviews, LOPL administration requested that we avoid inquiring about the incident with Robin as the attorney retained by LOPL was reviewing the case to determine next steps. At the request of LOPL administration, PSS did not inquire about this incident.

Recommendations

Robin should be questioned about the incident and then HR or the attorney needs to determine if the evidence gathered warrants disciplinary action.

IV. Organizational Dimensions

Organizational Climate is a set of unique characteristics and features that are *perceived by the employees about their organizations*, which serves as a major force in influencing their engagement and behavior. The next section of this report includes findings and recommendations for six dimensions related to high performing organizations: work climate, communication, management/leadership; hiring and promotions; productivity and performance evaluations; and diversity.

Climate

Work climate is an assessment of employees' shared perceptions and experiences of the policies, practices, and procedures of their **workplace** and the behaviors that get rewarded, supported, and expected there. **Climate** exists at the group or organization level of analysis. The employees described the work atmosphere as a hostile environment. The following image depicts the employees' description of the atmosphere. Employees repeated the words in larger-sized font more frequently.



The dominant perception of the LOPL atmosphere is a hostile work environment in which there are cliques, nepotism and intimidation. Fear is pervasive and employees overwhelmingly indicated fear of retaliation if they complained or expressed any level of dissatisfaction with their supervisors, director-level leadership or operations. Employees developed a low level of trust in management and in HR. They perceive LOPL as a bureaucratic environment, which deflates their motivation and makes it difficult to complete their work. Changes are instituted

without engaging those employees who are primarily affected by the change, resulting in a confusing and chaotic work environment. Important information is not widely shared in the organization, which breeds more feelings of unease, tension and distrust. A few employees stated that the climate is good in their respective areas, but not in LOPL as a whole. Additionally, a few employees asserted that the climate is better now that Jason is in the Interim Director position.

Recommendations: Climate

- The organizational culture needs to be transformed into one that promotes its core values and a culture of transparency and trust.
- Establish and maintain a level of awareness of work climate by implementing an employee engagement system that incorporates surveys and focus groups to share the results and envision improvement strategies and actions.
- Train managers and supervisors on employee engagement and implement accountability structures and processes for the entire workforce.
- Establish improved communication strategies.
- Involve employees in process/program improvements throughout the change process.

Communication

Effective communication in the workplace is one of the most important factors in making the organization successful. During the interviews several employees stated that communication was lacking within LOPL. One employee indicated that she heard more from customers and community because “higher ups” didn’t share important information.

Employees were moved to different locations without adequate explanations resulting in a lack of transparency and trust deficit with employees. Poor communication often leads to confusion.

Poor communication has resulted in inconsistent hiring and onboarding. A new employee would report to work and the supervisor would forget to inform his staff that the person was starting work.

Some leaders were also perceived as untrustworthy based on potential confidential information being shared. Information that was potentially shared included protected health information, which could possibly lead to a HIPAA violation. An employee purposely delayed notifying HR about an upcoming sick leave due to the lack of confidence the employee had in HR to keep the health information confidential. The employee stated, “when I was going to take FMLA, I felt like Jim immediately ran around and told people my business”. The manner in which leaders uphold confidentiality impacts the employees they lead as well as the culture of the organization.

Recommendations: Communication

- Communicate changes that impact employees and LOPL in an effective manner. Develop a process and multiple modes of communication.
- In terms of HIPAA, medical information needs to be kept confidential, managers need to understand the importance and their legal responsibility to protect employee information.
- Analyze vacation utilization trends throughout the year. Explore low usage more fully to learn if there is a pattern of misuse or intimidation by managers.

Management & Leadership

PPS consultants found poor leadership at LOPL to be the primary cause of the perception of a hostile work environment. Employees expressed an extremely low level of confidence in LOPL leadership. Employees reported that some managers are rude, inconsiderate and intimidating. One manager in particular

intimidates those staff who need to take sick leave by using profanity when they call to inform her of their illness. The manager subsequently breaches confidentiality by emailing staff to announce the employee's absence and the type of illness of the employee. An employee stated, "She [her manager] emails everybody to tell them details about why you're out sick. She swears when you call in sick causing you to not want to call her when you're sick".

Employees also reported that managers routinely treat staff differently, rule by fear, and avoid holding certain employees accountable. Other words and phrases used to describe managers were: erratic, volatile, inappropriate, unapproachable, prejudiced, antagonizing, disrespectful, threatening, micromanaging, and missing in action. One employee stated that her manager frequently does not follow policies concerning counting money and handling customers' missing cards. Examples of perceived favoritism include the following: managers promote less experienced employees instead of the most experienced employees; managers allow certain employees to telecommute; and managers do not charge leave time for certain employees.

Many employees reported that they have a low level of confidence in their immediate manager/supervisor. One employee reported,

"I do not really have any confidence [in my manager]. He doesn't like to delegate anything, he talked down to us like we were uneducated and ignorant, like we didn't understand human speech".

Managers had meetings but concerns expressed by their employees were reportedly "brushed off and not addressed". An employee reported that his/her manager did not maintain confidentiality regarding leave usage stating, "He did fairly well until the end, vacation and sick time and he displayed it on his desk and walked all over us".

Leaders should focus on providing sufficient information to enable employees to carry out their responsibilities. There should

be an atmosphere in which employees inform one another with information about decisions which are made. Transparency involves openness, availability, and disclosure of information. It involves providing information about procedures and being thorough, timely, and considerate toward others' specific needs in communications about those procedures. An employee stated, "All the uncertainty about what I am doing and where I'm going is very upsetting".

Some employees perceive the environment as "better since Jason is in the interim Director position". An employee stated, "right now there is hope because of what's going on now". Another employee stated, "I've never been so spirited about coming to work". Jason brings appreciation and vision. Staff morale has increased since Jason."

To the contrary, some employees expressed concern about Jason's leadership behaviors as follows:

- He reportedly makes inappropriate comments about employees to groups of employees and others.
- He was observed to have an emotional outburst with episodic screaming during a meeting.
- He is inaccessible – he does not visit the branches.
- He is inexperienced, has no background in managing public libraries.

Additionally, a few employees stated that Jason is warm, passionate, listens to employees and they would like to see him continue in the Library Director position.

Recommendations for Management/Leadership

- Implement engagement surveys and take action on the results;
- Adhere to organization policies and hold managers accountable.

- Train managers to analyze processes and workflows to ensure workload balance.
- Establish improved communication strategies,
- Provide leadership development for all management level employees.
- Involve employees in process and program improvements throughout the change process.
- More of an effort needs to be made to keep employees informed about the status of important decisions related to their jobs and the future of LOPL.
- Leaders should be transparent and make an effort to keep the employees apprised of changes in operations. Ensure communication is effectively and frequently delivered to help employees understand the rationale behind decisions.
- Management and leadership development should be mandated for all management level employees. Leadership assessments and coaching would enhance the managers' self-awareness, communication, decision-making, and interpersonal skills.
- Appropriate expectations and metrics for employee development and engagement should be developed to establish accountability for the management team beyond business operational goals.
- Develop and implement procedures and management training to support managers in implementing and applying policies within the system such as:
 - Selection and recruitment
 - Onboarding, performance and probationary management
 - Promotions and transfers
 - Role clarity (including position descriptions)
 - Performance management
 - Managing complaints
 - Terminations

PPS observed significant deficiencies in strategic leadership, operational effectiveness and efficiency at LOPL. The next Library Director will be challenged with transforming the organization while simultaneously engaging employees and

building a healthy culture. PPS strongly recommends the next Library Director have previous library system director experience and a proven track record of effective leadership to transform LOPL into a high-performing organization. Previous managerial experience alone is insufficient for the Library Director's role and responsibilities and for the extent of whole-scale change management leadership required at LOPL. Use a behaviorally based interview process for the selection of the next Library Director. Screen candidates for leadership maturity, technical skills, emotional intelligence and learning agility.

Hiring and Promotion

Hiring practices set the tone for development and mobilizing talent within an organization. Interviewees stated a variety of perceptions pertaining to hiring and promotions. Fundamentally, there was not a shared understanding of the hiring and promotion processes. Many interviewees were knowledgeable about the hiring process, and fewer employees were knowledgeable of the promotion process. The interviewees who had the most comprehensive information were in supervisory roles.

- “When there is a vacancy, it's posted, HR does that, an email is sent out to all staff, whether it is internal or internal/external, then it is posted of library website. They will post it in other media, usually (I get) information on people (to be interviewed).”
- “To me it's not a (hiring) process anymore, if they like you, then you will get one. If you're not, you will be passed over. It isn't based on years of service, and they will pull someone off the street that they know rather than someone they know can do the job.”

Given that most interviewees were knowledgeable of the process, there was an overwhelming majority of interviewees who believed

that LOPL did not follow the established processes. They described experiencing, observing, or witnessing unfair hiring practices, favoritism, overall inconsistencies on following the Recruitment and Selection Policy of the Live Oak Public Libraries Human Resources Policies. The Live Oak Public Libraries Human Resources Policies, Section II-108.0 Transfers and Promotion on p. 14 states, “Decisions relating to transfers and promotions shall be based on the overall performance and demonstrated ability of the employee. Documented formal and informal evaluations, interviews and communications with the employee, shall support decisions in these areas.”

- “I haven’t applied for any other positions because they always have someone in mind so it’s a waste of time. They already have their mind made up who they want in these positions and I don’t want to waste my time and theirs either.”

The unfair hiring and promotional practices were related to: 1) preferential treatment of Caucasians over African Americans and 2) African Americans being encouraged to apply for roles at certain locations that were deemed undesirable or more suitable for African Americans. The following statements were made in support of these findings:

- “There was no warning after two years about why I was being moved from the Southwest Branch. I was told that I was going to (location) I wondered what was going on. I was replaced by a younger white male. He had just moved from (another location). The organization has just uprooted people on the spur of the moment without giving any reasoning.”
- “I was the only one out of the original people that were sent there to open the building, I was the only one that was moved. The only one...Christian stated, ‘You were bitching about the mall’, then he changed the subject and said “oh...well...we just need to make some changes there. The Assistant Director, John Tuggle said, we just need to get

(employee) and (employee) out of the building and this should not leave this room”. They just throw people around.”

- “A former employee (African American female) was told, when she applied, that she didn’t qualify for the Librarian Assistant III position at the Islands Library because they could not promote a Librarian Assistant I to a Librarian Assistant III. She was told she needed more experience. When she applied, she had been a Librarian Assistant I for some years. In turn, one Caucasian female and two Caucasian males were all hired for positions for which they had no experience. The Caucasian female was moved from Page to a Librarian Assistant III within months of being hired. One of the Caucasian males was moved from Page to a Library Associate and the other Caucasian male was moved from a Librarian Assistant II to a Library Associate. None of them had former experience in these areas.”
- “Thunderbolt is a predominantly white neighborhood, they opened Carnegie, which is primarily black. They copied black people on the Carnegie (postings) encouraging them to apply, but not for Thunderbolt. Recently, we had an opening at Thunderbolt so now the focus is on you have to know Circulation. Some of them (African American employees) called to ask about applying and they (administration) were like “no thank you”. They are reposting the Thunderbolt position. There’s no consistency. We (African Americans) have gone anywhere (to any library) but certain people (Caucasians) don’t go to Carnegie.”
- “An African American male applied, three people went through the interview process. Scores for the African American male and an outside candidate were identical. Caucasian female was a (Department) Librarian. Jim, John, and I were in the interview. One question about diversity was posed and the Caucasian female was the only candidate who never answered the question at all. I wanted to pick the African American male and they (Jim and John, both white

males) said “no”. The outside candidate was close in ranking) to the African American male candidate. They said (they wanted to choose) the Caucasian female. People told me they had promised the Caucasian female the job. That evening I was called up to HR and Jim said, “You need to sign this form to hire your candidate (the Caucasian female)”. I said, “No, I didn’t hire (the Caucasian female) her”. I tore up the form and said “You hired her, (the Caucasian female) I didn’t. They did all the paperwork and (the Caucasian female) was brought into the job.”

- “Hiring process is flawed; whites skip management levels but black people don’t even get an interview.”
- “They have created positions they do what they want to do for certain people. I still do my job, makes you believe they don’t want you to succeed, they want you to stay where you’re at.”
- “White people go from Page to Librarian Assistant, which is the highest paid position outside of being a Librarian...(Caucasians) or someone they (Administration) likes or favors will get a promotion, but not so much for African Americans. I don’t know if there has been any of us (African Americans) who have been moved from one position to another. People won’t ask or say anything because they think they are going to jeopardize their jobs. It has happened a number of times, but people have a job and have bills. It’s a regular practice. HR plays a very big part.”
- “We (African Americans) have gone anywhere (to any library) but certain people (Caucasians) don’t go to Carnegie. But they don’t pull non-African Americans to go to Carnegie. They pull African Americans out and sent to other branches. They would place white people there.”
- “An African American female worked 32 hours a week. She has asked on numerous occasions could she work a 40-hour

week but has been ignored. In turn, Caucasian male was hired to work 30 hours a week when he got his new position but now he is employed for 40hrs and the African American female who has been employed for many, many years is still working 32 hours.”

In addition, data from the interviews indicated that communication was inadequate across LOPL in terms of sharing new openings accurately and in a timely manner. The Live Oak Public Libraries Human Resources Policies on page 8, Section II-101.3, states, “All available positions shall be advertised on a Job Posting list published by the Library Human Resources staff on the Library website.” Interviewees shared:

- “Not as helpful (communicating postings internally), not always communicated... advertising positions.”
- “They did hiring before they did interviews or posting, (administration) knew who they were going to pick, it was a waste of time, it was only done to cover their tracks...”
- “Some jobs aren’t advertised, just shifted.”
- “How do they just make a job for someone? I don’t understand. Jobs aren’t posted.”

Lastly, interviewees shared that administration created new job titles for roles that may or may not have been posted, created inconsistencies when recognizing employees, and created inequities/compression among positions that were filled.

- “They have created jobs for members already on the library staff; on the Westside, they do whatever they want to do for that branch so they can have what they need.”
- “A position was advertised as - Clerical Assistant III equal to a Library Assistant II, \$20 – 25K salary. We strongly believe it was advertised as one thing, but is Scott (Pool) really making this salary? For white people, jobs have been advertised for one thing, but when they get hired the jobs are totally different. Especially for Jim Stroud’s friends.

That's why people who applied for positions never really got them."

- Every time we see something new, we said they created another job. With John's position (Library Assistant I) when they changed Assistant Manager/Library Assistant, they created it to give him more money, it was never posted for anyone to apply to."
- "I was employee of the year and received a gift certificate and flowers. Rumors are some people who were nominated got increases along with the recognition."
- "Leaders need to ensure equity in income/salaries. I know it's a difference. They hire new people who make as much as I do. They hire people, create positions, based on who they like whether they are qualified or not. They don't advertise positions because they were created for certain people."

LOPL Policy states that, "It shall be the policy of Live Oak Public Libraries to select, develop and promote employees based on the employee's ability and job performance. It is the policy of the Library to provide equal employment opportunities to all people in all aspects of employer/employee relations without discrimination." From the accounts of the majority of interviewees, LOPL did not appear to uphold their stated policy and in many ways undermined efforts to create an optimal, collaborative work environment in terms of talent mobility. PPS consultants attempted to analyze salary history, but the requested data was not shared in a timely manner.

There were few people who had positive comments about the hiring process, promotion process and HR involvement, but they were sparse. While most interviewees shared their negative perspectives about the hiring and promotion process, the undercurrent of the interview was the powerlessness of the non-management level employees. Interviewees spoke of how HR did not serve as an advocate for employees and how they feared retaliation if they complained.

Recommendations: Hiring & Promotion

- All employees should have an opportunity to post for open positions and develop in their career through promotions.
- The hiring and promotion process that is documented should be updated and followed. It should be consistently communicated and modeled by leaders.
- In order to establish trust with employees, LOPL should develop and/or revise job descriptions and publish job titles, grades (matrix) with or without pay.
- LOPL should also increase internal transparency, to build trust, by revising information in the current policies about pay with promotions.
- Review the existing recognition programs to assess equity/access and set standards for the organization.
- Establish a set of practices/standards within the hiring process to address diversity in the organization (e.g. Affirmative Action Plan) and create a rebuttal process for hiring/promotions.

Work Productivity & Performance Evaluations

The relationship between work productivity and performance is crucial to an organization's success. Work productivity can be described as the rate of output. Performance is the action or process of carrying out or accomplishing an action, task, or function. "Productivity is never an accident. It is always the result of a commitment to excellence, intelligent planning, and focused effort" (Paul J. Meyer). These two factors also need to be assessed at the individual, team and organizational levels. Performance evaluations provide a process for this to take place.

During the interviews, employees shared their experiences and thoughts related to work productivity in LOPL. The topics of work standards, funding, workload, and tools needed to perform work. In addition, they shared information about their knowledge of the performance review process, timing, the manager's role and perception of their past reviews. The following section will share more depth to these topics and specific quotes to highlight a sample of the voice of the employee.

First, work standards at LOPL were viewed in many ways. There was mixed feedback on work standards being upheld, awareness of accountability, maintaining library standards. Employees stated,

- “We have policies and procedures to follow, they do change from time to time, and we do our job to the best of our ability and go from there.”
- “I don't know how we are held accountable, department functions separately, the problem in Southwest Branch is that there is not a lot of coordination.”
- “My immediate supervisor is a good supervisor, very smart, is a team player and listens to your concerns.”
- “My supervisor was straight to the point, no sugar coating, told them what they needed to do, wasn't aggressive, she was very good at helping them (team), she was involved, there were several projects.”
- “I worked well with my supervisor, she was knowledgeable, had a lot of great ideas, make the right connections but just not effective, some of it was the structure, I probably got along with them the best.”
- “The library is clinging to its physical collection and not purging, not shy about advocating for enlightenment in this profession, there is a preference for tangible books at the expense of audio visual equipment. There is an overflow of

dump books, there is no collection maintenance. Books are boxed up and sent to them, they are nearing capacity and he voiced a concern, need to purge out things from circulation, example- need to discard 10 copies of the same book.”

Second, interviewees suggested that funding was inconsistent or nonexistent in terms of funding LOPL and local branch projects. While some branches appeared to have no funding challenges to facilitate a successful event, there were other branches that had to use personal funds on a regular basis to ensure there were adequate and relevant programs for their patrons. In addition, there was commentary about the time lapse with raises as an employee stated, “A \$3.50 raise in 16 years and no performance review in a few years.” Employees must have the tools in order to perform their jobs. This includes funding as well as equipment, adequate staffing, and proper reporting. If there is inconsistent funding for LOPL, it will be extremely challenging to attain the organization’s goals, stated as follows, by several employees.

- “Lack of money, no budget (for a science experiment), and a 3D printer would be nice. Duct tape has to be purchased on our own, which signals that the Children’s Department isn't valued. At our branch more children come through the door.”
- “Librarians need books and supplies for programming. In Tech services they were provided for, they got a bigger screen when we were doing the new library project, as a librarian I spent some of my own money, [I] felt like they wasted money on Public Relations instead of giving them [Librarians] money to do their jobs, took all things I paid for with me. Library should buy supplies for them. They spent money on flyers. I spent \$500 on summer reading program.”
- “Talked to my supervisor about it and she’s supportive and tries to fight for us to get more help and supplies. They would get along with me but the money we get is not enough. I’ve given my own money to help these kids.”

- “We get slowed down when computers are down, there are not enough carts to get books, not enough Pages.”
- “We fix equipment - printers and computers, we don’t have budget, and we can handle the 19 libraries with good balance. Support from LOPL was helpful, good, and my supervisor has done an amazing job with technology, they have a technology day luncheon.”

Third, the workload and capacity of the team should be managed to attain the goals of the organization. There were interviewees that planned their days without the help of their supervisor and some employees reported their supervisor does not distribute work fairly. This imbalance can cause disruption in the organization. Supporting statements are as follows:

- “My supervisor mismanages workloads.”
- “[Work] is not allocated well. There is favoritism with the workload distribution.”
- “I think it varies per person. My supervisor has favorites. There isn't anything that my co-worker doesn't want for, things benefits. Benefits include: Saying I need to be off at a certain time at the last minute, without my supervisor making a comment that you should have told me earlier, everyone else when they do it, my supervisor talks to them about vacation requests and making schedule changes and with my co-worker, there is never an issue.’
- “I didn't bring anything to HR’s attention (workload distribution issues). I thought that once I took it to the coordinator that he would take the next steps and that never happened. Taking it to HR would have been a total waste because my current Supervisor is one of their favorites and it would have been swept under the rug. My supervisor is a favorite to HR and Administration. They can’t do anything wrong in their eyes.”

- “If I was relying on my supervisor no, relying on co-workers yes, if we had to rely on my supervisor we wouldn't, I wouldn't. I've been doing this longer than my supervisor and I had great training. We go to work from 9-6 and he says nothing to none of us.”

The Live Oak Public Libraries Human Resources Policies on page 48, states, “The supervisor will meet formally to discuss work performance at least once each year. A rating will be assigned summarizing the employee's work during the evaluation period.” The process and timing of performance reviews are not widely understood among employees. Employees perceive the role of the manager and overall fairness of the performance evaluation process as inconsistently executed.

The timing of reviews was disparate, ranging from six to fourteen months. Employees reported that some managers administered the evaluations fairly; however, most managers administered the evaluations poorly.

Employees claimed that managers do not consistently write the performance evaluations, nor do they provide detailed feedback. Employees stated,

- “I never had a performance review; my supervisor was wonderful but more of the mothering type. My supervisor would say, ‘you write it and tell me what you want to do’.”
- “I remember one time my supervisor came down with my evaluation, we went over it and it was really good/great. Then my supervisor came down a few days later and said, I am sorry but I showed this to Christian and John Tuggle. They said I can't give you a five on this, because if I give you the best then there would not be room for improvement, and my supervisor was upset about that.”
- “Evaluations under them were very biased. In my opinion, it was not fair, once you get on my current supervisor's bad

side you stayed there. I wasn't politically savvy enough to get that. I challenged her protégé."

- "I didn't realize I had not had one in two years. My supervisor would mention that they needed to get them done."
- "Done annually, not fairly depending on your supervisor."
- "I don't know the [performance evaluation] process."

Recommendations: Work Productivity & Performance Evaluations

- The job descriptions for LOPL positions should be linked to the work responsibilities for each department.
- LOPL should determine budgets for all branches and departments and establish a monitoring process.
- In order to support and build a collaborative environment, LOPL should organize a team of representatives from each major department (i.e. Circulation, Reference, Children's, Technology, and Teen) to develop a core set of standards and present them to the leadership team and the employees (to verify and get feedback).
- Provide training to leaders on best approaches to manage workload to achieve the collective goals for the organization.
- Educate the organization on the Performance Management Process. Include descriptions of ratings, discussion of goals, appropriate frequency, feedback discussion process and self-evaluation.
- LOPL should create shared goals for the organization and metrics that connect each branch and department to the goals.
- Establish a frequency to review organization metrics for each branch and overall for LOPL.

The fairness of performance evaluations should be addressed once the goals and metrics are established to create transparency in the organization.

Diversity

The state of diversity in LOPL is not a core focus for organization leaders. There is no diversity policy and the employees are unsure of how to define and support it within the organization. One interviewee explained, “They were articulate about diversity and business norm, but there is no depth, no measurement or accountability.”

During the interviews, PPS consultants explained diversity as follows:

Diversity is described as a commitment to a work environment that is free from bias as it relates to ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic class, religion, physical ability, and age.

Interviewees shared that while there appeared to be more diversity amongst staff recently, there is no depth to an actual commitment to diversity. Employees discussed alleged mistreatment based on ethnicity, specifically, African Americans. The alleged preferential treatment of Caucasians at LOPL were surrounding types of jobs they attained or were appointed to, pay, and other related benefits which created an unfavorable workplace environment for employees and perpetuated a climate of hostility. There was an overwhelming response from interviewees about the hiring practices of LOPL. There were examples provided of how the policy was well known but not followed by management and administration. This is one account from an employee:

- “There’s no consistency. We [African Americans] have gone anywhere [to any library] but certain people [Caucasians] don’t go to Carnegie. But they don’t pull non-African Americans to go to Carnegie. They pull African Americans out and sent to other branches. They would place white people there. Inconsistent treatment. There is a clique

where the ones who had the highest positions and were friends of a friend got the job.”

The Hiring and Promotions section of this report provides additional evidential support regarding how the policy was not followed coupled with preferential treatment of Caucasians. There were also accounts shared of unprofessional or inappropriate comments about gender, religion, and overtones of classism expressed.

Other topics that were categorized under diversity were confidentiality, inequities in pay, ethical leadership, honesty, and quality of service. Concerning honesty, one employee stated, “They weren't honest at all, nothing specific in terms of examples, they weren't trustworthy. When I had a [health event], I felt like Jim immediately ran around and told people my business, that's not what HR does.”

These topics were a part of the undercurrent throughout this assessment and are interlinked. The employees appear to be knowledgeable about their field and want to be at work, but have been demoralized by the alleged mistreatment, disrespected by management, and subjected to a dishonest workplace environment that the leaders have perpetuated to instill fear and unrest amongst the larger employee base.

Recommendations: Diversity

- Establish a diversity statement and link their existing policies to it.
- Provide training on diversity, harassment and associated laws. This will enable leaders to model the correct behavior and serve as a basis for setting expectations on leadership accountability.
- Learn more about the patron demographics at each branch. Collaborate with each employee group at the branches. This will assist in creating programs that best meet the needs of their respective communities and the overall goals of the organization.

Desired Outcomes

Employees conveyed a desire for a fair and healthy work environment in which people are “happy to come to work and stay at work”. Other desired outcomes expressed by employees were:

- Improve communication
- Change HR leaders
- Hire a strong Library Director
- Stop intimidation and discrimination
- Follow policies
- Replace Jim Stroud and Scott Pool with ethical, knowledgeable, competent leaders
- Conduct a compensation study

Participants shared the following comments that support the overall findings in this section:

“I think we should follow policies. We need clear lines concerning roles and responsibilities. We need a united top leadership team: marketing, PR, the longer these positions are left vacant...we need to fill those positions. He needs a great team under him right now.”

“Jim needs to go because of the way they treat other people.”

Recommendations

- Proactively share a summary of this report in focus groups or town hall meetings and outline findings and recommendations.
- Share future plans to transform the organization and invite employees’ feedback. A session such as this requires an experienced facilitator. Assure employees that their voices were heard and changes will be made accordingly.

- Implement annual employee engagement surveys and a series of teambuilding exercises.
- Replace Jim Stroud and Scott Pool with more effective human resources leaders.
- Utilize several communication modes weekly and quarterly;
- Hire an experienced transformational leadership team of directors and hold the team accountable for achieving specific goals for improving climate and building a new culture.
- Follow the disciplinary process, even for management.
- Implement management training and leadership development. Include coaching and a 360 Degree assessment.
- Assess skills of managers and place them in positions that complement their skills/education/ career aspiration.
- Establish an ethics policy, code of conduct, values and mission. Mandate ethics training for all LOPL employees. Emphasize the importance of an ethical culture.
- Conduct a compensation study to alleviate salary compression issues and develop job descriptions.
- Ensure directors receive performance evaluations annually and frequent feedback from the Library Director.

Conclusion

Human Resources is integral to the success of organizational health and productivity. PPS conducted an assessment of HR using a model for high performance organizations with effective human resources functions. LOPL is perceived as a hostile work environment with a culture of fear, intimidation, retaliation, and many other factors that contribute to dysfunction. The HR Director and HR Coordinator are contributors to the dysfunction in LOPL; therefore, they should be separated from LOPL and replaced with certified, highly-experienced professionals with a track record of building high performing teams, culture transformation, and ethical leadership, in addition to other critical competencies for HR professionals. Recommendations in this report, if executed as suggested, may help to dramatically

improve work climate and employee satisfaction, thereby increasing employee engagement and retention.

Appendix

Summary of Recommendations

HR Assessment	
Topic	Recommendations
Strategic HR Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand the focus of HR to include strategic human capital management processes. • Develop strategic objectives that align with LOPL's strategic plan. • Outline goals that help achieve the HR Strategy. • Develop a scorecard and report progress quarterly.
Governance & Management Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a HR Council to focus on strategic, operational and functional accountabilities related to HR strategy development, overseeing rewards plans and programs, HR resource allocation, staff development and leadership succession. The HR Council would establish and use metrics to evaluate and communicate the effectiveness of HR. • Assess and secure employee files. Transition to an electronic file system to simply, secure and protect personnel files. • Follow policies and hold managers accountable for adhering to organizational policies. • Expand and enhance communication modes. • Develop a budget reporting process.

Functional Management – HR Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace Scott Pool with a certified, experienced HR generalist who would provide broad support and expertise in this position. • Replace Jim Stroud with a principled, experienced certified professional who is skilled in leading strategic HR and culture transformation.
Employee Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint principled leaders of integrity in HR. • Initiate a culture change process to reestablish an environment of trust, transparency, and support. • Abandon the practice of engaging multiple managers to meet with a single employee. • Establish service goals and execute roles and responsibilities accordingly. Include the goals on the performance evaluation for HR professionals.
Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate culture transformation to one that embraces diversity and that values differences. • Appoint leaders whose values align with an inclusive and diverse workforce. • Incorporate diversity into LOPL’s strategic plan. • Provide diversity training for all employees.
Safety & Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire a HR Director who is committed to treating employees with dignity and respect and who has experience in developing and implementing a comprehensive Safety and Wellness program. • Develop a culture of civility and one that does not tolerate bullying. • Train managers to lead by example by reinforcing the message that every

	<p>employee is valued, respected, and appreciated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer resilience training to strengthen employees after experiencing such a stressful work environment. • Adopt social networking to engage employees in wellness programs. • Offer an Employee Assistance Program, if not already in place, to assist employees with family issues, job performance problems, stress and grief.
<p>Compensation & Benefits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate jobs and analyze salary history data to determine internal equity. • Conduct a compensation study including job description development and/or updates.
<p>Human Resource Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a training and development needs assessment focusing on the organizational analysis, task analysis and person analysis. • Managers and supervisors with the responsibility for managing the efforts of others should be provided with appropriate learning opportunities to develop their supervisory skills. • Establish a mentoring and/or coaching program to enhance individual career, personal and professional growth and development. • Offer a comprehensive career planning and development program. • Review every employee’s training and development needs at least annually and establish plans to address any gaps. • During the development of the annual budget consider including appropriate resources to fund employee training and development.
<p>Staffing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a process to regularly review short and long term staffing needs. • Ensure hiring and promotion processes

	<p>are fair and consistently executed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address any potential key employee turnover so that LOPL’s patrons continue to receive library programs and services.
Methods and Standards of Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish service standards and metrics for critical HR processes.
HR Planning/ Management Depth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in workforce planning to determine short and long-term employment needs. • Conduct talent reviews to identify high-potential leaders for critical positions. • Establish and implement career paths and career planning for all employees.
Overall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swiftly change HR leadership to certified professionals who are experienced in leading strategic HR, transforming culture and building teams. • Select HR leaders who are principled, emotionally intelligent and who have the leadership maturity to transform HR and LOPL.
Active Employee Complaints	
Aimee Ruth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze the cost for double coverage during the reported time period and reimburse Ms. Ruth accordingly. • In a letter to Mr. Broughton dated June 30, 2016, Ms. Ruth delineated expenses totaling \$726.
Employee Investigations	
Brent Feasel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct an independent forensic assessment to determine if the images on the flash drive match the IP address of his computer. This would confirm the data linkage and further support the original chain of custody in how the information was obtained.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The findings from the CPA review should shed light on how vacation hours are applied to Brent's leave of absence and if there was misallocation of his vacation time. • Remove Brent from his position and separate him from LOPL.
<p>Robin Estes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question Robin about the incident and then HR or the attorney needs to determine if the evidence gathered warrants disciplinary action.
<p>Organizational Assessment Dimensions</p>	
<p>Climate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organizational culture needs to be transformed into one that promotes its core values and a culture of transparency and trust. • Establish and maintain a level of awareness of work climate by implementing an employee engagement system that incorporates surveys and focus groups to share the results and envision improvement strategies and actions. • Train managers and supervisors on employee engagement and implement accountability structures and processes for the entire workforce. • Establish improved communication strategies • Involve employees in process/program improvements throughout the change process
<p>Communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate changes that impact employees and LOPL in an effective manner. Develop a process and multiple modes of communication.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In terms of HIPAA, medical information needs to be kept confidential, managers need to understand the importance and their legal responsibility to protect employee information. • Analyze vacation utilization trends throughout the year. Explore low usage more fully to learn if there is a pattern of misuse or intimidation by managers.
<p>Management Leadership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement engagement surveys and take action on results. • Adhere to organization policies and hold managers accountable for following policies. • Train managers to analyze processes and workflows to ensure workload balance Establish improved communication strategies, • Provide leadership development for all management level employees Involve employees in process and program improvements throughout the change process. • More of an effort needs to be made to keep employees informed about the status of important decisions related to their jobs and the future of LOPL. • Leaders should be transparent and make an effort to keep the employees posted on developments. Ensure communication is effectively and frequently delivered to help employees understand the rationale behind decisions. • Management and leadership development should be mandated for all management level employees. Leadership assessments and coaching would enhance the managers' self-awareness, communication, decision-

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> making, and interpersonal skills. • Appropriate expectations and metrics for employee development and engagement should be developed to establish accountability for the management team beyond business operational goals. • Develop and implement procedures and management training to support managers in implementing and applying policies within LOPL such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Selection and recruitment ○ Onboarding, performance and probationary management ○ Promotions and transfers ○ Role clarity (including position descriptions) ○ Performance management ○ Managing complaints ○ Terminations • The next Library Director must have previous library system director experience and a track record of effective leadership to transform LOPL into a high-performing organization. • Use a behaviorally based interview process for the selection of the next Library Director. Screen candidates for leadership maturity, technical skills, emotional intelligence and learning agility.
<p>Hiring & Promotions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All employees should have an opportunity to apply for open positions and develop in their career through promotions.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The hiring and promotion process that is documented should be updated and followed. It should be consistently communicated and modeled by leaders. • In order to establish trust with employees, LOPL should develop and/or revise job descriptions and publish job titles, grades (matrix) with or without pay. • LOPL can also increase internal transparency, to build trust, by revising information in the current policies about pay with promotions. • Review the existing recognition programs to assess equity/access and set standards for the organization. • Establish a set of practices/standards within the hiring process to address diversity in the organization and create a rebuttal process for hiring/promotions.
<p>Productivity & Performance Evaluation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The job descriptions for LOPL roles should be linked to the work responsibilities for each department. • LOPL should determine budgets for all branches and departments and establish a monitoring process. • In order to support and build a collaborative environment, LOPL should organize a team of representatives from each major department (i.e. Circulation, Reference, Children’s, Technology, and Teen) to develop a core set of standards and present them to the leadership team and the employees (to verify and get feedback). • Provide training to leaders on best approaches to manage workload to achieve the collective goals for the organization.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate the organization on the Performance Management Process. Inclusive descriptions of ratings, discussion of goals, appropriate frequency, feedback discussion process and self-evaluation. • LOPL should create shared goals for the organization and metrics that connect each branch and department to the goals. • Establish a frequency to review organization metrics for each branch and entire organization.
Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a diversity statement and link their existing policies to it. • Provide training on diversity, harassment and associated laws. This will enable leaders to model the correct behavior and serve as a basis for setting expectations on leadership accountability. • Learn more about the patron demographics at each branch. Collaborate with each employee group at the branches. This will assist in creating programs that best meet the needs of their respective communities and the overall goals of the organization.
Employees’ Desired Outcomes & Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactively share this report with employees in focus groups or town hall meetings and outline findings and recommendations. • Share future plans to transform the organization and invite employees’ feedback. A session such as this requires an experienced facilitator. Assure employees that their voices were heard and changes will be made

	<p>accordingly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement annual employee engagement surveys and a series of teambuilding exercises;• Replace Jim Stroud and Scott Pool with more effective human resources leaders.• Utilize several communication modes weekly and quarterly.• Hire an experienced transformational leadership team of directors and hold the team accountable for achieving specific goals for improving climate and building a new culture.• Follow the disciplinary process, even for management.• Implement management training and leadership development. Include coaching and a 360 Degree assessment.• Assess skills of managers and place them in positions that complement their skills/education/ career aspiration.• Establish an ethics policy, code of conduct, values and mission. Mandate ethics training for all LOPL employees. Emphasize the importance of an ethical culture.• Conduct a compensation study to alleviate salary compression issues and develop job descriptions;• Ensure directors receive performance evaluations annually and frequent feedback from the Library Director.
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