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Call for Entries

2011 VACo Achievement Awards

Deadline: June 1, 2011

Application Form

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. Deadline: June 1, 2011.

Program Information

Locality _County of Hanover_

Program Title _Improving Senior Leaders' Communication, Collaboration & Work Processes_

Program Category _Information Technology_

Population Category _4_

Contact Information

Name _Craig Williams_

Title _Deputy Director, Information Technology_

Department _Information Technology_

Complete Mailing Address _PO Box 470, Hanover, VA 23069_

Telephone # _804-365-6229_   Fax # _804-365-6304_

E-mail _cawilliams@co.hanover.va.us_

Signature of county administrator or chief administrative officer

Name _Cecil R. Harris_

Title _County Administrator_

Signature* _Cecil R. Harris_

*Entries without this signature will not be accepted.

IMPROVING SENIOR LEADERS' COMMUNICATION, COLLABORATION AND WORK PROCESSES

VACo ACHIEVEMENT AWARD APPLICATION

PROGRAM CATEGORY: Information Technology
POPULATION CATEGORY: 50,001-100,000

HANOVER COUNTY – IMPROVING SENIOR LEADERS' COMMUNICATION, COLLABORATION AND WORK PROCESSES

Category: Information Technology

SUMMARY

Several communications and performance reporting challenges faced senior leadership in Hanover County. Communication with Senior Leaders for weekly briefings, performance measures, and Board of Supervisor Initiatives was performed in a multitude of ways, formats, and locations. In addition, the County has numerous processes that are labor and paper-intensive. By taking advantage of a new Microsoft Enterprise License Agreement and adopting the Microsoft SharePoint web collaboration platform the County has been able to provide a consistent method for senior leaders to: communicate, collaborate, submit performance measures, improve departmental processes, and save on printing costs. The Information Technology Department (ITD) analyzed SharePoint failures and successes to learn the critical success factors for adopting this new technology. Some of the critical success factors included: 1. Take the time to find the appropriate business applications for the tool; 2. Work closely with customers to understand their business needs; 3. Educate the customer on how they can use SharePoint to get their work done in a more effective way. ITD developed a repeatable process for rolling out SharePoint, and worked with County senior leadership to construct a SharePoint web site for Department heads. This has enabled County executives to establish uniform processes for collaboration and workflow and establish consistent methods for accessing and reporting information on performance measures, issues, and leadership topics.

HANOVER COUNTY – IMPROVING SENIOR LEADERS' COMMUNICATION, COLLABORATION AND WORK PROCESSES

SITUATION

There were several opportunities to improve communication and collaboration for Senior Leadership in Hanover County:

- Communications with Senior Leaders for weekly briefings, performance measures, and Board of Supervisor Initiatives was being performed in a multitude of ways, formats, and locations.

- Many reporting and collaboration processes were labor-intensive and/or paper-based

- Email was overused as a collaboration tool

- Remote (internet) access to documentation limited

- Use of complex shared file server folders made it difficult to find information

Some examples illustrating the need for improved communication and collaboration methods:

- It is common for documents (e.g., policy updates) to be routed to senior leaders through email for feedback and review. It is difficult to synthesize and organize all of the material, and depending on whether or not participants reply all to the message, the feedback may not be visible to all participants. Multiple conversation threads occur and information may be repetitive.

- Each month Department heads report to County Administration dashboards of key measures for their departments. The dashboards were created in multiple formats and had to be manually organized, collated and printed for distribution by Executive Assistants in the County Administrator's Office.

- Each week department heads prepare their Weekly Briefs for the County Administrator where they report on key departmental activities. The weekly briefs are also shared with all department heads. The briefs were produced by updating a single Word document stored in a shared folder. Frequently the document would be locked by other users and department heads had to continually check to see when the document was free. The shared folder where the document was stored was

also not available for access through the internet; so, department heads had to be connected to the network to update the weekly brief. Internet access is a need for mobile executives and quasi-County agencies with limited network access.

SOLUTION SUMMARY

The Information Technology Department (ITD) worked closely in partnership with County Administration and Senior Leaders to design and implement a Department Heads SharePoint site that enhanced access, consistency, and ease-of-use for those reporting and receiving critical information.

BACKGROUND/DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOLUTION

In 2008, the County was without a Microsoft Enterprise License Agreement. Products were purchased a la carte, and Fire/EMS spent approximately $60,000 to purchase and implement a limited SharePoint (Microsoft's web-based communication and collaboration suite) deployment which displayed benefits of the tool to County executives and IT leadership. For example, they began preparing their dashboard in SharePoint and that idea caught the eye of other department heads. In 2009, the Information Technology department (ITD) moved to successfully negotiate an attractive enterprise license agreement with Microsoft that saved the County $330,000 (over two years) in budget-strapped times, and significantly increased the range of availability and functionality of Microsoft products to the County, including SharePoint. SharePoint could now be deployed across the County without additional licensing expense. Later that year, ITD created a SharePoint team (a Deputy Director, a Project Manager and a Systems Engineer) who analyzed best and worst practices for deploying SharePoint. They learned that SharePoint improperly deployed in an enterprise results in "software kudzu," an unmanaged tangle of websites, but properly deployed—focusing on the things that SharePoint is good at (collaboration, document workflow, and communication)—it can be a real benefit. They assessed that with the right effort the tool could help departments and other work groups (e.g., communities of practice, communities of interest and project teams) improve their processes. After

testing the tool with an ITD department site, the team developed a repeatable process that included assessing a group's work styles, communications and collaboration challenges, and designing solutions to fit their needs. The SharePoint Team implemented a few sites with groups that would realize the greatest benefits. Groups larger (e.g., over 20 people) and disbursed across multiple locations tended to have the greatest potential to improve their operations with SharePoint. They leveraged features such as team calendars, announcements and news to improve department communication. Wikis, document workflow and discussion threads were used to improve collaboration.

At first adoption was slow and ITD used the time to refine its methods and improve the sites the teams were using. The biggest challenge was changing people's work habits away from email.

As noted above, department head processes for weekly reporting and submitting performance measures were ineffective. One Deputy Administrator saw what Fire/EMS and ITD were doing with SharePoint and believed that it could be a good tool for addressing some of the Senior Leaders' process issues. The SharePoint team discussed this with him and recognized that the department heads functioned as a community of interest and could likely benefit from a collaboration site. They met with several department heads and administrative assistants who were involved in the reporting and communications processes to assess the pain points and identify how SharePoint might be able to alleviate them. The result was a Department Head collaboration site. It uses the standard features of other team sites, such as announcements/news where department heads can post items of interest to other department heads instead of using mass emails.
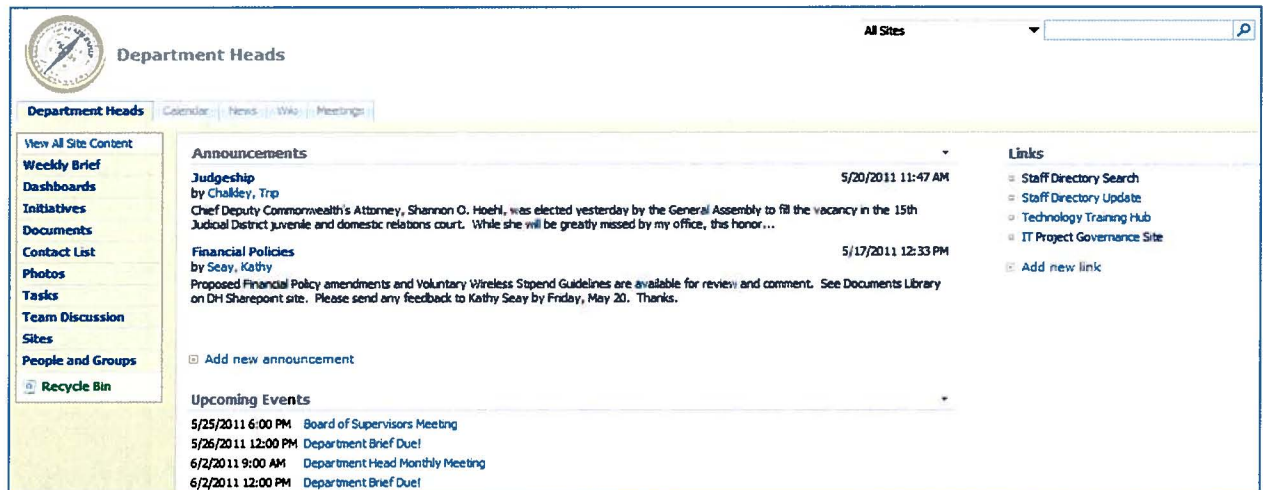
Document collaboration is now done using document workflow and discussion threads, significantly improving the document workflow and the readability of information. The calendar is used to track significant events and due dates.

The most significant process improvements were to the weekly department briefs and the monthly dashboards. Weekly briefs are now kept in a list so authors are not locked out by other users. Size limitations have been placed on the lists to ensure that the comments updates are brief and to the point. The list items are easy to sort and filter making it easy to view items for a single department or group of departments. Finding historical items is also much easier because of the filters and powerful search features.

Weekly Brief

Goal

To share information from a departmental perspective that can serve other senior leaders in better understanding County scope of operations for current issue; provide new ideas of cost management, employee benefits and/or service provision that other senior leaders can deploy in their departments; and general information that meet the "quick conversation in the hallway" philosophy in apprising others of simply "what's going on". In order to adhere to weekly brief goals, an assigned person in each department should provide the weekly brief and in their absence, assign such task to others in the office. In addition, in order for brief to best be utilized entity-wide, a goal to illustrate information in a "brief" format (no more than a few bullets) will help accomplish this goal.

New ▼ Actions ▼				View: CurrentWeek ▼
Department	Functional Area	Date	Brief Description	Comments
Communications	Public Safety	5/19/2011	- Meeting with Asst County Admin, Deputy Director and Support Manager to discuss outstanding issues regarding projects - 3 trainees still progressing - 1 near release/use - Attended HSO Memorial breakfast and awards ceremony - Attending APCO State Conference in VA Beach (Wed - Fri) - Dept Performance Evaluations have begun - Approved for Director to transition to part-time to finish radio project outstanding issues.	
Building Inspectors	Public Safety	5/19/2011	Richard is at an energy training class in Tidewater Thursday and Friday of this week. Preseason inspections of Kings Dominion Water Park have begun.	
Fire/EMS	Public Safety	5/19/2011	• The Department has recently certified 6 individuals as Scott Airpack technicians. This certification will allow us to repair our own breathing apparatus and reduce out of service times and saving money on repairs. • The Technical Rescue Team's Zodiac boat is now in-service. Our team now has better capabilities to handle water rescue request to ensure public safety. • Fire Marshal's Office personnel that participated in the hotel arson fires and ultimate arrests were made, were recognized by the Ashland Police Department. • Battalion Chief Chris Slemp has been nominated to an International Code Council committee position. • Chief Carneal has been working with the Town of Ashland to secure grant funding to install a new AM 1700 Emergency Sign within the Town limits. Installation should occur over the next couple months • We have reviewed the CISCO router for mobile use and feel the InMotion device is best suited to meet the department's needs. We will begin discussions with InMotion and county IT to make sure everyone is comfortable with this option. • EMSIS (National EMS Information System) V 3.0 is scheduled for release sometime in the middle of the year. Our software vendor is aware of the changes for EMS reporting. • After meeting with FIRE Records at Zoll, repairs were conducted to our replication software. The repair is scheduled to fix intermittent problems with the software. • Both the high school and regular firefighter academies are approaching or are already into their live fire training sessions. This will result in graduations over the next month or so. Enrollment for the next regular academy is about to open with a projection of as many as 25 candidates planning to enroll for the next school year. • We continue to work with other county departments to develop a comprehensive risk assessment model. As of this week, we are finalizing the model and hope to start running reports against next week. This is in an effort to develop a Standards of Cover Document by mid-August. One of the key changes will be the way we measure our performance indicators. We currently measure the time from dispatch until the arrival of the first unit. The new model (as specified by the Center for Public Safety Excellence) calls for us to measure from the initial 911 call until the arrival of the first unit. • Our Technical Rescue Team was well represented at the Division 1 Technical Rescue Teams 2011 Rescue Challenge. The teams performed well and accomplished all assigned tasks. Teams throughout the State of Virginia and Maryland participated in the training event.	
Animal Control	Public Safety	5/19/2011	cruelty calls continue to increase this time of year. evening shift continues to struggle and overtime continues with priority calls at the end. Data to follow.	

Dashboards are also now consistently formatted and stored in the SharePoint document library. The filtering features make them easy to find and sort through. They no longer have to be printed to be distributed, saving a lot of paper.

Dashboards

New ▼ Upload ▼ Actions ▼			View: All Documents ▼	
Type	Name	Department	Functional Area	Month ▼ Year
🗎	Assessor Dashboard April 2011	Assessor's Office	Administration	April 2011
🗎	BP Dashboard Apr-11	Building Inspectors	Public Safety	April 2011
🗎	CCP Dashboard April 2011	Community Corrections	Public Safety	April 2011
🗎	Community Resources April 2011	Community Resources	Human Services	April 2011
🗎	Dashboard - Health Department April, 2011 5-16-11	Health Department	Human Services	April 2011
🗎	Dashboard April 2011	Public Utilities	Community Development	April 2011
🗎	ECD Monthly Dashboard Apr 11	Communications	Public Safety	April 2011

BENEFITS

Enhanced access, consistency: Senior leader reporting, communication, and collaboration are performed uniformly across the County.

Ease-of-use and Accessibility: The tool is easy to learn, integrated with other Office products and accessible (using an ID and password) via the internet, so agencies with limited access to the County network, or busy mobile executives can access the site from wherever they are working.

Innovation and Adoption: As Department heads have begun using the site they are finding other uses for it. For example, County and Board of Supervisor initiatives are now also tracked on site as well.

The implementation of the Department Head site has also had additional benefits by helping to increase overall SharePoint adoption and spark innovation within departments. As people have learned about the products capabilities, they are finding other ways to improve communication and collaboration. Use of the Department Head site has increased SharePoint usage and requests for new sites. Some examples of successes include:

- The Sheriff's Office makes SharePoint available in patrol cars for deputies to access reports and information they need while on the road

- County Administration is piloting the tracking of citizen calls and requests

- ITD has implemented Project Management Methodology and Project Governance using SharePoint sites. All IT projects are now tracked in SharePoint and the prioritization process leverages features of the tool.

Hanover IT Projects

List of active and pending IT projects available in a variety of views.

New ▾ | Actions ▾ | Settings ▾

	ID	Task_Name	Project_Description (Business Need)	Project-Status	Modified	Project_Mgr	Comm_of_Interest	Department_Steward	Start_Date	Finish_Date
	171	Replace CAD Mapping Servers	Cyclical replacement of CAD mapping and ProQA hardware (CAD05, CAD05HA and CAD05T)	In-Progress	5/18/2011 3:02 PM	Schaffranek-Troy	Justice & Public Safety	Emergency Communications	12/1/2010 12:00 AM	12/30/2011 12:00 A
	70	SFTP site	FTP site for mortgage info and deliquent real estate collections	In-Progress	5/18/2011 3:01 PM	Schaffranek-Troy	Enterprise Solutions	Treasurer's Office	11/4/2010 12:00 AM	6/1/2011 12:00 AM
	169	Replace CSB server hardware and virtualize	Cyclical replacement of CSB hardware while upgrading software levels and virtualizing the server.	In-Progress	5/18/2011 3:01 PM	Schaffranek-Troy	Health & Human Services	HCSB	9/30/2010 12:00 AM	4/29/2011 12:00 AM
	189	Upgrade the IT Support database server	Correction: Cyclical Replacement of the SUPPORT (SQL DB and App) Server. Upgrade server to Server 2008R2 from Server 2003 which no longer has Microsoft mainstream support	In-Queue for Initiation	5/16/2011 8:42 AM	Garman-Trish	Enterprise Solutions	Information Technology	7/1/2011 12:00 AM	6/30/2012 12:00 AM
	186	Upgrade the Document Imaging (Laserfiche) server	Correction: Cyclical replacement of DOCIMG (Laserfiche) Server. Upgrade server to Server 2008R2 from Server 2003 which no longer has Microsoft mainstream support	In-Queue for Initiation	5/16/2011 8:41 AM	Garman-Trish	Enterprise Solutions	Information Technology	7/1/2011 12:00 AM	6/30/2012 12:00 AM
	161	Automated Password Reset System	Implement automated password reset process to elimnate approximately 20% of all IT Requests.	In-Queue for Initiation	5/13/2011 3:32 PM	Johnson-Buddy	Enterprise Solutions	Information Technology		
	52	New Financial System	Current system does not meet all business requirements. Requirements definition will determine where the gaps in functionality can help enhance business productivity. Integration with other systems, fixed asset management, are not adequate.	Requested Funding	5/13/2011 11:12 AM	Mayhew-Sandy	Enterprise Solutions	Finance	7/2/2012 8:00 AM	11/12/2013 5:00 PM

Knowledge/Work Sharing/Best Practice Information: The County has formed a SharePoint "Power Users" group. These are employees within the departments who have been trained in some of the administrative and management aspects of the tool. ITD has been able to delegate some responsibilities to the power users, thus saving ITD time for complex requests. The group meets on a regular basis and shares ideas of how they have used SharePoint to improve their department's processes. In addition, many power users and IT team members participate in and have presented at a regional SharePoint user's group to gain further knowledge of best practice usage for the tool.

CONCLUSION

Hanover County's successful SharePoint implementation can be attributed to learning what other companies have done well, and adopting those practices while avoiding their mistakes. Taking the time to find the right uses, working closely with customers to understand their needs, and finding ways to get work done in a more effective way have proven to be the keys to increasing adoption/utilization. Real savings and value have been realized through: reduced printing, productivity gains from collaborative processes, consistent/uniform communication among senior leaders, and making information easily accessible to those who need it.