Office of Information Technology's Professional Development Program©

http://www.careeradvance.oit.gatech.edu

Abstract

Georgia Tech has worked diligently over the past several years creating and implementing a multi dimensional professional development program aimed to recruit and retain technical employees. Addressing salary, training, and career progression, this session will share the components of the program that is now web-enabled. We will demonstrate the on-line resource available to our employees.

Introduction

In response to Georgia Tech's strategic objective to create a "Supportive and Collaborative Administrative Infrastructure", the Office of Information Technology initiated a career development project that allows for proactive training in identified growth areas, creates defined career tracks, and publishes defined business practices. What is now called the OIT Professional Development Program has been an evolving process to create a working environment that is welcoming to people of all backgrounds, promotes individual growth, and is recognized for community greatness by current and prospective employees. The web site was opened to all employees in March of 2001.

Background

A training needs assessment was conducted in house in 1996 that established a baseline for the types of training that would be cultivated and offered to OIT employees. The assessment identified three types of training applicable to all OIT employees - Core Training, Professional Development Training, and Mission Critical Training. The assessment also identified the need to evenly distribute training opportunities as well as establishing training initiatives at the directorate level. Further, there was a need to create an effective method of communicating training resource information to the employees. A follow on survey in 1998, this time by an
outside consultant, reinforced the need for training and for well-defined career paths and opportunities for advancement.

During the same time frame, Atlanta became a “hot bed” for technology professionals and OIT began to experience significant vacancy rates in the technical areas. The vacancy rate for technical positions spiked as high as 24% in the recent past! The Professional Development Program underway seemed to be the perfect vehicle to address a number of recruiting and retention issues at a time when it was most needed.

The Professional Development Program was a collaborative effort with Human Resources as we addressed defining career paths, creating generic job descriptions, adjusting salaries to market demands, formalizing the business policies and procedures, and hiring a shared technical recruiter.

The web site is designed with four major components:
The Business Practices section provides an overview of the entire effort. Here an employee will find an explanation of the process, OIT departmental policies, program format, terms used, and institute policy.

The Career Opportunities section sets the stage for employees to take responsibility for their career. This section offers tools to assist in evaluating where someone might currently be in their professional life. It also provides the option to explore future opportunities.

The Training and Development section provides a central site for training related materials, an employee’s personal training record (developed in an earlier phase), and educational programs available to institute employees.

The final section, Measurements, ties the effort to our strategic plan as well as providing data to validate whether this massive effort has had any impact on employee satisfaction, retention, or promotion.

Future
All of the many employees that have been involved in this effort, both in OIT and Human Resources, certainly hope this program affords all of our employees the opportunity to explore future career paths and opportunities. Since the rollout in March, 2001, we have been soliciting feedback as to what works and what needs to be changed. We will be sharing our experiences with other institutions that have already expressed interest in the outcome of this phase.
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