



**Project: Online County Recruitment**  
**County: Orange**  
**State: California**  
**Web Site: <https://jobs.ocgov.com/virtualjobapp/index.asp>**  
**Contact: John Wheeler**  
**Title: Assistant Chief Information Officer**  
**Department: CEO's Office, Human Resources**  
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#### **BEST OF BREED SUMMARY**

- *They went out of their way to engage the customers and request their feedback on the system.*
- *Communication through regular meetings played a critical role.*
- *When the project became too large to manage, they stepped back and looked at the application in an incremental fashion.*
- *They took the application out to customers to test it.*
- *Effective marketing increased its overall usage.*

Orange County created an online recruitment system that can compete with the best systems in private industry. The system was developed to help county government compete with other government entities and private industry for qualified job candidates.

Human Resources launched the system after a survey revealed that there was a high dissatisfaction with the recruitment process that was often regarded as too slow and lacking in communication to let applicants know where they were in the process. At a budget of \$350,000, the department worked with outsourced vendor-contractor ACS that performed hands-on programming to provide many of the features that comprise the system.

Many of the system's capabilities were designed to address the common complaints about the old method. It has the ability to provide proactive e-mail communication regarding county job openings to candidates who have expressed prior interest. It stores job application templates to reduce the time it takes to apply. It also does the following: provides online feedback regarding the applicant's status; provides candidates immediate feedback on whether they are qualified to apply for a specific position based on a new online self-assessment test.

"I believe that our system is one that is leading-edge technology in respect to government," said Marguerite Adams, recruiting and marketing manager for the CEO's Office in Human Resources. "We are spearheading a new direction that can keep up with the pace that is needed to draw talent into the workforce. We are able to then provide better customer satisfaction to both internal and external customers that includes our applicants."

Building the system required bringing the recruitment processes of some 25 different agencies under one umbrella since the agencies had their own approaches. "Our county is very decentralized, especially between Human Resources and the IT environment," explained Adams. "Although we wanted to recognize our current business processes, we wanted to take it as an opportunity to move forward in a direction that would be the most effective use. In other words, not just duplicate everything in our business practices, but our best practices within the organization."

It also meant forging a new path into uncharted territory. "When we got started there weren't any examples to follow," said John Wheeler, assistant chief information officer in the CEO's Office. "So, I think the biggest challenge was designing the online system so it would be at least close enough to all our existing business practices."

As the application developed, IT leaders immediately realized it was larger than anticipated. They had to take a step back and simplify the complexities by pulling it apart and approaching it in increments. "We actually had to take time out nine months ago and look at the application from the ground up -- reorganize it, rewrite it with some new technology and regroup a lot of the business processes from the applications perspective so it could serve as a platform for future growth and functionality," said Wheeler. "This activity brought together a lot of the loose ends."

This kind of organizational effort required the formation of tight teams and the implementation of weekly and sometimes twice-weekly meetings to discuss issues such as design work. "I think that was the key to our success," said Wheeler. "We worked through the requirements in great detail. We had the human resources people and the hands-on programmer in the same room, and they really talked in great detail about what was the requirement for the business process and what would the screens look like. They got down to it so that when things were developed and the technical people came back with the solution it would be a really close match to what the people had in mind when they started out -- that was another key to success."

Once the team had the application designed, they turned to the customer agencies to obtain their feedback. Engaging the customers in this way turned into another success story. "They felt they were a part of developing the system," said Adams. "When we said we were going to do something, we communicated with the various teams to let them know what was going on. This activity was especially important when there was a hands-on system rollout and when there was actual training involved. We conducted meetings and things of that nature to help promote dialog on any issues that were progressing relative to the system."



Initially the final product rolled out to moderate interest by the public that would be using it. The team quickly snapped to respond to the low interest by promoting it through effective marketing and public relations. This effort drove up the usage rate of Web submissions to 75 percent. Now the project is doing well. "We are proud of this project," added Wheeler. "And we're really excited about it."