UNDERSTANDING INTERNAL COMMUNICATION EXPERIENCES

Philadelphia Parks & Recreation

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PHILADELPHIA PARKS & RECREATION
FIND YOUR PATH

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Philadelphia Parks & Recreation (PPR) is a **large and diverse department** with 700 full-time and 1,300 seasonal employees spread out across the entire city.

In 2017, PPR engaged over 200 participants to develop its **Strategic Plan** – a set of key goals and objectives to inform the future of the department.

One key objective was to build an **intranet** – a central, online place where staff can access information.

Due to a realignment within the City, PPR now has **IT support** to build and maintain new tech.

We want to understand:

- What **information** do PPR staff want to have online?

- What **questions** do staff have in their day-to-day jobs?

- What **difficulties** do staff have when looking for information?

HIGH-LEVEL PROCESS

1 Planning and Recruitment

2 Interviews

3 Synthesis and Workshops

4 Developing Recommendations

PLANNING

- Engaged with stakeholder groups (IT, Communications)

- Developed research plan and interview guide

- Worked with City of Philadelphia's Service Design Studio to learn privacy best practices, and how to de-identify interview quotes

- Analyzed staff demographics and roles in order to recruit a representative set of participants

INTERVIEWS

Interviewed 28 field-based and administrative staff, for 45-minutes each.

Participants included:

- Program and Operations Managers
- Recreation Leaders
- Maintenance Workers
- Urban Park Rangers
- Executive Assistants
- Seasonal Staff

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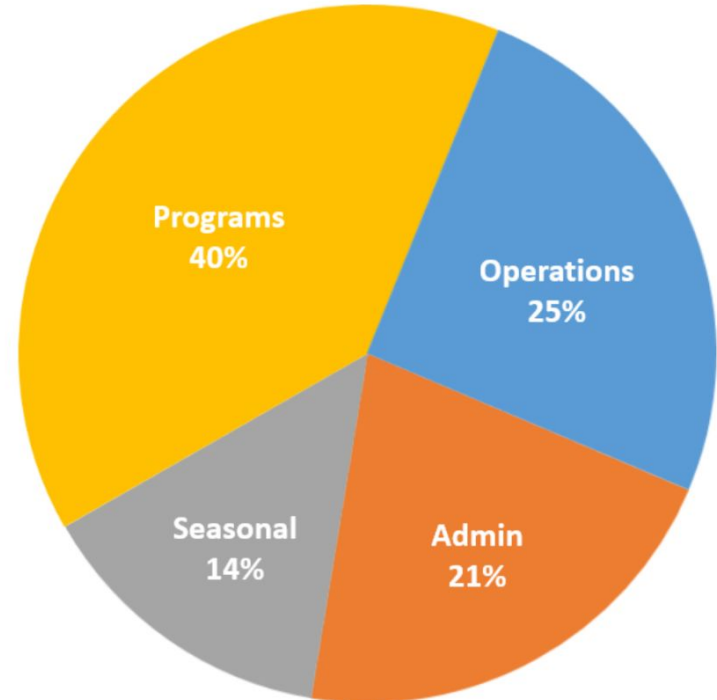
COLLABORATIVE WORKSHOPS

Facilitated 3 workshops with 18 total participants to bring in additional points of view.

Synthesis workshops

- Sorted 150 interview quotes into groups (Affinity Analysis) and voted on key themes

Recommendations brainstorm

- Invited City of Philadelphia's IT and UX experts to develop recommendations based on research insights

MAIN THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

THEME #1: DIRECT ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Currently, PPR Staff access information through their supervisors and colleagues. Staff want up-to-date, easy, and direct access to information. They want one central place for **accessing forms, looking up other staff, and exchanging ideas.**

Recommendations:

- Establish working group to launch intranet

- **Establish governance plan** for updating site information and ensuring relevance

- Test iterative prototypes of the intranet with PPR staff to inform content and layout

I'm in a group text with a bunch of rec leaders. We ask each other like, "Hey, do you have this form? Or do you know where you can get this?" [...] It should all be at our fingertips in today's world.

- Recreation Leader

THEME #2: TAKING THE LOAD OFF OF HR

Most HR processes are paper-based. Applicants, staff, and managers want to know the **ongoing status of job applications and promotions**, but HR is not always able to provide individual status updates.

Recommendations:

- Connect IT and HR to complete a business process analysis and identify potential improvement areas

- Use an **online application tracking system** like SmartRecruiters or NEOGOV to improve the seasonal hiring process.

Our detailed report will help **empower PPR staff** by making it easier to access the information they need.

THANK YOU!