

Wednesday, 25 July 2018 17:06

## **KYSHRM at the Pinnacle**

Written by Lynn Ingmire, SHRM-SCP, SPHR



Each year, the Society for Human Resource Management recognizes the highest achievements of the affiliate chapters and state councils in making their workplaces and communities a better place by awarding the Pinnacle Award to the top chapters and state councils.

This past year our KYSHRM state council, with the help of the SHRM chapters across the state, embarked on a statewide initiative entitled Bridging the Talent Gap – Kentucky, which began with Louisville SHRM in 2016 which met the criteria for the Advancing the HR Profession criteria. KYSHRM has become the catalyst that connects employers, learning providers and other community stakeholders to develop an understanding of how to meet the challenges of ensuring a skilled and educated workforce in Kentucky both now and in the future.



Bridging the Talent Gap - Kentucky was a collaborative process involving many stakeholders across Kentucky to provide meaningful statistics reflecting the gaps in business workforce needs and skills of current applicants. A similar program was conducted by Louisville and Southern Indiana SHRMs in 2016, along with The Graduate

Network, which consists of leaders of a national effort to increase college and credential completion among adults. During the Q1 of 2016, Lyle Hanna, a past chair of KYSHRM, arranged a meeting for members of Louisville SHRM, the KYSHRM and The Graduate Network with Kentucky's Secretary of Education and Workforce, Hal Heiner, to showcase the Louisville data. Secretary Heiner was thrilled and stated that he needed it for the entire state. Kentucky SHRM accepted the challenge.

In order to facilitate the collaborative process of stakeholders across the Commonwealth, Kentucky SHRM State Council established a committee chaired by co-Workforce Directors, Cathy Koop and Sherry Powers, and appointed a Project Manager, Shannon Byrne, the Council's Management Professional, to coordinate the survey efforts and provide reports to the chapters and state council. Kentucky state government representatives, Workforce Innovation Boards in Kentucky, research scientists from The Graduate Network, representatives from colleges and universities, community organizations and Ky. Chamber of Commerce, along with 15 local community Chambers of Commerce, 13 SHRM chapters, Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government assisted with the implementation and promotion of the initial survey .

The SHRM chapters across Kentucky were invited to attend a meeting in May 2016 with various members of the state KCEWS department, as well as representatives from Kentucky SHRM State Council. At the conclusion of the meeting, the Chapters made the commitment to promote the survey with their chapter members and stakeholders within their communities. The state's Community and Technical College system supported the project and provided financial support. Various associations/ organizations across the state, including the Kentucky Chamber, showed support by promoting the survey to their members.

KYSHRM had several goals with this initiative.

1. KYSHRM wanted to be the catalyst among business, government and educators to increase awareness of the current and future workforce needs was multi-faceted.
2. We wanted to rally state SHRM organizations in support of this initiative. We did that. All 13 chapters and the State Council rolled out the survey resulting in responses from across the state from small, medium and large organizations.
3. We wanted significant data for validity. According to our researchers, the project was considerably more robust than typical surveys of this type. SurveyGizmo, the survey delivery platform, reports normal response rates of 10-15% and the Kentucky survey was estimated to be a 31% response rate. Important was the mix of small and medium sized organizations. In total, usable data were derived from a total of 1,084 respondents. And as important as the total number, small businesses represented 55% of the total and medium businesses represented 31%. Also, 32% of the responses came from smaller communities across the state.

4. We wanted to rally the support of other businesses, political and community organizations which we did. We received support from the Governor and Secretary of Education and Workforce through their PSA's. The survey results were incorporated into the KCTCS FORWARD for Students, Communities and the Commonwealth. Newspaper articles were published in the Lexington Herald Leader. Two of our State Council members appeared on WYMT television discussing the survey and the dialogue between education and businesses on bridging the talent gap.

5. We wanted to get educational institutions and the State to provide the best education and training possible supporting businesses in Kentucky. Currently the Governor has implemented a scholarship program for training in fields highlighted in the survey: healthcare, skilled trades, professional and scientific and advanced manufacturing. Also, two members of KYSHRM have joined an advisory board for the Kentucky Business Coalition for Education whose goal is to prepare high school students for the workforce.

KYSHRM believes that the program was successful in that it has brought about increased attention to the work of the State Council and the chapters and brought together members of the business, education and government communities. Approximately 200 people from across the state attended the Bridging the Talent Gap Kentucky Results Event to hear some of the results and discussion among state officials, educators and business leaders regarding how the results will open dialogue to improve the skills being provided to candidates for the jobs available in the Commonwealth. Statistics regarding the survey results are included in the section above. Several community based results meetings have been held. Bluegrass SHRM Round Table included 30 leaders from private education, public and nonprofit sectors. Christian County Chamber presented the BTTG data to 20 manufacturing businesses in Southwestern Kentucky and since this meeting this group is creating a manufacturing sector strategy, working together to identify their preferred education and training providers to create a talent pipeline where students earn and learn. Local BTTG data was delivered to 20 business and industry leaders of Campbellsville who are studying how to improve workforce in their community. Approximately 100 leaders from public, private, education, public and non-profit in Northern Kentucky met to discuss the data and through the conversations that evolved, this meeting has catapulted NKY SHRM as a thought-leader in the community. The Kentucky Chamber of Commerce is Kentucky's largest business association and in an effort to support the BTTG initiative, the KY Chamber sent out the BTTG data results to its 4,000 members and a mailing list of nearly 15,000 contacts.

And the goal of being a catalyst continues. During the month of November, 2017, KYSHRM was asked by the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board to work with their consultant Deloitte on an extensive Workforce Strategic Plan by coordinating focus groups to discuss workforce issues in Kentucky. There were six focus groups representing the 10 WIB districts. The information gleaned from these focus groups will be incorporated into the workforce strategic plan to be presented to Governor Bevin by

March 2018.

Bridging The Talent Gap-Kentucky is an outstanding accomplishment that has received notoriety from government officials in the state and educators throughout the Commonwealth as well as the researchers who assisted KYSHRM. KYSHRM believes that this initiative is the beginning of the dialogue among businesses, government and educators to work toward solving the gap between skill sets in the current workforce and skill sets that are necessary for the future of business in Kentucky.

When the initiative was presented to SHRM for consideration of the Pinnacle Award, they too felt it was an outstanding accomplishment worthy of the award.

My congratulations and hearth-felt appreciation to the entire KYSHRM State Council, the chapters across the state and the partners who worked with us on this journey. My hope is that KYSHRM will continue to reap the benefits of all the efforts that went into the initial Bridging The Talent Gap – KY initiative.



Lynn Ingmire, SHRM-SCP, SPHR -- 2018 Immediate Past Chair KYSHRM