



EMPLOYEE value proposition/branding focus groups: 2007

During August and September 2007, Recruitment and Retention Innovations team members conducted four focus groups: two in Raleigh, one in Greenville and one in Greensboro, to discuss a statewide Employee Value Proposition (EVP) and Branding. These focus groups were part of The Office of State Personnel's **HR Performance Solutions** initiative, a comprehensive program designed to build and sustain a performance culture among its workforce. Agencies and universities were asked to send participants using this suggestion:

Identify four employees in your agency or university who can participate in the focus groups using the following guidelines:

- Top performers
- Length of service as follows:
 - Two new hires
 - Two employees with five or more years experience in state government
- One employee from each category
 - Manager/Supervisor
 - Professional/Technical
 - Paraprofessional/Office Support/Skilled Craft
 - Service/Maintenance

PARTICIPANTS

Participants totaled 97 employees representing 17 agencies and 9 universities. Agencies represented multiple regions by sending to multiple focus groups. Experience levels as state employees ranged from less than two weeks to thirty years and one day. Anecdotally, there were many participants with 15 - 20 + years of state government experience. Members of the Baby Boomer, Generation X, Generation Y, and possibly a couple of Traditionalists seemed to be present. Participants earnestly participated in the discussion, offering creative input and expressing enthusiasm about state employment. The employee with 30 years and one day of state government service proudly declared, "I could have retired yesterday, but I am sticking around because of job-interest alignment." Some employees gathered information from colleagues prior to the

focus group. Another participant contributed research about recruiting and retaining the emerging generation.

Participant totals:

	8/27/2007 Raleigh	8/28/2007 Raleigh	9/19/2007 Greenville	9/20/2007 Greensboro
<i>Participants</i>	32	29	17	19

Job titles and roles were diverse. Participants included administrative, processing, executive and student services assistants; a Security Officer, an SBI agent, a Special Deputy Attorney General, a Facility Maintenance Supervisor, a Division Director of Structural Pest Control, and Managers of Store Supply, Library Stacks, Research Operations, and Building and Environmental Service. Additional job roles were: Carpenter, Administrative Officers, Construction Engineer, Transportation Engineer, Maintenance Mechanic III, Housekeeper, Environmental Program Supervisor, Administrative Secretary, Landscape Architect, Marine and Shipyard Superintendent, Staff Development Specialist, Facility Electrical Engineer, Facility Maintenance Engineer, Facility Maintenance Supervisor, IT Director, Business and Technology Applications Specialist, Forestry Supervisor, Technology Support Analyst, Technology Support Specialist, Executive Assistant, Assistant State Librarian, Personnel Analyst, Personnel Technician, Personnel Supervisor, Information and Communications Division Director, Education Program Director III and a CIO.

METHOD

The focus groups began with PowerPoint guided reviews of [EVP](#) and [branding](#). Participants individually [ranked from most to least important](#) the top ten attributes that attracted them to and kept them working in state government. The attribute choices provided were based on Corporate Leadership Council (CLC) research. Definitions of the attributes were provided for clarity. Working in groups of 5 or 6, guided by a facilitator, each group reached [consensus about the top 3 attraction and top 3 retention attributes for their group](#). These top 3 attraction and retention attributes became the basis for each group's development of EVP messages. A [list of tag lines](#) was distributed to inspire conversation. Next, each group [created their own taglines](#).

OUTCOMES

Job-interest alignment, benefits, (including retirement), work-life balance, career development, future opportunities, organizational stability and manager quality were discussed as primary attraction and retention attributes most valued by the participants. Compensation (total compensation; not wages alone) and Job-interest alignment were identified as **consensus** top one or top two attraction

attributes at all four meetings. Job-Interest alignment was identified as **consensus** number one retention attribute at each focus group session. Other **consensus** standouts for retention were development opportunities and future career opportunities. Perhaps the most significant outcome of the focus groups was an extensive list of [recommended taglines](#) tied to the State's EVP.

www.performanceSolutions.nc.gov/staffingInitiatives/recruitment/EmploymentMarketing/EmploymentMarketing_Branding_2007ProjectSummaryReport.pdf