

Innovating recruitments with Lean at the San Francisco Public Library



September 2019

City Performance Unit

City and County of San Francisco | Office of the Controller



During 2018-19, San Francisco Public Library partnered with the City Performance Lean Team to reduce the Library's time-to-hire. Human Resources staff partnered with other divisions to develop solutions to streamline the hiring process, including new data that allows SFPL leadership to monitor hiring performance in real time.

The Problem

San Francisco Public Library employs approximately 900 staff across 27 branches, the Main Library, and two administrative buildings. On average, hiring a librarian takes about six months, and SFPL can have as many as 90 hiring processes in progress at any one time.

A long hiring process causes roles to remain empty and results in fewer library staff available to assist patrons. Additionally, vacancies tend to be distributed inequitably as staff reassign to locations they consider more desirable, with the heaviest burden falling on branches with the most need. Analysts with the Human Resources (HR) office coordinate all recruitments and have to navigate complex processes with hiring managers and candidates. HR analysts are challenged with a high volume of questions and requests and face periods of concentrated work as multiple recruitments overlap.

Want to learn more?

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What They Did

With coaching from the Lean Team, the HR team worked with partners to create a shared understanding of the hiring process by **mapping critical steps** and **interviewing customers** (recent hires and branch managers) to understand their needs, experiences, and expectations. The HR team also partnered with the Library's Research, Strategy and Analysis unit (RSA) to develop **new tools and data** to manage and monitor their work effectively.

HR analysts used these strategies to uncover root causes for their most significant pain points, including:

- duplicative paperwork to initiate recruitments
- unnecessary tasks consuming analyst time
- unnecessary approvals
- problems verifying new hire references
- complexities in scheduling interviews
- missing or inaccessible data

Innovations



Actionable data: HR analysts and RSA produced a new data set to analyze the hiring process by compiling records from past recruitments and creating tools to generate new data for all future hires. This enabled the Library to agree on their hiring pipeline, identify key metrics, and expand reporting options. This also gave HR resources to communicate more clearly about the hiring process and anticipate workloads. Hiring data is now available to leadership on-demand and the HR team can monitor their progress toward time-to-hire goals in real time.



Streamlined review and approval: The Library used new hiring data to identify job classifications causing the most significant hiring delays and removed unnecessary step early in the process. Leadership is testing new strategies for speeding up these recruitments, including streamlining approvals.



Simplified position packets: Hiring managers submit packets to the HR team to begin the hiring process for each vacancy, but redundancies in forms and time-consuming paperwork causes delays in receiving complete and correct forms. HR analysts are simplifying this process to reduce time, errors and confusion by removing unnecessary forms, developing standard templates, and adding a new identifier to help track each request.



Streamlined interview management: HR analysts are creating a bank of standard questions, preparing grab-and-go "kits" with day-of interview materials, and improving ways to schedule interviews for multiple positions. The team is also testing new interview protocols with panelists to free up more analyst time.



Faster reference checks: HR analysts are helping the Library check references quicker by creating a bank of standard questions, reducing the number of mandatory questions, and providing clearer instructions to candidates.