



Providing resources and information from Management Services in support of the Department's mission.

"If you focus on results, you will never change. If you focus on change, you will get results."

-Jack Dixon

Time Management for a Positive Workplace

James McMillan, Workforce and Succession Planning (WFSP) Unit

Almost all of us have had those days when we are just stuck on our assignments and seem to be unable to juggle our changing priorities. We worry about not turning in complete products. We have meetings that seem to go nowhere. We struggle keeping track of our assignments and do them sporadically. Turning in assignments on time seems to be a struggle, we begin to appear overly busy, and we end the day exhausted and possibly unsure of whether we have accomplished our goals. During such hectic times, time management becomes a useful and critical skill. Through effective time management, we can begin to approach assignments with positivity and ease.

One way to effectively manage your time is to keep a log of your daily tasks and review them. List them out with your start and stop times, and rate the importance of each task. Look at your energy level as you go through your day, and note that on your log. At the end of the day, check your list and think of a few questions: During which part of your work day did you have the most energy? Did the time you had the most energy align with the importance of your tasks? Did you constantly shift assignments with varying priorities? Once you have answered those questions, you may be able to create a log of your ideal, time managed work day. You may also be able to separate out your tasks by importance and urgency based on your log. You can then anticipate your urgent tasks before they become critical and focus on what tasks are most important. While you may not always be able to stick to this log due to shifting priorities and interruptions, you will get an idea of how to manage your work day effectively.

Shifting priorities and interruptions will not negatively affect your day if you can manage your

time effectively. For example, you can set aside some time in your day to be available to answer questions, and use the rest of your time to focus on your work. If possible, you should let your team know when you are not available, and that you will be able to assist them when you have time—Microsoft Outlook can be a great tool for this task. If you share a calendar with your team, you can block out time on your calendar during which you will be focused on a specific assignment or task to let your team know that you are working on a project and limit potential distractions.

Some assignments may seem time-consuming with no end in sight. You can manage your time by breaking the task down into smaller tasks and setting SMART goals at each step: Specific, Measurable, Action-Oriented, Realistic, and Timely. Think of a large, overwhelming project as a series of smaller, well-planned projects. Once you start taking these smaller steps, you will find that each step leads to a complete product. Reward yourself for completing each small step!

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Dear Claire DeAir: What did I miss at the FLO Conference?

Shannon McKenna, Business Services Office (BSO), Property and Local Services

Are your procurement, contract, state and federal property, or policy needs fraught with confusion? The BSO presents Claire DeAir, who will be here every month to offer advice and to ease all of your BSO burdens.

DEAR CLAIRE DeAIR,

I am a brand-new Forestry Logistics Officer (FLO), and I missed the FLO Conference earlier this year. Can you catch me up so I am ready for fire season?

-FLOrence Fuego

Dear FLOrence,

Sounds to me like congratulations are in order! Welcome to the exciting world of being a FLO for CAL FIRE! As you will quickly learn, the FLO has many important responsibilities that support our Department's mission. Since you missed the most recent FLO Conference, let me bring you up to speed and give you a quick breakdown of some information I am sure you will find useful.

What is the importance of the FLO Conference?

Let us shine a little light on this subject. Until recently, a statewide FLO training had not occurred for quite some time. Many of the general inboxes within BSO were filled with inquiries from FLOs relating to matters such as, "When is it appropriate to use a Small Business for services I need?" "How can I buy exercise equipment when I have limited funds?" And, the occasional, but very important "How long should I keep personnel records?" Referring back to my initial proclamation that FLOs wear many hats, BSO identified the need to compile a training that covers the many policies and procedures governing functions a FLO may perform. This quintessential FLO "boot camp" outlines Department rules, regulations, and best practices for day to day tasks which allow attendees to gain a stronger knowledge of their job duties and how those duties directly relate to BSO. The conference also provides a platform to allow us (BSO and FLOs) to work together to correct inconsistencies and work towards standardization. But the best part about the FLO Conference is the opportunity to network. It is a great chance to build relationships with your fellow FLOs and make them

valuable resources in your toolkit, as well as confidants with whom to swap ideas and methodologies.

What were some "hot" topics covered?

Whilst we nestle into the nitty-gritty details, I should let you know that no stone was left unturned! A variety of topics were discussed, including procurement, contracting, State property, Federal property, retrograde, policy/procedure, incident procedures (because, *yes*, they are often different from regular policy/procedure), recycling, small business/disabled veterans business enterprise, FISCAL, BSO's FIRM, and safety. The trainers presenting information on their respective topics were what we like to call subject matter experts (SMEs). They came bearing detailed knowledge and hands on experience with most policies and procedures that impact the duties of the FLO. But do not be intimidated by their well-versed quotations of the State Contracting Manual or Government Code; they will be happy to lend a helping hand in your time of need!

This year's conference highlighted many changes in the FIRM area of BSO. The SME for this, Linda Tien, provided clarification to many procedures and announced her intent to further clarify and make efficient many of the processes related to procuring printing and shredding services, establishing and maintaining records retention schedules, and the new issuance format and process for the Departmental handbook updates.

What resources are available to me now?

Though you missed the opportunity to attend the 2018 FLO Conference all is not lost, FLOrence.

BSO keeps updated and readily available resources and contact information for FLOs, including actual presentations from the conference, on our Intranet page. You can review them at your convenience by clicking [HERE](#) and navigating to the left hand side to locate the "FLO Quick Links" section.

You do not necessarily have to wait for the conference to come around every year to stay current on new policies and/or procedures. Just be sure you are keeping a watchful eye on your email

(Cont'd. on Page 6)

Dates to Remember

Final Filing Date(s):

*Communications
Operator
Continuous Filing*

*Deputy State Fire
Marshal III
(Specialist)
Continuous Filing*

*Fire Fighter II
(Paramedic)
Continuous Filing*

*Forester I
(Nonsupervisory)
Continuous Filing*

*Forester II
(Supervisory)
Continuous Filing*

*Forester III
Continuous Filing*

*Forestry Assistant II
Continuous Filing*

*Water Sewage Plant
Operator
Continuous Filing*

Retirement Benefits

Erika Terrell, Personnel Transactions Unit

Various life events cause employees to question whether they are ready to retire from State service. Questions arise such as, “When am I eligible to retire?” or “How much will my health benefits cost, and when will they be effective?”

Transitioning from active civil service to retirement can be overwhelming, so the California Public Employees’ Retirement System (CalPERS) has developed several guides and resources to help employees make these decisions.

Creating a [myCalPERS](#) user account allows employees to view current contributions and estimate their retirement benefits using the online tools and benefit calculator. The online calculator allows employees to enter in future potential salary rates to estimate retirement benefit payments.

The most common concern employees have is the impact to health, dental, and/or vision benefit coverage once retired. If enrolled in a CalPERS health plan prior to retirement, the health benefit coverage continues automatically into retirement as long as the last day worked is within 30 days of the approved retirement date. However, since an upcoming retirement is considered a health benefit “permitting event,” employees may elect to change health plans into retirement and/or change dependents covered. Dental and vision benefit coverage will continue into retirement as well. The Human Resources Office (HRO) will provide employees with the necessary dental and vision enrollment forms to complete and return.

Remember, this is an exciting new chapter, and HRO is here to help! Employees can also find additional documentation and resources on the CalPERS website ([Retirement Planning Checklist, Calculator, and Guides](#)) or by calling CalPERS directly at 1-888-CalPERS (1-888-225-7377).

Reminder:

- *Unused* Personal Development Days (PDD) must be used by the end of Fiscal Year (FY) 2017-2018 (June 30, 2018). Unused PDDs do not roll over into the next FY.

In accordance with collective bargaining, PDDs are granted at the beginning of each FY. PDDs may be used for activities such as professional and/or personal development

seminars, training, etc., to help employees achieve growth and enhance their professional and/or personal goals.

Since PDDs are considered “*use them or lose them*,” employees are encouraged to use their available PDDs time by June 30, which is the close of the fiscal year. Each PDD is equivalent to a standard 8-hour work day and can be used in less than full-day increments. Employees should refer to their applicable [Bargaining Contracts](#) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for specific information or restrictions.

PDD is a **usage only** benefit; PDD use is shown on employee pay warrants only when an employee has used it.

“Hard work does not guarantee success, but improves its chances.”

-B.J. Gupta

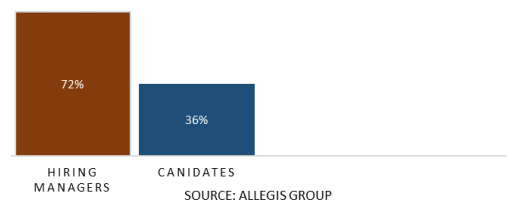
Recruitment Corner

Lawrence Troxler, Recruitment Unit

A company is only as exceptional as the people in it, and to get exceptional people, a strong recruitment process is a must. The start of the recruitment process begins with a strong and appealing job description.

Job descriptions should not just collect resumes. They should be tools that get candidates excited about a role, and a tool that the Recruitment Unit can use as sales ammunition throughout the rest of the recruitment process. A recent study done by the Allegis Group reports that while 72% of hiring managers say they provide clear job descriptions, only 36% of candidates say they are provided with clear job descriptions. Perception is reality in most cases. That being the case, make sure your job description as a hiring manager clearly explains what a candidate will be doing and gets them excited about working for CAL FIRE.

PERCENTAGE OF HIRING MANAGERS VS. CANDIDATES WHO SAY JOB DESCRIPTIONS ARE CLEAR



The Summer Must Haves—Camping, Grilling, & Celebrating the Fourth!

Lynnette Round, Communications Office

The summer months are fast approaching, and as they do, many of us are preparing for outdoor camping, grilling, and firework displays for the Fourth of July. As we go outside to camp, a fire is always on the list for entertainment, heat, or cooking. If you decide to have a camp fire, make sure to buy your firewood where you will burn it. Try not to move firewood long distances as you could unknowingly spread dangerous insects and diseases, which have the potential to kill millions of trees. Before you head out, if your campsite is more than 50 miles away, call the state or federal park or forests closest to the site and ask if they know of local distributors. You can ask the firewood dealer where the wood was cut — if it is not within 50 miles, or if it is from outside the county, find another source. Leave locally purchased wood at the campsite for the next campers when you leave. Be aware of state and county firewood regulations before you go. Some states do not allow you to bring firewood across their borders, and many counties restrict firewood movement out of the area.

If you plan on grilling this summer, beware of mixing oil with fire. Every year, thousands of backyard chefs become impatient when their charcoal briquettes are slow to heat. By being impatient they decide to speed up the process by applying more charcoal lighter fluid to smoldering coals directly from the can. Then poof, it backfires into a big ball of flames...not a good thing to happen. You can not hurry the process if you are going to BBQ, sit back and enjoy the time with your family and friends. Let the BBQ heat up slowly and enjoy the grill time.

In recent years, fireworks have been one of the leading causes of injuries serious enough to require hospital emergency room treatment. Fireworks can result in severe burns, fractures, or even death or disfigurement that can last a lifetime. Those injuries typically harm the eyes, head, or hands. Even sparklers, which are considered by many to be harmless, reach temperatures of more than 1,000° F. Would you put that in the hand of a

child? If you plan on using “Safe and Sane” fireworks this Fourth of July, always read the directions and have an adult present. Have a bucket of water and a hose handy. Use common sense and keep a safe distance. Never attempt to re-light or “fix” fireworks. If someone does get burned, make sure to cool the burn with water, not ice.

There are a lot of things to do this summer and staying safe should be one of them.

Time (Cont'd.)

For more information on SMART techniques, check out the [Think S.M.A.R.T. or SMARTER](#) article from the July 2017 issue of Connections or the [S.M.A.R.T. worksheet](#) on the CAL FIRE Intranet.

We may not always be able to anticipate every situation and challenge that we face. However, through effective time management, we can face those challenges head on and prevent them from affecting our ability to produce an exceptional work product, while providing fantastic customer service, and we can lead ourselves towards the path of success.

You may also find additional useful tips through the Time Management course offered by the California Department of Human Resources. A description of the course can be found [HERE](#).

If you have any thoughts, comments, or ideas that you would like to share with the WFSP Unit, please connect with us at WorkforcePlanningandSuccession@fire.ca.gov

Employee Spotlight: Olga Fanin, Accounting Officer

Isaiah Matthews, WFSP Unit

To recognize and showcase CAL FIRE's outstanding workforce, the WFSP Unit debuted the "Employee Spotlight" series. The goal of the series is to highlight and connect Departmental employees with one another and share our accomplishments, work duties, interests, and hobbies with the CAL FIRE workforce across California.



Accounting Officer Olga Fanin

You cannot get much more “behind-the-scenes” than working in the Departmental Accounting Office (DAO) at CAL FIRE. Behind closed doors on the 15th floor of the California Natural Resources building in Sacramento, you may pass by the office entrance without even knowing. Though they are not the most visible members of the CAL FIRE family, our employees in DAO are nevertheless vital contributors to the organization. One shining example is Accounting Officer Olga Fanin from the Travel/Revolving Fund Unit. Olga was recommended to the WFSP Unit because she consistently exhibits customer focused service, understands customer expectations, and acknowledges and responds to concerns in timely and helpful manner. We met with Olga to find out more about what she does for CAL FIRE, how she came into her position, and why she likes working for our agency.

Olga started with CAL FIRE in August of 2016 as an Accountant I (Specialist). Having earned a degree in Accounting from American River College and coming from working in a retail accounting office, Olga’s stint with CAL FIRE is her first in State employment. Her main duties in the Travel/Revolving Fund Unit involve processing travel claims for multiple programs, including many in the Northern and Southern Region Units, the Office of the State Fire Marshal, and Sacramento Headquarters. Her unit also processes revolving fund checks, travel advances, and manages some accounts receivable claims. A lot of what comes out of the Travel/Revolving Fund Unit has to do with payments to CAL FIRE employees. “I see it as keeping people going where they need to go. We try our best to answer questions and help people with the travel process,” Olga explains. Having

been recently promoted to Accounting Officer, Olga now serves as the lead for her unit, and she will train new employees once positions are filled. “Olga is an asset to our Revolving Fund Unit because she brings a great attitude and has a sincere interest in finding a resolution to the concerns and issues of CAL FIRE’s employees,” says Senior Accounting Officer (Supervisor) Aruna Raj.

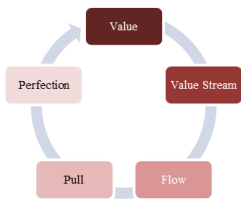
In a roundabout way, Olga’s life has involved traveling in some way, shape, or form. At age 10, she moved from Ukraine to Sacramento with her family. She has been to many states in the U.S., and has a brother and sister who live in Idaho, and whom she has visited many times. She has been to Pennsylvania and likes the Amish countryside. “If I had a choice, I would live somewhere with open fields and no one else around,” she says, speaking about her love of nature and the outdoors. She goes on to describe how she would like to be, “away from the city, but close enough to go shopping when I need to.” Living and working in Sacramento is a far cry from the open spaces of the outdoors, so what keeps Olga coming to work for CAL FIRE every day? “Great management, great coworkers—I just love the people I work with,” she replies. Though she enjoys her job with CAL FIRE, becoming an accountant was not necessarily something Olga dreamt of. As the second oldest of a family of 13 children, Olga was often preoccupied with helping her parents take care of her younger siblings, which meant cleaning, changing diapers, washing clothes, and even cooking. Luckily for her family, cooking is something Olga has enjoyed doing since she was seven years old, and something she has continued to do ever since, expanding her culinary skills with each meal she’s prepared. Olga is a self-acknowledged food blogger, and with the support of her husband Paul runs a food blog on her website, Olgascooking.com. One visit to the site, and you can see the delicious creations Olga comes up with and the artistic flair the photos of each dish convey. She said during the interview that everyone in her family has an artistic touch and uses it in different ways. Clearly, Olga’s creativity

LEAN: The Five Principles of Lean

Isaiah Matthews, WFSP Unit

In the April 2018 issue of *Connections*, the article “[What is Lean?](#)” introduced readers to the Five Principles of Lean:

- Identify customers and specify value (Value)
- Identify and map the value stream (Value Streams)
- Deliver value without waste (Flow)
- Deliver value based on demand (Pull)
- Seek perfection (Perfection)



These concepts (i.e., Value, Value Streams, Flow, Pull, and Perfection) support lean thinking, which is a business methodology for identifying and eliminating

deficiencies (waste) that prevent the delivery of services and/or products that benefit (is valued by) the customer. Let us further explain these concepts.

VALUE

Identifying the customer and what s/he defines as value is essential to the success of the lean methodology. To determine the customer of a process, ask who initiates the process and/or who receives the service or product? A process can have multiple customers with diverse meanings of value.

VALUE STREAMS

Business process activities are mapped and identified as value added, non-value added, or non-valued but required. Non-valued but required are tasks that are mandated by statutes, regulations, policies, etc.

FLOW

Activities that are identified as non-value added should be removed from the process so that the service and/or product can be delivered without waste while meeting the customers' expectations.

PULL

Timeliness represents the inherent expectation that the service (or product) is provided when the customer wants it. The customer signals the need which pulls the service/product through the business process.

PERFECTION

Seeking perfection is defined as the relentless pursuit of waste or opportunity for enhancement. This concept loops back to the first and the ongoing effort to incremental make continuous improvements to any process.

These concepts provide a foundation to guide implementation of the lean method and continuous process improvement.

For more information on Lean and process improvement, contact the Office of Program Accountability or visit our Intranet site at <http://calfireweb/organization/directorsoffice/programaccountability/articles.shtml>.

DeAir (Cont'd.)

for other valuable resources that come directly to you from BSO. BSO sends out periodic Procurement and FIRM broadcasts that let you know when updates have been made in the realm of contracts and procurement, as well as anything relating to forms, issuance, and records management (Hint: When our SME Linda makes changes to anything in FIRM, a broadcast will be sent out notifying you of those changes!). These gold nuggets will be vital in filling the gap between now and next year's FLO Conference. You may access all broadcasts via the intranet by clicking [HERE](#).

It is our intent to have this conference occur yearly for both new and existing staff. The information you receive may serve as a refresher if you have attended prior conferences. However, for new FLOs, it ensures that you are up to date with existing and new requirements on policy and procedures. If you are looking for support in between conferences, feel free to reach out to your fellow FLOs or [BSO](#). Good luck FLOing!

Competence and Accountability

Windy C. Bouldin, Office of Program Accountability

In last month's issue of *Connections*, the focus remained on the *Control Environment*, corresponding Principles 2 (*Exercise Oversight Responsibility*) and 3 (*Establish Structure, Responsibility, and Authority*) along with their attributes.

The United States Government Accountability Office's [Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government](#) describes the remaining *Control Environment* principles as Principle 4: *Demonstrate Commitment to Competence* (e.g., a commitment to recruit, develop, and retain competent individuals) and Principle 5: *Enforce Accountability* (e.g., evaluation of performance and internal control responsibilities). The associated attributes are described below:

- Principle 1: Demonstrate Commitment to Integrity and Ethical Values
- Principle 2: Exercise Oversight Responsibility
- Principle 3: Establish Structure, Responsibility, and Authority
- Principle 4: Demonstrate Commitment to Competence
- Principle 5: Enforce Accountability

Control Environment



Principle 4:

- *Expectations of Competence.* Competence is the qualification to carry out assigned responsibilities requiring relevant knowledge, skills, and abilities and demonstrated by the behavior of individuals as they carry out their responsibilities. The organization should access and address deviations throughout the organization.
 - ⇒ The [California Department of Human Resources \(CalHR\)](#) provides some information on competencies (e.g., models, definitions, and proficiency levels). Often in general speak, competencies and skills are used interchangeably.
- *Recruitment, Development, and Retention of Individuals.* This emphasizes the organization's consideration of recruiting procedures, training to develop appropriate competencies, mentoring based on standards of conduct and expectations, and retaining individuals by providing incentives to motivate and reinforce expected levels of performance and desired conduct.
- *Succession and Contingency Plans and Preparation.* The organization should have succession plans (long-term planning) and contingency plans (sudden need planning) for key roles to ensure the organization can continue to achieve its objectives.

Principle 5:

- *Enforcement of Accountability.* This attribute emphasizes the control culture of the organization including the day-to-day operational decision making, attitudes, and behaviors.
- *Consideration of Excessive Pressures.* The organization must also evaluate, and adjust when necessary (e.g., modifying goals, rebalancing workload, adding resources), excessive demands on its personnel as excessive pressures to accomplish unreasonable goals could result in cutting corners.

CAL FIRE has made great strides to strategically address recruitment issues. Recognizing a gap in workforce planning, around 2017, the Department established the Workforce and Succession Planning Unit (tasked with creating a formalized plan) along with the Department's Recruitment Specialist position. CAL FIRE also established the Statewide Talent Acquisition Team (STAT) in partnership with CalHR as a forum to share ideals and methodologies regarding focused recruitment. STAT brings together subject matter experts from different backgrounds to work on innovative solutions to challenging recruitment and retention issues. The Department's Professional Standards Program is also working with a variety of internal stakeholders to provide information to employees at the onset of their career with the Department (e.g., new employee orientations, onboarding) and throughout their tenure to assist in competency development as well as leadership training.

The *Control Environment* component is the foundation for an internal control system providing the discipline and structure to assist the organization in meeting its goals. Without this component, the organization could face systemic ethical problems, overwhelming inefficiencies, lack of accountability, and harbor an environment conducive to fraud and/or waste. These negative impacts are in direct opposition with the intent of the State Leadership Accountability Act and sound business principles.

For more information on the components of internal control or other business tools, please visit the Office of Program Accountability's [Articles, Presentations, and Publications](#) page on the CAL FIRE Intranet.

Spotlight (*Cont'd.*)

comes through in her cooking. Paul supports Olga's love of cooking by helping her shop for food from time to time, taking photos of the meals for the blog, and being the "guinea pig" for her meals. I think we could all agree that is not too bad of a gig for Paul. Aside from cooking, spending time with her family and enjoying the outdoors are some of Olga's other interests outside of work. Her family owns a quad, and they enjoy hiking and dirt biking, or "quadding," when they get the chance.

Olga has two children, Elijah, age seven, and David, age five, and is currently in the process of adopting a third child, two-year-old James. "It has always been a dream of mine to adopt a child," Olga says. Paul and Olga have been married for eight years, and have always kept the idea of adoption open for the right time. As it turns out, the right time came a few months ago, and Olga and Paul are excited to add to their family. In regard to her "work family," Olga is happy where she is. Her positive relationship with her supervisor and her coworkers creates a good work environment, and the service Olga provides for our employees is a great example of what makes CAL FIRE the Department to work for.

The WFSP Unit would like to thank Olga for her participation and Aruna Raj for her contribution to this month's article.

If you would like to nominate someone for the Employee Spotlight article, please send us an email at WorkforcePlanningandSuccession@fire.ca.gov with the employee's name, position and title, and a brief description on why you think they should be featured in the article.

"What you do today can improve all your tomorrows."

-Ralph Marston

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contributors!*