Nine Ways to Build Your Workforce Infrastructure
Your transit district is working against time to repair our nation’s infrastructure.

Yet your workforce infrastructure is also in desperate need of repair. Budget shortfalls, the growing skills gaps, and increasing retirements make it difficult to effectively manage your existing workforce, let alone develop and grow a new one. Even worse, fewer students are graduating in trades crucial to transportation, such as engineering and construction, and technology and materials are changing so rapidly even engineers are hard-pressed to keep up.

So what can you do?
Use a unified talent management system to build a better workforce infrastructure.

When it comes to meeting the challenges ahead, having a skilled, engaged workforce at the ready can make or break everything from business continuity to the ability to meet compliance regulations.

A unified talent management (UTM) system brings together every phase of the employee lifecycle to help your organization find qualified employees faster, deliver targeted learning, reduce operational costs, and greatly simplify compliance tracking and reporting.

HERE ARE TEN WAYS A UTM SYSTEM HELPS YOU RECRUIT, DEVELOP, AND ENGAGE A WORKFORCE READY TO MEET YOUR BIGGEST TRANSIT CHALLENGES:
According to the United States Department of Transportation, districts face a dramatically “insufficient pipeline of new workers” due to retirements and skill gaps. A UTM system enables districts to get out in front of key talent losses with powerful succession planning and recruiting tools. Districts can map key positions over the next five or ten years to identify potential gaps in all positions—bus drivers, ferry operators, dispatchers, and fleet mechanics—and align recruiting to create a robust, working talent pipeline. A UTM system streamlines the management of contractors and other outsourced resources, making it simpler to manage hiring, performance, and compensation of every district worker.

Additionally, as the Baby Boomers leave, districts aren’t just losing people power: they’re losing knowledge. A UTM system’s performance and networking tools can match soon-to-be retired employees with newer hires to ensure knowledge transfer through mentorship and other learning opportunities.

The US Department of Transportation’s Strategic Plan has established a goal to increase employee engagement to 70.5% positive by 2018. With Millennials poised to make up half of the workforce by 2020, districts need to create new strategies to recruit and retain the younger generation.

Millennials expect the recruiting process—and their jobs—to make smart use of technology. Yet too many districts still rely on disparate legacy systems that make recruiting and training an onerous, clumsy process. With a UTM system, districts can reach Millennial candidates faster where they already are (on mobile devices and on social networks), streamline the application process (crucial to competing with the private sector), and unify recruiting and onboarding with later learning and performance to keep Millennial candidates engaged and motivated. Millennials also expect to have training at their fingertips; districts can meet their desire for continual learning by delivering online, asynchronous or synchronous development opportunities through a UTM system’s learning management tools.

Transportation agencies face big challenges when it comes to attracting top talent. Government employment is too often viewed in a negative light, known more for bureaucracy and a lack of flexibility and autonomy than its very real opportunities for career development and growth. A UTM system’s streamlined recruiting and outreach capabilities help agencies share who they really are—their brand, not just their mission—to find talent that is both highly skilled and already a match to the agency’s goals, culture, and succession plans.
Onboarding isn’t just critical to engaging new hires; it plays a key role in ensuring new employees maintain compliance and productivity. With a UTM system, districts can streamline the pre-employment process before a new employee’s first day on the job, from HR policies to the handling of hazardous materials. Training can be delivered via videos, interactive tests, and collaboration opportunities designed to engage new hires and make them more productive in less time and reduce district operating costs.
With fewer graduates in engineering and construction and the retirement of the Baby Boomers, growing skill gaps are the new reality. Most transportation employees in the field don’t have time to take a full-day, onsite class, and many still have limited access—or no access—to computers. With a UTM system, districts can stop pulling people out of the field for classroom training and instead make video learning and online opportunities available at any time.

A UTM’s mobile capabilities also ensure crucial training is still accessible to those working far from the traditional office. Employees can learn on their own schedule and at their own pace; training can also be customized to meet the initiatives of specific departments or address individual performance and skill gaps.
Voluntary turnover is on the rise as the competition for top talent intensifies. The healthcare and technology fields are already seeing high-performance, long-term employees jump ship for better offers. Directly replacing one employee can cost between 50-60% of that employee’s salary; total costs, including HR staff time, delays in service, training costs, and more can reach 90-100% of the salary.

How then can transportation districts compete, especially with the more moneyed private sector? By placing the focus on engaging and developing their existing employees. A UTM system’s performance tools enable districts to quickly identify top performers and create career development plans designed to both engage and motivate.

These learning and development opportunities are particularly critical for retaining Millennial employees, who value career development and job growth even more than monetary compensation.

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Developing a culture of compliance is critical not just to a district’s reputation and business continuity but to ensuring the safety of drivers, pedestrians, and even the nation’s food and goods supply. With a UTM system, transportation districts can make compliance activities an integral part of certification, learning, and performance. Plus, a UTM system’s mobile observation capabilities enables districts to assess and record skills and competencies directly in the field, eliminating the need for paper checklists and allowing the instant transfer of data into performance records. The result? Compliance is transformed from merely a monitoring activity to one that integrates competencies and performance management—in real time.

A UTM system’s reporting capabilities also allow agencies to streamline compliance reporting to regulatory agencies, from OSHA safety training reports to FHWA and NHI oversight requirements. Performance data and scorecards charting workforce objectives can also be easily aggregated and sent to Congress for reporting against national strategies.
To facilitate preparedness and ensure continuity of transportation operations during an emergency, the DOT’s strategic plan has established that transportation staff must meet or exceed minimum training standards by 2015. A UTM’s learning management component enables districts to quickly deliver, track, and report on mandated training. Reporting tools eliminate duplication of effort, allowing agencies to seamlessly report compliance to multiple regulators.

A UTM system gives transportation agencies the entire view of the employee lifecycle, for every employee. Managers and administrators can quickly see how performance and learning intersect, succession drives recruiting, and onboarding affects productivity and turnover. With real data about each employee’s strengths, motivation, skills—and skill gaps—agencies can make informed decisions about hiring, anticipate and prepare for position losses with real succession planning, and engage and retain high-performance employees.
For transportation agencies, ensuring business continuity and compliance in the face of tomorrow’s challenges—skill shortages, changing technology, increasing competition for talent, and the Silver Tsunami—means creating a skilled, engaged, productive workforce today. A unified talent management (UTM) system helps transportation agencies efficiently recruit, develop, manage, engage, and connect employees, in the field or across the country, from a single platform, with a single login. By using a UTM system to manage the entire employee lifecycle, transportation agencies can increase compliance, improve succession planning, create more engaged employees, and reduce operational costs.

Cornerstone OnDemand is a leader in cloud-based applications for talent management. The company’s solutions help organizations recruit, train, manage and engage their employees, empowering their people and increasing workforce productivity. Based in Santa Monica, California, the company’s solutions are used by over 2,100 clients’ worldwide, spanning more than 18.1 million users across 191 countries and 42 languages. To learn more about Cornerstone for Government, visit csod.com/state-local.