An Assessment of Court Clerk Training Needs and Motivational Incentives in the Marin County Superior Court

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This study assesses the training needs for the court clerks of the Marin County Superior Court, and serves to provide some insight in determining whether establishing job performance standards and a formal training program would be beneficial in encouraging court clerks to make working for the Marin County Superior Court a career. Since there is no formal training program in place currently, the research will benefit both the Marin County Superior Court and the court clerks significantly by serving as a gauge for managers and the human resource director in developing and implementing a training program.

The goal of this research is to reduce the turnover rate of court clerks by identifying the training necessary to enable them to perform their duties, thus creating greater job satisfaction. In establishing job performance standards and training, the Marin County Superior Court will be complying with the Trial Court Performance Standards by improving access to justice for all, ensuring more expeditious and timely processing of documents, making the court clerks accountable for their actions, and instilling the public’s trust and confidence in the process.

Two confidential questionnaires were distributed to the court clerks a year apart, and court clerks were requested to voluntarily complete the forms. The first questionnaire delivered in 2001 surveyed the court clerks on their need for training in the various areas of the court. The second questionnaire delivered in 2002 surveyed how successful the court clerks felt the training and creation of job performance standards in certain areas were during the year 2001-2002. The 2002 questionnaire also surveyed the court clerks to determine what they considered most important to retain them as long-term employees of the Marin County Superior Court.

Results of the research indicated that the majority of court clerks value and need training in the numerous topics set forth in the 2001 questionnaire, and the overall morale and work environment rated by the court clerks of the Marin County Superior Court is above average. The court clerks demonstrated that they value training, but the results of the 2002 questionnaire prove that it is not the single most important factor for retaining their services. The court clerks of the Marin County Superior Court rated additional pay as their number one choice and incentive for maintaining their long-term employment.

The conclusions derived from this research is that the Marin County Superior Court should develop and implement a formal training course for court clerks in every division of the court. By setting job performance standards, everyone gains in helping the court clerks to become more professional and knowledgeable. It is the recommendation of this author to present this study to the human resource director and the managers of the Marin County Superior Court, and to encourage the
establishment of a team to create a formal training program. As for additional pay, this is an issue to be brought to the bargaining table during contract negotiations.

This research paper is available in its entirety in portable document format. To access, you must first obtain and install the Adobe Acrobat Reader.

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