

American AgCredit Enhances Strategic Talent Management



Enhancing its broad strategic talent management (STM) plan, American AgCredit (AAC) is working with FCC Services on a multi-pronged effort designed to attract high-caliber talent, develop internal leaders and build effective team communication.

AAC began with a self-assessment and discovery process supported by a change management consultant, which led to the creation of a 70-member internal leadership group. Follow-up initiatives with this group led to the recognition that the organization's strategic talent management approach could be improved.

As a first step, AAC undertook a functional alignment effort to evaluate and re-level every position in the organization and identified the set of competencies and skills essential for each level within 20-25 job families. The organization mapped the entire organization across these levels and job families and pinpointed what capabilities and competencies individuals need to develop at each stage in their career progression. The next step was aligning these needs with learning and development resources through a functional development approach focused on supporting career growth within AAC, including an employee wanting to grow within their role or grow within the company but potentially moving between departments.

"We want our employees to see a linear progression of how they can grow their careers, for example from associate, to senior associate to management and leadership," says John Mudd, AAC's Director of Learning and Development. "This process also included identifying the soft skills needed for more senior roles, supporting our leadership development efforts."

Applying appropriate learning and development resources consistently was another goal, so AAC developed and has implemented a formalized process to review each employee training request to ensure the right training is delivered at the right time in someone's career progression.

"We've created a consistent approach of how to utilize training opportunities to the most benefit of the employee and the organization," says John. "Before we implemented this process earlier this year, training opportunities were decided and approved by managers throughout the organization, who potentially had different training philosophies. Now we have a formal, organization-level approach."

Working with FCC Services, AAC first explored available FCC Services training and other industry training to understand what each offering delivers, the targeted audience and the desired outcomes. Then they established a review process to ascertain that each training request was the best possible option for that employee, ensuring also that the employee will be able to actively implement the training outcomes back in the office.

"We now have a better sense of why an individual would and should attend different classes, and we talk with each employee requesting training to make sure that the session or program they've requested will fit with what they're trying to achieve," John says. "There are situations where we can recommend a different, more targeted course or class – for example, someone may be looking to specifically develop communications skills to fill a gap in their capabilities and would benefit from a single 'Crucial Conversations' session rather than signing up for an entire LDP program."

When AAC is unclear about what training to recommend or approve, they reach out for insight from FCC Services, which proposes options based on the desired outcomes. And, when AAC is looking for a training solution that doesn't currently exist, they're able to work with FCC Services to develop a custom program.

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“We wanted to deliver coaching training to a large number of our employees, and while it’s included in Leading and Managing for Results, we didn’t want to have to send everyone to the full LMR program,” says John.

“We’re exploring with FCC Services how we can design a stand-alone coaching session as a single offering to a broad group of our employees. We really appreciate FCC Services’ willingness to customize solutions to meet our needs.”

In another strategic talent management initiative, FCC Services customized delivery of a team Predictive Index (PI) workshop, a series of which were undertaken to develop self-awareness and enhance team-building and communication. FCC Services conducted multiple PI workshops for groups ranging from 15 to 50, and when scheduling became a problem for one group, delivered the initial session via video conference.

“FCC Services was able to move our efforts along by using technology to meet our needs and deliver the PI session,” John says. “They’ve really created excitement around this tool and we’ve seen people using it in a more productive way in understanding themselves and in how they engage with their teams, which was what we were hoping for.”

Word of the success of the Predictive Index workshops is spreading, and more AAC teams are requesting PI sessions.

“We’ve had a very successful partnership with FCC Services in all our strategic talent management initiatives, and I’ve been really impressed with their expertise and responsiveness,” says John. “Much of the framework that FCC Services has developed for us has prepared us for our planned transition to a new Learning Management System, and positioned us to successfully develop and grow our employees.”

For more information about FCC Services’ Strategic Talent Management solutions, please contact FCC Services at 303.721.3200.