OIT Financial and Policy Training

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Author Note

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Abstract

My capstone project at Boise State University aimed to address and rectify the pervasive challenges of staff not adhering to financial policies regarding purchasing cards, travel expenses, and engagements with independent contractors. Through the creation and implementation of an online, interactive training, it provided hands-on guidance and real-world scenarios to ensure a comprehensive understanding and application of policies. This initiative had stakeholder collaboration, involving feedback and contributions from employees, my supervisor, and managers to ensure the training’s relevance and accessibility. The project significantly contributed to financial policy compliance, enhancing operational efficiency and reducing non-compliance risks across the university.

Keywords: Financial compliance, stakeholder engagement, interactive training
**Section 1: Introduction to your Capstone Project**

My inspiration for undertaking this capstone project was inspired by first hand observations of the challenges and miscommunications surrounding financial policies and compliance with Boise State Employees. I recognized the impact of these challenges on compliance and operational efficiency, and saw an opportunity to make a significant contribution. I observed firsthand the challenges and miscommunications regarding purchasing, p-cards, travel, and independent contractor policies among stakeholders at Boise State University. There were several incidents of noncompliance that highlighted the risks associated with these challenges and underscored the need for a comprehensive training solution. I have participated in previous training sessions that were ineffective and experienced the frustration. This personal experience with existing training deficiencies inspired me to create a more engaging, comprehensive, and effective training program.

My capstone project sought to develop and implement an innovative online training program designed to enhance understanding and compliance with financial policies, particularly focusing on purchasing cards (p-cards), travel, expense reimbursements, and engagements with independent contractors with Boise State University and the State of Idaho. I compiled sources and policies from Boise State University and the State of Idaho, ensuring the training was grounded in the latest standards and procedures. Employing a creative framework, I designed the training to be interactive, incorporating real-life scenarios, and requiring active participation during the Zoom training. Early and continuous engagement with stakeholders was pivotal. My supervisor’s input helped tailor the training to meet diverse needs and ensured the program was relevant and accessible to all stakeholders. The training was delivered via Zoom, offering flexibility and accessibility to participants across different locations. The use of technology
enabled the integration of interactive elements and real-life examples, enhancing the learning experience. I developed a post-training survey for feedback to assess the effectiveness of the training and identify areas for improvement. This was crucial for understanding participant satisfaction and the practical impact of the training.

Section 2: Elements coming together

Innovative Approach

My training will help stakeholders with disparate perspectives gain a thorough understanding of Boise State University and the State of Idaho policies. The training will include collaboration among employees, managers, and contractors, providing a supportive environment for addressing questions, concerns, and challenges. It will also provide real scenarios and reinforce compliance principles.

Emotional Intelligence

Performing research for this project required both awareness of self and awareness of others in several ways. First, it required self-awareness to recognize gaps in my knowledge or understanding of financial policies and practices related to Boise State University and the State of Idaho. I was also able to identify areas where employees' knowledge may be lacking.

It also demonstrated awareness of others by recognizing the needs and challenges faced by colleagues, employees, and stakeholders who are involved in these processes. Understanding the complexities and potential issues/problems allowed me to tailor training to meet the needs of those affected, thereby enhancing collaboration, efficiency, and satisfaction among all stakeholders.
My approach and recommendations will demonstrate consideration for the emotional intelligence of the audience and recognize that the audience may have varying levels of familiarity and comfort with financial policies and procedures. My suggestions will emphasize the importance of clear communication when delivering information on financial policies and procedures. By presenting complex concepts in a straightforward and understandable manner, I will be able to help alleviate confusion and anxiety that stakeholders may feel when confronted with unfamiliar information.

My research is valuable to others for several reasons. First, it provides valuable insights into best practices and compliance standards. By understanding and implementing these practices, stakeholders can ensure compliance with relevant policies and regulations, and reduce risk. Next, my research helps identify potential risks and challenges associated with p-card use. Trainees can mitigate potential liabilities by understanding these risks and implementing appropriate controls and safeguards. Finally, my research provides valuable guidance and resources for promoting compliance and mitigate risks.

Creative Thinking

I drew on my creative framework in my approach several ways. First, I’m drawing on previous training either in person or via zoom that I have taken regarding these topics. After the training, I would receive calls from colleagues who participated in the same training asking for help regarding travel, p-cards, reimbursements, and independent contractors. This helped me identify which parts of the training needed some sort of additional explanation, training aid, or practice. My training incorporates actual examples that are non-compliant and participants will identify the compliance violations.
I have learned by having training via zoom that many participants have their cameras off, mics muted, and continue working with the training on in the background. This frequently leads to participants not fully engaging. To prevent this, I will require training participants to have cameras turned on at all times, and I am considering requiring microphones stay on.

At the end of the training, I will ask for feedback from the participants. This will help me identify areas for improvement and adapt the content accordingly. I will also distribute learning aids for participants to reference later.

My approach is unique compared to other training courses on this topic because it is more engaging, checks comprehension, and will evolve based on the learning outcomes. Existing training on this topic is strictly presentation focused and requires no engagement from participants. The training will also be tailored to the audience rather than generic.

**Your Innovative Solution**

The interactive hands-on real-life examples will engage participants and enhance their learning experience, leading to better retention of key concepts and policies. By incorporating hands-on guidance and practical exercises, participants will have the opportunity to apply their knowledge in simulated scenarios, thereby strengthening their understanding and proficiency in managing financial transactions with P-Cards.

The flexibility offered by Zoom ensures accessibility for all participants regardless of their location or scheduling constraints. This approach enables stakeholders to enhance their financial skills at their own pace and convenience. Additionally, the incorporation of real-life case studies and examples relevant to the State of Idaho and Boise State University policies adds practical value to the training, allowing participants to directly apply their knowledge to their roles and responsibilities.
Section 3: Results

A Google Form of a survey was sent to the participants after the zoom training. I expect the results from the survey to show an improvement in participants’ understanding of policy regarding purchasing cards (p-cards), travel expenses, reimbursements, and independent contractors before and after the training. The survey will gauge how confident participants feel in applying the knowledge and skills gained from the training in real-world scenarios. The survey was sent to 9 participants by Google Forms. Six participants completed the survey and three remain outstanding.

I asked 8 questions about the usefulness of the training. Six of the questions ranked different aspects from 1 being the lowest to 5 being the highest. One question asked for open feedback and the other question ranked the overall training on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest).

The responses for six of the questions had an average score of 5 out of 5. The question about the overall usefulness of the training had an average of 9.8 out of 10. There were two responses regarding the feedback on improving the training of “Good job Katy!” and “The training was great! As an individual who only travels to one conference a year, it was nice to have this refresher training.”

Boise State University employees who participated in the training gained a deeper understanding of the policies and procedures surrounding p-cards, travel, expense reimbursements, and working with independent contractors. This knowledge empowered them to perform their duties more effectively, reducing the risk of non-compliance and enhancing their confidence in handling financial transactions within the university’s guidelines.
The impact on the stakeholders is having enhanced knowledge, compliance, and efficiency while fostering integrity and continuous learning and a deeper understanding of Boise State University policies and State of Idaho policies. The training has the potential to serve as a model for other departments within University facing similar challenges, extending its impact beyond the immediate context of Boise State University.

Section 4: Conclusion

The results I anticipated is Boise State University employees will be better equipped to manage p-card transactions, travel expenses, and reimbursements correctly, departments university-wide should experience smoother operational processes. This includes fewer errors in financial documentation and reporting, leading to increased efficiency in the finance department's processing and auditing tasks.

I confirmed what I expected by the actual results were improved compliance and enhanced engagement through innovative training. The use of interactive elements, real-life scenarios, and hands-on guidance resonated well with participants.

Reflecting on my experience of the capstone project, I would refine my project management approach to include more realistic timelines, milestones, and contingency planning. An iterative approach with continuous stakeholder feedback could also allow for more flexibility and adaptability throughout the project.

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Section 6: Appendix
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