



Crossroads

Volume 1, Issue 6

CEO Corner

This edition of Crossroads talks about PHFE and our connection to research.

At PHFE research impacts almost every aspect of our business.

As a fiscal sponsor, PHFE supports research projects conducted by government as well as independent researchers.

By providing support for the day to project needs and demands of those partners PHFE frees researchers to better focus on the research at hand.

When it comes to the disciplines involved in working at PHFE our research is focused finding better, more efficient ways to do our work including researching

which training and certification programs provide the best background and knowledge base for our employees.

In addition, PHFE is constantly researching which insurance plans, health plans and retirement plans are best able to support our business activities and protect and support our employees.

PHFE is always looking for better ways to do things by supporting the research activities of our partners and conducting our own research to advance our mission of improving the health and well being of people, communities, the nation and the world

-Mark Bertler, CAE, CEO

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News and Events for July

July 2010

Fireworks Safety Month

UV Safety Month

July 4, 2010

Independence Day

July 14-16, 2010

National Association of County and City Health Officials

Memphis, Tennessee

July 15, 2010

OCHNA Board Meeting

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Fiscal Commentary Fiscal Focuses In

PHFE is currently researching options to address various operational issues. One such issue is how to best manage our subcontractor/subgrantee review responsibilities, hereafter referred to as "subs". PHFE "subs" are located all throughout California. As part of its contractual guidelines, PHFE is required to perform a review of its "subs". This review includes several components such as a review of their Financial Systems, Human Resources, policies and procedures, internal controls and the physical site, to name a few.

PHFE has historically done these reviews using its own, in house, staff. We are now looking at other ways to meet these requirements. There are several reasons to review this process and perhaps make changes. Questions that come to mind include:

- Do we have the in-house expertise?
- Do we have the right tools to perform the reviews?
- Do we have the money/time to perform these reviews with existing staff?
- Should we consider hiring external staff to complete these reviews?

- Are there outside professionals that have the background and expertise?

After carefully addressing each of the questions above, we came to the conclusion that hiring outside professionals made the most sense. The benefits of having outside professionals handle these reviews are three fold:

- They possess the experience and expertise of having performed such reviews as a regular part of their current business.
- They have the ability to perform an unbiased assessment since they have no formal connection to the prime contract and an arm's length relationship with PHFE
- They have the time and skills to perform these necessary reviews thus saving PHFE the costs of hiring and supervising in house staff to complete these reviews

As part of PHFE's efforts to continually strive for efficiency in operations, we will continue to regularly review our processes to ensure we are working in the most effective and efficient manner.

-Susan Vacko, Director of Operations

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Tech Café

The New Tablet Generation

Seemingly, everyone is now racing to get into the tablet game in the wake of Apple's iPad. On June 23, 2010, Wired.com reported that Apple sold 3 million iPads in 80 days. Another electronics manufacturer, LG, has announced plans to launch a tablet computer powered by Google's Android operating system later in 2010.

My research on tablet technologies brought me back a decade ago when Microsoft introduced, Tablet PC, in Comdex (Nov 13, 2000). Some analysts predicted that it would form the basis of PCs to come, that pen and touch would supplement the mouse, touchpad, and keyboard and that future PCs would be defined by all three interfaces. This prediction was incorrect.

Fast forward to the iPhone / iPod Touch generation and suddenly, the interest of the masses were on the touch screen. So what was different?

1) Applications – iPad™ apps were exclusively created for the iPad. Some are meant to show news, sports or weather information. Others are used to provide maps and perhaps even GPS services.

The robustness of Safari browser made it possible to see and monitor doctors' conducting a live

surgery.

2) Web 2.0—Wikipedia defines it as "web applications that facilitate interactive information sharing, interoperability, user-centered design, and collaboration on the World Wide Web." This technology landscape is an enormous one and the pace of technological change is only increasing.

3) User experience- with the launch of Microsoft tablet a decade ago, the user interface was not changed to adapt to the new input method. Even if you used a Touch or a Stylus, the Windows UI was designed for a mouse and was awkward for touch. With the iPad, it's all about the user experience.

In the hands of the right user, tablets like the iPad are a respectable and effective business machine.

<http://www.microsoft.com/presspass/features/2000/nov00/11-13tabletpc.msp>
http://www.pcworld.com/article/200539/lg_android_tablet_in_late_2010_so_what.html
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/06/03/ipad-surgery-video-watch_n_599200.html
<http://www.aiim.org/What-is-Web-2.0.aspx>

-Jude Lauren, Director of IS and Technology

HR Scoop

Research and Human Resources

Many people might think "what does research have to do with the field of human resources?" At first thought, one might think not much. However, when you really examine our field the answer clearly becomes "a lot". Human Resources is completely fluid. Things are constantly changing – laws, work environments, people, etc. A colleague of mine recently asked "why do we have to start doing things this way? We never had to do that in the past?" My reply was twenty years ago you could smoke at your desk and a two martini lunch was an acceptable practice. Things change.

But I digress...We recently updated our bereavement leave policy by redefining what was considered immediate family. In today's society of blended families it was necessary to broaden that definition. We researched the topic by polling other organizations to see what they were doing. From our research we were able to come up with

a thorough definition of immediate family which would meet most people's needs.

As the workplace continues to evolve, no two issues are really the same. We are constantly researching laws and other policies to make sure we are staying up to date on current workplace requirements.

At PHFE we want to make sure we have the best tools to provide the best services to our employees and customers. This means researching to find the best applicant tracking system, or talent management system, or HRIS.

It is an ever changing world that we always have to stay on top of. Our research skills will have to remain honed to stay on top of everything.

- Danielle Gonzalez, Director of HR

Practitioner's Point

Research Possibilities in Public Health

Research – The definition of the word research according to Webster's New World Dictionary is, " (the) careful, systematic, patient study and investigation into some field of knowledge, undertaken to discover or establish facts or principles." As a concept, most can grasp this fairly easily. Research has always been critical to the advancement of the collective knowledge of human beings. Scientists conduct research in an effort to cure or prevent diseases, to perform tasks associated with living in a society more efficiently, and to assure that we live in as safe an environment as possible among many other things.

But in public health practice, research is not of the same primary importance as it is in other scientific fields. Public health practitioners use information to perform actions that enhance the overall well-being and health status of the population that they serve. They do not take actions to advance the body of knowledge in any particular subject area. That is not to say that public health actions have no connections to research, they clearly do.

For example, the nascent field of health information exchange is ripe for research possibilities and PHFE Consulting is seeking to gain new insights into the efficiencies and improved health outcomes that come with health information and data being readily available to health care providers during patient encounters. PHFE is attempting to develop a model for better understanding the systemic effects of having more information available to the health care provider at the point of care. What improved health outcomes can be attributed to having this information? What efficiencies in the costs of managing care can be realized? What procedures and services were not duplicated as a result? Developing models for measuring the impact of making increased patient data available may give us all a better understanding of how this information can be used to make the health care delivery system can be more efficient and effective.

-Greg Smith, Director of Consulting Services

Contract Management Currents

Research Programs at PHFE

PHFE has the opportunity to work with numerous programs and entities that play a critical role in our mission of protecting people's health by way of an impressive list of studies in infectious disease and other diseases and conditions. As well as, in the environmental arena through analysis (research) of air, water, and soil samples. PHFE's role in the advancement of research is a result of agreements with numerous funders such as the Centers for Disease Control, State of California Department of Public Health, local public health agencies, and the National Institute of Health. Programs such as the California Emerging Infections Program (CEIP) based in Oakland CA, which is one of eleven federally funded Emerging Infections Program (EIP) sites. As part of the EIP network, the CEIP has been a valuable national resource for surveillance, prevention, and control of emerging infectious diseases

since 1994. Also, there is the Infant Botulism Treatment and Prevention Program (IBTPP) based in Richmond, CA. This is a high-visibility departmental activity of national scope and impact because of its orphan drug BabyBIG[®] (human Botulism Immune Globulin, licensed October 2003) that has become the standard-of-care for paralyzed, critically-ill patients with infant botulism, as well as a recognized treatment for a domestic bioterrorist attack that uses botulism toxin as a weapon. In addition, PHFE has worked with The City and County of San Francisco for many years to advance research in the development of HIV Vaccines. These programs, along with countless others have continued to provide research to the nation to assist in promoting healthier people.

-Rochelle McLaurin, MBA
Contract Manager