



## CASE STUDY – WA HEALTH

The BigRedSky system was already in place, but not being used to its full potential.

Solution	BigRedSky
Company	WA Health
Industry	Healthcare
Employees	41,000
Recruits	7,000
Applications	40,000

**Challenge** The BigRedSky system was already in place, but not being used to its full potential.

WA Health employs around 41,000 people in Western Australia, including all doctors, nurses, cleaners, allied health professionals, ward clerks, patient support assistants and everyone else employed in public hospitals throughout the state.

Jeff McDonald is Co-ordinator of Employment Services at Health Corporate Network (HCN), which provides, among other things, an HR shared service function for WA Health, the state's health department.

In the year ending June 30th, 2008, HCN ran over 7,500 advertisements through BigRedSky, plus 28,000 ads in newspapers and other print media across the state and around the world. The BigRedSky system managed 40,000 applicants, resulting in 7,000 plus new employees.

As the system administrator for BigRedSky for all of WA Health, Mr McDonald is well positioned to comment on HCN's e-recruitment experience since its inception in February 2006. He says that recruitment used to be very decentralised throughout WA Health, with HR recruiting at each individual area health service and even at different hospitals within the same service. "We have tried to maximise the implementation of electronic recruitment at WA Health so that it can be centralised and standardised, resulting in fewer errors and better compliance" says Mr McDonald.

### System Utilisation and Development

Although BigRedSky's system was a part of government policy when HCN started in 2006, having won a state government tender, Mr McDonald says it was then not being used to its full potential. Many were only using its job posting function, without implementing the candidate management function at all.

In order to standardise recruitment practices across WA Health, HCN did a review of the BigRedSky system, defining where the tool

should sit in the business process if it was utilised to its full potential. February 2006 saw the candidate management system introduced department wide with other enhancements to follow.

Mr McDonald explains that one of these improvements was the introduction of an open-ended recruitment pool that especially addressed the needs of employers in areas of high need and high turnover. In usual circumstances, a recruitment pool for an advertised position fills up over a period of two weeks and is then closed for consideration of all applicants. However, open-ended pools have no closing dates and applicants are assessed as they apply. There are currently averages of between 40-160 applicants in various nursing, patient support and service assistant pools.

"The panel chairperson and panel members get email notification from the system when new people enter the pool. Now when there's a vacancy, you can immediately see who is available to be assessed for that position," says Mr McDonald.

A complex issue that exists in government recruitment is the management of a recruitment panel system. The nomination of members to recruitment panels often change, depending on the vacancy or recruitment pool being advertised. With an eye on both response time and system security, Mr McDonald worked with BigRedSky to expand panel members' on-line access and utility of applications. Panel members are now issued a login ID that can be removed when their position on the panel is no longer required.





The system was further modified in November 2006 to create a faster and more attractive process for applicants and to reduce the complexity of the system. Now, instead of answering 32 questions when applying online, applicants answer just three. "These changes have enhanced our ability to be seen as an innovative and preferred employer," says Mr McDonald.

**Return on Investment**

The cost of the BigRedSky system was determined through a government-wide contract managed by the Department of Premier and Cabinet. Mr McDonald can therefore only comment on benefits the system offers.

"We know that it is probably one of the most successful systems to be used within government," he says, citing the fact that the numbers of vacancies advertised within the system has increased, as have the numbers of successful candidates. In fact last year, there were 1500 more WA Health advertisements through the BigRedSky system than the previous year.

**Highlights**

Mr McDonald loves the fact that the system is quick and accessible to many people. The number of words that can be used in advertisements is unlimited, so there is more scope to promote careers in WA Health and market individual vacancies by using multimedia application that tell applicants more about the job or the health service, or by adding links to tourism , real estate or education websites.

He says that the feature that allows candidates to register with the WA jobs board and to be notified when a vacancy occurs has also been warmly welcomed.

There is now a minimal use of paper throughout the recruitment process. This not only saves money and is good for the environment but has also improved the level of confidentiality. Limiting access levels to only the appropriate people through login identification has also strengthened confidentiality.

HCN has also developed a strong relationship with BigRedSky, working together to tailor the system for their particular use.

"They have been great to work with. We have asked them 'Can we do this?' and they either have already developed a function for another customer and provided it to us or designed it for our specific use,"

says Mr McDonald, Co-ordinator of Employment Services at Health Corporate Network.

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