

How would you define people development?

People development is an investment of time, knowledge and resources into employee lives with the underlying purpose of enhancing one's God-given gifts and talents and better cultivating the skill sets that will make both the individual and the university more effective in our global educational ministry. To increase institutional effectiveness, these skill sets must continually reinforce the strategic goals and objectives of the university and align with our world-changing mission.

For Indiana Wesleyan University, people development is not just about mitigating legal liabilities, strengthening technical competencies, and equipping individuals with both hard and soft skills to improve performance, but it consciously incorporates a faith component that underpins our Christ-centered focus.

What does people development look like at the workplace?

For many organizations, people development often takes on a holistic approach, upon which the mind and body are focused. For the mind, educational opportunities are typically available to employees through orientation programs, college coursework, training workshops, experiential projects, coaching and mentoring. For the body,

wellness programs focus on preventive care, exercising, and nutrition so the individual is in optimum condition to perform on the job.

For the faith-based organization, incorporating *spirit* into the

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holistic approach of people development is just as integral. If the spiritual health of an employee is not properly aligned with the organization's faith-based mission, the effectiveness of the organization in fulfilling its calling is severely

hampered.

How have you developed your faculty and staff at Indiana Wesleyan University?

When IWU's president, Dr. Henry Smith, set forth his vision in 2006 to make IWU one of the best places to work anywhere, he backed up his words with action and the necessary resourcing to truly make a difference at the institution. With the full support of the University's senior leadership and the expertise of Dr. Larry Lindsay, an employee training manager was hired to complement the outstanding training and development efforts already being carried out with faculty members.

Like most organizations, Indiana Wesleyan University focuses heavily upon on-boarding, traditional anti-harassment and discrimination training, supervisory training, technology proficiencies, safety training, and numerous soft skill courses; however, after the University's most recent participation in the *Best Christian Workplace Survey*, a new leadership curriculum was developed by Dr. Larry Lindsay to build an improved supervisory infrastructure commensurate with a Best Christian Workplace. The coaching, teambuilding, faith integration and leadership development sessions have been of tremendous help to the campus community and supervisors are going back to their departments with new

levels of confidence and competence.

Changes in policy also helped to make development opportunities more accessible for employees. To assist with succession planning and career progression strategies, eligibility for graduate study grants was expanded to all levels of the University.

What are some hindrances to people development and how do you address them?

As a university with an increasing number of multi-state operations, one of the biggest challenges IWU faces is engaging and developing employees who are geographically quite diverse. We know from the *Best Christian Workplace Survey* responses that we have opportunities to improve on developing our regional site employees, so there is an ongoing effort for greater engagement.

IWU's Employee Training Manager, Michelle Vore, has been traveling to our various educational centers, providing an increased level of on-site development offerings. Vore has also focused heavily upon providing training and development workshops in online formats, including video streaming, webcasts, self-directed learning, and facilitator-based sessions with employee cohort groups. These online development mechanisms have

increased the availability and convenience of the workshops for all of our valued employees, regardless of location.

We also know that in a high growth environment, when so many employees are immersed in their own projects and initiatives, that finding time to participate in development opportunities can be challenging. Again, onsite and online training and development options have been a viable solution for the University.

“An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest.”

Employees who are unable to attend site-based workshops are able to view online archived presentations or complete various learning modules at their convenience through the University's intranet.

What are the rewards of developing your faculty and staff?

Benjamin Franklin once said, “An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest.” At Indiana Wesleyan University, we have found this to be true on several levels. As the University continues to shift resources toward people development, we have found that the overall

turnover rate has dropped dramatically. In less than five years, IWU has seen close to a 50% drop in overall turnover with faculty, administrative and hourly staff employees. People can see the efforts being expended for development and the deep desire to continually enhance our Christian work environment.

As a result, the University has been able to retain more loyal, competent, technologically proficient, mission-driven and strategically aligned staff. We are finding greater collaboration between institutional divisions and a drive to continually improve upon the quality of everything we do. Above all, Indiana Wesleyan University firmly believes that its efforts to develop its people are making a difference for Christ in the lives of our students and in the communities in which we serve.

Neil Rush is the Director of Human Resources for Indiana Wesleyan University in Marion, Indiana. He worships and resides with his wife and two daughters in Upland, Indiana.