



Workstream | SUCCESS

INSPIRE YOUR WORKFORCE, TRANSFORM YOUR BUSINESS.

## YORK REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

*“Workstream Recruitment has helped us establish processes that improve the entire spectrum of recruiting activities, from the standpoint of both our internal customers and job applicants. This in turn makes our school board a more desirable place to work, which enhances the value of our brand in the education marketplace.”*

*Elizabeth Gordon, Manager of Recruitment and Retention, York Region District School Board*

### **York Region District School Board Streamlines its Recruiting Process - and Burnishes its Brand - with Workstream Recruitment**

Customer focus and brand management aren't just for companies selling products and services to consumers and businesses. The most forward-thinking recruiting organizations in sectors such as education are also keenly aware of how their customers – namely, school administrators and prospective employees – perceive their brand, and are constantly looking for new ways to better serve these key constituencies. York Region District School Board (YRDSB), one of the fastest-growing school districts in Ontario, is one such organization. Since 2001 it has successfully used Workstream Recruitment to streamline its recruiting efforts and, during the process, has established ongoing, brand-enhancing dialogs with these audiences.

“Although we have more than 8,500 applicants for 500 teaching jobs per year, our school board is still competing for the best people,” says Elizabeth Gordon, Manager of Recruitment and Retention at York Region District School Board. “Workstream Recruitment has helped us establish processes that improve the entire spectrum of recruiting activities, from the standpoint of both our internal customers and job applicants. This in turn makes our school board a more desirable place to work, which enhances the value of our brand in the education marketplace.”

### **Eliminating recruiting bottlenecks: A top priority**

With 108,000 students and over 8,500 employees, YRDSB's recruitment needs are large and growing. Over the next 25 years the board expects to add 90 to 95 new schools, which currently translates into approximately four per year. “Five years ago, it was already clear that manual methods could not keep up with our hiring needs,” Gordon recalls. “We initially chose Workstream to help us improve the recruitment process from teacher applicants' perspective. Being in a desirable, high-growth area, and having a reputation as a progressive school board, was garnering a lot of interest from prospective teachers, both new and experienced.”

Prior to implementing Workstream Recruitment, YRDSB was flooded with paper-based resumes. An attempt to get data online via a scanning system was not successful; it was followed by a large team of data entry clerks keying resume information into a database. This process was expensive and error-ridden; a simple typographic error meant that a qualified applicant could be overlooked. Gordon describes another pitfall with the data entry approach:

“Hiring managers didn’t have access to applicant information. We had one clerk in the recruitment department who accessed the database to do applicant searches. This was a major bottleneck.”

“We knew we had to get everything, and everybody, online,” she continues. “But when the school board first implemented the Workstream Recruitment system, we were still using our old processes. This gave us some improvement because we had a new suite of tools for candidates, and information no longer needed to be keyed in, but the hiring managers still couldn’t access applicant information directly. After a year we went back and set up the system as Workstream suggested, and each year have made system and process improvements at their suggestion. Our recruiting function is now running successfully on Workstream Recruitment.”

### **Establishing a dialogue over a long hiring cycle**

Gordon, and her staff of three recruitment officers and four administrators, use Workstream Recruitment to fill between 750 and 1,000 new hire positions per year, ranging from substitute teachers to superintendents. However, the bulk of the positions they fill are for teachers, which entails a uniquely long recruiting cycle. She explains: “The majority of this hiring is done at the beginning of the school year. But the recruitment process for those positions often begins in November of the previous year. This is because about half of our eventual new hires are finishing up their teacher college education; they will be graduating the following spring. The applicants may start applying for jobs in November, or over the holiday break. They also attend career fairs during the winter, after which their job search begins in earnest.”

This creates a unique challenge for school boards such as YRDSB: how to keep candidates engaged over what can be an eight- or nine-month period. “The long hiring cycle has several implications,” Gordon says. “Even though the chances are less than one in 10 that an applicant will get a job, we still want to keep him or her enthusiastic about the selection process, and feeling good about our school board.”

“To do that, we need to have regular communication with the applicants. Workstream Recruitment provides excellent functionality in this regard; we have the ability to send them current information to keep them engaged. We send out an automatic acknowledgement after their application is received, as well as monthly updates containing timely information. Applicants can use the system to send us attachments such as transcripts and letters of recommendation. This is a very important capability. The Workstream solution also allows us to create a link that the applicant can use to update his or her information, keeping it fresh throughout the hiring process.”

“Maintaining contact also offers a distinct advantage at the end of the hiring cycle. Gordon says that most of the applicants who find jobs at other school boards notify YRDSB, helping to keep the database of applicants up-to-date. “As a result, we’re not storing thousands of resumes from previous applicants who are no longer available.”

### About Workstream

Workstream provides on-demand compensation, performance and talent management solutions and services that help companies manage the entire employee lifecycle - from recruitment to retirement. Workstream's TalentCenter provides a unified view of all Workstream products and services including Recruitment, Performance, Compensation, Development and Transition. Access to TalentCenter is offered on a monthly subscription basis under an on-demand software delivery model to help companies build high performing workforces, while controlling costs. With offices across North America, Workstream services customers including Aspen Ski Company, Chevron, EMS SATCOM, Kaiser Permanente, Nordstrom and Wells Fargo.

For more information visit [www.workstreaminc.com](http://www.workstreaminc.com) or call toll free 1-888-221-4005.

### U.S. Headquarters

1350 Old Bayshore Road  
Suite 100  
Burlingame, CA 94010  
650-340-4000  
888-221-4005  
[www.workstreaminc.com](http://www.workstreaminc.com)  
[info@workstreaminc.com](mailto:info@workstreaminc.com)

## Improving service levels for internal customers

Workstream Recruitment has also enabled the York Region District School Board District's recruiting team to better serve its internal customers. Gordon and her staff work with more than 300 hiring managers, most of whom have direct access to the Workstream system. "Giving the hiring managers direct access to the system is very empowering. They want to know that they are doing the most they can to find the best candidates; being able to look at applicants' qualifications directly online goes a long way."

Utilizing the Workstream Recruitment system, the hiring managers can search on a variety of criteria. The YRDSB recruiting staff use screening questions extensively to better characterize each individual applicant; advanced search capabilities in Workstream Recruitment help hiring managers sort a large number of applicants into a more manageable subset. Gordon and her staff work in partnership with the hiring managers to help them optimize their search efforts.

She illustrates, "With Workstream Recruitment, if a principal gets an emergency call on a Friday night, he or she can log on over the weekend and start sourcing candidates. This puts the power back in their hands. In high-demand areas such as French language, technology and special education, self-directed search definitely makes it easier for the hiring managers to find the right applicants for the job." The Workstream system also notes which applicants may have been interviewed, but were not selected for a particular position. This information is updated on the system, giving the hiring managers up-to-date status on any candidate. "While an individual may have not been the right person for a certain position, it's great to know that they are an excellent candidate for another job within our school board," she says.

While self-directed search is the most popular method for reviewing applicants for new teaching positions, the recruitment staff works extensively with hiring managers to fill single-incumbent job openings such as assistant manager of maintenance or speech language pathologist. "For these types of positions we are very involved. We have a career area on the school board's external Web site that links into Workstream Recruitment. When we post jobs on external job sites such as Workopolis, we direct interested parties to apply online at the school board's site. In this way, we keep as much recruitment activity as possible in the Workstream system."

## The end result: A better process, and a better brand

Gordon believes that today, all parties have a greater sense of ownership and participation in the recruiting process, due in large part to the York Region District School Board's use of Workstream Recruitment. She summarizes, "Ongoing communication and information access are key. We can now say that all participants are fully engaged in the recruiting process, which helps distinguish our school board and, in effect, our brand – a big accomplishment in the competitive world of public education. Every school board says they want to be the employer of choice; we are confident that the York Region District School Board is making real progress toward achieving that goal."