MyCareer@VA

About MyCareer@VA

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) employs more than 320,000 employees in offices and healthcare facilities across the country. With such a large employee base, recruiting, retaining and developing top talent is critical to fulfilling VA's mission of serving veterans and their families. Further, in a competitive job market it is a challenge for the agency to encourage prospective applicants throughout the federal hiring process and motivate high-performing employees to stay. Enter MyCareer@VA – a program that combines human capital best practices with intuitive and integrated technology to engage talented people throughout the life of their career at VA.
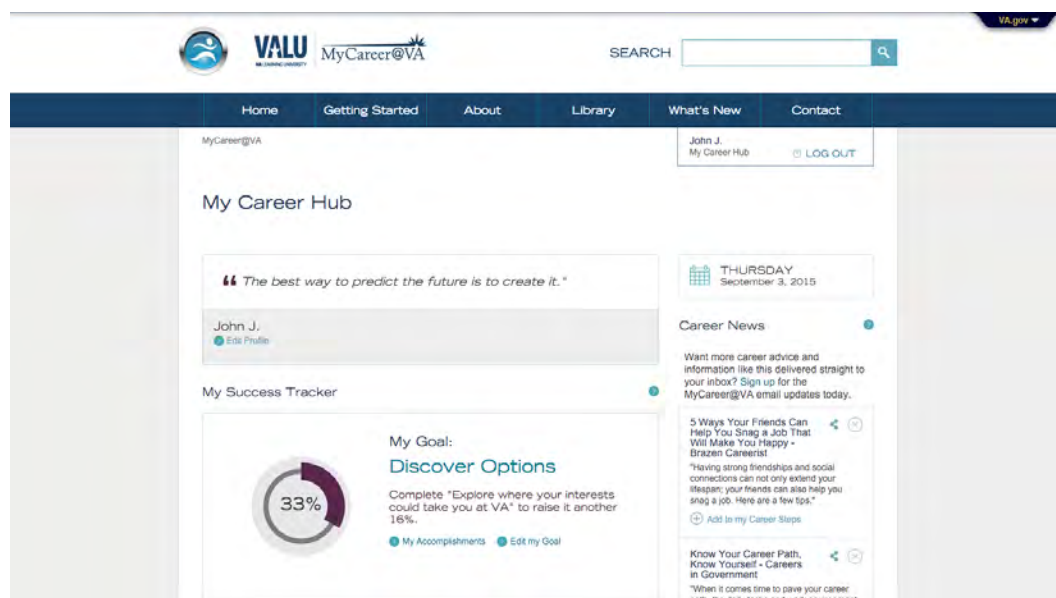
When users create a MyCareer@VA account, a personalized career workspace takes shape – complete with tailored career steps that connect them to tools and resources and guide them to achieve their goals. Users plan their career paths at VA, track their progress by learning and building the necessary skills to advance and apply for new positions – all from one integrated and user friendly platform. The site also includes a library of publicly accessible career development content that visitors can explore.

The site is a part of the VA Learning University (VALU), which is VA's corporate university that supports the agency's mission and business objectives through high

quality, cost-effective continuous learning and development that enhances leadership, occupational proficiencies and personal growth.

Technical Approach

Drupal is the core piece of technology powering MyCareer@VA, but the site's functionality is augmented via integrations with other platforms operated by partner groups. Those systems include job search and application tools produced by Monster Government Services, a separate database of VA occupational data, a job fit survery tool powered by Microsoft's .NET framework and a single sign-on system powered by Microsoft Active Directory Federation Services. Drupal, using a variety of contributed modules and custom integrations communicates with these other services to deliver a seamless experience for users as they interact with each system.

The Career Hub

The core of MyCareer@VA is the Career Hub. This is a dashboard users see upon logging in that contains a summary of all the activities they've done on the site. To achieve this, the software powering the Career Hub connects to a variety of databases and custom web services built into the site's component systems to present users with simple and complete view of information that isotherwise spread amongst disparate systems. This solution built into Drupal is an extensible one; the team will build new dashboard views and API connections as the site's feature set grows.

Single Sign-On

Single sign-on is necessary for the site as the various component parts of the site, hosted on different platforms, must share user identities. Drupal's open architecture made it perfect for integrating Drupal's user system with the SAML token-based authentication paradigm that ADFS uses. Drupal's contributed module repository

already contained the necessary modules to make this connection between open-source and proprietary systems simple.
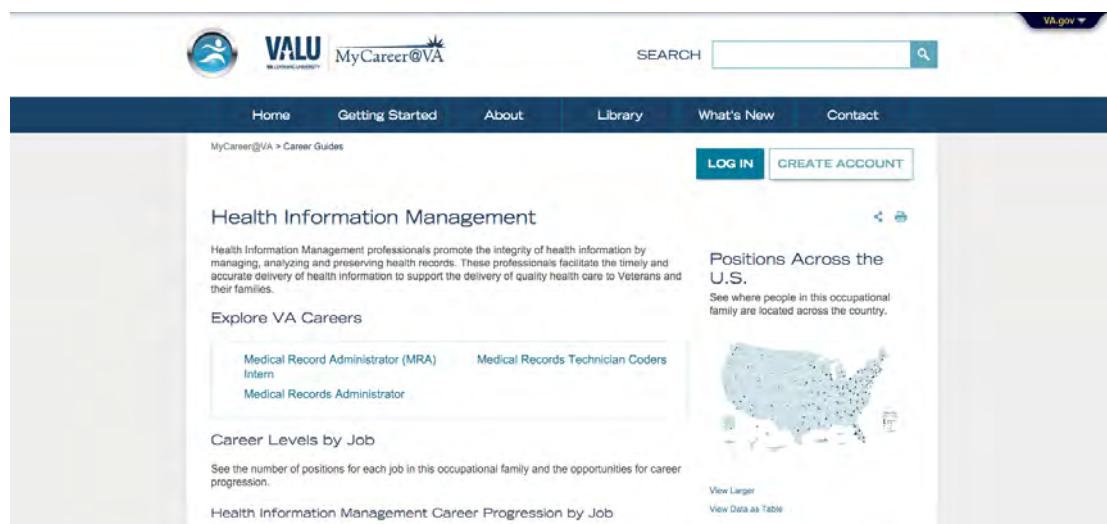
Data Visualization

Using specially collected occupational data, the Career Guides tool produces pages and data visualizations that illustrates to visitors the pay levels and job requirements necessary to work at the VA. This data, accessed from a Microsoft SQL Server outside of Drupal and shared amongst the site's various platforms, integrates seamlessly with Drupal so that other modules such as the site's search can leverage and use the data to produce complete and consistent user experiences.

Editorial Management

The MyCareer@VA team is comprised of multiple partners who have different content needs on the site. To accommodate the constant need for content updates, Drupal Workbench was implemented. Using the roles of Author, Webmaster and Reporter, the workflow of publishing on the site allows for efficiency and quality control.

Project Outcome

Using Drupal to create a dynamic, intuitive user experience, the MyCareer@VA team has successfully enlisted more than 2 million site visitors and 55,000 account holders who have completed more than 257,000 career development activities. Perhaps even more telling than the site's usage statistics are its satisfaction scores. The MyCareer@VA website has garnered a Foresee satisfaction score of 73, more than 10 points higher than the average VA site (61). The site is also helping VA achieve its goal of attracting employees: 13 out of 15 people surveyed said they are likely to apply for a position after visiting the site.

For more details, visit http://adfero.com