

Paula Cooper, BBA, SPHR

paula.cooper@yahoo.com

817-845-7692

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

A results driven HR professional with a strategic and highly collaborative approach to resolving business issues. Committed to integrity and the development of strong business relationships across various levels of an organization. Excel at building and leading a team and partnering with the business and other areas of HR to create alignment between HR and business objectives/strategies. Adept at streamlining processes and procedures, increasing productivity, and coaching/training leaders to be more effective.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Employee Relations
- HR Compliance
- Facilitation & Training
- Vendor Management
- Policy Development
- Building & Motivating a Team
- Coaching & Development
- Acquisition Due Diligence
- Benefits
- Process improvement
- Investigations
- Employment Law

EDUCATION/CERTIFICATIONS

Southwest Airlines MIT Leadership Training	2012
National Mediation Board – Certification in Mediation and ADR	March 2006
Senior Professional Human Resources (SPHR)	January 2005
Northwood University, BBA Summa cum Laude (Minor, International Business)	May 1997
Tarrant County College, AA, Legal Assistant	May 1995

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Santander Consumer USA

April 2013 – October 2014

Senior Vice President, HR Advocacy & Compliance

August 2013 – October 2014

Responsible for developing strategies and delivering programs and services that fostered a culture of top performance and sustainability. Worked collaboratively with senior management to solve issues, implement proactive solutions, ensure compliance and provide strategic direction for the HR function. Led a team of HR and Compliance professionals.

Vice President, HR Advocacy

April 2013 – August 2013

Responsible for all operations and day-to-day management of the HR employee relations functions for the company. Managed a staff of HR Managers and HR Business Partners to provide prompt review and guidance on the full range of labor and employee relations matters. Provided expertise and consulting services and ensured legal and regulatory compliance were maintained and company policies were applied. Built and implemented the HR Business Partner and Compliance area of HR.

Southwest Airlines

October 2008 – April 2013

Senior Manager Employee Relations

October 2010 – April 2013

Provided strategic direction and collaborated with other Departments on initiatives to improve the work environment, including areas such as Diversity and Inclusion, Workplace Violence, and other educational/preventative practices. Created and implemented training to minimize harassment and discrimination in the workplace. Identified and implemented best practices in investigations and handling of employee complaints to minimize legal risks and ensure trust and integrity in the process. Provided guidance to leaders at all levels on employee relations issues.

Active member of the Diversity Council – represented the Diversity Council and Co-Chaired the 2010 Diversity Summit, Chair of the 2011 Diversity Summit (both award winning) and provided guidance and support for the planning of the 2012 and 2013 Summits. Member of the core Leadership Advisory Team assisting the VP of Diversity in diversity and inclusion efforts.

Manager, Employee Relations

October 2008 – October 2010

Managed a Team of Specialists who handled employee claims of harassment and discrimination. Reviewed all investigative reports for accuracy and thoroughness. Provided guidance to leadership throughout the system on handling employee relations issues. Maintained up to date knowledge of EEO laws and regulations. Prepared for and participated in System Boards and Arbitrations when necessary. Provided training for leaders and employees on Company policies related to harassment and discrimination. Coached leadership on addressing employee issues and fostering a harmonious work environment.

American Airlines

June 1992 – September 2008

Senior Vendor Relations Specialist

September 2007 to September 2008

Accountable for all contractual aspects of the HR Business Process Outsourcing Agreement with IBM and Mercer (a large scale outsourcing project). Responsible for Service Level Agreements, Change Management and problem resolution. Provided advice and counsel to business units. Acted as the primary interface between IBM, Mercer, Legal, and the internal business units.

Senior Specialist, Workplace Planning

July 2006 to September 2007

Collaborated with Organizational Development, HR Operations Managers, and Legal to develop workplace plans to resolve work environment issues. Enhanced the Workplace Advocate Program, an initiative made up of employee volunteers to improve the work environment and employee engagement. Facilitator in Alternative Dispute Resolution cases, and observed and assisted in Arbitration cases. Appointed by leadership to be the Diversity Advisory Council Representative for Women in Aviation. Actively involved in Diversity initiatives and the Diversity Council. Assisted in the development of California Sexual Harassment Training. Also involved in Community/Charitable giving initiatives.

Senior Investigator, Work Environment

September 2005 to July 2006

Investigated possible violations of the Company's work environment policy and recommended appropriate discipline when applicable. Worked with senior leadership in addressing leadership and employee relations issues. Collaborated with Legal Department to resolve high risk cases.

Senior Specialist, Corporate Policy

May 2004 to September 2005

Created, interpreted and revised corporate policies. Collaborated with other departments to improve corporate policies to support the business goals. Strong emphasis on simplifying processes, cutting costs and minimizing inefficiencies. Made revisions to the Purchased Vacation Policy, which resulted in first year savings of over \$750k. Revised the Relocation Policies and achieved significant cost savings for the Company and Employees.

Manager, Pensions and QDROs

October 2002 to April 2004

Managed team of employees handling QDROs, QMCSOs, Benefit Audits and USERRA. Also managed vendor relationship with JP Morgan and State Street. Member of the Pension Benefit Advisory Committee. Handled collection of pension and benefit overpayments. Resolved escalated pension and 401(k) issues. Reviewed pension appeals and benefit communications to employees. Worked on several large-scale projects involving pension plans. Implemented improvements to processes and procedures to maximize productivity and reduce costs. Chosen to work on potential bankruptcy filing; worked with outside counsel and in-house knowledge experts to analyze and plan for impact of bankruptcy filing. Reviewed/revised legal briefs related to benefit plans. Managed the department's budget.

Senior Analyst Benefits Compliance

August 1999 to October 2002

Insured Pension Plans complied with ERISA and IRS regulations and responded to pension appeals. Analyzed impact of union negotiated pension changes and provided support to Employee Relations during negotiations. Responsible for 401(k) administration and assisted in development of the 401(k) employee website. Co-Lead on large scale project to develop new 401(k) matching plan; also responsible for developing and implementing training and communication materials. Revised Summary Plan Descriptions and Plan documents. Completed Form 5500s and worked with external auditors and actuaries. Analyzed impact of spin-off/acquisitions on pension plans. Project Lead on all due diligence related to Health and Welfare and Pension Plans for acquisition of TWA. Managed the department's budget.

HR Representative**August 1998 to August 1999**

Managed Employee Recognition Programs at Sabre (subsidiary of AA). Developed program and implemented procedures to bring program into full compliance with company policy and audit guidelines to avoid tax and legal liability. The previous program had failed an audit before I took on the role and successfully passed 6 months after my implemented program and changes. Coordinated President's employee meetings and prepared officer speeches for employee recognition awards. Managed and promoted community relations/charitable events including United Way, AIDS Lifewalk, March of Dimes, Komen, etc. Managed Employee Recognition and Community Relations budget.

Senior Paralegal**March 1994 to August 1998**

Counseled HR and Company Leaders on obligations related to ADA, Title VII, EEO, Sexual Harassment, and Workplace Violence. Assisted attorneys in all aspects of employment litigation from receipt of lawsuit through discovery, trial and/or settlement. Handled several major OFCCP audits, investigated state and federal discrimination charges, conducted witness interviews, drafted Company response and assessed risk. Represented company at on-site investigations, mediations, fact-finding conferences, and wage and hour hearings. Conducted extensive research regarding ADA, Family Leave, Wage and Hour, Benefits and other employment issues. Settled numerous EEOC cases through mediation.

Paralegal**June 1992 to March 1994**

Provided Company's response to state and federal discrimination charges. Investigated claims, interviewed witnesses, and prepared witnesses for questioning by state and federal agencies. Assisted attorneys in all phases of litigation.

RECOGNITION, PROFESSIONAL AND VOLUNTARY/COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Volunteer for Tzu Zoo Rescue (a rescue organization for Shih Tzu's) 2013 to present
- Texas Diversity Council Award 2013
- Chair and Co-Chair for Southwest Airlines' Award Winning Diversity Summits (2010, 2011, and 2012)
- Diversity Advisory Council for American Airlines (2005-2008)
- Leadership Excellence Award American Airlines (2006 and 2007)
- Chair for AIDS Lifewalk, United Way, Susan G. Komen, Shared Housing Fundraising, Salvation Army, and many other community charities (1998 through 2014) while employed at American Airlines, Southwest and Santander
- Board Member VP/Treasurer North Texas HD 1986-1990