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Making government work, and work for all

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Consortium Task VIII: The HR Transitions Conference 2002: Partnering for Success, Real World Solutions

The Academy's Center for Human Resources Management held its Fall Conference at the Maryland Inn and Conference Center September 9 and 10. Over 400 human resources directors and personnel specialists attended and over thirty exhibitors displayed booths. To view the schedule and associated links please click [here](#).

Day 1 – Ms. Myra Howze Shiplett gave the welcoming remarks and Academy President Robert O'Neill introduced the keynote speaker, Mr. Max Stier. Mr. Stier, president and CEO of [Partnership for Public Service](#) discussed the challenges we all face in attracting the best and brightest to federal service. The Partnership, a non-profit organization, has developed a five-part plan to improve the recruitment and retention of excellence in the federal workforce. Mr. Stier stressed that communications is the key to revitalizing the civil service.

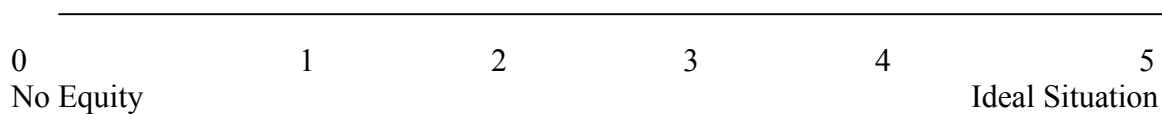
Conference attendees were able to choose from nine concurrent sessions in the morning and twelve in the afternoon. The sessions included a presentation sponsored by Systems, Applications, and Products ([SAP](#)), which dealt with "Best Practices in Federal HR Implementation." SAP is a solutions-based consulting firm; its slogan is "SAP may have the perfect solution for you to conduct your business, your way." Bailey Spencer moderated a presentation by the Postal Service, Interior and SAP. Deborah Schmidt from SAP made an intriguing presentation that had the "solutions" for this implementation. She echoed the comments of Mr. Stier by saying that there is a limited pool of talent and the federal government

is getting the short end of the stick in that competition. SAP believes three points of the Human Capital Management plan must be implemented in order to maximize efficiency: 1) leveraging workforces, 2) managing competencies and 3) engaging employees. Ms. Schmidt noted that the most dissatisfied employees are ironically the most productive. To optimize your workforce, the best strategy is to define the conditions and needs that your company must address in a particular position and attract and retain the “perfect” employee that fits those parameters.

Day 2 – The day’s activities were opened by a plenary session with the Dean of the [JFK School of Government, Harvard University](#), Mr. Joseph S. Nye Jr. Dean Nye focused his discussion on the question “How can we improve public service?” He spoke about the changes that have taken place over the past fifty years in public service, most notably the evolution of the clerk position into a more technically proficient position. While the position has evolved, the way to recruit and deal with it is still in the 1950s. Dean Nye noted most of the changes to the regulations governing public service have been piecemeal with minimal effect. He pointed out that the time to act is now and these five principles will facilitate the needed changes:

- Advertising: Highlight the importance of government jobs
- Branding: Make your agency a destination of choice
- Marketing: This is not a bad thing; get rid of unnecessary bureaucracy
- Streamlining: Improve the timeframe of the hiring process so applicants are not discouraged
- Expanding: Enlarge mid-career recruitment

On this second day attendees were able to choose from eight concurrent sessions. Of particular note was “Diversity at Work: The Total Equity Solution” by Trevor Wilson of Trevor Wilson Inc. ([TWI](#)). Mr. Wilson, a world-renowned diversity strategist, focused his lecture on the movement of companies towards a realization of true equity. He differentiated the terms of equity and equality: equity is fairness and treating people the same while acknowledging their differences and equality is treating people the same without acknowledging their differences. Mr. Wilson has developed an “equity continuum,” which reflects the level of equity that is displayed by each organization:



The numbers indicate the different levels of equity present in a given organization. A zero reflects no adaptation of equity. A one indicates that the organization is being forced to participate in a program such as affirmative action. A two indicates that the organization participates because it makes the personnel in the organization feel good. There is a significant difference between the twos and threes. A three indicates a regular business case, where many organizations practice equity, but the program is not integrated in their overall system. This is the difference between a three and a four. Four is integrated, and the program will not disappear once the implementing personnel have moved on. A five indicates the perfect scenario, the organization functions totally on merit. The total equity solution that Mr. Wilson creates for most organizations aspires to a five, but realistically aims for a three. Mr. Wilson highlighted

two types of inequity: attitudinal and systemic. Attitudinal refers to the “isms,”- racism, ageism and sexism for example. Systemic refers to unfair tests, seniority and the old boys network to name a few. The most intriguing point that Mr. Wilson made was that of fairness. Many organizations that ask him to consult want a little bit of fairness, but he makes the astute observation “there are no degrees of fairness.” The organization is either fair or it is not.

Treasury Secretary Paul O’Neill’s Remarks

Midway through the second day the conference was privileged to have Secretary of the [Treasury](#) Paul O’Neill address the attendees. Secretary O’Neill discussed his stay in the private sector and his attempts to convert his success there to the public sector. A primary point to the conference attendees was that no one at work should ever be harmed at work, emotionally or physically. Harm at work usually leads to lost days. There can be a great reduction in lost days if managers take the time out to be diligent leaders and put less emphasis on administration. To be effective, a leader must do what s/he says (Walk the Talk!) and show that the employee truly matters. To have the employee feel valued and most productive there must be a level of dignity and respect for them. At Alcoa, Secretary O’Neill decreased the number of lost days significantly. He noted that management and administration are the easy parts of a manager’s job. Being a true leader is the more difficult path, but the one that will lead to the most success.

Jim Poisant, formally of Disney, spoke at a plenary session. He noted seven points to effective leadership:

- Managers must truly care about employees
- Supervisors of customer service oriented organizations manage differently than traditional organizations
- Take care of your people. They will take care of your customers and the money will come.
- Organizations need clear, simple mission statements—written not for shareholders but for employees
- Celebrate and recognize employees who best contribute to the values of the organization
- Do not tolerate abusive managers
- Learn how people understand.

The best managers are the nurturers and champions.

Tim Clark closed the conference by announcing the renaming of the NCAC/Government Executive Leadership Award for distinguished achievement during a career in federal service to the David O. Cooke Award for Leadership in the Federal Service.

Consortium Task V: Building IT Competence in the HR Workforce

The Model Includes:

- *Competencies*
- *HRIT User Roles*
- *Summary Level Task Statements*
- *Detailed Task Statements*

In an increasingly technology-driven work environment, today’s HR practitioners must be able to understand and use technology and technology-based tools to enhance HR programs and services. They do not need to become IT specialists, but they do need to become competent users of technology to make HR programs and services more efficient and effective. Managers must be able to identify what competencies are needed and insure that the

HR staff has the level of HRIT competency to take advantage of the continuing expansion of supporting technologies.

The competency model detailed in *HR in a Technology-Driven Environment: Linking HRIT Competencies with Technology-Based Tasks* is derived from the Office of Personnel Management competency framework and the NAPA HR competency model developed for the HRM Consortium in 1996. This model builds on those competencies by describing six roles that HR practitioners perform that require IT user competency. The cornerstone of the model is a detailed list of the tasks associated with these roles. Individual organizations can use the model to select and develop competencies tailored to their own situations. The model can also be used as a tool for workforce planning and recruitment and as a resource for mapping the competencies with learning opportunities. It can be used in conjunction with the OPM HR Manager. An Excel spreadsheet of the detailed task statements has also been developed as an application tool. On July 16th the project team met with representatives from a number of agencies to discuss becoming “early adopters” and other actions that may be helpful to the federal HR community in managing technology-based HR change.

The complete model was shared with workshop participants at the recent NAPA HR Transitions Conference 2002 and is available at no charge to Consortium members at: http://www.napawash.org/pc_human_resources/hrm_current_pop.html. The HRIT Project team welcomes your feedback on the model. Any agencies that are interested in adopting the model in their HR organizations should contact a member of the project team. Contact information is included on the website in the model document.

Consortium Task II: Human Resources Metrics

The Partnership for Public Service is working with the consortium task team in developing a “crosswalk” to link the President’s Management Agenda, OMB’s Management Scorecard, OPM’s Human Capital Scorecard, and the General Accounting Office draft Human Capital Model. The resulting integrated scorecard matrix will address all aspects of the various mandates and scorecards.

The matrix consists of 5 dimensions and accompanying elements for each dimension. Each dimension reflects a scorecard element, mandate, or aspect of restructuring that is implicit in the process but not explicit in the scorecards or mandates. The matrix that is currently known as the Readiness Assessment Tool is being piloted by applying the elements of the matrix to two hands-on agency restructuring efforts to assess whether it can function as a template for structuring an agency’s plans in a format that links measures and metrics. Questions may be referred to Greg Keller at gpkeller@adelphia.net.

Upcoming Events

October 24, 2002 from 11:00 to 1:00 NAPA HR Directors Series featuring Bob Hosenfeld from United States Geological Survey presenting “Workforce Planning Made Easy: A Software Solution”