The Federal Workforce

for the 21st Century

Results of the Merit Principles Survey 2000

A Report to the President and the
Congress of the United States by the
U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board

U.S. MERIT SYSTEMS PROTECTION BOARD
1615 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20419-0001

September 2003

The President
President of the Senate
Speaker of the House of Representatives

Dear Sirs:

In accordance with the requirements of 5 U.S.C. 1204(a)(3), it is my honor to submit this Merit Systems Protection Board report, "The Federal Workforce for the 21st Century: Results of the Merit Principles Survey 2000."

The prominent placement of "Strategic Human Capital Management" as the first of five Governmentwide initiatives in the President's Management Agenda clearly acknowledges that the Federal Government is faced with one of its most serious challenges. The downsizing of the 1990s and the unexpected losses of senior personnel in critical positions--coupled with a relatively small influx of new hires and difficulties in recruiting highly qualified applicants--have raised concerns about Federal employees not having the right mix of skills to do the work. These skill imbalances threaten to become an even greater problem in the face of projected retirements and rapidly changing demands on the Government's workforce. Against this backdrop, the experiences and opinions of employees can provide valuable insights into the impact of the downsizing on their work and the factors related to their decisions to stay or leave. This report consolidates and summarizes the results of a Governmentwide survey and identifies human resource management areas to be addressed to ensure a productive Federal workforce.

Although the employees we surveyed generally believe that the Federal workforce is productive, the stresses resulting from the downsizing and the demands of a changing work environment revealed some potential problem areas. Among these are skill imbalances, loss of institutional memory, and negative personnel management experiences that can adversely affect quality of worklife and employees' intentions to stay or leave their jobs. This report clarifies these issues and offers suggestions that may help agency managers resolve some of the problem areas we have identified. A follow-up survey is being planned to examine how the significant events since the survey, such as the events of 9/11, may have affected the perceptions of the Federal workforce.

I believe you will find this report useful as you consider the challenge of shaping and managing a highly qualified Federal workforce that is fully prepared to meet the needs of the 21st century.

Respectfully,

Susanne T. Marshall

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Executive Summary

Periodic assessment of the health of the Federal merit systems is critical to ensuring the Federal workforce is able to meet the needs and expectations of the American public. Such an assessment is especially important today, in light of a potential "human capital crisis" in the Federal workforce and likely consequences of that crisis on the accomplishment of critical goals and missions. This report examines the health of the merit systems within the context of this human capital crisis. Our analyses rely primarily on data collected from a Governmentwide administration of a survey of Federal employee perceptions and experiences concerning their work.

We found a number of problem areas that may have a significant impact on the human capital crisis. Although the employees we surveyed generally believe that the workforce is productive, the downsizing of the 1990s has resulted in skill imbalances—when workers don't have the right mix of skills to do the work—that undermine the ability of the civilian workforce to carry out its missions. In a number of important areas, employee perceptions and experiences have become more negative since the 1996 administration of our survey. Even more disturbing is the possibility that significant events since the survey, such as the events of 9/11 and the restructuring of agencies into the Department of Homeland Security, may adversely affect the situation. A follow-up survey to be conducted in the coming year will examine more closely the effects recent events may have had on the workforce and how human capital crisis issues are being addressed.

While the economic downturn of the last few years may have slowed the loss of critical skills, it may simply have delayed the crisis. We will continue to monitor and anticipate any imbalances in the skills needed to accomplish the Government's mission. Ultimately, part of the solution will need to involve attracting candidates with the skills and abilities most needed by the Government. However, given the continued potential for losses with turnover and retirements in critical occupations, retaining the best workers is also an important component. The data from our Merit Principles Survey 2000 offer many insights into the factors related to employee decisions to stay or leave their jobs. The data can help identify areas to be addressed to ensure long-term success in dealing with the human capital crisis confronting the Federal workforce for the 21st century.

In this report, we summarize the major results of MSPB's Merit Principles Survey 2000 (or MPS2000). We administer the survey every three to four years to assess the health of Federal merit systems from the perspective of the Federal workforce. Their assessment of how well the Government is working can identify relationships among variables that can be used to improve the operation of Federal programs. Respondents to our survey are also an important source of information about human capital issues affecting the Federal workforce — issues that need attention because of the unprecedented changes in the workplace as well as expected major new challenges. Specifically, downsizing, restructuring, and changing demographics have resulted in skill imbalances in the Federal Government's workforce, leading to a "human capital crisis" that represents a significant challenge to the ability of Federal agencies to meet their missions.

Findings

The Government downsizing that occurred in the 1990s was largely accomplished through "buyouts" and not replacing those employees who left the Federal service. While this meant that relatively few employees were involuntarily separated from Government service, it also meant that many of the reductions that occurred were unplanned and not related to changes in organizational missions. Wherever possible, we summarize our survey respondent views in the context of the downsizing and its effect on the health of the Federal civil service.

Employees Experienced Negative Consequences After Downsizing

- While 62 percent of our respondents said they worked in units that had been downsized, only 7 percent believed it had made their unit more efficient.

- More importantly, half (50 percent) of our respondents said their work unit currently did not have enough employees to do the work.

Only 39 percent said their unit had enough employees and 11 percent were not sure. This is a further deterioration of the working conditions we found in 1996.

- Perhaps even more important than the shortage of workers is the finding that 46 percent of our respondents believed that the downsizing had seriously eroded institutional memory or knowledge in their work unit.

- The changing working environment has also left many employees unprepared to do their jobs effectively. More than a quarter of our respondents said they had not received the needed training to perform their job, and 48 percent said they need more training to perform it effectively.

Employees Still Believe They and Their Work Units are Highly Productive

- Despite problems created by the downsizing, the majority of respondents (83 percent) rated their own productivity highly (7 or higher on a 10-point scale). Additionally, 66 percent gave this rating or higher to the work performed by their work unit and 53 percent said that their organization was working at this level.

- When asked to rate the quality of the work performed by their work unit, 67 percent rated the work of their unit as outstanding or above average.

- Efforts to empower Federal workers are continuing as 51 percent said they had been given more flexibility in how they did their work during the past 2 years. Notably, having greater flexibility is related to greater productivity in the work unit. Some 66 percent of the respondents who said they had been given more flexibility also reported improved work unit productivity.

Employee Job Satisfaction Appears To Be Slipping

- While 67 percent of employees still say they are satisfied with their jobs at the time of the survey in 2000, this percentage, in conjunction

with several other measures of satisfaction, suggests a downturn in overall employee job satisfaction since 1989 (70 percent).

◆ The measures of job satisfaction showing a decline include the meaningfulness of work, whether employees would recommend the Government as a place to work, and the belief that a spirit of cooperation and teamwork exists in their work unit.

◆ Overall, job satisfaction was highly related to how respondents rated many aspects of their job, including the productivity of their work unit, the quality of work performed, and their intentions of leaving the work unit.

Some Planned Retirements May Worsen the Human Capital Crisis

Additional workforce problems may arise given the changing demographics of the workforce. In particular, there is a potential for an even greater loss of institutional memory in many organizations over the next 5 to 10 years as the numbers of employees eligible to retire increases. Most significantly, there appears to be a relationship between planned retirements and problems of understaffing.

◆ While 12 percent of the respondents said they were currently eligible for retirement, an additional 32 percent said they would become eligible to retire during 2001 to 2005. Of these, fully three-quarters said they planned to retire during that time.

◆ Second only to a desire to pursue nonwork interests, excessive job stress was cited as the most important reason for planning to retire. Significantly, of respondents planning to retire, 68 percent came from units where there were not enough employees to do the work. In comparison, of respondents planning to retire for non-stress reasons, just 41 percent came from such understaffed work units.

Employees Who Plan to Leave are Also Dissatisfied With Their Supervisor

◆ Although 58 percent of employees generally were satisfied with their supervisors, some 24 percent were dissatisfied. Consistently, employees satisfied with their supervisor differed markedly from employees dissatisfied with their supervisor. For example, employees dissatisfied with their supervisor were about twice as likely to say they intended to look for another job in the coming year as employees who were satisfied with their supervisor (53 percent vs. 28 percent).

Employees are Concerned About Some Aspects of Their Supervision

◆ Supervisors more frequently got high marks for their technical skill (60 percent) and 63 percent said their supervisor promotes high standards of integrity and conduct. However, less than half (47 percent) said their supervisor had good management skills.

◆ Only 41 percent of employees believed that their supervisor encouraged their career development. They were also fairly negative about their supervisor's staffing decisions, such as whether their supervisor promotes the best qualified person (only 32 percent thought this) and uses fair and open competition when promoting someone (31 percent believed this).

◆ Respondents gave their supervisor the lowest rating for the treatment of poor performers. While 45 percent of respondents said their supervisor retains employees based on their job performance, just 35 percent claimed that their supervisor deals effectively with misconduct on the job, and just 22 percent said their supervisor deals effectively with poor performers.

◆ Of those respondents in work units with at least one employee who they considered deserving to be fired, only 9 percent reported that their supervisor dealt effectively with poor performers.

◆ Only 20 percent of respondents said that their current performance appraisal system motivates them to do a better job and an identically small percentage said it had helped job-related communications with their supervisor.

Some Employees Continue to Report Negative Personnel Management Experiences

◆ Personal experiences of denials of a job or job benefit because of discrimination based on race/national origin, age, or sex continue to be reported by more than 10 percent of the respondents.

◆ While formal disclosures of unlawful behavior, waste, fraud, or abuse had been made by just 7 percent of the respondents, 44 percent of these respondents reported experiencing retaliation.

◆ While only 9 percent of respondents reported having formally exercised their appeal rights, 61 percent (or 6 out of 10) of these respondents felt that they had been retaliated against for taking this action.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In the report, we examine a variety of factors that have contributed to the human capital crisis we face in the Federal workforce. Although respondents to our survey still consider the Federal workforce a productive one, the scope and approach to downsizing of the workforce during the 1990s, along with problems in bringing in new talent, have left the workforce with skill imbalances and erosion of institutional memory. Adding to the problem is the potential loss of additional seasoned employees as a large proportion of the workforce nears retirement eligibility.

Our MPS2000 survey results provide some possible clues for approaches to addressing the challenges of a human capital crisis. Based on employee responses to our survey, we offer the following general recommendations:

◆ Agency managers should systematically assess the degree to which employee skills match the job skills needed now and in the future to carry out agency missions. If imbalances exist, they should address those imbalances in their strategic plans for recruitment, hiring, and employee development.

◆ Agency managers should ensure that supervisors within the agency have both the ability and the desire to communicate effectively with employees, even when the information is negative, such as that necessary to address performance deficiencies. This may involve instituting more effective supervisor selection, training, and development systems.

◆ Agency managers and HR officials should incorporate findings from MSP2000 concerning what attracts individuals to Federal service into their recruitment strategies.

◆ Agency managers should share information more freely concerning their strategies for hiring and selecting employees and provide job candidates with more realistic expectations about the job and the opportunities for advancement.

◆ Agency managers should examine their agency's culture to ensure they provide adequate support for supervisors and managers who are trying to deal effectively with poor performers.

◆ Agency managers should take any necessary steps to foster a culture where employees are free to exercise their appeal rights or report waste, fraud or abuse without reprisal or the fear of reprisal.

Clearly, these recommendations and the findings discussed throughout this report are not the panacea for the Government's HR management problems. However, these recommendations can help shed some light on the nature of the crisis facing the Federal workforce and suggest some possible ways to begin to address its major challenges.

Introduction

Every three or four years, the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB or the Board) conducts a Governmentwide survey of Federal employees and supervisors. This survey, the Merit Principles Survey, provides a rich source of data for assessing the health of the Federal merit systems. Federal employees share with us their views and perceptions about the human resources management issues affecting them—information that can be especially useful when tracked over time. Changes in employee perceptions and experiences can indicate when something else may be changing in the workforce—whether it is knowledge, awareness, attitudes, events, or behaviors. Depending on the changes, these indicators can often flag areas in human resources management that need further analysis or attention.

We conducted such a survey in the spring of 2000 (see Appendix 1). In conducting the survey, we randomly selected a sample of 17,250 full-time permanent civilian employees (supervisors and nonsupervisors) from the Federal workforce of over 1.5 million employees in executive branch agencies (excluding the U.S. Postal Service and various intelligence agencies). The sampling plan was stratified by the major large Federal executive branch agencies to help ensure that there would be sufficient numbers of respondents from each agency to permit agency-level comparisons.

Participation in the survey was voluntary and responses were anonymous. Excluding nondeliverables, completed surveys were returned by 6,958 employees for a response rate of 43 percent. This response rate is consistent with rates obtained in similar Governmentwide surveys conducted during that time period.[1]

This report consolidates and discusses some of our survey findings that are particularly important given the attention that has been given in recent years to the management of our Federal workforce and the "human capital crisis" in that workforce. Many of the major findings have already been reported in our Issues of Merit newsletters and been shared with interested parties inside and outside the participating Federal agencies.

Increased Emphasis on Human Resources Management Concerns

The importance of a capable and reliable Federal workforce has been a consistent theme of reports issued by MSPB and others for a long time. However, when terrorists attacked the World Trade Centers and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001 the concerns about the capabilities of our Federal workforce were seen in an all-new light and took on a new urgency. A public that perhaps had not previously given much thought to the work of the Federal workforce became very concerned about

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[1] National Partnership for Reinventing Government and the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 2000 Government-wide Employee Survey, from http://web.archive.org/web/20010611173337/www.employeesurvey.gov/2000-backg.asp Dec. 2000.
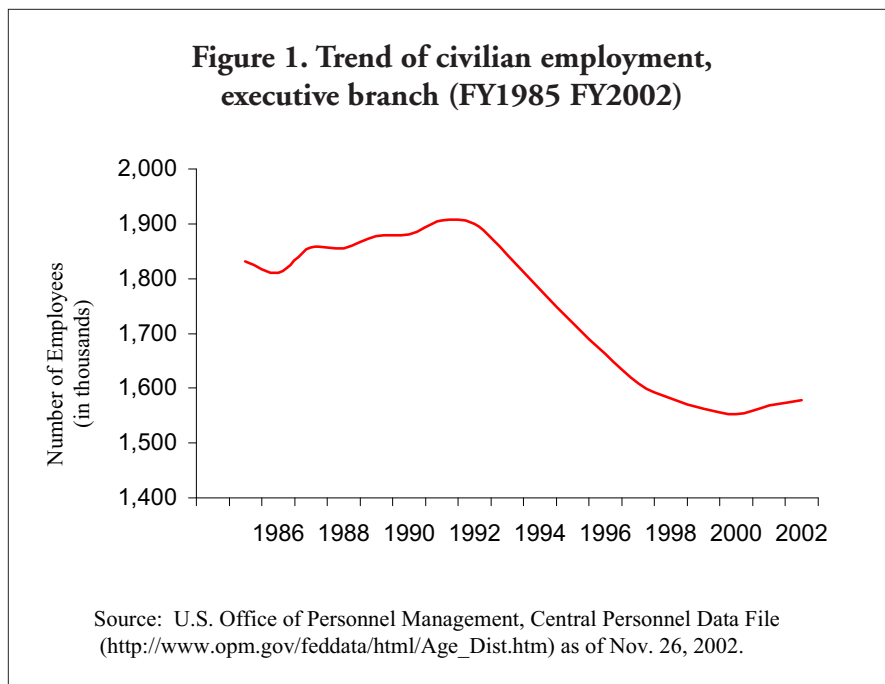
that workforce's ability to protect the Nation and provide services and support for those in need.

Of course, the "human capital crisis" in the Federal Government, as it has come to be known, was recognized well before the events of September 11. Agency leaders and congressional policymakers had already identified a number of concerns about the Federal workforce. In May of 2000, Senator Fred Thompson issued "Government at the Brink," a report highlighting major problems with the state of the Federal workforce.[2] In November of the same year, Senator George Voinovich in a report to the President expressed concerns that a crisis that had developed in the Federal public service as a result of years of downsizing and technological change.[3] Then, in January of 2001, the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) placed human capital on the Federal Government's "high risk" list, warning of serious consequences of ignoring the growing problems in the Federal workforce.[4] The executive branch, for the first time in 2000, included "human capital management" in the U.S. Government's budget (FY2001) as a "Priority Management Objective"[5] and the Bush Administration designated "Strategic Management of Human Capital" as the first of its five management initiatives for FY2002.[6] As part of the President's Management Agenda, OPM is leading the Government's Human Capital initiative and, in collaboration with GAO and OMB, has prepared a single comprehensive Human Capital Assessment and Accountability Framework[7] for agencies to use in establishing their human capital management standards and for gauging their progress.

Certainly, the downsizing of the workforce that occurred during the 1990s contributed to the crisis facing the Federal workforce. As can be seen in figure 1, during the 1990s the Federal workforce experienced a dramatic decline. The resulting employment levels returned to those in the 1960's. However, it wasn't just the magnitude of the downsizing that led to the current situation, but the way it was done. Faced with targets for

Figure 1. Trend of civilian employment, executive branch (FY1985 FY2002)

Source: U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Central Personnel Data File (http://www.opm.gov/feddata/html/Age_Dist.htm) as of Nov. 26, 2002.

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[2] Fred Thompson, *Government at the Brink: Volume 1, Urgent Federal Government Management Problems Facing the Bush Administration*, A report of the Committee on Governmental Affairs, United States Senate, 106th Congress, June 2001.

[3] George V. Voinovich, *Report to the President: The Crisis in Human Capital*, A report of the Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, Restructuring, and the District of Columbia, Committee on Governmental Affairs, United States Senate, 106th Congress, December 2000.

[4] For example, see U.S General Accounting Office, *Major Management Challenges and Program Risks: A Governmentwide Perspective*, GAO-01-241, Jan. 2001; and High-Risk Series: An Update, GAO-01-263, January 2001.

[5] The White House, Memorandum to the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies, "Actions to Further Improve Management of Human Resources," June 9, 2000.

[6] Office of Management and Budget, *The President's Management Agenda: Fiscal Year 2002*, Aug. 24, 2001.

[7] U.S. Office of Personnel Management, *Human Capital Assessment and Accountability Framework*, draft report, Nov. 1, 2002.

substantial reductions (and hoping to minimize pain and disruption), many departments and agencies offered incentives for employees to separate from public service. Not surprisingly, those most likely to take advantage of the incentives offered were often those who had been in the Federal service the longest. While the incentives helped agencies accomplish targeted reductions with few involuntary separations, their use appears to have had unintended consequences. In some organizations, for example, unanticipated losses of senior personnel may have led to gaps in institutional memory, and at the same time many organizations are raising concerns about not having the right combination of skills to accomplish their mission. These skill imbalances threaten to become an even greater problem as the mix of jobs needed to carry out the Government's mission changes over time; for example, to address the increased security needs of the nation or the increasing proportion of professional/administrative jobs in the Federal workforce.

As the demands for Government services and national security continue to increase, many agencies are struggling to close their skill gaps. After so many years in a "downsizing mode," agencies are reporting difficulties in recruiting effectively for the skills they need. While the decentralization and delegation of recruitment seen in recent years may be beneficial for large agencies with adequate staffs to administer their recruitment programs, such changes have created problems for small agencies without the resources to recruit. Furthermore, many agencies are finding recruiting difficult because of salary and hiring restrictions that work against them in today's highly competitive labor market.

Unfortunately, workforce demographics suggest evidence that the crisis may get worse before it gets better. The number of Federal baby boomers cited to become eligible for retirement is of some concern.[8] As this cohort starts to become eligible for retirement, the number of retirements is certain to increase. Both GAO[9] and OPM[10] issued reports concerning the expected increase in retirements from the Federal Government as we enter the 21st century.

To put the expected increase in perspective, OPM estimated that the projected increase in actual retirements would be gradual—increasing from a projected 3.4 percent of the Federal workforce in FY2001 to 4.1 percent in FY2005.[11] As it turns out, thus far the actual rates of retirements have been well less than expected (2.7 percent in FY2001 and 2.7 percent in FY2002). Such deviations from expected retirement rates underscore that retirements are voluntary and influenced by many factors internal and external to the workplace. While the predicted and actual retirement rates do not appear unmanageable, both OPM and GAO note that there are wide variations among agencies and occupations and the delayed exodus of retirement eligibles may simply defer a potential skill loss. Moreover, even losses of just a few employees can become critical if these employees are in mission-critical positions for which replacements are difficult to find. This is especially true given the fact that the downsizing strategies of the 1990s already have impaired the ability of some agencies to perform their core missions.[12]

Because no one knows for sure how many employees will actually leave, agencies need to take appropriate steps to plan for possible workforce

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[8] For example, see Voinovich, op. cit., p. 2.

[9] U.S. General Accounting Office, *Federal Employee Retirements Expected to Increase over the Next 5 Years Illustrates Need for Workforce Planning*, GAO-01-509, Apr. 2001.

[10] U.S. Office of Personnel Management, "Retirement Statistics, May 2001," see http://www.opm.gov/feddata/retire/fy99rs.pdf.

[11] U.S. Office of Personnel Management, op. cit. p. 52.

[12] U.S. General Accounting Office, *Human Capital: Managing Human Capital in the 21st Century*, GAO/T-GGD-00-77, Mar. 9, 2000; and *Human Capital: Meeting the Governmentwide High-Risk Challenge*, GAO-01-35T, Feb. 1, 2001.

shortages and skill imbalances, or face serious consequences. The lower-than-expected rates of retirement in FY2001 and FY2002 may simply have delayed the surge in retirements. Changes in the economy, major workforce restructuring, and other factors can quickly shift the balance between staying and leaving. For this reason, it is important that agencies remain vigilant to changes in retirement rates to ensure more accurate workforce planning.

Figure 2 shows that the number of employees in the 50- to 54-year age group is notably larger today than it was in 1985—specifically, about 107,000 employees larger. As a result of the years of downsizing during the 1990s with relatively few new hires, employees in this age group (who constitute a major component of the employees who will become eligible to retire in the coming years) increased from just 12 percent of the Government's workforce in September 1985 to over 21 percent in September 2002.

While workforce demographics, retirement eligibility statistics, and historical turnover trends provide useful information, they don't tell us much about how inclined employees may actually be to leave their jobs. In contrast, their experiences and opinions about their jobs and worklife can give us valuable insights into the impact of the human capital crisis on their work and factors related to their decisions to stay in or leave their jobs.

Figure 2. Number of full-time permanent Federal employees at various age groupings, 1985 and 2002
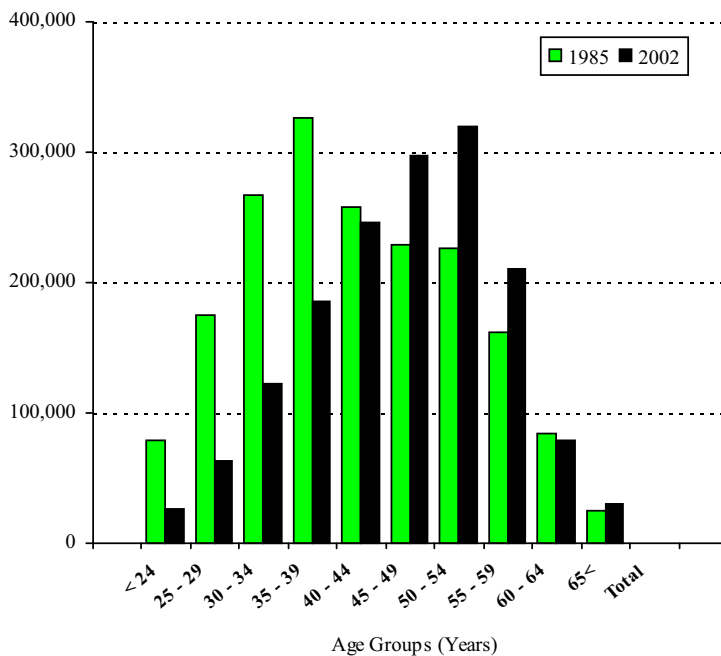
Source: U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Central Personnel Data File (http://www.opm.gov/feddata/html/Age_Dist.htm) as of Nov. 26, 2002.

Responses to the Merit Principles Survey 2000 (MPS2000) are particularly important in this regard, telling us not only whether the respondents are likely to remain Federal employees but also show how the human capital crisis is shaping their opinions and affecting agency operations. This report presents our findings from the survey in the hope that these employee and supervisor views can aid policymakers and other Federal officials as they work to ensure that our Nation's Federal workforce is prepared to meet future challenges in an uncertain world.

Employee Views of Staffing and Productivity

Decreases in Staff

Many of the issues raised by those warning of a human capital crisis in the Federal Government were echoed in the experiences and opinions of the employees we surveyed. Among employees' greatest concerns is the effect that a decade of downsizing has had on their work unit. While our respondents gave their work unit rather high marks for productivity and quality of work, the downsizing of the 1990s has left its mark. As shown in figure 3, almost two-thirds (62 percent) of our respondents worked in units that had undergone some downsizing in the 5 years preceding the survey, namely 1994 through 1999. Because agencies wanted to limit the number of Reduction in Force (RIF) actions they had to take, and to ensure that women and minorities were not unduly affected by the reductions, most of the downsizing during this time was accomplished by attrition. However, by relying primarily on attrition rather than on careful assessments of organizational requirements and future needs, many agencies were left with severe skill imbalances once the downsizing was

accomplished. Not surprisingly, although it may have been an effective cost- and staff-cutting strategy, respondents saw the downsizing as having a decidedly negative and unintended effect on the efficiency of their work unit. Over two-thirds of our survey respondents (69 percent) disagreed with

Figure 3. Respondent views on downsizing

Percent

Survey Statement

Legend: Agree · Neither · Disagree

Survey Statement	Agree	Neither	Disagree
My work unit has been downsized in the last 5 years.	62	10	28
Downsizing has seriously eroded institutional memory in my work unit.	46	26	28
My work unit has a sufficient number of employees to do its job.	39	11	50
A private sector company could perform the work just as effectively as my work unit.	17	11	72
Downsizing has helped make my work unit more efficient.	7	24	69

Source: MSPB, Merit Principles Survey 2000, questions 4, 13, 38, 39, and 40.

the statement that the downsizing had helped make their unit more efficient and only 7 percent agreed.

Perhaps even more importantly, half (50 percent) of our respondents said their work unit did not have enough employees to do the work, while only 39 percent said there were enough employees, and 11 percent were unsure. Individual agencies varied widely in the perceived adequacy of the number of employees to do the work. At one extreme, employees of the Veterans Administration, NASA, Interior, and the Social Security Administration expressed the most concern about worker shortages, with more than 6 out of 10 respondents from those agencies saying there were not enough employees to do the work. Even among agencies with the least reported staff shortages (i.e., Energy, Treasury, and Navy) almost 40 percent of our respondents reported insufficient numbers of employees to do the work.

It is important to note that we found only a weak link between ratings of the sufficiency of the number of employees to do the work and the extent to which an agency had actually downsized during the 1990s. For example, the U.S. Department of Defense agencies experienced some of the greatest reductions in personnel, yet respondents from those agencies were not particularly likely to report insufficient numbers of personnel at the time of our survey. Possibly, the workforce reductions in these agencies were accompanied by corresponding changes in mission or by reduced workloads due to closing military bases or contracting out some of the work.

Erosion of Institutional Memory

As noted previously, downsizing affects not just the number of employees available to do the work but depending on how the downsizing was conducted, also the quality and expertise of the

workers remaining to do the work. To minimize the number of involuntary separations, the Government's downsizing strategy during the 1990s relied primarily on buyouts of senior employees coupled with a hiring freeze.[13] Since many of the most able and most knowledgeable employees are often among the first to leave,[14] it comes as no surprise that almost half (46 percent) of our survey respondents said that downsizing had seriously eroded the institutional memory of their work unit.

While the magnitude of the downsizing in an agency was only weakly linked to the extent to which respondents said there were sufficient employees to do the work, it was more strongly related to the perceived loss of institutional memory in the affected work units. The agencies in our sample that had experienced the greatest downsizing since 1993 were the DOD agencies, Housing and Urban Development, NASA, the General Services Administration, and Energy.[15] Respondents from each of these agencies were the ones most likely to report erosions of institutional memory, with serious losses being reported by at least 50 percent of the respondents in those agencies. Justice Department employees were the least likely (24 percent) to report erosion of institutional memory. Perhaps not coincidentally, at the time of the survey, Justice was the agency with the largest employment gain (28 percent) since 1993.

It is important to note that even in other agencies that gained employees (e.g., Commerce) or that lost relatively few employees (e.g., State, the Environmental Protection Agency, and Labor), almost one-third of the respondents from those other agencies thought that their work unit had experienced a loss of institutional memory. This suggests that even when reductions are relatively small, those separated may have possessed

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[13] U.S. Office of Personnel Management, *Downsizing in the Federal Government*, Aug. 1998.

[14] Bedeian and Armenakis, op. cit., p. 59.

[15] Each of these agencies experienced reductions of at least 20 percent between January 1993 and May 2000.

important institutional knowledge, thus affecting the work of the unit. It also suggests that losses of institutional memory are not readily overcome by an influx of new hires. Although such an influx can fill the positions of employees who were lost, agencies may have to wait years before the new hires have the expertise of those who left, potentially leaving the organization with serious knowledge and skill gaps during that interim waiting period.

Need for Training

A 1995 MSPB report[16] on Federal training issues identified problems in the practice of human resource development in many organizations. Employees are often sent to training for reasons not related to mission or changing work requirements. Training resources are not always spent wisely, and in times of budget limitations—when training may often be most critical—training funds are often the first to be cut. The report warned that unless organizations change the way they do business and place greater emphasis on effective program evaluation and strategic planning, they will have difficulties prioritizing the use of the limited resources that are likely to be available for training.

This warning is no less appropriate today, and we have already seen that many employees have reported serious erosion of institutional memory in their work unit and insufficient numbers of employees to do the work. Within this context, what do employees specifically say about the training they have received and their training needs?

As shown in figure 4, just over half (56 percent) of the respondents in 2000 said that they had received the training needed to perform their job. Although not shown in the figure, one-quarter (27 percent) said they had not received the needed training. It is disturbing that such a large portion of the 2000 workforce considered themselves unprepared to perform the basic tasks of their jobs. We note from figure 4 that the percentage of employees saying they had received the needed training increased slightly (4 percentage points) from 1996 to 2000, but it remains 3 percentage points below the 59-percent level of 1992.

Perhaps the most striking finding depicted in figure 4 is the percentage of employees—48 percent, or nearly half—saying they need more training to perform their jobs effectively. This is a dramatic increase of 11 percentage points since

Figure 4. Trends in respondent perceptions of training received and training needed, 1992, 1996, and 2000
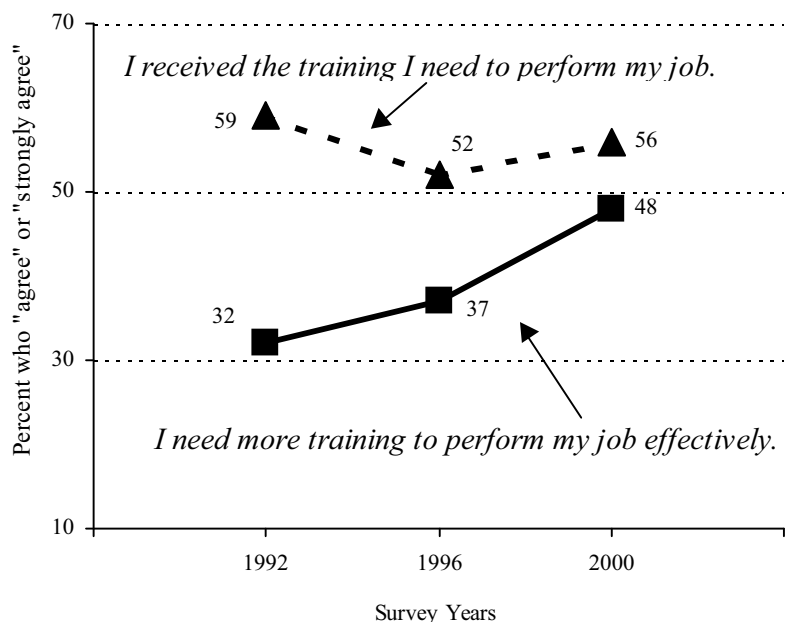
Source: MSPB, Merit Principles Surveys: 2000, questions 15 and 16; 1996, questions 5 and 6; 1992, questions 8 and 10.

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[16] U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, *Leadership for Change: Human Resources Development in the Federal Government*, July 1995; pp. vii-x.

1996 and is 16 percentage points higher than in 1992.[17] Thus, more and more respondents are telling us that the training they have received is not enough and that they need more training to perform their jobs effectively.

While the responses to these two training questions may initially appear somewhat contradictory, a closer examination of the interrelationship of these questions helps clarify the apparent disconnect. As would be expected, the 27 percent of employees who had not received the needed training to do their job were also very likely (i.e., 86 percent of them) to say they needed more training to perform their job effectively. What was less expected was the finding that so many employees—30 percent—of the group who had received needed training also said that they needed more training to perform their jobs effectively. The key terms here are "more" and "effectively." While the training received may be adequate for employees to perform their jobs at a basic level, it is significant that a sizable portion of employees think that in order for them to perform their jobs effectively they need more training.

Overall, the sharp increase in the percentage of employees saying they need more training should alert agencies that this is an area requiring management attention. As our survey results show, the skilled employees who remained in the workforce during the downsizing of the 1990s have not always been able to keep up with the changing technology and resultant job expectations. Employees may feel that they need more training to keep up. Traditionally, training resources have been additional casualties of any drive to downsize and reduce budgets. With gaps in institutional memory and workforces

insufficiently trained to keep up with changing technology, many agencies may be ill prepared to meet the challenges they face in today's environment.

Productivity of the Work Unit

We asked our survey respondents to rate the productivity of their work unit, their own productivity, and that of the larger organization of which they are a part. The respondents were asked to rate productivity on a 10-point scale ranging from 1 for "not productive at all" to 10 for "extremely productive."

Figure 5 shows that most of the productivity ratings were well above 6. Respondents gave their own work the highest productivity ratings, followed by that of their work unit and then that of the larger organization. Eighty-three (83) percent of the respondents gave their own productivity a rating of 7 or higher. Two-thirds (66 percent) of the respondents gave similarly high ratings to the work unit, and slightly over half (53 percent) gave such ratings to the larger organization. Overall, these ratings suggest that Federal employees generally believe that they and their work unit are producing at rather high levels.[18]

In addition, despite the downsizing of the 1990s, nearly half (46 percent) of our survey respondents said the productivity of their work unit had improved in the past 2 years. This is down slightly from 49 percent in 1996. Additionally, about half (51 percent) of the respondents said they had been given more flexibility in how they did their work during the past 2 years. This was unchanged from 1996.

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[17] U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, *The Changing Federal Workplace: Employee Perspectives*, Mar. 1998, p. 12.

[18] On the 10-point rating scale, respondents gave their own, their work unit, and their organization mean productivity ratings of 8.47, 7.90, and 7.34, respectively.

Figure 5. Respondents rate their own productivity, that of their work unit, and that of their organization

"On a 10-point scale, how would you rate the overall productivity of your…."

☐ Organization ☐ Work Unit ■ Self

Percent giving rating

Productivity Ratings

Not at All Productive ← → Extremely Productive

Source: MSPB, Merit Principles Survey 2000, questions 59a, 59b, and 59c.
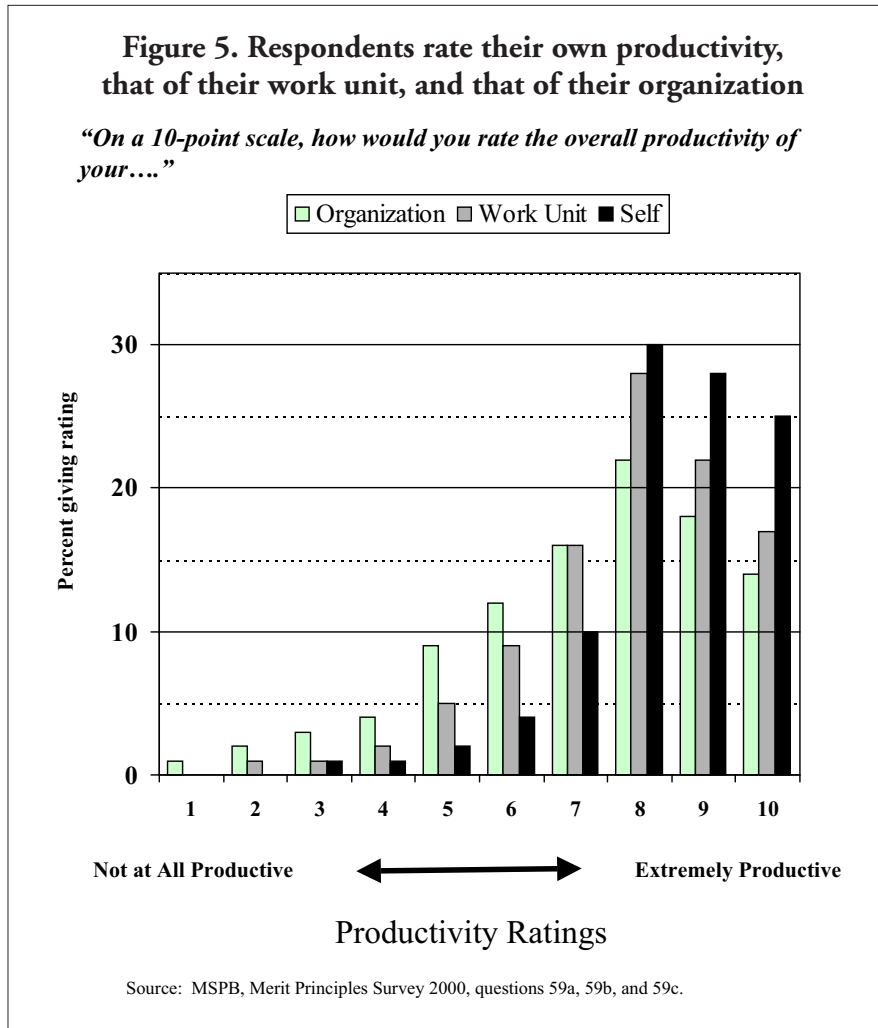
As shown in figure 6, having greater flexibility in how employees do their work is related to the productivity of the work unit. Some 66 percent of the respondents who said that they had been given more flexibility also reported improved work unit productivity in the past 2 years. On the other hand, only 20 percent of the respondents who did not have more flexibility reported improved work unit productivity. While we have no evidence of a cause and effect relationship and we know that other variables are involved, the finding nevertheless suggests a possible link between the flexibility employees have in doing their work and the productivity of their work unit.

Figure 6. Relationship of respondent views of work flexibility to their views of workunit productivity

Percent of respondents who reported an improvement in work unit productivity

Respondents saying they were given more flexibility — 66

Respondents saying they were not given more flexibility — 20

Source: MSPB, Merit Principles Survey 2000, questions 6 and 7.

Quality of Work Performed

Closely related to the productivity of work units is the quality of the work performed in those work units. To find out more about this issue, we asked employees to rate the quality of work performed in their work unit. This is the fourth time we have asked this question (having included it on our 1989, 1992, and 1996 Merit Principles Surveys).

As shown in figure 7, slightly over half of our 1989 and 1992 survey respondents (53 percent and 56 percent, respectively) rated the quality of the work in their work unit as outstanding or above average. In 1996, this percentage jumped to 67 percent, indicating a marked increase in the perception of work quality. In 1996, we speculated that some potential contributors to this perceived increase in work quality may have included the Government's reinvention efforts; increases in automation; increased emphasis on results; focus on customer-oriented service; and mandates to "do more with less"; as well as the ongoing threat of possible job loss.[19]

Our 2000 survey showed that the percentage of employees rating their unit's work as outstanding or above average remaining at 67 percent. In light of the problems cited with downsizing and a lack of training, it is at least encouraging that two-thirds of our respondents still believed the work of

Figure 7. Respondents saying the quality of work performed in their unit is "above average" or "outstanding," 1989, 1992, 1996, and 2000
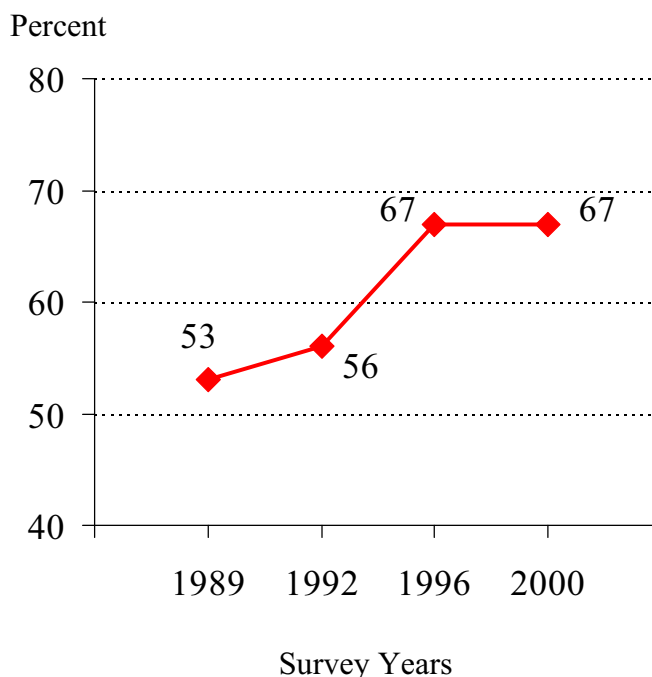
Sources: MSPB, Merit Principles Surveys: 2000, question 60d; 1996, question 46a; 1992, question 40; and 1989, question 30.

their unit to be of high quality. However, the concern must be how long this level of productivity and quality can be sustained, given the diminished "bench strength" of the workforce and the prospect of additional losses in critical occupations. Moreover, how have the problems associated with the downsizing affected the satisfaction of employees with their jobs and what are the implications for the long-term ability of agencies to accomplish their mission?
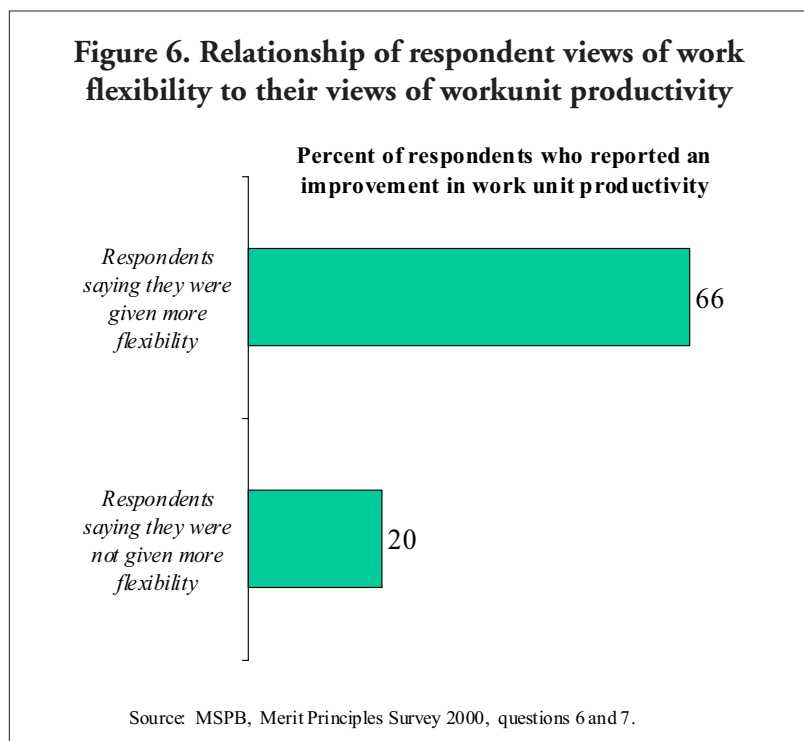
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[19] U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, *The Changing Federal Workplace: Employee Perspectives*, Mar. 1998, p. 23.

Employee Job Satisfaction

Overall Job Satisfaction

Although we have been tracking employee job satisfaction since 1983, changes in the survey permit meaningful comparisons only among the more recent surveys. As shown in table 1, the overall level of job satisfaction between 1989 and 1996 was extremely stable. Even during the height of the Government's downsizing and immediately following major Government shutdowns in 1996, job satisfaction remained relatively unchanged, with 71 percent of employees agreeing that in general, they were satisfied with their job and 87 percent saying that their job was meaningful. At that time, in commenting on the reasons for the continued high level of job satisfaction during the downsizing, we noted that employees might simply be grateful to still have a job. We also said that increased flexibility in doing work and improvements in productivity resulting from

Table 1. Trends in job satisfaction measures, 1989, 1992, 1996, and 2000

Job satisfaction measure	Percent who agree			
	Survey year			
	1989	1992	1996	2000
In general, I am satisfied with my job.	70	72	71	67
The work I do on my job is meaningful to me.	88	87	87	78
I would recommend the Federal Government as a place to work.	49	67	57	52
Overall, I am satisfied with my supervisor.	—	60	61	58
Overall, I am satisfied with my pay.	28	42	50	49
A spirit of cooperation and teamwork exists in my work unit.	—	63	64	56

Note: A dash (—) indicates a year in which this question was not asked.

Source: MSPB, Merit Principles Surveys, 1989, 1992, 1996, and 2000.

various workplace initiatives were other likely reasons.[20]

Table 1 shows that in 2000, the percentage of employees satisfied with their job dropped from 71 percent in 1996 to 67 percent. Although this may not seem like a major decline, it becomes significant given the historical stability of responses to this survey item. It is also important to look at some of the other job satisfaction indicators and trends. Again, while the magnitude of the changes is not always large, the patterns and directions of the changes suggest a downward turn in the level of employee job satisfaction. For example, compared to 1996, the percentage of employees reporting that their work was meaningful dropped from a very high 87 percent to 78 percent. Respondents in 2000 also were less likely than respondents in 1996 (52 percent versus 57 percent) to recommend the Government as a place to work.

We don't know the reasons for the downturns noted in job satisfaction, but a number of possibilities suggest themselves. One is that the downturn could be related to working in a unit with insufficient numbers of employees or in a unit with seriously eroded institutional memory. Another could be the stress associated with maintaining high levels of productivity and quality service in a fast-paced environment filled with demands for mastering new technologies. In addition to these possibilities, the general aging of the workforce and the possible burnout resulting from reduced opportunities for meaningful career progression could be having a serious impact on job satisfaction.

Relationship of Job Satisfaction to Performance Outcomes

It is generally assumed that employees who are satisfied with their work are more likely to provide high-quality service to their customers than employees who are not satisfied with their work. Over the years, extensive research on the relationship between employee job satisfaction and numerous measures of individual productivity have demonstrated that the relationships are anything but clear-cut. More recent research suggests that employee job satisfaction may be more directly related to the overall sustained success of their organization than to their own individual achievements. Not surprisingly, studies suggest that organizations with satisfied employees tend to be more successful than those whose employees are not satisfied.[21]

Figure 8 clearly shows the magnitude of the relationship between job satisfaction and several measures closely related to work unit productivity. For example, a comparison of satisfied and dissatisfied employees shows that employees satisfied with their jobs were more than twice as likely as dissatisfied employees to agree that the productivity of their work unit has improved or that they have more flexibility in how they accomplish their work.

Regardless of the reason for the downturn in overall job satisfaction, the potential exists for these attitudes to affect organizational productivity, and that presents a major challenge to agency management. But how do agency managers improve employee job satisfaction? Our respondents have provided us with their opinions

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[20] Ibid., p27.

[21] Anthony J. Rucci, Steven P. Kirn, and Richard T. Quinn, "The Employee-Customer Profit Chain at Sears," *Harvard Business Review*, Jan.-Feb. 1998, pp. 83-97.

**Figure 8. Responses to selected survey statements:
A comparison of respondents who said they were
satisfied with their job with those who were dissatisfied**

Percent who "agree" or "strongly agree"

Survey Statement

| | Satisfied Respondents | Dissatisfied Respondents |

Overall quality of work performed by the work unit: "Outstanding" or "Above average."
- Dissatisfied: 49
- Satisfied: 73

Overall productivity of the work unit: "Extremely productive" (ratings of 9 or 10).
- Dissatisfied: 26
- Satisfied: 45

The productivity of my work unit has improved.
- Dissatisfied: 20
- Satisfied: 56

I have been given more flexibility in how I accomplish my work.
- Dissatisfied: 25
- Satisfied: 62

Source: MSPB, Merit Principles Survey 2000, question 27 with questions 6, 7, 59f, and 60d.

and their observations about their experiences regarding a host of areas that can provide useful clues for managers trying to effect change. In the next section we examine some of those areas, starting with the very things that employees have told us can influence their decision to stay in or leave their jobs. We also explore employee views of their supervisor—including how supportive supervisors are of career development, the way in which supervisors fill jobs, and how they deal with poor performers. In addition, we look at performance management and the impact of poor performers on the workgroup. Finally we explore the issues of discrimination and the occurrence of prohibited personnel practices, as they may have an impact on employee job satisfaction and willingness to stay in the workforce. If organizations are truly interested in addressing the human capital crisis, all of these areas require attention.

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Areas in Need of Attention

Employee Views on Staying or Leaving Their Jobs

Because of our concern about potential turnover in the workforce over the next few years, we asked employees about their intentions to retire or look for another job and whether they were looking for another job inside or outside Government. We also asked those planning to retire or to look for another job about the reasons for their plans. Similarly, we asked those planning to stay about the factors that were most important in their decision. These questions provide some indication of the variables that are most closely linked to employee decisions to stay or leave.

Figure 9 shows that 57 percent of our respondents intended to stay in their present job in the coming year. Thirty-seven percent said they were planning to look for another job in the coming year. Most of those planning to look for another job (19 percent) intended to do so within Federal Government or both inside and outside the Government (15 percent). Only a small percentage (3 percent) planned to look for another job exclusively outside

the Government. Some 6 percent of the respondents indicated they planned to retire.

Retirement plans were of particular interest to us, especially in light of the potential loss of institutional memory in many organizations. Twelve percent of our survey respondents said they were eligible to retire at the time of the survey—a percentage that is virtually identical to the percentage of retirement eligibles in the Federal workforce in 2001, as determined from OPM's

Figure 9. Percent of respondents who plan to stay, retire, or look for another job in the coming year
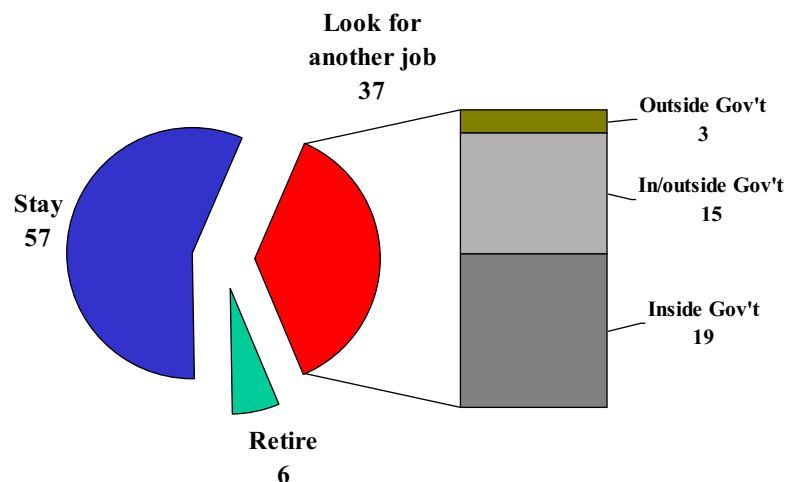
Source: MSPB, Merit Principles Survey 2000, questions 51 and 52.

Central Personnel Data File.[22] Of survey respondents currently eligible to retire, 36 percent said that they planned to retire in the coming year. This is just slightly higher than the 30 percent rate (53,696 retirements out of 181,758 eligibles) that OPM projected to retire during 2001.[23] This difference is not surprising, since survey responses reflect planned retirements, while OPM projections are based on actual retirements in previous years. Experience has demonstrated that it is not uncommon for employees to delay planned retirement. As it is, we now know that the actual percentage of eligibles who actually retired in FY2001 was well below the early projections— 22 percent versus 30 percent.[24] Downturns in the economy and devaluation of retirement accounts are suspected contributors to the lower than expected rates of retirement.

When we asked survey participants in 2000 about their retirement eligibility in the next 5 years, 37 percent said they were eligible or would become eligible within 5 years. Of those already eligible or to become eligible in 5 years, more than three-quarters (77 percent) indicated that they would retire in that time frame—namely 5 years.[25] Managers need to be aware that—on average— about one-third of their employees will become eligible to retire within 5 years and that as many as three-fourths of them report intentions of leaving during that time. These separations are in addition to the employees who will resign or leave the work unit for reasons other than retirement. Aside from the obvious implications of needing to plan for replacements to do the work of the unit, managers are likely to find that motivating employees who are planning to leave requires different incentives than those for employees planning to stay in their current jobs.

These data clearly indicate that while the Federal workforce has a solid core of employees planning to stay in their current job, more than 40 percent of employees have other plans for the near future. Because many of those looking for another job indicated they are doing so within the Government, the implications for the Federal workforce are much less critical than for the individual work units that will be losing an employee. Job mobility within the Government does not result in a loss of the moving employee's expertise to the Government and can often result in further development or better use of that expertise within the Federal workforce. For the supervisor and the work unit losing the employee, however, the issue can be more problematic. To better understand what determines whether an employee retires, looks for another job, or stays in the current job, we asked employees to share their thoughts.

Reasons for retiring. To assist managers in motivating and possibly retaining valued employees who are contemplating retirement, we asked the 6 percent of our survey respondents who planned to retire in the coming year to tell us what factors from a list of 27 played the most important role in their decision to retire. Figure 10 shows the 10 most important factors. By far, the most frequently cited (73 percent) reason for retiring was nonwork interests. This is not something a supervisor is likely to have much control over, except for possibly setting up a more flexible or part-time working arrangement that will permit some employees to pursue their nonwork interests while still contributing to the work of the unit.

Excessive job stress was cited as the second most important reason for planning to retire, with 45 percent rating it important or very important.

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[22] Unpublished data from OPM of Feb. 8, 2001 show that 12.3 percent of the 1,480,941 full-time permanent Federal employees onboard on July 1, 2000 were eligible to retire.

[23] Op. cit.

[24] Unpublished data from OPM's FY2001 CPDF Dynamics Data including FY1997-FY2001 Trends, p. 3.

[25] This is not unlike the 29 percent cumulative eligibility rate OPM calculated from 2001 through 2005 in unpublished data from OPM, Feb. 8, 2001. At that time, OPM calculated that there would be a total of some 433,223 full-time permanent employees eligible to retire during 2001 through 2005 and that 292,751 of these eligibles were projected to actually retire (68 percent) during that time.

Figure 10. Top 10 reasons respondents plan to retire in the coming year

Reason for retiring

Percent saying the reason is "important" or "very important"

Reason	Percent
Nonwork interests	73
Excessive job stress	45
Desire to work on your own	42
Better use of skills and abilities	40
Too few people to handle the work	40
Lack of recognition	37
Desire for different work	36
Family reasons	35
Problems with higher level supervisors	35
Inadequate equipment, supplies, etc.	33
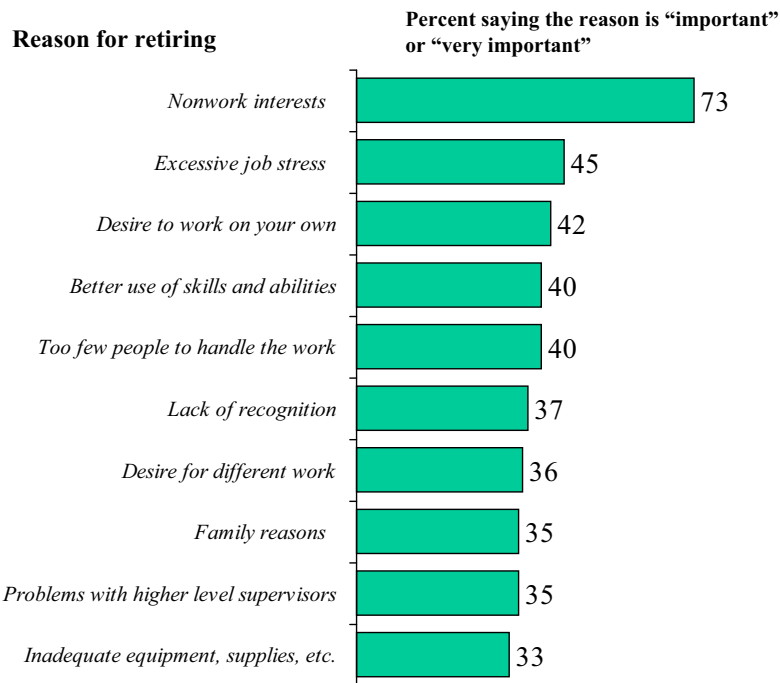
Source: MSPB Merit Principles Survey 2000, question 51 with question 53A.

work unit did not have sufficient employees to do the work.[27] When stress was cited as a factor in the decision to retire, 68 percent of those planning to retire said their work unit did not have sufficient employees to do the work. When stress was not cited as a factor, just 41 percent said their work unit did not have sufficient employees.

These findings suggest that workload is an issue that managers and supervisors should consider when encouraging valued retirement-eligible employees not to retire. Second, they suggest that some of the valued employees planning to retire might be retained if their work stress levels could be reduced. For some, options to work part-time, share work, work

Rounding out the top 5 were the desire to work on one's own (42 percent), the desire to make better use of one's skills and abilities (40 percent), and insufficient numbers of employees to do the work (40 percent).[26]

The emergence of insufficient numbers of employees to do the work and excessive job stress among the top five reasons for retiring raises the question of whether the two might be related. Closer examination shows that this is indeed the case, as is shown in figure 11. Respondents who plan to retire and who cite excessive job stress as a factor tended to report that their

Figure 11. Relationship of respondent views of staffing levels to their views of job stress as a reason to retire

Percent of respondents saying unit does not have enough employees

	Percent
Respondents who said stress was a reason to retire	68
Respondents who said stress was not a reason to retire	41
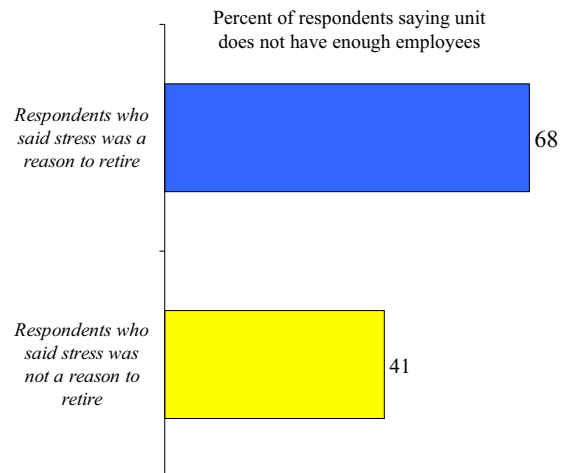
Source: MSPB, Merit Principles Survey 2000, questions 51 and 53A9 with question 4.

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[26] In addition to indicating the importance of each of 27 reasons to retire, we asked respondents to select the 3 most important reasons. Using this approach, the top 3 reasons and the percentage of respondents including the reason among their top 3 were: nonwork interests (50 percent), excessive job stress (24 percent), and family reasons (22 percent).

[27] Pearson product moment correlation is $r = -.25$, $p < .01$.

at home, or work on more flexible schedules may induce them to work a while longer, possibly long enough to help train new hires.

Reasons for looking for another job. Just as it is important for managers and supervisors to better understand the reasons employees are planning to retire, it is also important to find out why employees may be looking for another job. As noted previously, some 37 percent of our respondents said they were planning to look for another job in the coming year—a much larger proportion than the 6 percent planning to retire. Consequently, it is important to manage this segment of the workforce wisely. A supervisor's focus will differ depending on whether he or she is trying to keep a valued employee from leaving the Federal workforce, or just trying to ensure the continued productivity of one who is "looking around." In either case, it is useful for the supervisor to know more about the reasons these employees say they are looking for another job.

Figure 12 shows the top 10 reasons respondents planned to look for another job. Unlike employees planning to retire, employees planning to look for another job cited multiple reasons as important rather than just a few. Eight of the top 10 reasons were rated important or very important by over 50 percent of the respondents. In contrast, just one of the top 10 reasons for retiring was rated important or very important by over 50 percent of the respondents.

According to our survey respondents, the primary

motivations behind looking for another job were their desires to make better use of their skills (86 percent) and to increase their opportunities for advancement (84 percent). The desire to earn more money (76 percent) was a close third, followed by the desire to improve opportunities for training (64 percent). The top 10 list is rounded out by many of the same reasons that were cited by employees planning to retire: Lack of recognition, desire for different work, too few people to do the work, inadequate resources to do the job well, and excessive stress. And, as might be expected, one factor playing a more important role for those planning to look for another job than for those planning to retire was the outside job market.[28]

Figure 12. Top 10 reasons respondents plan to look for another job in the coming year

Reason to look for another job

Percent saying the reason is "important" or "very important"

Reason	Percent
Better use of skills and abilities	86
Increase opportunities for advancement	84
Desire to earn more money	76
Improve opportunities for training	64
Lack of recognition	62
Desire for different work	55
Good job market	51
Too few people to handle the work	51
Inadequate equipment, supplies, etc.	47
Excessive job stress	46

Source: MSPB, Merit Principles Survey 2000, question 51 with question 53A.

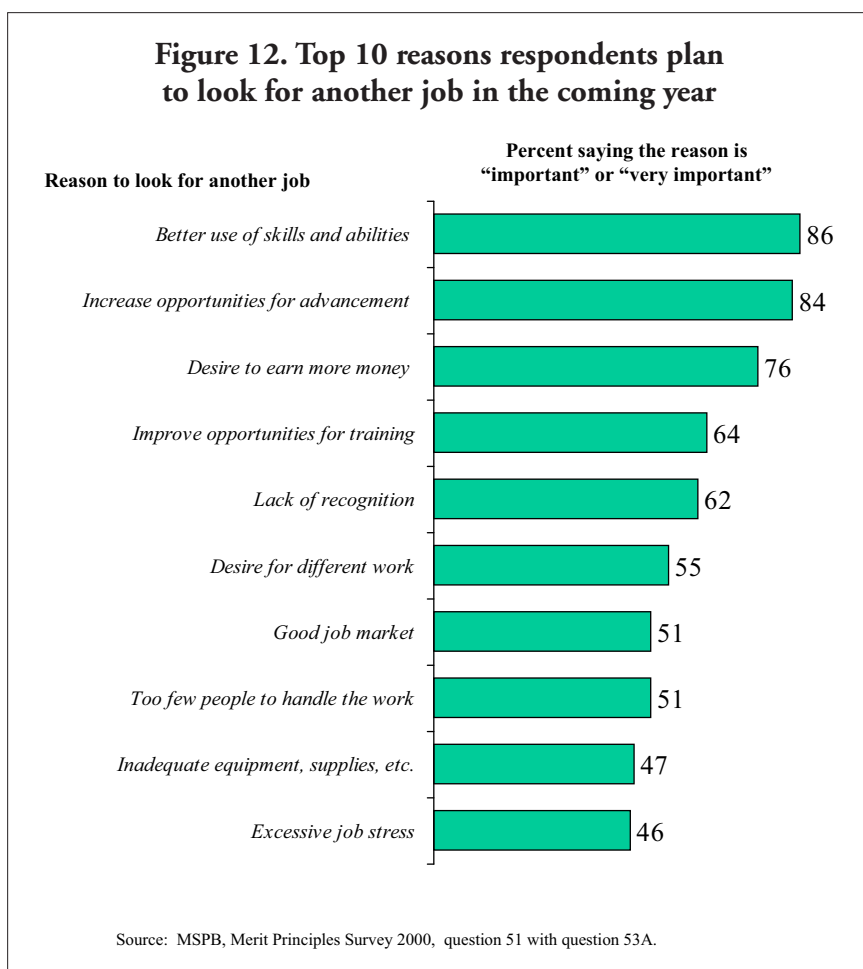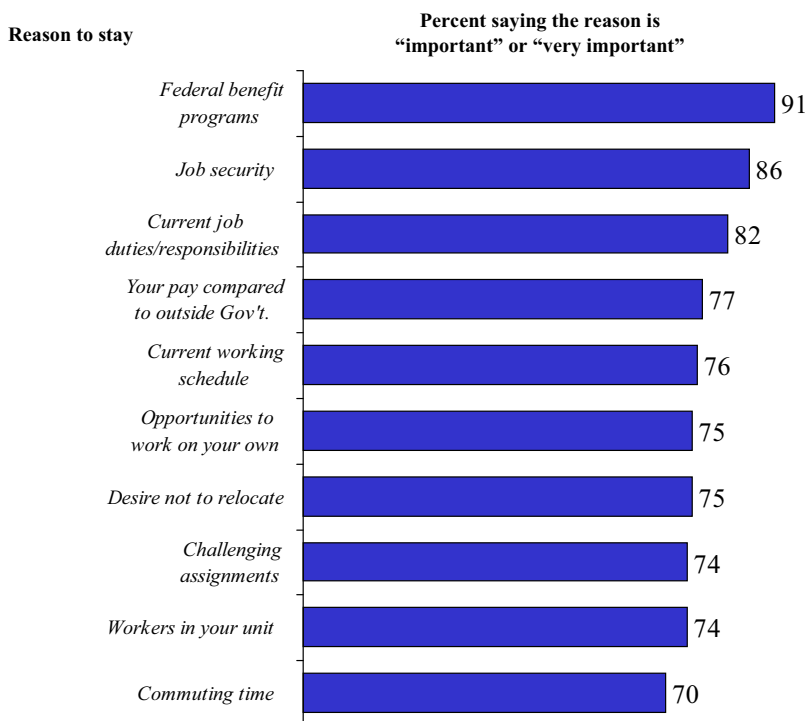[28] When asked to select the 3 most important reasons for looking for another job, the top 3 reasons and the percentage of respondents selecting the reason were: better use of skills and abilities (45 percent); increase opportunities for advancement (45 percent); and desire to earn more money (44 percent).

Most of the reasons cited suggest that employees planning to look for another job are driven by a desire to advance their career. Most do not appear to particularly want to leave Federal service, since most are planning to look for another job within the Government. To the extent these "lookers" are among the top performers, their managers and work unit supervisors may want to take appropriate steps to help retain these valued employees, at least within the Government if not within the work unit.

Although supervisors themselves are not cited directly among the top reasons employees look for another job, supervisors certainly have responsibilities for and often exercise considerable control over many of the factors that were cited. In particular, supervisors should evaluate the extent to which they have taken full advantage of available resources to provide valued employees with appropriate recognition, training opportunities, and work assignments that promote their growth and make better use of their skills and abilities.

Reasons for staying. The majority of respondents—about 6 out of 10—indicated they had no plans to retire or look for another job in the coming year. For this core group of employees, what are the important reasons they cite for staying in their jobs? Knowing more about the factors that are important to employees who plan to stay may help Government managers as well as work unit supervisors to better motivate and retain this largest component of the workforce.

Figure 13. Top 10 reasons respondents plan to stay in their jobs

Reason to stay

Percent saying the reason is "important" or "very important"

Reason	Percent
Federal benefit programs	91
Job security	86
Current job duties/responsibilities	82
Your pay compared to outside Gov't.	77
Current working schedule	76
Opportunities to work on your own	75
Desire not to relocate	75
Challenging assignments	74
Workers in your unit	74
Commuting time	70

Source: MSPB Merit Principles Survey 2000, question 51 with question 54A.

Figure 13 shows that respondents planning to stay picked even more reasons for their decision than did respondents planning to look for another job. Not only did they cite more reasons to stay; the reasons to stay were judged important or very important by a larger portion of the respondents. Specifically, all of the top 10 reasons for staying were rated important or very important by 70 percent or more of the respondents who said they planned to stay.

Among the many incentives that employees indicated as reasons for staying are: Federal benefits (noted by 91 percent), job security (86 percent), and current job responsibilities (82 percent). These were followed closely by pay (77 percent), work schedule (76 percent), and opportunities to work on one's own (75 percent).[29]

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[29] When asked to select the 3 most important reasons for staying in the job, the top 3 reasons and the percentage of respondents selecting the reason were: Federal benefits program (41 percent); job security (33 percent); and pay compared to that outside Government (37 percent).
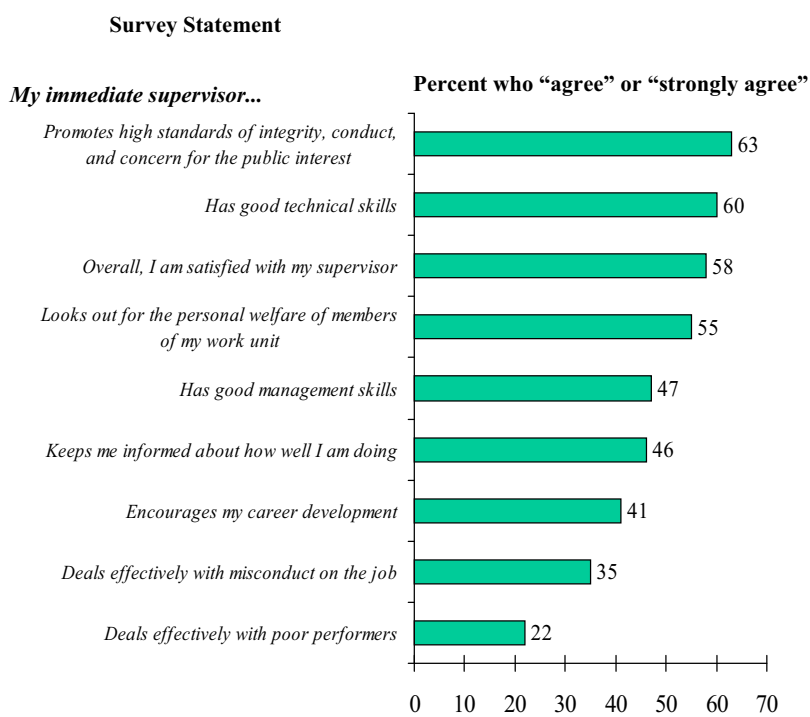
General Views on the Immediate Supervisor

Throughout its nearly 25-year history, the Board has conducted several studies addressing the critical role played by supervisors in ensuring that the Government's workforce remains competent and motivated to effectively serve the American public.[30] While various Board study reports have noted that supervisors generally do a commendable job in the technical aspects of their job, they do less well with human resources management aspects, particularly the less pleasant or potentially confrontational aspects. All too often, many supervisors approach human resource management tasks from a short-term rather than a long-term perspective.[31]

Our current survey results show that, except for some aspects of performance management, employees generally give their supervisors reasonably good marks. As shown in figure 14, more than half of the respondents indicated that they were satisfied with their supervisor (58 percent) and reported that their supervisor looks out for the personal welfare of employees in the work unit (55 percent). Almost two-thirds indicated that their supervisor promotes high standards of integrity and conduct (63 percent). However, as we found in previous studies, respondents were more likely to say their supervisor has good technical skills (60 percent) than good management skills (47 percent).

Figure 14. Respondent views on their immediate supervisor

Survey Statement

My immediate supervisor...   Percent who "agree" or "strongly agree"

Statement	Percent
Promotes high standards of integrity, conduct, and concern for the public interest	63
Has good technical skills	60
Overall, I am satisfied with my supervisor	58
Looks out for the personal welfare of members of my work unit	55
Has good management skills	47
Keeps me informed about how well I am doing	46
Encourages my career development	41
Deals effectively with misconduct on the job	35
Deals effectively with poor performers	22

Source: MSPB, Merit Principles Survey 2000, questions 28-35, and 55e.

When we compared the views of supervisors made by employees who said they were satisfied with their supervisor and those who said they were not satisfied, we discovered some pervasive and dramatic differences. For example, while on average 63 percent of employees said their supervisor promotes high standards of integrity and conduct, this statistic jumps to an overwhelming 85 percent for those respondents who said they were satisfied with their supervisor. For the relatively small share (24 percent) of respondents dissatisfied with their supervisor, only 20 percent said their supervisor promotes high standards. These differences manifested themselves not only in views about the supervisor but in views of virtually every aspect of human resources

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[30] U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, *Federal Supervisors and Strategic Human Resources Management*, June 1998; *Federal Supervisors and Poor Performers*, July 1999; and *Federal First-Line Supervisors: How Good Are They?* March 1992.

[31] U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, *Federal Supervisors and Strategic Human Resources Management*, June 1998, p. 1.

management examined in this survey. For example, respondents dissatisfied with their supervisor were twice as likely to say they planned to look for another job than respondents satisfied with their supervisor (58 percent versus 31 percent).
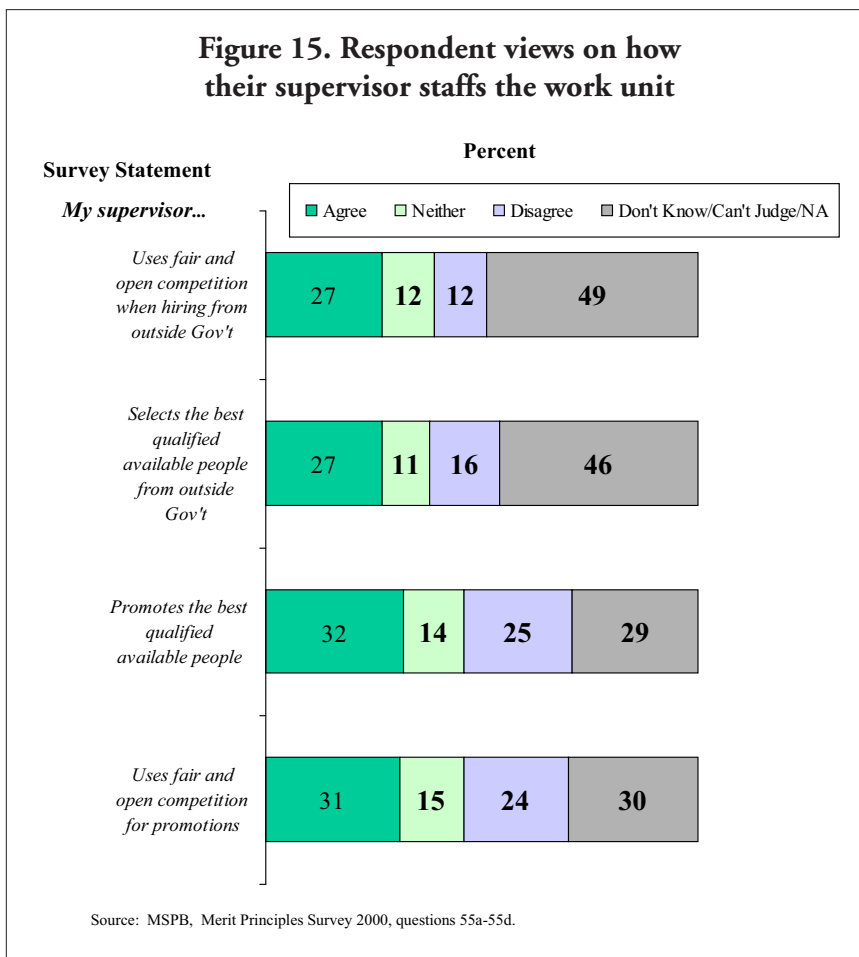
Supervisor Support for Career Development

One area where employees were not particularly positive about their supervisor was the extent to which they believed their supervisor encouraged their career development. In fact, only 41 percent of the respondents said that their supervisor did this. Although employees may have differed in what they consider career development, training and opportunity for advancement undoubtedly figure in their views on this issue. As reported previously, many employees did not

believe they were receiving the training they need to do their jobs effectively. If they were not receiving training for their current assignments, it is not surprising that they were also not receiving training for further advancement. In addition to funding problems for training that many agencies have faced in recent years, it is also likely that there are managers who believe that career development is not an organizational responsibility and, given limited training budgets, the organization should only incur training costs directly related to its mission. Under those conditions, these managers would not be likely to support requests for developmental training if that training didn't relate directly to the current job.

Supervisor's Staffing Practices

We noted in a previous Board report[32] that an important part of the supervisor's job involves the strategic management of human resources, which includes the hiring and promoting of people to do the work of the work unit. As shown in figure 15, in the area of staffing, large percentages of respondents were unable to judge their supervisor's staffing practices. This is not unexpected since many employees are not directly involved in the staffing decisions of the work unit and do not have extensive knowledge of the applicant pool or procedures used. About one-fourth of all respondents agreed that their immediate supervisor elects the best qualified from outside the Government (27 percent) and uses fair and open competition (27 percent). Only about half as many respondents disagreed with these statements.

Figure 15. Respondent views on how their supervisor staffs the work unit

Survey Statement

My supervisor...

Percent

■ Agree   ■ Neither   ■ Disagree   ■ Don't Know/Can't Judge/NA

Survey Statement	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Don't Know/Can't Judge/NA
Uses fair and open competition when hiring from outside Gov't	27	12	12	49
Selects the best qualified available people from outside Gov't	27	11	16	46
Promotes the best qualified available people	32	14	25	29
Uses fair and open competition for promotions	31	15	24	30

Source: MSPB, Merit Principles Survey 2000, questions 55a-55d.

[32] Ibid., p. 1.

Even for promotions—the staffing decisions likely to personally involve respondents—employees continued to be more likely to view their supervisor as fair than as unfair and were more likely to agree than disagree that the best qualified available people were promoted. Although some 30 percent of respondents were not able to make a judgment, about one-third of all respondents agreed that their supervisor promotes the best qualified person (32 percent) and uses fair and open competition for promotions (31 percent).

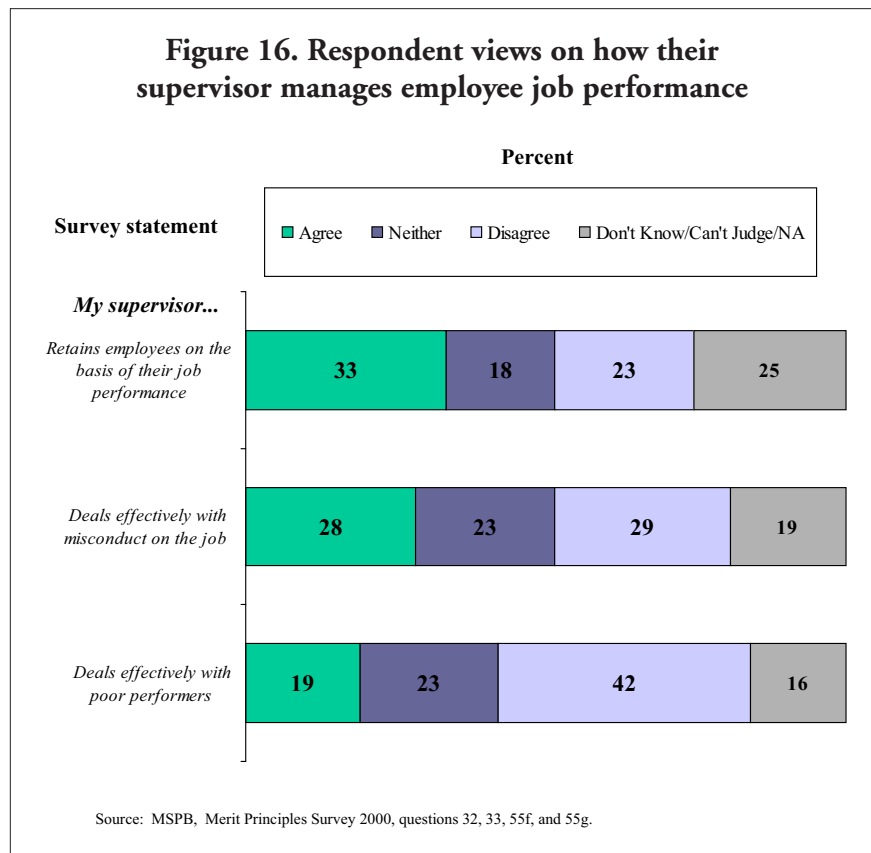## How Supervisors Deal With Poor Performers

A critical component in supervisor management of employees is how they deal with poor performers in the work unit. All too often, the poorest performer consumes a disproportionate share of the supervisor's attention. When we asked employees about how well their supervisor deals with poor performers, significant portions—16 to 25 percent—were unable to make a judgment.

Many remedial and disciplinary actions are taken in private and employees may not be aware of their supervisor's actions in this area, which may account for why so many respondents could not make a judgment on this question. Additionally, as we discuss below, many employees may not have had an opportunity to see how their supervisor handles problem employees because there were no problem employees in their work unit. Nevertheless, employees generally did not give their supervisors very good marks in handling poor performers, as shown in figure 16. For example, just over one-fourth (28 percent) of all respondents claimed their supervisor deals effectively with misconduct on the job and only

19 percent said their supervisor deals effectively with poor performers.

The supervisors themselves suggested that their problems in handling poor performers are not entirely under their control. Supervisors attributed difficulties they encounter in dealing with performance problems to a lack of confidence in the performance management system (74 percent) and insufficient support from higher level management (61 percent).

To determine the magnitude of the poor performer problem, we asked employees to tell us how many of their coworkers were performing at a "level below what is reasonably expected from them on their jobs" and how many, if any, of their coworkers were "performing so poorly that they deserved to be fired." Respondents made their judgments based on their direct knowledge of the work requirements in their work unit and their perceptions of the abilities and willingness of their coworkers to do the work.

Figure 16. Respondent views on how their supervisor manages employee job performance

Percent

Survey statement: My supervisor...

Legend: ■ Agree ■ Neither □ Disagree ■ Don't Know/Can't Judge/NA

Survey statement	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Don't Know/Can't Judge/NA
Retains employees on the basis of their job performance	33	18	23	25
Deals effectively with misconduct on the job	28	23	29	19
Deals effectively with poor performers	19	23	42	16

Source: MSPB, Merit Principles Survey 2000, questions 32, 33, 55f, and 55g.

Based on the reported total number of employees in each work unit, we calculated the percentage of employees in each work unit who were perceived by our respondents as performing below expectations and the percentage of employees who deserved to be fired. Overall, we estimated that an average of 14.3 percent of the employees were judged by their coworkers to be performing below reasonably expected levels. This translates into about one in seven employees who are unable or unwilling to perform satisfactorily. Within this group, 3.7 percent or about one-fourth deserved to be fired, in the opinions of our respondents.[33]
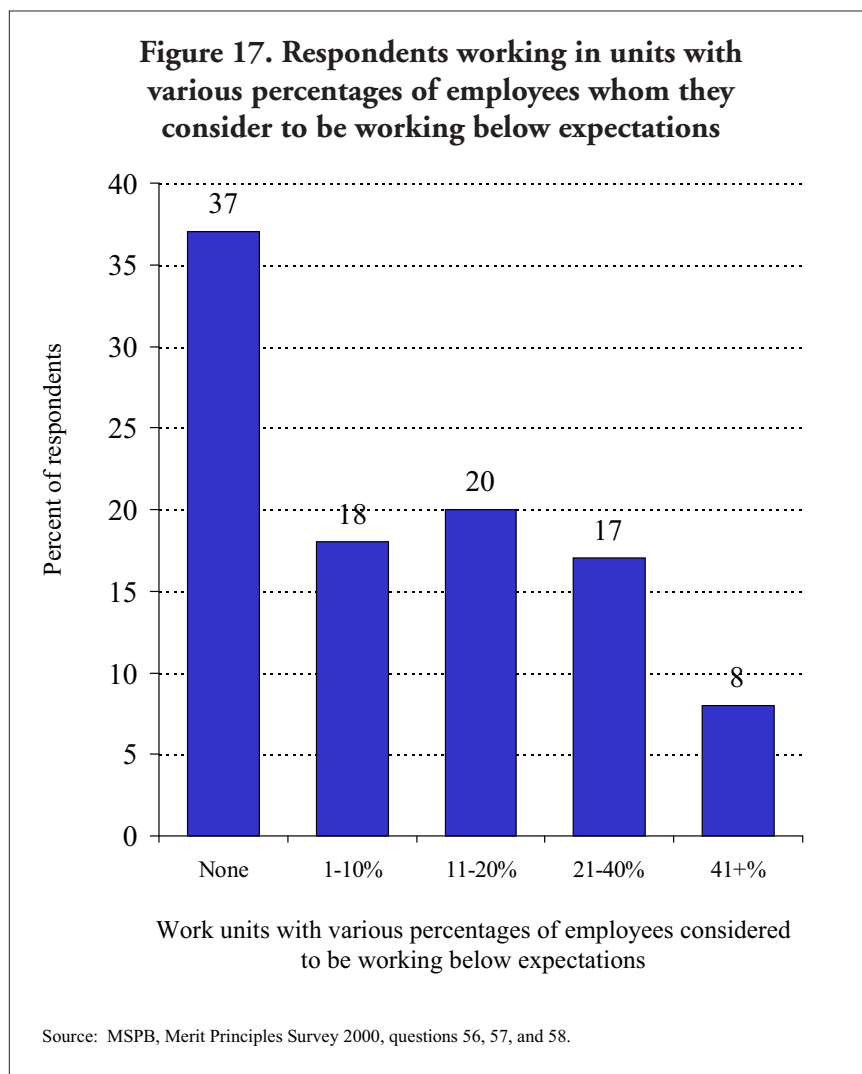
That is approximately one out of every 25 employees. Based on survey responses, the average work unit size was 13 employees, with most (73 percent) of the work units having fewer than 20 employees. Thus, on average, according to our respondents, a typical work unit can expect to have about two employees working below expected levels of performance. The size of the work unit did not seem to affect the percentage of employees working below expectations or deserving to be fired. However, based on numbers alone, large work units are more likely to have greater numbers of employees judged to be performing below expected levels.

On one hand, that 3.7 percent of employees deserve to be fired—in the eyes of their colleagues—in and of itself does not reflect a serious performance management problem in the

Federal Government overall.[34] However, our respondents judged an additional 10.6 percent (14.3 percent minus 3.7 percent) of employees to be performing below expected levels of performance—a finding that represents a sizable proportion of the workforce and therefore cannot be ignored.

Poor Performers and Work Unit Productivity

While figure 17 shows that 37 percent of respondents worked in a unit that had no employees whom they thought worked below

Figure 17. Respondents working in units with various percentages of employees whom they consider to be working below expectations

Percent of respondents

| None | 1-10% | 11-20% | 21-40% | 41+% |

37, 18, 20, 17, 8

Work units with various percentages of employees considered to be working below expectations

Source: MSPB, Merit Principles Survey 2000, questions 56, 57, and 58.

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[33] The 3.9 percent rate reported in our Feb. 2001 *Issues of Merit* newsletter was for unweighted data.

[34] This figure is corroborated by research from the U.S. Office of Personnel Management. See U.S. Office of Personnel Management, *Poor Performers in the Government: A Quest for the True Story*, Jan. 1999, p.9.

expectations, far too many others worked in a unit that was considered to have at least one marginal employee. Almost two-thirds (63 percent) of our respondents worked in units with at least one coworker who was viewed as performing below reasonable expectations. In terms of employees considered deserving to be fired, 70 percent of our respondents worked in units that had no one who fit that category. Conversely, 30 percent worked in units where at least one employee was thought to deserve firing.

Unfortunately, even a small number of poor performers can have a disproportionately large impact on the productivity of a work unit. Our analysis of survey results reveals that employee productivity ratings are related to whether the supervisor deals effectively with poor performers and whether corrective actions are taken when employees do not meet performance standards. Respondents in work units with no employees considered to deserve firing gave twice as many high productivity ratings (ratings of 9 or 10) to their work unit as employees in work units with a worker considered to deserve firing—specifically, 45 percent versus 23 percent.

Performance Management

Managing the performance of employees in the work unit is a primary responsibility of supervisors. In addition, it entails far more than completing periodic formal appraisals of employee performance. Rather, performance management is a systematic process that involves at least five major components, of which performance appraisal is perhaps the least important. These five components are: (a) planning work and setting expectations, (b) continually monitoring performance, (c) developing the capacity to perform, (d) periodically rating performance, and (e) rewarding good performance.[35] Each component is important in its own right and

applies to all the employees in the work unit, including poor performers. Taken together in a balanced and appropriate manner they are key to a highly motivated and productive workforce.

We now look at Federal employee views about each of these components of performance management.

Planning work and setting expectations. It is the responsibility of supervisors to consider the mission of their organization and to divide and assign the work that needs to be accomplished among the employees in their unit in such a way as to best meet the goals of the organization. This is no trivial task and involves careful consideration of the workload, the skills and knowledges required, and the capabilities of the employees in the work unit.

Although a large majority of respondents (83 percent) reported that they knew what was expected of them on their jobs, a significantly smaller proportion—less than two thirds—said that their present job made good use of their skills (63 percent) and that they had the resources to do their job well (62 percent). Based on these responses, supervisors seem to be doing a reasonable job communicating expectations to their employees; but from the perspectives of the subordinates, they are doing less well at matching employee skills to the work and ensuring that adequate resources are provided. Unfortunately, these latter two aspects of supervisory work are critical to productive performance.

Monitoring work and motivating employees. The ongoing interactions between employees and their supervisor about the work being accomplished are perhaps the most important component of performance management. This component, more than any other, can give employees a sense of how they are doing and can motivate them to be as effective as possible. Ideally, through these ongoing

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[35] U.S. Office of Personnel Management, *A Handbook for Measuring Employee Performance: Aligning Employee Performance with Organizational Goals*, rev. Jan. 2001, p. 3.
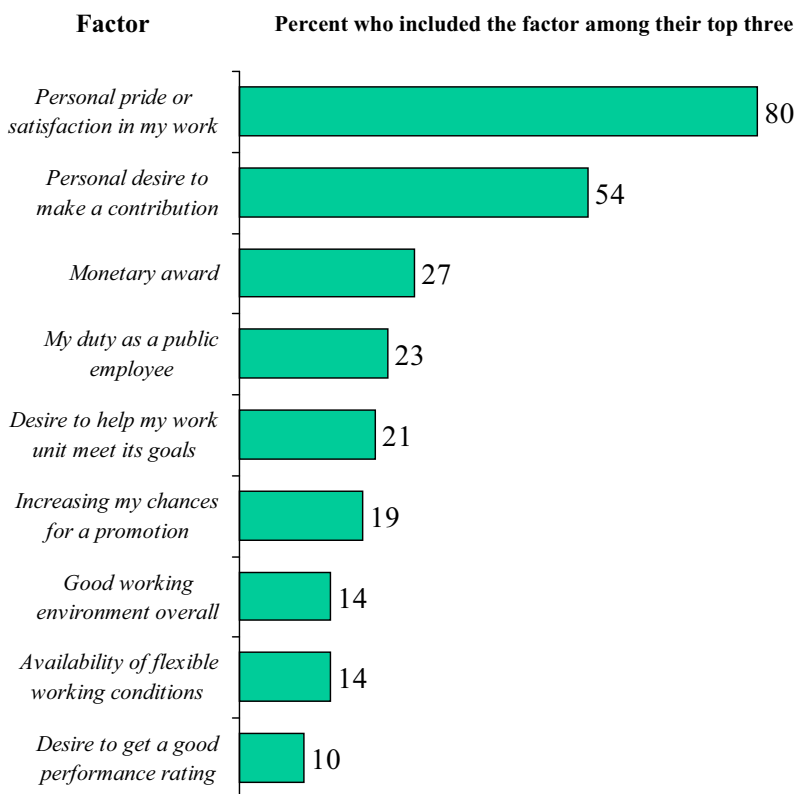
interactions between employees and supervisors, employees learn how their work fits into the goals of the work unit and how it contributes to the larger mission of the agency.

When we asked employees about information sharing on the job, some 60 percent of our respondents said that work-related information was shared freely in their work unit. While this is encouraging, just 46 percent of employees indicated that their supervisor kept them informed about how well they are doing. Notably, when we looked at the responses of employees who were satisfied with their supervisor, this percentage increased to 70 percent. Perhaps even more importantly, among employees who were not satisfied with their supervisor, only 8 percent said they were informed about how they were doing.

As part of performance monitoring, it is important for supervisors to be fully aware of the factors that motivate their employees so they can tailor their daily interactions accordingly. From the results of our survey, we find that most employees are self-motivated and want to contribute to their organization. When asked to select 3 of 15 factors that motivate them to do a good job, an overwhelming majority (80 percent) said they are motivated to do a good job by personal pride or satisfaction with their work, as shown in figure 18. Their second greatest motivator was a personal desire to make a contribution (54 percent). Monetary awards came in a distant third, selected by just 27 percent of the respondents.

Developing a capacity to perform. As discussed earlier, changes in technology, insufficient staff,

Figure 18. Respondents identify the factors that most motivate them to do a good job

Factor	Percent who included the factor among their top three
Personal pride or satisfaction in my work	80
Personal desire to make a contribution	54
Monetary award	27
My duty as a public employee	23
Desire to help my work unit meet its goals	21
Increasing my chances for a promotion	19
Good working environment overall	14
Availability of flexible working conditions	14
Desire to get a good performance rating	10

Note: Respondents were asked to mark the three factors that most motivate them to do a good job. Six additional motivators selected by less than 10% of the respondents are not shown here.

Source: MSPB, Merit Principles Survey 2000, question 43.

skill imbalances, and erosion of institutional memory have resulted in nearly half the workforce saying they need more training to perform their job effectively. The challenge for organizations will be to strategically plan to address this issue and to ensure that adequate funding is available for the implementation of the plan. The challenge for supervisors will be to work with their employees to identify training needs based on where their organizations are headed and to support employees in their efforts to develop the skills and knowledges they need to do their work effectively, today, and in the future.

Performance appraisal. One of the tools managers have available to help manage the performance of employees in their work unit is the formal

performance appraisal. However, over the years, agencies have struggled with their performance appraisal systems, and for a variety of reasons an increasingly large percentage of employees receive very high ratings. For example, 32 percent of GS13-15 employees received ratings of "Outstanding" in FY1991. By FY1996, this proportion had risen to 49 percent.[36]
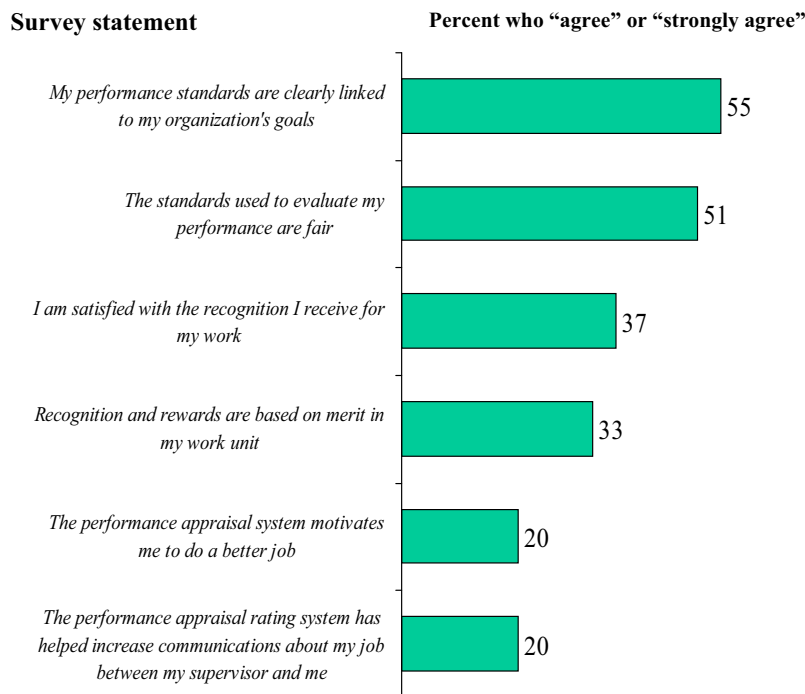
Employee responses to our survey clearly confirm that many current performance appraisal systems are not a meaningful performance management tool. For example, only 20 percent of the respondents said that their performance appraisal system motivated them to do a better job, as shown in figure 19.

While performance appraisal systems can also be used as tools to communicate to employees what is expected from them and how their work is related to the goals of the organization, it appears that these objectives are not being met. Only 20 percent of our respondents said that their performance appraisal system had helped communication with the supervisor about their job, and only 55 percent of respondents said their performance standards were clearly linked to organizational goals.

While these responses about the performance appraisal systems suggest that employees do not know what is expected of them, this is not the case. In fact, as discussed earlier, a large majority (83 percent) of respondents said they know what is expected from them on their job. What is clear from these responses is that their knowledge did not derive from the performance appraisal process. It also appears that it may be time for the Government to define what role, if any, it wants performance appraisals to have. More often than not, current systems do little to communicate expectations, do not meaningfully distinguish among levels of performance, and may be more demotivating than motivating.

Rewarding outstanding performance. Successful organizations make effective use of performance feedback and appropriately award and recognize individuals and teams for their valued contributions to the organization. Because effective behavior is so significantly shaped by its

Figure 19. Respondents agreeing with statements about their performance standards and feedback

Survey statement

Percent who "agree" or "strongly agree"

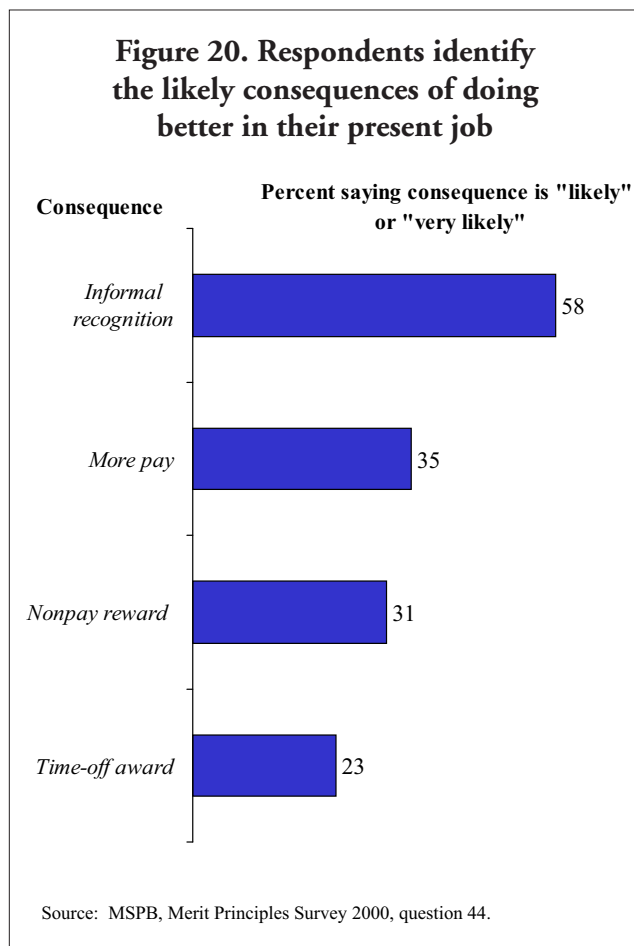| Survey statement	
My performance standards are clearly linked to my organization's goals	55
The standards used to evaluate my performance are fair	51
I am satisfied with the recognition I receive for my work	37
Recognition and rewards are based on merit in my work unit	33
The performance appraisal system motivates me to do a better job	20
The performance appraisal rating system has helped increase communications about my job between my supervisor and me	20

Source: MSPB, Merit Principles Survey 2000, questions 18, 19, 20, 21, 24, and 25.

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[36] U.S. Office of Personnel Management, *The Fact Book: Federal Civilian Workforce Statistics, 1999 Edition*, Sept. 1999, pp. 70-71.

consequences, it is important that employees receive the recognition they deserve and perceive a clear link between awards and performance.

While Federal employees may be largely motivated by personal pride to do a good job, this does not mean they do not need or deserve recognition. Figure 20 shows that some 58 percent of our

Figure 20. Respondents identify the likely consequences of doing better in their present job

Consequence	Percent saying consequence is "likely" or "very likely"
Informal recognition	58
More pay	35
Nonpay reward	31
Time-off award	23

Source: MSPB, Merit Principles Survey 2000, question 44.

respondents noted that informal recognition (e.g., being told they do good work) was the most likely consequence of their performing better on the job. Only about one-third of the respondents said that more pay (35 percent) and nonpay rewards, such as letters of commendation (31 percent), were likely consequences of doing better in their jobs. Time-off awards were even less likely consequences—only 23 percent of employees

indicated this was a likely consequence of good performance.

Overall, just 33 percent of respondents said that recognition and awards in their work unit were based on merit. Many employees clearly feel that they don't get the recognition they deserve. Only about one-third (37 percent) of our respondents were satisfied with the recognition they received for their work. Even among respondents who were satisfied with their supervisor, barely over half (53 percent) said they were satisfied with the recognition they received. Thus, while informal recognition may be the most likely consequence of good performance, supervisors are either providing it far less than employees feel they deserve, or employees want some other type of recognition. There are still many supervisors who don't know how to provide recognition, are unaware of the need to do so, or simply are not interested in providing such recognition to their deserving employees.

This is not to imply that all employees deserve equal recognition. Effective performance management must communicate standards and expectations and must link recognition and awards to the relative value of contributions made to the organization. However, in the views of our respondents, this is not currently happening.

Experiences and Beliefs About Discrimination

The Merit Principles clearly state that in an endeavor to achieve a Federal workforce from all segments of society, selection and advancement should be determined solely on the basis of relative ability, knowledge and skills....[37] Conversely, the Prohibited Personnel Practices specifically forbid discrimination for or against any employee or applicant based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, handicapping condition, marital status, or political affiliation.[38]

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[37] Section 2301, Title 5, USC.

[38] Section 2302, Title 5, USC.

In accordance with these statutory mandates and its oversight responsibilities, MSPB has continuously monitored the representation of "protected" subgroups in the Federal workforce.[39] During the last decade, significant gains in representation have occurred for many of the protected subgroups in most occupational groups, including improvements at higher grade levels and in executive positions. The importance of this issue is reflected in the changing attitudes of current Federal employees, with 52 percent of our survey respondents agreeing that workforce diversity should be taken into account in the hiring process, compared to 44 percent in 1992.

Over the years, in addition to monitoring the demographic diversity of the workforce, we have been asking employees about their perceptions and personal experiences with various types of discrimination.[40] Generally, the results have changed very little over time, although there are clear differences among types of discrimination involved.

Personal experiences with discrimination. As in prior administrations of the merit principles survey, we asked employees to tell us if they felt they had been denied a job, promotion, or other job benefit in the preceding 2 years based on their race/national origin, sex, age, handicapping condition, religion, marital status, or political affiliation. As shown in table 2, for the three most recent administrations (1992, 1996, and 2000) of the Merit Principles Survey, respondents varied relatively little in the frequency with which they reported experiencing each type of discrimination across time. However, the reported experiences with discrimination did vary considerably based on the type of discrimination involved. While discrimination based on handicapping conditions, religion, marital status, and political affiliation

Table 2. Trend of respondents who said they were denied a job, promotion, or other job benefit because of unlawful discrimination, 1992, 1996, and 2000

Basis of the unlawful discrimination	Percent who "agree" or "strongly agree"		
	Survey Year		
	1992	1996	2000
Race/national origin	12	15	12
Sex	12	13	11
Age	10	11	11
Handicapping condition	3	2	3
Religion	2	2	2
Marital status	3	3	2
Political affiliation	2	3	1

Source: MSPB, Merit Principles Survey 2000.

were reported by 3 percent or less of our survey respondents, discrimination based on race/national origin, sex, and age, were consistently reported by 10 percent or more.

It is important to recognize that overall levels of reported discrimination often mask some notably higher levels of discrimination reported by members of some subgroups. For example, based on responses to our MPS2000 survey, minority employees were on average three times as likely to report experiencing race-based discrimination than were nonminority employees (23 percent versus 7 percent). Similarly, older employees were twice as likely as younger ones to report age-based discrimination (19 percent versus 9 percent).

Although table 2 shows that employees reported significant levels of discrimination based on sex,

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[39] For example, U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, *Fair and Equitable Treatment: A Progress Report on Minority Employment in the Federal Government*, Aug. 1996; *A Question of Equity: Women and the Glass Ceiling in the Federal Government*, Oct. 1992.

[40] Because sexual orientation is not a statutorily protected class category, it was not included among our list of categories of discrimination. However, this is an issue that might need to be addressed in future surveys. Many survey respondents suggested that this item needed to be included on our next survey.

there were no differences between the perceptions of men and women on this question. Eleven percent of women and 10 percent of men reported being victims of discrimination based on sex. However, although there were no differences between the two groups, it is nonetheless disturbing that about 1 out of every 10 men and women in 2000 still believed they had been discriminated against because of their sex.

Perceptions of discrimination. On our MPS2000 survey, we replicated some questions from a special survey we conducted in 1993 about minority career advancement in the Federal workforce. In that 1993 survey we asked respondents to tell us their views about the incidents of flagrant discrimination based on race or national origin. At that time, we found perceptual differences so large that they suggested that minority and nonminority employees may have a difficult time understanding one another's perspectives and that much work still needed to be done to replace misinformation with facts and stereotypes with awareness.[41] Given the magnitude of the perceptual differences we found, it was important to determine if any of the perceptions had changed since 1993.

Accordingly, we asked our MPS2000 survey respondents the same question that was part of our 1993 study, "In your organization, to what extent do you believe that employees from each of the following groups are subjected to flagrant and obvious discriminatory practices that hinder their career development?"

The information in table 3, which compares how employees responded on the two occasions, shows a continuation of dramatic and almost identical differences among minority and nonminority subgroups in perceptions of flagrant discrimination. Large proportions of employees from each minority subgroup believed that members of their own subgroup were subjected to flagrant discrimination. This view was most

prevalent among African Americans, 54 percent of whom thought in 2000 (55 percent in 1993) that African Americans were victims of discrimination to a "great extent" or "moderate extent."

Consistently, each minority subgroup perceived the greatest flagrant discrimination against members of their own subgroup. On the other hand, nonminority employees (Whites) seldom reported (less than 5 percent in both survey years) that they perceived flagrant discrimination against members of any of the minority subgroups. Intermediate levels of flagrant discrimination were reported when minority employees were asked about incidents of flagrant discrimination against members of another minority subgroup.

We also looked at race/national origin subgroup differences in a number of other areas related to the job. While we found differences among minorities and nonminorities about how they think they are treated on the job, as shown in table 4 the differences were small compared to those reported above. The largest differences concerned flexibility and information sharing: a higher percentage of minority respondents than nonminorities said they had flexibility to accomplish their work and a higher percentage of nonminorities than minorities said information was being shared freely in their work unit. Notably, when asked about being treated with respect in the work unit, receiving recognition for their work, their job making good use of their skills, and rewards being based on merit, the differences between minority and nonminority respondents were virtually nonexistent.

Perceptions About Prohibited Personnel Practices

In addition to being prohibited from discriminating against employees, agency officials in our Federal civil service system are expressly prohibited from engaging in a variety of other

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[41] U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, *Fair and Equitable Treatment: A Progress Report on Minority Employment in the Federal Government*, Aug. 1996, p. xiv.

Table 3. Extent to which respondents believe minorities are subjected to discrimination based on their race/national origin, 1993 and 2000

Percent of respondents in each of 4 subgroups who perceived flagrant discrimination against each minority subgroup to a "moderate" or "great extent," 1993 and 2000

Survey year	Percentage who perceived discrimination against African Americans		
	African Americans	Other Minority	Whites
1993	55	15	4
2000	54	13	3

Survey year	Percentage who perceived discrimination against Asian Americans		
	Asian Americans	Other Minority	Whites
1993	21	14	3
2000	23	13	1

Survey year	Percentage who perceived discrimination against Hispanics		
	Hispanics	Other Minority	Whites
1993	28	23	3
2000	31	20	2

Survey year	Percentage who perceived discrimination against Native Americans		
	Native Americans	Other Minority	Whites
1993	19	15	5
2000	27	11	2

Notes: Percentages are based on all respondents, including those who marked "Don't Know/Can't Judge." The percentage of respondents marking "Don't Know/Can't Judge" ranged from 20% to 50%, depending on whether the subgroup that was perceived to be discriminated against was their own or another subgroup.

Source: MSPB, Survey of Federal Employees 1993, question 46; Merit Principles Survey 2000, question 63.

Table 4. Minority versus nonminority views about treatment on the job

Survey statement	Percent who "agree" or "strongly agree"	
	Minority	Nonminority
I have been given more flexibility in how I accomplish my work.	56	49
I receive the training I need to perform my job.	59	55
Recognition and rewards are based on merit in my work unit.	34	34
In general, I am satisfied with my job.	66	67
I am satisfied with the recognition I receive for my work.	36	38
My present job makes good use of my skills and abilities.	62	64
I am treated with respect in my work unit.	69	72
Overall, I am satisfied with my supervisor.	55	59
A spirit of cooperation and teamwork exists in my work unit.	52	57
Information is shared freely in my work unit.	55	62

Source: MSPB, Merit Principles Survey 2000, questions 1, 5, 6, 12, 14, 15, 20, 21, 27, and 35.

personnel practices. These prohibitions are designed, in part, to help ensure that Federal employment decisions are made without regard to political affiliation or favoritism and to ensure that employees have appeal rights that they can exercise freely without fear of retaliation.

Participation in political activities. Agency officials are expressly prohibited from pressuring employees or applicants to engage in partisan political activity or to act for or against others for political reasons. While certain restrictions of the Hatch Act[42] were lifted in 1993 and many Federal employees have been legally permitted to participate more actively in a variety of partisan political activities, the

prohibited personnel practices specified for agency officials remain illegal.

In our December 2000 *Issues of Merit* newsletter we reported that based on the results of our MPS2000 survey, most Federal employees are not particularly active in partisan political activity. We found that only 11 percent had participated in some partisan political activity in the past 2 years, up from 7 percent in 1996. We do not know if the 11-percent participation rate might have been higher had our survey—conducted in the spring of 2000—been conducted closer to the time of the presidential election. We do know, however, that the 11-percent participation rate is substantially

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[42] While the Civil Service Act of 1883 was traditionally designed to prevent Federal employees from being forced to provide political service, the Hatch Act in 1939 went further and prohibited Federal employees from active participation in partisan political activity even if it were done voluntarily. Over time these prohibitions came to be considered too restrictive and in 1993, with some exceptions, most Federal employees were permitted to engage actively in a wide variety of partisan political activities when off duty and outside of their workplace.

lower than the 31 percent of employees who said in our 1992 Merit Principles Survey that they wanted to participate more fully in partisan political activity.

Without a basis for comparison, it is impossible to say if an 11 percent participation rate is high or low. However, a University of Michigan national survey of voting-age citizens found that just 5 percent of their respondents had participated in political activity, where participation was defined as attendance at any public meetings, rallies, speeches, dinners, and similar affairs in support of a particular candidate.[43]

Based on these comparisons with voting-age citizens, it may be that Federal employees are slightly more likely to participate in partisan political activities than the average voter. This greater level of participation is what might be expected from our earlier findings that an important motivator for many Federal employees is a desire to make a contribution. This view would comport with the long-held view in the public administration literature that Government service attracts individuals with a service orientation.[44]

While Federal employees may personally and voluntarily participate in lawful partisan political activities, as discussed above, they may not be coerced by any agency official into doing so. Fortunately, this prohibited personnel practice occurs very rarely. Only 1 percent of our respondents reported unlawful pressure from an agency official to engage in partisan political activities. Similarly, only 1 percent reported that they had been pressured to retaliate or act for or against another employee or applicant for political reasons.

Unlawful influence on personnel actions. Agency officials also are prohibited from giving unfair advantages to anyone involved in a personnel action or to use their position of influence to unfairly affect the outcome of any such action. While we saw earlier that about half of our respondents who felt able to make a judgment agreed that their supervisor used fair and open competition and selected the best-qualified candidates for selection and promotion, not every respondent agreed. In fact, about 30 percent of the respondents able to make a judgment disagreed.

Table 5 confirms that not all employees view the staffing practices in their agency favorably. About one in five (22 percent) of our respondents believed they have been denied a job because an unfair advantage was given to another. Some 14 percent reported that they were misled about their right to compete for a job. A few respondents reported nepotism and pressure to withdraw from competition (both 4 percent).

The data for these prohibited personnel practices are quite stable and do not notably differ from data obtained in previous administrations of our merit principles surveys. Nevertheless, the results suggest that there remains an unacceptably large portion of employees who believe that agency selecting officials provide employees with misleading information about their right to compete for jobs or that these officials use the system to give an unfair advantage to another.

As with other perceptual data, the information presented in table 5 may not always give an entirely accurate picture of the actual incidence rate of these prohibited personnel practices. Employees who are not selected for a job or

[43] The National Election Studies (NES), Center for Political Studies, University of Michigan, "The 1998 NES Post-Election Survey," in the *NES Guide to Public Opinion and Electoral Behavior* from http://www.umich.edu/~nes/nesguide/nesguide.htm on Mar. 13, 2001.

[44] Gene E. Brewer, Sally Coleman Selden, and Rex L. Facer II, "Individual Conceptions of Public Service Motivation," *Public Administration Review*, May 2000, v. 60i3, p. 254.

Table 5. Trend of respondent experiences with prohibited personnel practices, 1986, 1989, 1992, 1996, and 2000

Survey statement	Percent who "agree" or "strongly agree" Survey Year				
	1986	1989	1992	1996	2000
In the past 2 years, do you feel you have been…					
Denied a job or promotion because one of the selecting or recommending officials gave an unfair advantage to another applicant	—	—	19	25	22
Deliberately misled by an agency official about your right to compete for a job or promotion	—	—	16	18	14
Influenced by an agency official to withdraw from competition for a Federal job or promotion in order to help another person's chances of getting that job or promotion?	4	5	5	5	4
Denied a job or promotion which went instead to the relative of one of the selecting or recommending officials?	6	6	4	5	4

Note: A dash (—) indicates a year in which this question was not asked.

Source: MSPB, Merit Principles Surveys: 1986, question 12; 1989, question 33; 1992, question 48; 1996, question 49; and 2000, question 66.

promotion far outnumber those who are selected. It is human nature (and likely very often the case) for employees not selected to attribute their nonselection to factors other than any deficiencies in their own qualifications. Nonselected employees may also not be fully aware of the selection criteria, the qualifications of other candidates, or details of the selection/promotion process to make an accurate assessment, as evidenced by the sizable portion of respondents saying they were unable to make a judgment. Also, there is evidence that a significant portion of competitions for internal merit promotion actions may be conducted to conclusion even when the selecting official already has a clear "best candidate" in mind based on a knowledge of the actual job performance of the candidates involved. Factors such as these can certainly affect how employees view the personnel actions of their supervisors and their reports of these prohibited personnel practices.[45]

Formal disclosures, appeals, and retaliation. The prohibited personnel practices and whistleblower protection laws were designed to give employees rights to grieve or appeal many personnel actions and to permit employees to make lawful disclosures concerning issues of health and safety dangers, unlawful behaviors, and fraud, waste, or abuse. In particular, the laws place strong sanctions against any individual who retaliates against another for exercising such lawful rights or for making such lawful disclosures.

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[45] For a more in-depth discussion of this issue, U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, *The Federal Merit Promotion Program: Process vs. Outcome*, Dec. 2001.

**Table 6. Trend of respondent experiences with retaliation
or threats of retaliation, 1992, 1996, and 2000**

Survey statement	Percent who "agree" or "strongly agree" Survey Year		
	1992	1996	2000
In the past 2 years, do you feel you have been retaliated against or threatened with retaliation for…			
Exercising any appeal, complaint, or grievance right? *	11	12	9
Making a disclosure concerning health and safety dangers, unlawful behavior, and/or fraud, waste, and abuse? *	8	7	7
Testifying for or otherwise assisting any individual in the exercise of whistleblowing, equal opportunity, or appeal right?	6	6	5
Refusing to obey an unlawful order?	4	3	2
Reporting unwanted sexual attention or sexual harassment?	—	2	1

Notes: In the two questions with an asterisk (*), the retaliation reported could be the result of either formal or informal actions or disclosures. A dash (—) indicates a year in which this question was not asked.

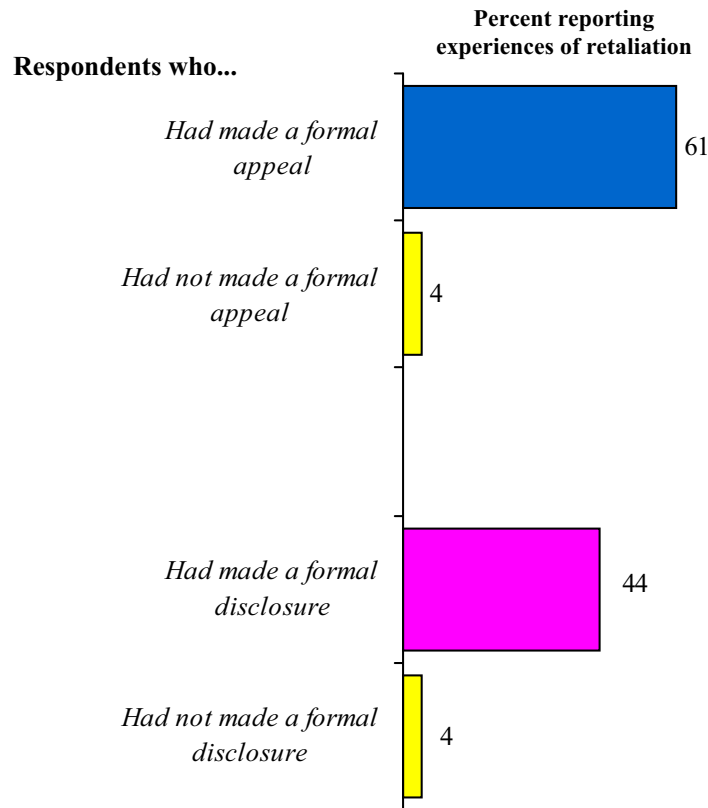Source: MSPB, Merit Principles Survey 2000, question 67.

As we reported in our December 2000 *Issues of Merit* newsletter and as table 6 shows, survey respondents—overall—reported feeling retaliated against for making lawful disclosures or for exercising an appeal right less than 10 percent of the time (7 percent and 9 percent, respectively). These percentages were quite similar to those found in our 1996 and 1992 surveys. It is important to note that these reported feelings of retaliation derived from respondents who may or may not have made any formal disclosures or appeals.

While this overall perception of retaliation is relatively low, it is important to look at this rate separately for employees who actually had taken some formal action versus those who had not. One would expect few, if any, reports of retaliation from employees who had not made any disclosures or exercised any appeals rights. Therefore, a more precise measure of the perceived rate of retaliation

is that derived from the survey respondents who had actually taken some formal action.

It turns out that 7 percent of our respondents said they had made a formal disclosure of unlawful behaviors, waste, fraud, or abuse and 9 percent reported that they had exercised a formal appeal, complaint, or grievance right. (It is coincidental that these percentages are identical to the percentages of respondents reporting feeling retaliated against, but the respondents involved are not identical.) It is difficult to say whether the magnitude of these percentages should be a source of concern. Without knowing more about the nature of the formal actions taken or their context (e.g., level of actual or alleged wrongdoing), an evaluation of the findings is impossible without further exploration. For example, while both questions asked respondents about formal actions they had taken, it is not clear how respondents may have interpreted "formal." Also, rates of

Figure 21. Retaliation experienced by respondents who had or had not made formal disclosures or appeals

Respondents who...

Percent reporting experiences of retaliation

Had made a formal appeal — 61

Had not made a formal appeal — 4

Had made a formal disclosure — 44

Had not made a formal disclosure — 4

Source: MSPB, Merit Principles Survey 2000, questions 61a, 61b, 67a, and 67b.

disclosure or appeals are affected not only by the level of perceived wrongdoing but by how confident employees are that they will not be retaliated against for taking any formal action. These are questions worth pursuing in future possible studies.

Figure 21 compares respondents who had taken formal action with those who had not and shows the extent to which they perceived retaliation. The differences are dramatic. Respondents who had made a formal disclosure reported retaliation 44 percent of the time—a rate not unlike the 37 percent rate reported in a special Board report on whistleblowing in 1993.[46] Even more disturbing, some 61 percent of respondents (or 6 out of 10)

who had exercised a formal appeal right felt they had been retaliated against for their action. On the other hand, the over 90 percent majority of respondents who had not taken any formal actions reported virtually no retaliation—just 4 percent. This 4 percent may reflect perceptions of retaliation in response to some informal actions that may have been taken by these respondents. Even if the facts do not support the high levels of retaliation reported, that such a large proportion of respondents perceived retaliation after having taken formal action could have a profoundly negative impact on workplace dynamics, future lawful disclosures or exercise of appeal rights, employee morale, and productivity.

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[46] U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, *Whistleblowing in the Federal Government: An Update*, Oct. 1993, p. ii.

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Conclusions and Recommendations

The opinions and experiences of our survey respondents clearly attest to the fact that a human capital crisis is now occurring in the Federal Government. Ignoring this crisis can only further weaken the Federal civil service, but trying to address it will not be easy. In this report, we have tried to highlight a number of problem areas—based on employee experiences and perceptions—that may be significant contributors to the weakening of the health of the Federal civil service. It is up to agency management to address those problems, if we are to make progress in improving the current state of affairs.

While the Federal employees responding to our survey consider the Government's workforce to be productive, the scope and manner of the downsizing of the last decade and the limited influx of new hires have left many work units with what they perceive to be insufficient staff and a serious erosion of institutional memory. Employee job satisfaction ratings, which have generally been extremely stable, have taken a downward turn, and many of our respondents believe they need more training to perform their jobs effectively—a possible consequence of the unprecedented rate of technological and organizational change in recent years.

Against this backdrop, the Federal workforce must face a number of potentially serious changes. For example, it is quite likely that the number of retirements will increase as more and more baby boomers reach retirement eligibility. The magnitude of the increase will vary greatly from organization to organization and work unit to work unit. No one knows for sure if the baby boomers will follow the traditional pattern of turnover or whether external factors such as the economy or job market will significantly alter current projections.

In addition to dealing with the challenges of employee departures, Federal agencies must be concerned about their ability to attract and retain employees to fill in behind those who leave. There are already serious skill shortages in many occupations and in many agencies. Based on sound workforce analyses and strategic plans, the Government needs to improve the quality of its hiring decisions to begin to offset current worker shortages and skill imbalances and to prepare the workforce for future knowledge losses.

However, while there is great potential that turnover in the coming 5 to 10 years could exacerbate the present human capital crisis, we do have some insight into potential incentives for avoiding excessive turnover. Overall, declines in job satisfaction help to bring home the point that there are problems in the workplace. We have noted some of the factors that affect employee decisions to leave or stay in the job. We have also discussed numerous issues—from employee views of their supervisor's performance to the occurrence of prohibited personnel practices—that have the potential to threaten workforce productivity as well as to discourage employees from staying in

the Federal service. It is imperative that Federal managers address these challenges in order to have an impact on the worsening human capital crisis. Some of the more critical management challenges raised in this report and the responses we recommend to address them are discussed below.

Identifying Skill Imbalances and Planning Corrections

Agency managers need to ensure an appropriate match between employee skills and the skills needed for jobs in the agency. If skill shortages or imbalances exist, agency managers need to ensure that the agency is engaging in strategic planning to correct those shortcomings by incorporating such planning into recruitment and hiring practices, as well as employee development initiatives.

The right balance of skills between employees and jobs is critical not only for enabling employees to be productive but also to discourage valued employees from leaving the agency because of dissatisfaction with the work. To ensure an appropriate match between skills needed and skills on hand, agency managers need to involve supervisors in the strategic planning process and ensure that the supervisors understand how their human resource management actions (e.g., with regard to recruitment, selection, and development) have direct impact on the agency's ability to meet its long-range goals.

Improving Hiring Practices

Once skill imbalances are identified, many agencies will need to improve their hiring strategies in order to address those imbalances. This will likely involve making the hiring process faster, since some candidates with needed skills will be in demand, and prolonged hiring processes may mean losing good candidates. However, effectiveness of the hiring process in identifying the best available candidates (especially when trying to address skill imbalances in the workforce) is perhaps even more critical, and must be addressed. As noted in previous Board reports,

agencies need to ensure that the best assessment tools available and practical for use are incorporated into their selection strategies.

Taking Career Development Seriously

Another important aspect of addressing skill imbalances concerns the development of employees. Agency supervisors need to realize that employee development is part of their jobs as supervisors and is critical to long-term mission accomplishment. Decisions about training and other developmental activities need to be based on what is most appropriate for the organization's needs in the long run. Previous Board studies have found that agency training decisions are often based on self-nomination by employees rather than a thoughtful collaborative effort between employees and their supervisors to address agency skill needs. Supervisors should be much more strategically involved in training decisions, looking more closely at their work unit to identify training needs that should be addressed. Supervisors should place greater emphasis on continuous learning programs and become much more involved in their agency's strategic planning to ensure that program budgets adequately support necessary training. Previous Board studies have found that commitment to training budgets is lacking in many agencies (with training budgets often being the first cut during times of fiscal constraint). If skill needs in the current workforce are to be adequately addressed, training programs must be adequately funded and supported by agency management.

Improving Supervisor Communication Skills

Agencies should work to ensure that all current supervisors have the interpersonal skills needed to communicate effectively with their employees. And agency managers must select future supervisors who have the ability to communicate effectively with their employees, even when the information to be communicated is negative; who are fully aware of the critical importance of

communicating well with their employees; and who have the desire to do this.

To this end, agency managers should begin now to promote a culture in which supervisors understand that communicating effectively with employees on a regular basis is a critical aspect of their jobs. Supervisors should view the responsibility as critical because it helps employees understand the role their work plays in the accomplishment of organizational goals, provides employees with feedback concerning their performance (both to encourage the continuance of good performance and to help correct poor performance); promotes better relations among members of the workgroup when perceived inequities exist; and creates an "open" environment in which employees feel safe in disclosing observations of illegal or inappropriate acts.

Elevating the Importance of Performance Management

In terms of performance feedback, agency managers should take a close look at their performance management and appraisal systems to ensure that they encourage ongoing and frequent discussions about performance between supervisors and employees. More importantly, agency managers need to ensure that all supervisors understand that while the performance appraisal is a tool to aid supervisor communication about performance with their employees, effective performance management must be an ongoing interaction between supervisors and their employees.

Improving the Selection of Supervisors

Agencies need to ensure that their supervisory selection systems focus on critical supervisory skills and abilities—such as communication skills—to the same extent that they focus on technical skills. As the Board has previously reported, many agencies promote individuals into supervisory positions based on their technical skill rather than

on their "human relations" skills and abilities. Agencies should focus on selecting for supervisory positions only those who possess necessary competencies, and seek other ways to reward employees who just perform well in technical aspects of the job.

Dealing with Weak Supervisors

At the same time, agencies should address ways to handle current supervisory employees who are not well suited to perform in those positions, such as through additional training and development, or movement to a nonsupervisory role in the organization.

Emphasizing the Positives About Federal Employment

Our survey respondents have provided us insight into the aspects of Federal employment that people who choose to work for (and stay with) the Federal Government find most appealing. Federal recruiters in their campaigns to attract talented individuals to Federal jobs should emphasize this information. This is especially important when trying to compete against private sector employers in tight labor markets where salary differences have tended to give private sector recruiters the edge. For example, Federal recruiters should emphasize the highly regarded benefits programs and job security associated with Federal employment, as well as the varied types of duties and challenging responsibilities that Federal jobs can offer.

Addressing Employee Mistrust of the Selection and Promotion Process

Agency management should be as open as possible about how they hire and promote employees within the agency. Information such as the number of anticipated promotional opportunities and requirements for promotion should be widely disseminated so that employees have a fuller understanding of their chances for being promoted.

As discussed in a previous Board report,[47] one reason that so many employees are unhappy with and distrust their organization's selection and merit promotion processes is that they do not always have a complete understanding of what their opportunities for selection and advancement actually are. In addition, applicants and employees often do not understand the basis for the selection/promotion decisions.

By sharing information about the criteria that will be applied by managers making selection and promotion decisions, and how candidate qualifications match with those criteria, agencies will help applicants make better choices about which jobs to apply for. Such information will help reduce the number of applications from unqualified candidates. Moreover, by educating employees about agency statistics concerning hiring and promotion rates and patterns, employees already onboard can develop more realistic expectations about their own opportunities for advancement within their career fields. For example, our research has shown that many employees expect to be promoted within 2 years of achieving a particular grade. In fact, however, employees may stay at the same grade level for 10 to 15 years once they reach journey levels in their occupations.

Dealing More Effectively with Poor Performers

Agency managers need to ensure that they have created a culture that supports supervisors in more effectively addressing the problem of poor performers.

Over the past two decades, the Board has frequently addressed the issue of dealing with poor performers. However, based on responses in the MPS2000 survey, this is still an issue of great concern to employees and supervisors alike. While it is easy to blame supervisors for not dealing effectively with problem performers, there are a number of factors that can impede supervisors from doing so. It is an issue that agencies must address from the top of the organization. To that end, we encourage agency management to:

◆ Provide supervisors advice and assistance when they are trying to take appropriate action against a problem performer, or aid them in placing the poor performer into a position that might be a better match of skills and abilities.

◆ Reward supervisors who, by addressing performance problems, are taking a strategic approach to performance management and goal accomplishment, even when it means that short-term goals might go unmet. Also make the organization's other supervisors aware when one has been so rewarded.

◆ Work to find less costly, more efficient, and less disruptive strategies for handling performance problems rather than taking formal actions.

◆ Ensure that their supervisors are both willing and able to handle performance problems as they arise. This may mean adopting new ways of selecting individuals for supervisory positions, as well as training current supervisors or moving current supervisors to nonsupervisory jobs.

Ensuring a Culture Free from Reprisals

Agency managers need to ensure that they have created a culture in their organization that protects employees from reprisals for exercising their appeal rights or for blowing the whistle on instances of waste, fraud, or abuse.

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[47] *U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board*, The Federal Merit Promotion Program: Process vs. Outcome, *Dec. 2001.*

Appendix 1: The Merit Principles Survey 2000

U.S. MERIT SYSTEMS PROTECTION BOARD
1120 Vermont Avenue, NW.
Washington, DC 20419

January 2000

MERIT PRINCIPLES SURVEY 2000

Dear Federal Coworker:

We are interested in what you think about your work and your work environment.
I know how busy people are these days, but I hope you will be able to spare a little time to
help us by responding to this survey. You are part of a relatively small random sample of
government employees whose views will represent the views of the larger federal
workforce. You can make a difference.

This effort is an important part of the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board's (MSPB)
oversight of the "health" of the federal civil service. MSPB has been conducting this survey
approximately every three years since 1983. The findings will go to the President,
Congress, federal managers, and other decision makers.

All your responses to this survey will be **strictly confidential.** The survey should take you
about **20 to 30 minutes to complete**, depending on the number of questions you are asked
to answer. The survey **may be completed at your work site or at home.** Additional
information about this survey—and a summary of the eventual findings—will be available
by clicking the "STUDIES" icon on MSPB's website (*www.mspb.gov*).

Please complete the survey and **return it in the enclosed prepaid envelope within 5 days
after you receive it.** If you have any questions about this survey, please contact us on our
survey hotline at (202) 653-6772, Ext. 1337 or via e-mail at SURVEY2000@mspb.gov.

Thank you very much for contributing to this important project.

Sincerely,

John M. Palguta
Director, Policy and Evaluation

MERIT PRINCIPLES SURVEY 2000

This survey asks for your opinions on a variety of personnel issues. **You will not be asked to answer every question** on this survey and instructions will tell you which questions to skip.

The survey is divided into the following three sections:

> **SECTION I, COMPLETED BY ALL EMPLOYEES,** covers a wide range of topics, including your job, your work unit, your supervisor and coworkers, reasons for staying or leaving government, personnel practices, and individual and organizational performance.

> **SECTION II, COMPLETED BY SUPERVISORS,** specifically covers difficulties encountered in filling vacancies, selection procedures used, and problems in dealing with poor performers.

> **SECTION III, COMPLETED BY ALL EMPLOYEES,** covers individual background information for use in comparing the perceptions of different employee subgroups.

DEFINITIONS USED IN THIS SURVEY

Throughout the federal government there are many different interpretations of work, work units, and levels of supervision. To guide your interpretation and for the purposes of this survey, your:

WORK UNIT is the group of people you work with on a regular basis and with whom you most identify. This will usually be the group of <u>employees working for the same immediate supervisor. A</u> work unit is generally larger than a "team" and may include one or more teams led by "team leaders."

IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR is the person who generally is the first person to sign your performance appraisal rating.

ORGANIZATION refers to the next higher unit to which your work unit belongs. This is usually a level between your work unit and your AGENCY.

AGENCY is the governmental component where you work. <u>If you work in an independent agency</u>, such as the Environmental Protection Agency or the Office of Personnel Management, that would be "your agency." <u>If you work in one of the large cabinet-level departments</u>, such as the Department of the Treasury, the Department of Justice, or the Department of Defense, "your agency" would be a major component of that department. For example, major departmental components include "Bureaus" (e.g., Bureau of the Census, Bureau of Land Management); large components such as the Army, Navy, and Air Force; "Services" (e.g., the Forest Service, the Internal Revenue Service), "Administrations" (e.g., Food and Drug Administration, Drug Enforcement Administration).

ATTENTION SUPERVISORS: <u>If you are a supervisor</u>, consider your WORK UNIT to be the group of people you <u>directly</u> supervise.

- 2 -

- **Use a No. 2 pencil or <u>blue</u> or <u>black</u> ink pen.**
- **Fill in the oval completely.**
- **Do not make any stray marks on this survey.**

CORRECT MARK:

INCORRECT MARKS:

SECTION I: ALL EMPLOYEES

Don't Know/Can't Judge

Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Neither Agree nor Disagree
Agree
Strongly Agree

1. Information is shared freely in
   my work unit.

2. I have the resources to do my
   job well

3. At the place I work, my opinions
   seem to count

4. My work unit has a sufficient
   number of employees to do its job

5. A spirit of cooperation and
   teamwork exists in my work unit

6. In the past 2 years, I have been
   given more flexibility in how I
   accomplish my work

7. In the past 2 years, the productivity
   of my work unit has improved

8. I am often bored with my job

9. I would recommend the
   Government as a place to work

10. The work I do is meaningful to me

11. I know what is expected of me
    on the job

12. I am treated with respect in my
    work unit

13. My work unit has been downsized
    in the last 5 years

14. My present job makes good use
    of my skills and abilities

Don't Know/Can't Judge

Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Neither Agree nor Disagree
Agree
Strongly Agree

15. I receive the training I need to
    perform my job

16. I need more training to perform
    my job effectively

17. Employees participate in
    developing long-range plans in
    my work unit

18. My performance standards are
    clearly linked to my organization's
    goals and objectives

19. The performance appraisal
    system motivates me to do a
    better job

20. I am satisfied with the recognition
    I receive for my work

21. Recognition and rewards are
    based on merit in my work unit

22. In my work unit, corrective actions
    are taken when employees do not
    meet performance standards

23. In my work unit, steps are taken to
    deal with a poor performer who
    cannot or will not improve

24. The standards used to evaluate
    my performace are fair

25. The performance appraisal rating
    system has helped increase
    communications about my job
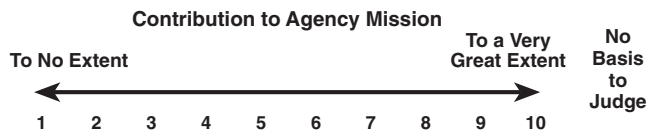   between my supervisor and me

Don't Know/Can't Judge

Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Neither Agree nor Disagree
Agree
Strongly Agree

26. Overall, I am satisfied with my current pay .... ○○○○○ ○

27. In general, I am satisfied with my job.......................... ○○○○○ ○

28. My supervisor has good management skills .... ○○○○○ ○

29. My supervisor has good technical skills .... ○○○○○ ○

30. My supervisor looks out for the personal welfare of members of my work unit .... ○○○○○ ○

31. My supervisor keeps me informed about how well I am doing .... ○○○○○ ○

32. My supervisor deals effectively with poor performers .... ○○○○○ ○

33. My supervisor deals effectively with misconduct on the job .... ○○○○○ ○

34. My immediate supervisor encourages my career development .... ○○○○○ ○

35. Overall, I am satisfied with my supervisor .... ○○○○○ ○

36. Overall, I am satisfied with managers above my immediate supervisor .... ○○○○○ ○

37. Workforce diversity should be taken into account when choosing among the best-qualified candidates .... ○○○○○ ○

38. Downsizing has seriously eroded the institutional memory or knowledge in my work unit .... ○○○○○ ○

39. Downsizing has helped make my work unit more efficient .... ○○○○○ ○

40. A private sector company could perform the work of my work unit just as effectively as my work unit... ○○○○○ ○

Don't Know/Can't Judge

Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Neither Agree nor Disagree
Agree
Strongly Agree

41. During the past 2 years, I have participated in legally permitted partisan political activities .... ○○○○○ ○

42. I am familiar with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA).......................... ○○○○○ ○

43. Of the following, mark the 3 factors that most motivate you to do a good job. Please mark no more than 3.
    - ○ Monetary award
    - ○ My supervisor's encouragement
    - ○ Recognition from my coworkers
    - ○ Personal desire to make a contribution
    - ○ Desire to get a good performance rating
    - ○ My duty as a public employee
    - ○ Desire to make my supervisor look good
    - ○ Increasing my chances for a promotion
    - ○ Desire to help my work unit meet its goals
    - ○ Personal pride or satisfaction in my work
    - ○ Desire not to let my supervisor down
    - ○ Desire not to let my coworkers down
    - ○ Good working environment overall
    - ○ Availability of flexible working conditions (e.g., hours or work)

    ○ Other (specify) _____

No Basis to Judge

Very Unlikely
Somewhat Unlikely
Neither Likely nor Unlikely
Somewhat Likely
Very Likely

44. If you perform better in your present job, how likely is it that you will:

    a. receive more pay (e.g., bonus, promotion, cash award) .... ○○○○○ ○

    b. receive a time-off award .... ○○○○○ ○

    c. receive a non-pay reward (e.g., letter of recognition) ...... ○○○○○ ○

    d. receive informal recognition (e.g., being told you do good work)......................... ○○○○○ ○

- 4 -

Contribution to Agency Mission

45. On a 10-point scale, to what extent do you feel that each of the following contributes to the accomplishment of your <u>agency's</u> mission?

	To No Extent									To a Very Great Extent	No Basis to Judge
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
a. The work you personally perform	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩	◯
b. The work performed by your work unit	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩	◯
c. The work performed by your organization	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩	◯

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46. Considering your Federal career overall, how likely is it that you will be leaving the Federal Government by:

	Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neither Likely nor Unlikely	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely	Not Sure
a. *resigning* <u>before</u> you become eligible to retire?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
b. retiring <u>within 6 months after</u> you become eligible to retire?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
c. retiring <u>more than 6 months after</u> you become eligible to retire?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

47. Before you retire or resign from the Federal Government, how likely is it that you will:

	Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neither Likely nor Unlikely	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely	Not Sure
a. leave your current *work unit* to work in another work unit in your agency?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
b. leave your current *agency* to work in another Federal agency?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

48. Are you <u>currently eligible</u> to retire?
  - ◯ Yes – skip to question 50.
  - ◯ No

  - ◯ Don't Know/Not Sure

49. Will you <u>become eligible</u> to retire within the next 5 years?
  - ◯ Yes
  - ◯ No

  - ◯ Don't Know/Not Sure

50. <u>Within the next 5 years</u>, how likely are you to:

	Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neither Likely nor Unlikely	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely	Not Sure
a. retire from the Federal Government	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
b. leave your work unit for another Federal Government job	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
c. leave your work unit for a job *outside* the Federal Government	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

51. <u>In the coming year</u>, do you plan to *retire*?
  - ◯ Yes – skip to question 53.
  - ◯ No

52. <u>In the coming year</u>, do you plan to *look for another job*?
  - ◯ No – skip to question 54.

  - ◯ Yes, but only within the Federal Government
  - ◯ Yes, but only outside the Federal Government
  - ◯ Yes, I plan to look both inside and outside the Federal Government

53A. If you plan *to retire* or *look for another job* in the coming year, how important, if at all, is each of the following as a reason for your decision?

(If you are NOT planning *to retire* or *look for another job* in the coming year, SKIP TO question 54.)

	Very Important	Important	Neither Important nor Unimportant	Unimportant	Very Unimportant	53B
PERSONAL						
Desire to pursue nonwork interests	○	○	○	○	○	○
Desire to move to another city or town	○	○	○	○	○	○
Excessive commuting time	○	○	○	○	○	○
Health problems	○	○	○	○	○	○
Family reasons	○	○	○	○	○	○
YOUR WORK						
Desire to make better use of your skills and abilities	○	○	○	○	○	○
Desire to change to a different type of work	○	○	○	○	○	○
Desire to work more on your own	○	○	○	○	○	○
Excessive job stress	○	○	○	○	○	○
Lack of job security	○	○	○	○	○	○
WORKING RELATIONSHIPS						
Problems with coworkers	○	○	○	○	○	○
Problems with workers in other units	○	○	○	○	○	○
Problems with customers you serve	○	○	○	○	○	○
Problems with your immediate supervisor	○	○	○	○	○	○
Problems with higher-level supervisors	○	○	○	○	○	○
ADVANCEMENT/RECOGNITION						
Improve opportunities for training	○	○	○	○	○	○
Increase opportunities for advancement	○	○	○	○	○	○
Lack of recognition for outstanding performance	○	○	○	○	○	○
Poor public image of Federal workers	○	○	○	○	○	○
COMPENSATION/BENEFITS						
Desire to earn more money	○	○	○	○	○	○
Unsatisfactory benefit program (e.g., retirement, leave, health, Thrift Savings)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Concerns about possible changes to benefit programs	○	○	○	○	○	○
OTHER						
Good job market for what you do	○	○	○	○	○	○
Too few people to handle the workload	○	○	○	○	○	○
Inadequate support (equipment, supplies, office assistance, etc.)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Unsatisfactory working conditions (space, temperature, furniture, etc.)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Unsatisfactory working schedule	○	○	○	○	○	○

Please be sure to continue to question 53B

54A. If you are NOT planning *to retire* or *look for another job* in the coming year, how important, if at all, is each of the following as a <u>reason for you to stay in your present job</u>?

(If you ARE planning *to retire* or *look for another job* in the coming year, be sure you answered both parts of question 53, then SKIP TO question 55.)

54B.

Select and mark the **3 reasons** that are the **most important** in your decision *to stay in your present job*.

Do not mark more than 3.

Very Unimportant
Unimportant
Neither Important nor Unimportant
Important
Very Important

YOUR WORK
Current job duties and responsibilities . . . . ○○○○○ ○
Opportunities to work on challenging assignments . . . . ○○○○○ ○
Opportunities to work on your own . . . . ○○○○○ ○
Level of job stress . . . . ○○○○○ ○
Job security . . . . ○○○○○ ○

WORKING RELATIONSHIPS
Workers in your unit . . . . ○○○○○ ○
Workers in other work units . . . . ○○○○○ ○
Customers you serve . . . . ○○○○○ ○
Your immediate supervisor . . . . ○○○○○ ○
Higher-level supervisors in your agency . . . . ○○○○○ ○

ADVANCEMENT/RECOGNITION
Opportunities for training . . . . ○○○○○ ○
Chances of getting promoted in the future . . . . ○○○○○ ○
Recognition for outstanding performance . . . . ○○○○○ ○
Reputation of the Federal Government as an employer . . . . ○○○○○ ○
○

COMPENSATION/BENEFITS
Your pay (excluding benefits) compared to pay for similar
   jobs outside Government . . . . ○○○○○ ○
Federal benefit programs (e.g., retirement, leave, health,
   Thrift Savings) . . . . ○○○○○ ○

PERSONAL
Desire not to relocate . . . . ○○○○○ ○
Commuting time . . . . ○○○○○ ○
Health reasons . . . . ○○○○○ ○
Family reasons . . . . ○○○○○ ○

OTHER
Poor job market for what you do . . . . ○○○○○ ○
The number of people to handle the workload . . . . ○○○○○ ○
Availability of resources and support equipment . . . . ○○○○○ ○
Physical work environment (office space, facilities, etc.) . . . . ○○○○○ ○
Your current working schedule . . . . ○○○○○ ○

Please be sure to continue to question 54B

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55. Indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements about the performance of your immediate supervisor.

Not Applicable
Don't Know/Can't Judge

Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Neither Agree nor Disagree
Agree
Strongly Agree

My immediate supervisor . . .

a. Selects the best-qualified available people when hiring from outside Government ...... ○○○○○ ○○

b. Promotes the best-qualified available people for the jobs to be filled .... ○○○○○ ○○

c. Uses fair and open competition when hiring from outside Government .... ○○○○○ ○○

d. Uses fair and open competition for promotions .... ○○○○○ ○○

e. Promotes high standards of integrity, conduct, and concern for the public interest .... ○○○○○ ○○

f. Retains employees on the basis of their job performance ... ○○○○○ ○○

g. Has let the fear of being charged with discrimination adversely affect the way work is assigned, performance is evaluated, or awards are given.. ○○○○○ ○○

h. Would try to remove an employee who even after counseling refused to perform satisfactorily .... ○○○○○ ○○

i. Would try to remove an employee who even after coaching was not able to perform satisfactorily........... ○○○○○ ○○

j. Would try to help a poor performer improve............. ○○○○○ ○○

k. Would encourage a poor performer to resign or transfer out of the work unit .... ○○○○○ ○○

56. What is the total number of employees in your immediate work unit, including the supervisor and team leader(s)?

Write the number and mark the matching ovals below each box. Use leading zeroes, if less than 100, e.g., 031 or 009.

⓪	⓪	⓪
①	①	①
②	②	②
③	③	③
④	④	④
⑤	⑤	⑤
⑥	⑥	⑥
⑦	⑦	⑦
⑧	⑧	⑧
⑨	⑨	⑨

57. In your opinion, how many employees in your immediate work unit, if any, are **performing below what is reasonably expected from them on their job**?

Write in the number and mark the matching ovals below each box. Use leading zeroes, if less than 10, e.g., 05 or 01.

⓪	⓪
①	①
②	②
③	③
④	④
⑤	⑤
⑥	⑥
⑦	⑦
⑧	⑧
⑨	⑨

58. In your opinion, how many employees in your immediate work unit, if any, are **performing so poorly that they deserve to be fired**?

Write in the number and mark the matching ovals below each box. Use leading zeroes, if less than 10, e.g., 05 or 01.

⓪	⓪
①	①
②	②
③	③
④	④
⑤	⑤
⑥	⑥
⑦	⑦
⑧	⑧
⑨	⑨

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Level of Productivity

59. On a 10-point scale, how would you rate the overall productivity of:

	Not at all Productive								Extremely Productive		No Basis to Judge
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
a. Yourself	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩	◯
b. Your work unit	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩	◯
c. Your organization	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩	◯

60. Overall, how would you rate the quality of work performed by:

	Poor	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Outstanding	No Basis to Judge
a. Yourself	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
b. People who have joined your work unit in the past 2 years, if any	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
c. People who have left your work unit in the last 2 years, if any	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
d. Your work unit as a whole	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
e. The larger organization that includes your work unit	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
f. The Federal workforce as a whole	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

61. In the past 2 years, have you:

	Yes	No
a. Made any formal disclosure of unlawful behaviors, fraud, waste or abuse at work?	◯	◯
b. Exercised any formal appeal, complaint, or grievance right?	◯	◯

62. In the past 2 years, to what extent do you believe you have been treated fairly regarding the following?

	To No Extent	To a Little Extent	To Some Extent	To a Considerable Extent	To a Very Great Extent	No Basis to Judge
a. Promotions	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
b. Awards	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
c. Training	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
d. Annual performance appraisals	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
e. Discipline	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
f. Job assignments	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

63. In your organization, to what extent do you believe that employees from each of the following groups are subjected to flagrant and obviously discriminatory practices which hinder their career development? (Mark a response for each group.)

	To No Extent	To a Minimal Extent	To a Moderate Extent	To a Great Extent	Don't Know/Can't Judge
a. African Americans	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
b. Asian Pacific Americans	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
c. Hispanics	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
d. Native Americans	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
e. Whites	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

No

Yes

64. <u>In the past 2 years</u>, do you feel you
have been denied a job, promotion
or other job benefit because of
unlawful discrimination based upon:

     a. Race/national origin . . . . ○ ○   ○

     b. Sex . . . . ○ ○   ○

     c. Age . . . . ○ ○   ○

     d. Handicapping condition . . . . . ○ ○   ○

     e. Religion . . . . ○ ○   ○

     f. Marital Status . . . . ○ ○   ○

     g. Political affiliation . . . . ○ ○   ○

65. <u>In the past 2 years</u>, do you feel you have
been pressured by an agency official:

    a. To engage in partisan political
      activity . . . . ○ ○   ○

    b. To retaliate against or take action in
      favor of another Federal Employee
      or applicant for political reasons . . . . ○ ○   ○

66. <u>In the past 2 years</u>, do you feel you
have been:

    a. Deliberately misled by an agency
      official about your right to compete for
      a job or promotion . . . . ○ ○   ○

    b. Influenced by an agency official to
      withdraw from competition for a
      Federal job or promotion in order to
      help another person's chances of
      getting that job or promotion . . . . ○ ○   ○

    c. Denied a job or promotion because
      one of the selecting or recommending
      officials gave an unfair advantage to
      another applicant . . . . ○ ○   ○

    d. Denied a job or promotion which went
      instead to the relative of one of the
      selecting or recommending officials . . . . . ○ ○   ○

No

Yes

67. <u>In the past 2 years</u>, do you feel you
have been retaliated against or
threatened with retaliation for:

    a. Making disclosure concerning
      health and safety dangers, unlawful
      behavior, and/or fraud, waste, and
      abuse . . . . ○ ○   ○

    b. Exercising any appeal, complaint,
      or grievance right . . . . ○ ○   ○

    c. Testifying for or otherwise assisting
      any individual in the exercise of
      whistleblowing, equal opportunity,
      or appeal rights . . . . ○ ○   ○

    d. Refusing to obey an unlawful order . . . . . ○ ○   ○

    e. Reporting unwanted sexual
      attention or sexual harassment . . . . ○ ○   ○

68A. Are the following programs available to you at work?			Be Sure to Answer Both Parts of This Question	68B. How important is each program to you personally (even if it is not currently available to you)?					
Yes	No	Don't Know/ Not Sure	Programs	Very Important	Important	Neither Important nor Unimportant	Unimportant	Very Unimportant	Don't Know/ Can't Judge
○	○	○	a. Flexible work schedule (i.e., variable starting and ending times)	○	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	b. Compressed work schedule (i.e., working more than 8-hour days)	○	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	c. Opportunity to work part-time	○	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	d. Opportunity for job sharing	○	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	e. Opportunity to work away from the main work site (telecommuting)	○	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	f. Child care resource and referral services	○	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	g. Elder care resource and referral services	○	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	h. Onsite/near site child care center	○	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	i. Sick leave for family care, bereavement, or adoption	○	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	j. Leave sharing	○	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	k. Commuter fare subsidies	○	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	l. Employee assistance programs (EAP)	○	○	○	○	○	○

Sources of Information	69A. Indicate which of the following sources of information are readily available to you at work. Available?		69B. How often do you use each as part of your work?					
	Yes	No	Hourly	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Less than Monthly	Not at All
a. Fax	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. Voice-mail	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. E-mail	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. Internet	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

70. Are you a supervisor (i.e., do you sign the performance appraisal ratings for your immediate subordinates)?

○ No – Skip to Section III, question 89 on page 15.
○ Yes

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71. Have you filled a vacant position in the last 2 years?

    ○ No – Skip to question 79 on page 13.
    ○ Yes

72. Please tell us about the position you filled most recently within the last 2 years.

    What job category was it in? (Mark one)

    ○ Professional/Administrative
    ○ Technical/Clerical
    ○ Wage Grade
    ○ Other

    ○ Not sure

73. Which of the following types of applicants were referred to you for your most recent selection?
    (Mark all that apply)

    ○ Federal employees from within your agency
    ○ Federal employees from outside your agency
    ○ Former Federal employees
    ○ Applicants who have never been Federal employees

    ○ Unsure/Don't know

74. From which type of applicant did you make your most recent selection? (Mark only one)

    ○ Federal employees from within your agency
    ○ Federal employees from outside your agency
    ○ Former Federal employees
    ○ Applicants who have never been Federal employees

    ○ Unsure/Don't know

75. Do you think you filled this job more quickly than you would have 2 years ago?

    ○ Yes
    ○ No

    ○ Don't know/Can't Judge

76. Have you filled any entry-level professional/administrative vacancies in your work unit in the last 2 years?

    ○ No – Skip to question 78 on page 13.
    ○ Yes

77A. When filling entry-level professional/ administrative vacancies in your work unit, to what extent do you rely on the following sources of information in making your hiring decisions?

Be Sure to Answer Both Parts of This Question

77B. In your opinion, to what extent is each of these sources of information a good predictor of professional/administrative job performance?

To a Great Extent	To a Moderate Extent	To a Minimal Extent	To No Extent	Don't Know/ Can't Judge	Source of Information	To a Great Extent	To a Moderate Extent	To a Minimal Extent	To No Extent	Don't Know/ Can't Judge
○	○	○	○	○	a. Written test scores	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	b. Prior work experience	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	c. Level of education achieved	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	d. Reputation of educational institution attended	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	e. Major field of study	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	f. College grade point average	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	g. Interviews	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	h. Quality of the application or resumé	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	i. Reference checks	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	j. Personal recommendations	○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○	k. Other (Please specify) _____	○	○	○	○	○

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78. For all the vacancies you filled in your work unit in the past 2 years, has the quality of applicants improved or worsened with regard to each of the following categories of positions?

	Not Applicable	Greatly Improved	Somewhat Improved	Remained the Same	Somewhat Worsened	Greatly Worsened	Don't Know/Can't Judge
a. Wage grade (trades or crafts)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. Clerical or support	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. Technical (e.g., engineering, biological or medical technician or aide)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. Entry-level professional or administrative positions	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
e. Mid- or senior-level professional or administrative positions	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
f. Senior Executive Service (SES)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

79. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know/Can't Judge
a. Since 1993, I have gained additional flexibilities in taking personnel actions	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. High employee turnover is a major problem in my work unit	○	○	○	○	○	○

80. Does your work unit rely on any of the following types of contingent employees to get the work done? (Mark all that apply.)

○ Temporary/Term-limited employees
○ Contract employees
○ Students (interns, co-ops, summer hires, etc.)

81. In the next 5 years, is the reliance of your work unit on contingent employees likely to:

○ Increase
○ Stay the same
○ Decrease

○ Don't Know/Not Sure

82. During the past 2 years, have you supervised employees with performance or misconduct problems?

○ No – Skip to Section III, question 89 on page 15.

○ Yes, misconduct
○ Yes, poor performance
○ Yes, both poor performance and misconduct

83. During the past 2 years, have you taken any formal action (e.g., demotion, removal) against an employee for a performance problem?

○ No – Skip to Section III, question 89 on page 15.
○ Yes

84. Is the employee against whom you took formal action still in the work unit? (If there was more than one employee, answer in terms of the most recent action taken.)

○ No
○ Yes

85. How easy or difficult was it for you to do the following tasks in dealing with an employee with a performance problem?

Don't Know/Not Applicable

Very Difficult
Difficult
Neither Easy nor Difficult
Easy
Very Easy

a. Identify specific performance deficiencies . . . . ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯   ◯

b. Relate the performance deficiencies to the employee's critical job elements . . . . ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯   ◯

c. Discuss the performance deficiencies with the employee . . ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯   ◯

d. Provide the employee an opportunity to demonstrate acceptable performance . . . . ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯   ◯

e. Develop a performance improvement plan (PIP) . . . . ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯   ◯

f. Supervise an employee who is on a PIP . . . . ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯   ◯

g. Document the employee's performance . . . . ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯   ◯

h. Defend the decision to remove or demote the poor performer . . . ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯   ◯

86. Did you have any difficulty in dealing with an employee with a performance problem?

◯ No – Skip to question 88.
◯ Yes

87. Of the difficulty you had in dealing with an employee with a performance problem, were any of the following a reason for the difficulty?

	Yes	No
a. Insufficient time to devote to the problem	◯	◯
b. Your lack of training on how to deal with poor performers	◯	◯
c. You didn't believe your action would be upheld by a third party	◯	◯
d. Insufficient support from higher-level management	◯	◯
e. Inadequate advice from the human resources (personnel) office	◯	◯
f. Lack of objectivity of the performance standards	◯	◯
g. Your dislike of confrontation	◯	◯
h. Your concern that the employee might file a discrimination complaint	◯	◯
i. Employee filed a discrimination complaint	◯	◯
j. Poor agency guidelines regarding the performance management process	◯	◯
k. Your lack of confidence in the performance management system	◯	◯
l. Other (Please specify) _____ . .	◯	◯

_____

88. Generally, how did taking formal action to deal with a poor performer affect your working relationship with each of the following?

Not Applicable
Don't Know

Got Worse
Stayed the Same
Improved

a. The poor performer involved . . . . . . ◯ ◯ ◯   ◯ ◯
b. Your immediate supervisor . . . . ◯ ◯ ◯   ◯ ◯
c. Upper management . . . . ◯ ◯ ◯   ◯ ◯
d. Other workers in the same work unit as the poor performer . . . . ◯ ◯ ◯   ◯ ◯
e. Union representatives . . . . ◯ ◯ ◯   ◯ ◯

89. How many years have you been a Federal Government employee (excluding military service)?

○ Less than 1 year   ○ 16 to 20 years
○ 1 to 5 years   ○ 21 to 25 years
○ 6 to 10 years   ○ 26 to 30 years
○ 11 to 15 years   ○ 31 years or more

90. Do you work at your agency's headquarters office (typically in Washington, DC), or in a field location?

○ Headquarters   ○ Field

91. Are you:

○ Male   ○ Female

92. What is your age?

○ Under 20   ○ 50-54
○ 20-29   ○ 55-59
○ 30-39   ○ 60-64
○ 40-49   ○ 65 or older

93. What is your highest educational level?

○ Less than high school diploma
○ High school diploma or GED
○ High school diploma or GED plus some college or technical school
○ 2-year college degree (AA, AS)
○ 4-year college degree (BA, BS, or other bachelor's degree)
○ Some graduate or professional school
○ Graduate or professional degree

94. What is your pay category?

○ General schedule or similar
○ Wage grade
○ Executive (SES or equivalent)
○ Other

95. What is your current pay grade?

○   ⑨   ○ ES 1-6 (SES pay grades)
○   ⑩
○   ⑪   ○ Other
○   ⑫
○   ⑬
○   ⑭
○   ⑮
○

96. Are you of Hispanic or Latino origin?

○ Yes   ○ No

97. What race do you consider yourself to be? (Mark one or more.)

○ American Indian or Alaskan Native
○ Asian
○ Black or African American
○ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
○ White

98. Where do you work?

○ Agriculture
○ Commerce

Defense
○ Air Force
○ Army
○ Navy
○ Other DOD

○ Education
○ Energy
○ Environmental Protection Agency
○ General Services Administration
○ Health and Human Services
○ Housing and Urban Development

○ Justice
○ Labor
○ Interior
○ National Aeronautics and Space Administration
○ Social Security Administration
○ State

○ Transportation (not FAA)
○ Transportation (FAA)
○ Treasury
○ Veterans Affairs

○ Other

99. To which retirement system do you belong?

○ FERS
○ CSRS
○ Other
○ Don't know

COMMENTS:
(Enclose extra sheets, if needed)

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Comments may also be sent via e-mail to SURVEY2000@mspb.gov.

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