

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE COALITION

Improving Performance Management Systems

The Government Performance Coalition is a leading alliance of performance management and human capital organizations. As key policy-makers determine the future of Department of Defense human resource system, and the benefits/challenges of a pursuing a larger transformation across much of the federal sector, the Coalition believes any change efforts going forward should include three key drivers for enhancing the prospects of success.

1. Focus First on Instituting a Proven Performance Management System - In order to effect change, performance management must initially be separated from pay. Moreover, a successful performance management system must be tied to proven improvements in performance inclusive of productivity gains and/or achieving desired public service outcomes. While the long-term goal of enhancing individual performance should remain connected to pay, the complexity of operating under a new system and the associated cultural changes necessitate an iterative process. Management and employees must have a reasonable understanding of the new system, especially as it relates to measurement methods, goal setting, and feedback. There must be acceptance of the fact that this will be a multi-year effort. The transition to a new system can be detrimentally affected by injecting compensation and financial impacts too early in the process. An effective performance system must be recognized as benefiting employee motivation and engagement, as well as recruitment and retention, regardless of pay.
2. Provide for the Proper Level of Transparency - People go through a psychological process when experiencing new or different things. Therefore, managing change involving the way in which work is performed, evaluated, and compensated must entail trust-building. Events such as supervisory ratings, pay pool determinations (where applicable), and reliance on data should be clear to the affected employee, as should the rationale for the rating and any fiscal or budgetary factors that impact performance-based payouts. A successful performance management system must be transparent and accountable to all affected parties. Without the ability to understand the one's rating or the way in which the process functions, a major reason for an enhanced system is lost.
3. Reinforce the Value of Constructive Ongoing Communication - Most everyone would agree that employee-manager feedback and dialogue are important, yet providing constructive communication on an ongoing basis is often difficult to achieve. While some progress has been made in training supervisors on performance and feedback, greater efforts (time and money) need to be dedicated to this essential part of the process. There must be an examination of training techniques, methods, and subject matter to sustain a workplace culture that values

constructive communication. Moreover, when designing the new system (whether government-wide or on an agency-by-agency basis), involvement of employees, supervisors, and their representatives must be part of a collaborative consensus-based process.

The Government Performance Coalition is available to elaborate on the aforementioned points and/or to provide further assistance to specific agencies, the Office of Personnel Management, the Office of Management and Budget and/or Members of Congress.

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Members of the Government Performance Coalition include:

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