



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20503

DEPUTY DIRECTOR
FOR MANAGEMENT

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT'S MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

From: Clay Johnson III

Subject: The "So What?" of the PART

PART recommendations are the "So What?" of the PART. Just having an integrated performance plan and budget is not enough. In order to help agencies succeed, OMB collaborates with you to develop program-specific recommendations through the PART—the Program Assessment Rating Tool. The PART provides a systematic way to ask what works and, if something is not working, what we can do about it. The PART is most effective when there is adequate follow-up on the recommendations we agree upon.

We have found that agencies are pioneering new ways to use these recommendations to achieve greater results and to address their performance, management, and efficiency challenges. Several underlying principles for approaching the PART process have been identified that help make the most of the resulting recommendations. For example:

- Managing for results requires strong and committed leadership. Without it, budget and performance integration will be an initiative in name only and not become the way we do business. Institutionalize your commitment to managing for results; always ask what it is you are trying to accomplish and whether our programs are achieving it and engage in these discussions with the executive implementing the program.
- When undergoing a PART review, foster a strong program manager/OMB examiner relationship. PART assessments are completed by OMB and agencies together. This partnership will help ensure the best measures for each program are identified, related performance targets are suitably aggressive yet attainable, and meaningful program reforms are recommended.
- Encourage program managers and staff to view the PART as an opportunity to substantiate and validate concerns with program performance and management, including challenges that result from external constraints. For example, if program effectiveness or efficiency is constrained by external factors, such as legislation, develop strategies for change. Likewise, use the PART to highlight well-designed, well-run programs and to share their best practices.
- Use the PART process to aid in the management and assessment of agency programs and personnel: tie program goals to the agency-wide strategic goals, and individual performance plans and appraisals to program goals and measures. Make a clear link

between resources and program goals and activities. And remember: GPRA plans and reports, PART assessments, human capital strategies, workforce plans, and budgets are integrated tools, plans, and processes. The measures used in each of these efforts should be consistent and mutually reinforcing.

- Assign individuals with the responsibility for implementation of PART recommendations. Meet regularly to assess the status of PART recommendations and ensure necessary actions to implement the recommendations are accomplished.

Once the PART review is completed, it is critical that the recommendations be implemented in a timely way so we achieve the performance improvements the PART is designed to bring about. You should have a centralized process to ensure the implementation of recommendations. These recommendations, as well as program-specific performance measures, should be tracked and you should be prepared to report on their status.

Some agencies have instituted systems for administering the PART and monitoring the implementation of recommendations. These systems are appropriately geared to the needs of agency staff, program managers, and policy officials and, as we understand it, produce easy-to-use reports on the current status of, among other things, PART recommendations. Should your agency employ such a system, I strongly recommend that you work closely with those OMB officials who will work with your PART data most – the examiners. Examiners will need to review and edit PART data in a format that is user-friendly. A system should, at a minimum, be capable of:

- Accepting comments and edits from all users, especially if it is web-based,
- Easily producing reports on the current status of PART recommendations and other program measures being tracked, and
- Uploading the most recent results to the OMB database (currently maintained in Excel) upon request.

By keeping our commitment to each other to set aggressive but realistic performance, management, and efficiency targets—and then by following-through and remaining accountable for reaching those goals—we will improve the results we achieve on behalf of the American people.

Please call me (202-456-7070), Robert Shea (202-395-4568), or Diana Espinosa (202-395-7790) if you have questions or wish to share your success stories.