



Highlights of GAO-04-85, a report to the Subcommittee on Legislative Branch, Committee on Appropriations, U.S. Senate

Why GAO Did This Study

The Government Printing Office (GPO) has undertaken the task of transforming itself in response to pressing fiscal and other realities in the 21st century. This report focuses on actions GPO's leaders can take to advance its transformation efforts through strategic human capital management and is a part of GAO's response to a congressional request that GAO conduct a general management review of GPO that focuses on issues related to GPO's management and transformation. GAO plans to address other management topics, including strategic planning and financial management, in a series of reports that may assist GPO in its ongoing transformation efforts.

What GAO Recommends

GAO makes many interrelated recommendations that reflect the important role of human capital in GPO's ongoing transformation. These recommendations provide a framework to reinforce GPO's initial transformation efforts and enhance its future efforts.

We provided a draft of this report in September 2003 to the Public Printer for review and comment. GPO's Chief of Staff, Deputy Chief of Staff, and Chief Human Capital Officer provided comments orally and by e-mail on behalf of GPO generally agreeing with the content, findings, and recommendations in the draft report.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-04-85.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact J. Christopher Mihm at (202) 512-6806 or mihmj@gao.gov.

GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

Advancing GPO's Transformation Effort through Strategic Human Capital Management

What GAO Found

The Public Printer has demonstrated the leadership commitment that is essential to transforming GPO, stating that GPO is going to have to reengineer itself to remain relevant and viable for the future. Under the Public Printer's direction, GPO has taken several steps that recognize the important role strategic human capital management plays in its transformation. For example, GPO created and filled the position of Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO), shifted the focus of existing training and expanded opportunities for more staff to attend needed training, enhanced recruitment strategies, and initiated a process to develop an agency strategic plan and an accompanying strategic workforce plan.

To sustain its transformation efforts, GPO's leadership needs to ensure that managers throughout the agency appreciate the importance of their role in managing GPO's workforce and helping transform the agency. Furthermore, now that GPO has hired a CHCO, it can begin to restructure its human resources office to better support its transformation by adopting a more strategic view of human capital management and by having human resources officials work collaboratively with GPO managers. To further support its transformation, GPO should use strategic workforce planning to help ensure that its staff has the skills needed to meet emerging needs. A workforce plan that includes both an inventory of current GPO employees' knowledge and skills and an identification of the knowledge and skills GPO needs in the future will best support GPO's transformation. Finally, a modern, effective, and credible performance management system can help GPO facilitate the transformation process and serve as the basis for establishing individuals' roles and accountability in the transformation. Performance management can also help GPO achieve results, accelerate change, and facilitate two-way communication between managers and employees.

GAO makes numerous recommendations to GPO on the steps it should take to strengthen its human capital management in support of its transformation. These recommendations can guide GPO as it seeks to meet the changing and emerging information needs of its customers. The focus of GAO's recommendations is on the following four interrelated areas:

- communicating the role of managers in GPO's transformation,
- strengthening the role of the human resources office,
- developing a strategic workforce plan to ensure GPO has the skills and knowledge it needs for the future, and
- using a strategic performance management system to drive change.

By implementing the recommendations in these four areas, GPO can build the strong human capital foundation needed to reinforce the transformation now under way.