



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

April 23, 2004

INSPECTION MEMORANDUM

To: Phil Maestri
Director, Management Improvement Team
Office of Deputy Secretary

From: Cathy H. Lewis
Assistant Inspector General
Evaluation, Inspection and Management Services

Subject: Review of MIT ACTION Item #183 (ED/OIG I13E0010)

This memorandum provides the results of our inspection of one Action Plan item from the Department of Education's (Department's) Blueprint for Management Excellence. The EIMS group is examining several Action Plan items related to Human Capital. Our objective is two-fold: 1) was the item completed as described; and, 2) as completed, does the action taken help the Department towards its stated Blueprint objective. In this report, we examined item Number 183 (completed on 12/18/02), concerning the development and use of a manager survey after employee training.

Background:

The action required by item #183 was to:

“Develop and use manager survey to assess changes in performance due to training.”

The comments field on this item states, “Completed 12/18/02 – a pilot survey was conducted. The program will be institutionalized when an memo announcing the process is sent to all managers in January 2003.”

The first survey was distributed to 21 managers in December 2002. By January 2003, the Training and Development Team (TDT) planned to have a functioning electronic version to evaluate training offered in FY 2003 in both headquarters and the regions. The survey was intended to be completed about 45-90 days after staff completed training.

Objective 1: Did OM complete the actions needed to complete this item?

While TDT *developed* a post-training survey to measure employee performance, it never effectively *used* the survey or the results.

TDT developed a post-training survey for managers containing four questions that managers could fill in and email back to TDT staff. Of the first 21 surveys that went out, TDT only received back three replies. A reminder was sent out, but TDT did not receive any additional responses. Due to the lack of response, TDT did not feel they had enough data to properly analyze and form conclusive results.

TDT never sent the planned memo to supervisors to inform them of the new evaluation process. In addition, while they planned to send an announcement out to all managers and employees via ED Notebook, this has never occurred. Rather, they have included information about the follow-up evaluation in announcements about particular programs that use the survey, such as the Tuition Reimbursement Program. At the current time, TDT is receiving only a 15% response rate to the survey.

Objective 2: Did the actions completed help the Department to move towards its stated Blueprint Objective (“To improve the strategic management of the Department’s human capital”)?

As completed, the actions have not helped the Department to achieve the underlying Blueprint Objective.

Post-training follow-up with a manager can be a useful tool in determining if learning objectives have been achieved. However, the Department has not effectively implemented the process to gather the information needed to conduct such an analysis. TDT has sent out approximately 88 survey forms to managers since December 2002; however, they have received back only 13 responses (15%), leading to insufficient information on which to base any sort of meaningful analysis. Despite this low response rate, OM has not taken steps to determine why the response rate is so low or how to increase the amount of feedback. For example, it may be that managers would find the survey more useful, and therefore would be more inclined to fill it out, if it were conducted later, allowing more time for the manager to assess the training’s impact. Training effectiveness is a key component of any training/development program and suggested completion of this action item could be a useful component of an effective human capital plan.

Departmental Response

We provided the MIT with a draft report that contained recommendations that would, if implemented, support the MIT’s decision to list the action item as “completed.” The MIT concurred with these recommendations but decided to “close” the item instead. “Closed”

indicates that the item is either no longer a priority for the Department or has been overtaken by events. OM plans to gather input from Executive Officers, distribute information to all managers about the training survey and its results, and annually analyze and distribute the results. The recommended improvements will be added to the current 2004 Blueprint for Management Excellence. Therefore, we have removed our recommendations from the report. OM's response is included in its entirety as an attachment.

Administrative Matters

We appreciate the cooperation given to us during the inspection. If you have any questions or wish to discuss the contents of this report, please call me at 202-205-8639 or Deb Schweikert, Director, Evaluation and Inspection Division at 202-205-5569. Please refer to the control number in all correspondence relating to this report.

April 19, 2004

To: Cathy H. Lewis
Assistant Inspector General
Evaluation, Inspection and Management Services

From: Phillip Maestri, Director
Management Improvement Team

Subject: Draft Inspection Memorandum (3/19/04)
Review of MIT Action Item #183 (ED/OIG I13E0010)
“Develop and use manager survey to assess changes in performance
due to training”

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on a draft version of this inspection memorandum.

Comments on Background and Findings

The *Blueprint* action item number 183 was, “Develop and use manager survey to assess changes in performance due to training.” As OIG found, the Department developed and distributed a survey to managers to assess the impact of training. The completion of this activity marked the completion of this *Blueprint* action item in December 2002.

In the course of this inspection, the OIG found that the survey has not been successful. The OIG found that the response rate was low. The Office of Management (OM), which implemented the post-training survey, reported that only 15 percent of the surveyed managers responded. OM found that the response rate was so low that it could not form conclusions from the results.

Response to recommendations

Recommendation 1: Meet with the Executive Officers to determine how to make the survey process more effective and revise the process consistent with customer feedback.

Recommendation 2: Send out information to all of the managers about the survey and how the information collected will be used.

Recommendation 3: Gather and analyze results from the survey on an annual basis and share this information with Executive Officers, managers, and training staff.

Response: We agree that further follow up with managers would improve the Department's understanding of how training benefits participants and their offices.

OM's initial plans to respond to the findings of this investigation include: gathering input from Executive Officers; distributing information to all managers about the training survey and how the results will be used; and annually analyzing and reporting the results.

Recommendation 4: Until it completes these actions, action item #183 should be re-designated as "open." Alternatively, this item should be designated as "closed."

The original *Blueprint* action item called for the development and use of a survey to assess changed in performance due to training. Although the survey was developed and implemented, it has not produced the information on changes in performance that ED sought. Therefore, the MIT will revise the designation of action item number 183 to "closed" to reflect this finding. The recommended improvements to the way ED evaluates training will be added to the current FY 2004 *Blueprint*.