

**INTERAGENCY WORK GROUP
ON PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

**REPORT TO THE
PRESIDENT'S MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
ON MANAGING PERFORMANCE
IN THE GOVERNMENT**

February 2000

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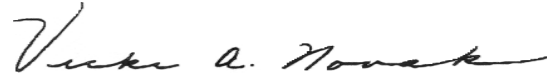
MESSAGE TO THE PRESIDENT'S MANAGEMENT COUNCIL:

We are pleased to present this Report to the President's Management Council on Managing Performance in the Government. This is in response to your mandate for actions and recommendations to address the issue of employee performance management.

Our work group of human resources management executives concluded that a report that could be shared with all Federal agencies would demonstrate top-level commitment to excellent performance. The inclusion of concrete recommendations and information on best practices provides practical assistance for achieving excellence throughout the Federal Government.



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Premises and Principles

- The Federal workforce is comprised of dedicated, hardworking public servants who strive to deliver value to Americans.
- As a result, Americans can expect performance excellence when the workforce is engaged and involved in designing a results-oriented, performance-based, and customer-focused system that delivers that value.
- Federal leaders and managers create a climate for excellence by communicating their vision, values, and expectations clearly, and by:
 - creating an environment for continual learning;
 - working in partnership with employees to ensure they reach their full potential;
 - recognizing and rewarding excellence with financial incentives and non-financial incentives, such as increased flexibility to do jobs, more meaningful work, and achieving a sense of accomplishment; and
 - taking timely action to both reward and correct performance appropriately, ensuring that excellence is the standard for all.
- Feedback from customers and employees, along with operations results, will be the basis for credible and useful performance evaluations. Employees are personally responsible for being results-oriented, performance-based, and customer-focused, and for providing feedback that holds their leaders, managers, and colleagues accountable for achieving excellence.
- Leaders and managers will work in partnership with unions to promote constructive discussion about all aspects of performance management, including improving employee performance.
- Leaders, managers, and employees have a mutual obligation to provide value and excellence to America. This requires each individual to be continually challenged to perform their best. Taking action to improve the performance of each individual is imperative to achieving agencies' missions.
- The President's Management Council – indeed the entire Administration – is committed to pursuing effective performance management throughout Government.

These premises and principles are reflected in **three major themes**. For each theme, this report identifies opportunities and challenges, offers substantiating evidence where appropriate, and makes recommendations for action.

Appendices summarize the report's recommendations and offer examples of agency innovations and resources for immediate application to improving performance management in agencies throughout the Government.

Theme 1: Expect Excellence

Communicate Expectations

- Employees need a clear picture of what's expected of them, both as individuals and as members of a team, if appropriate.
 - Communicating clear expectations is an ongoing responsibility for senior management as well as supervisors and team leaders.
 - Employees should understand how their contributions – and their colleagues' contributions – link to the organization's mission and program goals.
 - Performance plans for Senior Executive Service and General Schedule employees should correlate directly to the agency's Annual Performance Plan and other Departmental and component strategic and operating plans.
- Agencies should monitor performance to ensure that progress is being made and expectations will be met, making mid-course corrections as things change. For example, under the Social Security Administration's two-level performance assessment program, employees have noted that mandatory informal discussions between managers and employees are the best part of the process.
- Agencies that use balanced measures of results – operations results, customer satisfaction, and employees' perceptions of their workplace – are achieving real breakthroughs in how they plan and communicate expectations.
- Shared performance expectations, established jointly through supervisors and employees and management and unions working in partnership, lead to greater understanding and ownership of the work to be done and improve the chances for success.

What employees tell us: In the 1999 NPR Employee Survey, only one out of four respondents reported that they had a clear understanding of how "good performance" is defined in their agency.

Recommendations

- Agencies should update their employee performance plans, using balanced measures extensively and working with their labor partners in a constructive discussion about effective, credible measurement.
- Employee plans should be linked to the goals of their respective offices (e.g., as expressed in agency strategic plans and the Annual Performance Plan under the Government Performance and Results Act).

- Agencies should emphasize monitoring performance and giving employees ongoing, timely, and honest feedback (beyond a required progress review) to help sustain and reinforce what's expected.
- The Administration should pursue changes to the performance management statute that will emphasize improving performance and results through setting goals and objectives for organizational, group, and individual performance, as well as increasing flexibility for agencies to provide rewards to employees to recognize and encourage improved performance and results.

Create a Climate for Excellence

- Federal leaders and managers create a climate for excellence by communicating their vision, values, and expectations clearly.
 - Expecting excellence sets the direction.
 - But getting there and staying there requires a climate – led from the top – that sustains excellence.
- In an organization with a climate for excellence, high standards and continuous improvement become the “norm.”
 - Those high standards keep everyone’s gaze upward toward the horizon and away from a bureaucratic minimum.
 - By emphasizing excellence and improvement, performance management’s focus shifts away from simply labeling employees in a meaningless ritual.
- Management plays an important role by recognizing excellence – quickly and repeatedly – because recognition affects two sets of employees:
 - The employees who receive the recognition, and
 - The employees who observe the recognition and learn what is valued.

What employees tell us: In the 1999 NPR Employee Survey, only two out of five respondents were satisfied with the recognition they receive for doing a good job.

Recommendations

- Senior management should provide visible support to their agency’s performance culture and climate for excellence (e.g., with a top-level “performance counts” statement, as well as day-to-day support).
- Agencies must establish and communicate clear goals and develop effective performance measures that are consistent and balanced.
- Agencies should make sure that the resources (technology, learning, information) employees and their leaders need to do an excellent job are available.
- Formal and informal recognition programs should be linked to desired performance outcomes.

- Agencies should recognize that individuals differ in reaction to performance management techniques and should permit supervisors flexibility in meeting individual needs.
- Agencies should be committed to developing the tools and competencies (i.e., knowledge, skills, abilities, and attributes) that will let employees excel; for example, by offering comprehensive training and continuing professional development in essential employee and leadership skills, as well as by maintaining a library of readily accessible employee development tools.
- Agencies should consider establishing comprehensive leadership development programs that assure a continuous supply of highly qualified managers.
- Agencies should be committed to helping each other by sharing their formal and informal performance management practices and experiences through a clearinghouse at the Performance Management Technical Assistance Center on the OPM Web site.

Theme 2: Establish Accountability

Hold Supervisors Accountable for Managing Performance

- Employees are accountable for being results-oriented and customer-focused; in turn, they hold their leaders, managers, and colleagues accountable for achieving excellence.
 - Supervisors and team leaders must see performance management as a central role, not a collateral duty.
 - By “walking the talk,” executives can model effective performance management for managers and supervisors, for example, by starting with an overall assessment of organizational performance.
- Supervisors’ and team leaders’ “excellence” in performance management needs to be expected, developed, assessed, and recognized at least as much as their technical excellence.
 - Using balanced measures offers an opportunity to provide employee feedback about how well their performance is managed.
 - Managers should commend supervisors and team leaders for managing performance well.

What employees tell us: In the 1999 NPR Employee Survey, only half of the respondents reported that their immediate supervisor or team leader was doing a good or very good job.

Recommendations

- Agencies should share their successful practices and resources that keep supervisors managing performance effectively.
- Agencies should emphasize training in basic performance management skills; for example, by conducting intensive training for all new managers, supervisors, and team leaders on giving performance feedback and ensuring that all leaders receive updated training on performance feedback at least bi-annually.
- Agencies should make managing performance effectively a central factor in evaluating managerial and supervisory performance.

Include Performance Management Outcomes in HR Accountability Systems

- The Government’s Merit Systems Principles include the following performance management principles that each agency is accountable for using its human resources management systems to support:
 - Excellence in performance should be rewarded.

- Employees whose performance does not improve to meet established standards should be separated.
- The HR accountability systems that agencies are developing under the leadership of the Office of Personnel Management should examine how well the agency is achieving outcomes such as:
 - Positive linkages between performance and rewards, especially financial incentives;
 - Positive improvements in systems that proactively prevent performance deficiencies from developing in the first place; and
 - Customer and employee perceptions that poor performance is addressed and dealt with effectively.

Recommendations

- Agencies should establish tracking systems for performance management data and interventions and use this information to improve the effectiveness of their performance management programs.
- Agencies should examine how effectively performance management practices are integrated and aligned in support of mission accomplishment by examining and correlating agency information on Annual Performance Plan results, SES performance bonuses, performance ratings of record, and budget.
- Agencies should evaluate the effectiveness of their awards programs and, as appropriate, re-engineer them to focus on rewarding and publicizing tangible accomplishments at the individual or organizational level that improve products or customer service or otherwise directly contribute to achieving strategic goals and objectives.
- Agencies should share their success stories at reinvigorating their performance management programs and practices, both formal and informal.

Theme 3: Take Timely Action

Intervene Early

- Experience, particularly at the executive levels, indicates that resolving a "performance problem" may be a matter of creating a better fit between the employee and the role she or he is expected to perform.
 - Some employees who fail to perform well may be underutilized, and
 - Some may be performing functions that grew out of job restructuring, reassignments, downsizing or automation that the employees are not prepared to perform due to lack of training, skills, etc.
- The old adage that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" applies particularly well to anticipating the productivity impact of introducing new technologies and to dealing with performance problems.
 - When significant new responsibilities or technological skills are added, training that precedes implementation can help keep performance from slipping.
 - It takes far fewer resources to identify and correct performance that is starting to slip, than to intervene after a downward spiral has continued over months or even years.
 - Employees are often relieved and much more responsive to counseling and support when it is offered early.
- Timely and concerted action gets the best results.
 - Putting together a set of resources (e.g., from the training, employee relations, and employee assistance programs, as well as other staff offices and the line organization) can help the supervisor identify, accurately diagnose, and address a performance problem quickly.

What employees tell us: In the 1999 NPR Employee Survey, only 28 percent of respondents reported that corrective actions were taken with poor performers.

Recommendations

- Agencies should share successful techniques for designing and supplying proactive performance support, particularly in situations where new technologies and job duties are being introduced.
- Agencies should share successful early intervention practices.
- Agencies should make the modest investment to provide supervisors with more tools for at-the-desk, just-in-time help, such as the interactive CD-ROM on resolving performance problems that is available from the Office of Personnel Management.

- Agencies should work with unions to develop simplified, effective, and fair alternative dispute resolution (ADR) alternatives to the current statutory process for dealing with poor performers
- Agencies should share their resources, especially specific training for managers to use ADR techniques and to overcome their natural resistance to confrontation.

Support Supervisors Taking Performance-Based Actions

- Because performance problems are relatively uncommon, most supervisors are not “practiced hands” at dealing with the full set of procedures and require support from several perspectives:
 - Many supervisors are convinced that they should be acting on the problem, but are equally convinced that senior management will fail to support them.
 - A performance-based action is a legal process that has specific requirements.
 - Many supervisors have concerns about their personal liability.
 - Most supervisors need some moral and emotional support to get through what will never be a pleasant part of their job.
- Top management should commit the necessary resources and support; any failure to do so will have a chilling effect on the agency’s managers and supervisors.
- The Human Resources Office must be ready and able to help; in some instances this may require getting support from other agencies.
- Some agencies have streamlined their own internally-imposed agency processes.
- Every effort should be made to improve the governmentwide process for taking performance-based actions where possible, while maintaining employee protections.

What managers tell us: In the 1999 SES Survey, nearly one out of three respondents cited lack of upper management support as the reason they had not terminated a poor performer.

Recommendations

- The Administration should pursue changes to the performance management laws that will simplify the process for removing poor performers while preserving due process protections.
- Agencies should share successful practices for giving managers and supervisors the support that leads to successful resolutions.
- Agencies should pilot multi-party (i.e., “SWAT” or “Rapid Response” team) approaches to dealing with poor performers.

This report carries a simple message about performance management – **in the Federal Government, leaders, managers, and employees have a mutual obligation to provide value and excellence to America.**

The answers are within our grasp:

- Review and re-review your expectations so both manager and employee will clearly understand what it takes to deliver that value and excellence.
- Establish a contract with your employee laying out those expectations clearly.
- Develop the necessary performance management skills for coaching, assisting, measuring, recognizing, etc.
- Provide appropriate ongoing feedback and follow-up, both positive and negative.
- Reward the great performers, and move or otherwise deal with the poor performers.

Leadership is the key!

APPENDIX A – SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Theme 1: Expect Excellence

- Agencies should update their employee performance plans, using balanced measures extensively and working with their labor partners in a constructive discussion about effective, credible measurement.
- Employee plans should be linked to the goals of their respective offices (e.g., as expressed in agency strategic plans and the Annual Performance Plan under the Government Performance and Results Act).
- Agencies should emphasize monitoring performance and giving employees ongoing, timely, and honest feedback (beyond a required progress review) to help sustain and reinforce what's expected.
- The Administration should pursue changes to the performance management statute that will emphasize improving performance and results through setting goals and objectives for organizational, group, and individual performance, as well as increasing flexibility for agencies to provide rewards to employees to recognize and encourage improved performance and results.
- Senior management should provide visible support to their agency's performance culture and climate for excellence (e.g., with a top-level "performance counts" statement, as well as day-to-day support).
- Agencies must establish and communicate clear goals and develop effective performance measures that are consistent and balanced.
- Agencies should make sure that the resources (technology, learning, information) employees and their leaders need to do an excellent job are available.
- Formal and informal recognition programs should be linked to desired performance outcomes.
- Agencies should recognize that individuals differ in reaction to performance management techniques and should permit supervisors flexibility in meeting individual needs.
- Agencies should be committed to developing the tools and competencies (i.e., knowledge, skills, abilities, and attributes) that will let employees excel; for example, by offering comprehensive training and continuing professional development in essential employee and leadership skills, as well as by maintaining a library of readily accessible employee development tools.
- Agencies should consider establishing comprehensive leadership development programs that assure a continuous supply of highly qualified managers.
- Agencies should be committed to helping each other by sharing their formal and informal performance management practices and experiences through a clearinghouse at the Performance Management Technical Assistance Center on the OPM Web site.

Theme 2: Establish Accountability

- Agencies should share their successful practices and resources that keep supervisors managing performance effectively.
- Agencies should emphasize training in basic performance management skills; for example, by conducting intensive training for all new managers, supervisors, and team leaders on giving performance feedback and ensuring that all leaders receive updated training on performance feedback at least bi-annually.
- Agencies should make managing performance effectively a central factor in evaluating managerial and supervisory performance.
- Agencies should establish tracking systems for performance management data and interventions and use this information to improve the effectiveness of their performance management programs.
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Theme 3: Take Timely Action

- Agencies should share successful techniques for designing and supplying proactive performance support, particularly in situations where new technologies and job duties are being introduced.
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- Agencies should work with unions to develop simplified, effective, and fair alternative dispute resolution (ADR) alternatives to the current statutory process for dealing with poor performers.
- Agencies should share their resources, especially specific training for managers to use ADR techniques and to overcome their natural resistance to confrontation.
- The Administration should pursue changes to the performance management laws that will simplify the process for removing poor performers while preserving due process protections.
- Agencies should share successful practices for giving managers and supervisors the support that leads to successful resolutions.
- Agencies should pilot multi-party (i.e., “SWAT” or “Rapid Response” team) approaches to dealing with poor performers.

APPENDIX B – AGENCY INNOVATIONS AND RESOURCES

Theme 1: Expect Excellence

Communicate Expectations

- At the Department of Education, Senior Officers' performance plans are tied to the strategic goals of the agency and subordinate managers' and supervisors' performance plans are being revised to support those goals.
- The Department of Commerce will soon launch a standardized set of performance measures for SES managers. Each senior executive will have three standard elements consistent across the Department in areas such as Leadership and Diversity, and two elements that relate directly to the Department's or bureau's Strategic Plans. This will promote greater linkages with more direct results being realized as well as provide a method to assess and compare executive performance across the Department. In addition, the relationship between financial recognition/bonuses will be greatly enhanced.
- In 1998, the Department of Commerce conducted a review of linkages between the Department's Strategic Plan, bureau operating plans, and SES performance plans. This review concluded that a more consistent approach, including balanced measures and direct Strategic Plan linkages, was necessary. The result was SES 2000, an innovative program designed to revitalize the SES within the Department of Commerce as well as strengthen the corporate utilization of SES resources. SES 2000 emphasizes increased executive development, improved succession planning and SES candidate development, more robust SES performance management policies and practices, and greater communications with the SES corps.
- Before completing SES performance reviews, senior officials at the Department of Commerce convey to bureau leadership how well the bureau, overall, has performed for the previous year. This information is then factored into SES performance evaluations.
- The National Treasury Employees Union and the Office of the Secretary and Administration on Aging (Department of Health and Human Services) have just signed a memorandum of understanding for a pilot of a two-tier performance evaluation program. Recognizing how critical feedback skills are for successful performance management, the agreement calls for training both supervisors AND employees in how to give and request constructive feedback.
- At the Department of Transportation, a Balanced Scorecard is used for measuring performance in many of the support offices including acquisition and procurement, human resources, and real and property management.
- The Department of Transportation has adopted seven recommendations from an Accountability Workgroup to improve individual accountability throughout the Department including cascading the performance agreements to all SES members in the department. The Department has a performance management framework that links employee performance at all levels to the DOT strategic plan.

- The Department of Transportation uses Performance Agreements linked to the goals in the DOT Performance Plan between the Secretary and senior officials and has regular monthly meetings between the Deputy Secretary and Administrators to track progress against the goals in the agreements.
- At the Social Security Administration, senior executives' and higher level management officials' performance plans are linked to key SSA initiatives which are related to GPRA. Lower level employees' performance plans are linked to the goals of their respective offices.
- The Department of the Interior has established a Performance Management Council to guide the development of Interior's strategic planning process. This group is composed of senior planning officials from each bureau, as well as representatives from the Departmental management offices.
- The Bureau of Land Management (Department of the Interior) has redesigned its budget development and execution process to be the main communication tool with employees and managers of the organizational expectations. By providing budget targets one year in advance, the field units are able to negotiate their level of performance based on the available human and fiscal resources and realign, if necessary, their priorities and skill mix to meet the organizational needs.
- At the Bureau of Land Management (Department of the Interior), Senior Executive Service personnel performance evaluations are based on the agency's strategic goal areas, and lower-level managers' evaluations are based on the SES criteria.
- At the Department of the Interior, Superintendents of the National Park Service are evaluated, in part, on their performance against their park-specific GPRA annual performance plan.
- At the Department of the Interior, the development of employee performance plans has been streamlined. One goal was to restrict the construction of detailed written performance standards to the small percentage of employees who are having performance problems. [NOTE: OPM's legislative proposals are specifically designed to facilitate this approach.]
- Performance contracts or performance agreements are negotiated between the manager and the employee at NASA.
- NASA also uses an automated assessment tool that links an individual's performance plan and accomplishments to the strategic plan and GPRA.
- Performance management seminars (3-day courses) are held at the Department of State's Foreign Service Institute four times a year. Participants learn to write and communicate clear performance plans, provide coaching and feedback to improve performance; and conduct effective performance appraisals.
- The NPR Report on *Balancing Measures: Best Practices in Performance Management*, available on the NPR Web site, offers practical advice about how to develop and implement balanced measures of results. In addition, it provides extensive examples and contacts from the public and private sector.
- A series of articles on *Improved Performance Starts with Planning* originally published in OPM's bi-monthly newsletter *Workforce Performance*, are available at the Performance Management Technical Assistance Center on the OPM Web site.

- OPM's *"Measuring Employee Performance: Aligning Employee Performance Plans with Organizational Goals"* Workshop/Handbook covers an eight-step process for developing employee performance plans that are aligned with and support organizational goals from Results Act Strategic and Annual Performance Plans. The Handbook, which is available at the Performance Management Technical Assistance Center on the OPM Web site, provides guidelines for writing performance elements and standards along with hands-on exercises to give users a chance to practice their new skills. Agencies such as the U.S. Mint and the National Institute for Standards and Technology ensure that all their managers are trained in this method.
- Checklists for good performance plans are available on the OPM Web site.

Create a Climate for Excellence

- At the Treasury Department, agency leadership identifies priority areas and communicates them to the Department's Bureaus for action.
- The Department of Transportation provides Partnering for Excellence training.
- The Department of Transportation flagship initiative for Learning and Development encourages increased training opportunities and incentives, including a budgeted employee training pool for 2001 equaling 2 percent of employee salaries.
- The Department of Transportation has created "Team Excell," an employee team committed to encouraging excellence throughout the Department using the Baldrige/Presidential Quality Award criteria as a foundation.
- In 1999, the Department of Education began a program of 40 hours of core curriculum training each year for supervisors, managers, and executives in core competencies and management issues of importance to the Department and its Principal Offices. In addition, all new managers are provided training on the basics of supervision and provided extensive resource materials.
- Based on employee surveys, the Bureau of Land Management (Department of the Interior) has established a series of leadership management and employee development courses, including a year-long Leadership Academy. The "Leadership Excellence" spectrum of employee, management, and leadership training is designed to provide complete and comprehensive training centered around the 27 Senior Executive competencies established by OPM.
- The Bureau of Land Management (Department of the Interior) has established a workforce-planning framework identifying critical skill needs and providing maximum workforce flexibility. The framework calls for each state to analyze its current and future workforce needs and develop a strategy – including alternative delivery mechanisms, such as contracting, term appointments, and sharing scarce skills between different agencies – to address work demands without increasing current permanent staff.

- The “Service First” collaborative partnership between the Bureau of Land Management (Department of the Interior) and the Forest Service (Department of Agriculture) formalizes the agencies’ ability to share scarce skills and leverage constrained operations dollars to meet the public’s needs and expectations. In the HRM Concept of Operations (www.fs.fed.us/servicefirst), the BLM and the Forest Service have laid out the operational procedures of how the two agencies in two different departments will share employees, accept classifications, and jointly advertise positions.
- Numerous examples of agency practices and programs for successful formal and informal incentive and recognition programs and other effective performance management practices are described in OPM’s bi-monthly newsletter *Workforce Performance*. An extensive archive of current and back issues and articles from this newsletter is available at the Performance Management Technical Assistance Center on the OPM Web site.
- *“Label-less” Performance Management Program* – In an effort to dispense with performance “labels” such as “Outstanding” and “Marginal” which tend to attach themselves to employees themselves rather than their performance, the Department of Energy Headquarters now uses a performance evaluation program that summarizes employees’ performance as a numerical value. The value is derived by the rating official’s comparing an employee’s performance of tasks identified for each element (streamlined into very simple “action” statements) against four generic “levels of accomplishment.” The elements are weighted according to their critical or non-critical status. The employee’s score in each element is multiplied by the assigned level of accomplishment; resulting scores are added and then divided by the weighted number of elements. The resulting value is the employee’s rating of record. Both management and the union, the National Treasury Employees Union, have found the new program allows for equitable calculation of performance awards and allows the employees to see the direct effects of their performance on individual elements.
- *Multiple Progress Reviews Requirements* – Department of Energy Headquarters and its bargaining unit representative, the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU), are not only encouraging employees and managers to discuss employees’ day-to-day tasks and requirements, but also the employees’ role in the success of the larger organization. This will necessarily require more communications—more instruction and feedback—than under the previous program. Accordingly, the Headquarters performance management program now requires that employee expectations be clarified at the beginning of the performance period, and there must be at least two progress reviews during the period. Progress reviews must be more structured. At each progress review, the rating official must now discuss how the employee’s “tasks” (each element has a list of associated tasks) have been performed over the past few months, what documentation supports that performance, and what resources the employee will need in the coming months to support and enhance the employee’s and the organization’s performance. At the end of each progress review, the employee will be given a non-binding feedback score on each element performed during the progress review period.

Theme 2: Establish Accountability

Hold Supervisors Accountable for Managing Performance

- NASA conducts small team reviews of performance plans and assessments to ensure that management responsibilities are addressed.
- The Department of Education has an automated 360-degree performance evaluation system that includes all employees and supervisors, including members of the Senior Executive Service.
- The Indian Health Service (Department of Health and Human Services), as a way to strengthen supervisory skills, is retraining all current supervisors (as well as new ones) in the core interpersonal skills so necessary for good supervision. One large component of the Indian Health Service has gone even further to offer interpersonal skills training to the rest of their employees as well.
- In 2000, the Bureau of Land Management (Department of the Interior) will have all SES and manager appraisals based on its strategic goals and supplemented by a “360-degree review” for developmental purposes.
- The Social Security Administration is planning a competency self-assessment that will include those skills and attributes associated with effective performance management.
- *360-Degree (Upward) Feedback* – Several agencies are using multi-rater assessment techniques to bring their managers, supervisors, and team leaders richer information about their performance. In some cases, the information is used for developmental, rather than evaluative, purposes.
- The *Organizational Assessment Survey*, available through OPM’s Personnel Resources and Development Center, measures organizational climate and effectiveness, including the kinds of performance management support that managers provide.

Include Performance Management Outcomes in HR Accountability Systems

- Performance management has been incorporated into the NASA’s self-assessment program.
- The Department of the Interior’s new human resources accountability system uses a suite of indicators from a wide variety of sources to monitor program performance in the areas covered by the Department’s HR Strategic Plan. The system is simple and inexpensive, but effective in producing real-time measures of progress. The system includes performance management outcomes and utilizes a “balanced measures approach.”
- OPM’s *HRM Accountability System Development Guide*, which covers the performance management-related Merit System Principles is available on the OPM Web site.
- OPM maintains a clearinghouse of successful and promising applications of HRM accountability systems or their components within Federal agencies and other organizations; it is available through OPM’s Web site.

Theme 3: Take Timely Action

Intervene Early

- *“Rapid Response Teams”* – The Treasury Department has a Rapid Response Team consisting of several high level staff from the Department’s personnel and legal headquarters offices. They may be contacted directly by bureau officials to discuss sensitive personnel matters. The team member contacted can work individually, or with another team member, calling on whatever resources are necessary to provide immediate advice and guidance, including options for handling the matter at issue.
- The Department of Health and Human Services reports having success using an informal, multi-party approach to address what they call “underutilization.”
- The Department of Education has instituted a mobility assignment program that opens up detail opportunities on a competitive basis (for up to 1 year) to employees throughout the agency. Employees can develop new skills and gain experience that may help qualify them for new positions.
- The Department of Education provides mediation services through its Informal Dispute Resolution Center.
- In 2000, the Department of Education will launch an automated Individual Development Plan system.
- The Department of Transportation secretarial award “Find the Good and Praise It” recognizes employee contributions in support of DOT goals. The award is given on a monthly basis.
- NASA uses *mandated coaching sessions*.
- The Department of the Interior is implementing an early intervention alternative dispute resolution procedure called CORE, which is designed to enable a well-trained dispute resolution specialist to intervene in a dispute at an early stage to assist the parties in resolving the current misunderstanding and to help them develop conflict resolution skills to facilitate their future dealings. While this process will be open to any dispute an employee brings forward, experience suggests that a great many of these disputes involve performance expectations and performance appraisal issues.
- *Performance Development Resources (PDR)* – a Navy demonstration project includes a process in which a pool of people, including union representatives, act as a support system for employees and managers throughout the performance process. Should performance problems arise, PDR can be particularly useful in diagnosing issues impacting performance and identifying options for addressing these issues, for example, development opportunities, tools to support improved performance, and reassignment of the employee to a position that better matches his/her capabilities and interests. PDR may also identify systemic or organizationwide issues that may be affecting performance. Supervisors are expected to use PDR for assistance in preventing and alleviating performance problems. Employees may also use PDR to assist them in correcting self-identified performance problems, in development planning, and to facilitate communication and feedback with their supervisors. [NOTE: Although PDR is part of a demonstration project, it can be implemented without obtaining waivers of law or regulation.]

- The Social Security Administration has invested in training for managers to *overcome resistance to confrontation*.
- Training in subjects like performance counseling and dealing with difficult people is available from a variety of private vendors.
- Several agencies use a *checklist for successful interventions*.
- The comprehensive *Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Resource Guide* is available on OPM's Web site. ADR consists of a variety of approaches to early intervention and dispute resolution. Many of these approaches include the use of a neutral individual such as a mediator who can assist disputing parties in resolving their disagreements. ADR increases the parties' opportunities to resolve disputes prior to or during the use of formal administrative procedures and litigation (which can be very costly and time-consuming). The Guide provides an overall picture of how the most common forms of ADR are being implemented in Federal agencies. It summarizes a number of current ADR programs (including alternative discipline programs), and it includes descriptions of shared neutrals programs where agencies have collaborated to reduce the costs of ADR. It provides a listing of training and resources available from Federal and non-Federal sources. It also provides selected ADR-related Web sites. The information in the Guide will be helpful in exploring the feasibility and appropriateness of implementing alternative dispute resolution programs in an organization or enhancing existing programs.

Support Supervisors Taking Performance-Based Actions

- The various multi-party approaches described above provide continuous support in the event that a performance-based action is pursued.
- “Just in time” training is available for supervisors in the form of OPM's interactive CD-ROM and Handbook on *Addressing and Resolving Poor Performance*, which provides direct assistance and advice to supervisors for every stage of the process.
- The Department of Education uses a system of mentoring to provide managers tools and follow-up, as well as a system of executive coaches to work with managers on performance issues.
- At NASA, an agency expert provides performance seminars to field Centers; human resources staff and managers attend.
- The Department of Transportation has a new “Shared Neutrals Program” for timely resolution of conflicts throughout DOT.
- The Department of Commerce prepared, issued, and has posted on its Web site *The Manager's Handbook on Human Resources*. Three chapters in the Handbook pertain to this topic: “How Do I Evaluate An Employee's Performance?,” “How Do I Reward an Employee?,” and “How Do I Deal with an Employee's Unacceptable Performance.” Each chapter provides typical scenarios, principles, where to start, rules and flexibilities, basic steps, needed forms, time frames, good management practices, checklists, and a note on how the SES is different from the GS. The Handbook is available at <http://ohrm.doc.gov/information/handbook/Mgrhbk.htm>.
- The Department of State produced a handbook “Supervisor's Guide – Dealing with Employee Unacceptable Performance and Conduct.”

- The Department of State held workshops for all supervisors and managers on how to address unacceptable performance.
- Distance learning approaches can be used to provide management and skills training to address poor performance.
- Sample proposal and decision letters used in pursuing performance actions are available on OPM's Web site.