



PEOPLE SKILLS FOR SENIOR MANAGERS

Customer Challenge:

An agency criticized by Congress for its managers' poor people skills and lack of succession planning

While Congress felt this agency was technically competent, lawmakers were concerned about managers' poor interpersonal skills when dealing with the public and Congress itself. There were also concerns that mini-empires, or "stovepipes," were impeding performance within the agency, as was a lack of clear succession planning.

OPM's Solution:

A two-tiered program aimed at both current managers and potential new leaders

The Office of Personnel Management's Custom Solutions Team performed a professional needs- assessment and listened to extensive input from the agency to develop two levels of custom training:

- A three-week introductory program for emerging managers
- A two-week advanced program for current leaders

Both of these programs combined class instruction and hands-on participation exercises focusing on vital leadership skills including:

- Financial management and budgeting
- Strategy and project planning
- Small group dynamics
- Organizational behavior

Result:

Relationship issues finally beginning to mend, new leaders being cultivated

The agency has already made measurable progress in shifting attitudes among its existing managers and developing the next generation of leaders. It also has realized that improved people skills increases job satisfaction and breaks down artificial barriers between colleagues.

An agency official wrote: "I have always found OPM's Development Centers to have available the training we need, or they are able to create it. They are so responsive to our requests and have provided us with a great service."

