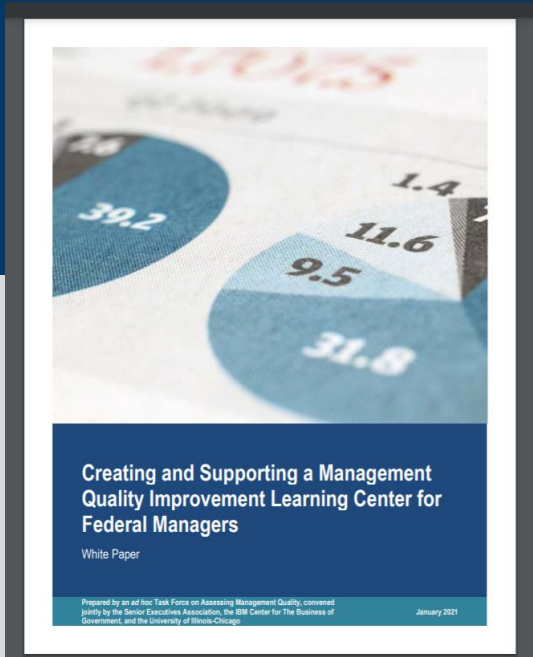


Task Force on Assessing Management Quality



SEA-NAPA-SSLC Shared Services Forum
March 11, 2021

Briefing Purpose and Outline

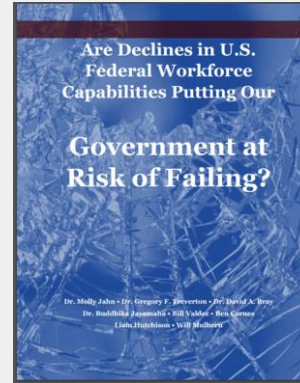
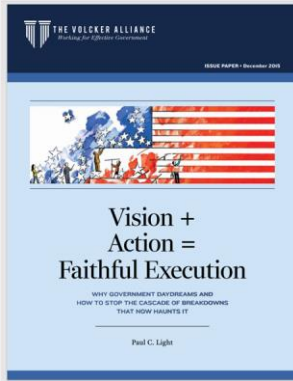
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Purpose: to share and get feedback on the white paper developed by the Task Force on Assessing Management Quality in Federal Agencies

Outline:

- Background
- The Task Force
- Assessing, Diagnosing, and Improving Management Quality
- Discussion

The case for a focus on management quality



- Good management practices lead to improved performance
- Good management helps to buffer the impact of dramatic changes from the environment (i.e. COVID-19).

Background: Measuring the Quality of Management

“Often the reason programs fail is because of bad management rather than because of bad policy. It’s hard to get people to pay attention to management.”

- Interviewee

Thesis: A valid and objective means of measuring agency management quality can serve to heighten awareness of management shortcomings and draw attention to the need to invest in the management function.



Task Force Members

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Task Force Charge

To deliver a written plan that outlines how a program to assess and ultimately to improve the management quality of federal agencies should be designed and implemented.

Our framework will serve as a guide for the program designers and implementers on...

- “what to assess”
- “how to assess”
- “how assessments can be used to improve management quality”

Task Force Vision

- A learning orientation that acknowledges good management as an evolving construct.
- Diagnostic tools can function as learning guides to identify strengths and weaknesses
- A program that is “owned” by the agencies

Management Reform in the Executive Branch

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- Conventional Model

- Compliance orientation
- OMB/EOP driven
- Top-down
- Coping orientation on the part of agencies
- Initiatives lapse with change of administrations

- Our Approach

- Learning orientation
- Senior civil servant driven
- Bottom-up
- Voluntary engagement on the part of agencies
- Initiative sustained over time

Design and implementation principles

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This initiative would...

- not be a compliance-driven exercise;
- provide agency decision makers with actionable insights;
- provide tools and resources to encourage capacity building to improve management quality;
- collaborate with agency leaders as champions for management quality;



Design and implementation principles cont.

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- Development of diagnostic(s) to provide an objective assessment of how well an agency is managed
- Identification of sponsor organization(s) other than OMB
- The diagnostic(s) as a “living document” subject to ongoing revision and refinement as learning occurs around the question of management quality
 - Iterative engagement with participating agencies
 - Dialogue within the federal management community around a protocol and management quality that would promote learning and management quality itself

Overall Framework

**Collaborative &
Evolving**

Government-wide Learning Community



Issues We Wrestled With

- Characteristics of “management quality”
- Lessons from similar initiatives
- Achieving buy-in
- Protocol design
- Governance & ownership



Characteristics of management quality

- Programs to improve the quality of management practices should focus on:

Organizational Performance

...and delivery of mission results in an effective, efficient, and equitable manner

Organizational Resilience

...to manage risk, respond to crises, and anticipate, prepare for, and respond to changes in the broader environment

Organizational Agility

...and ability to innovate

Lessons from Similar Initiatives

- Preceding/Existing models
 - Baldrige Performance Excellence Program
 - Government Performance Project
 - World Management Survey
 - Common Assessment Framework (European Union)
 - United Kingdom (Capability Assessment Review; Public Values Framework)

Achieving Buy-in

- From a Deputy Secretary/COO perspective
 - What are my agency's management strengths? Weaknesses?
 - What can I learn from agencies found to be well managed?
- From an SES perspective
 - How well is the management team doing?
 - In what areas are we strong? In what areas are we weak?
 - How should limited resources be invested?
 - How can this exercise induce a learning orientation on the part of middle managers?
 - What can be learned about practices engaged in by other, well-managed agencies?

Governance

- Who should host and champion this initiative?
 - Single org inside govt?
 - Single org outside govt?
 - Consortium?
 - FFRDC?
- What should OMB's role be, if any?

Diagnostic Design

- How should the attributes of what would constitute quality performance, resilience, and agility be defined and how would they be measured?
- Should there be a single, common diagnostic framework or multiple versions depending on the attributes of each organization?
- What should be the unit of analysis for the diagnostics?

Diagnostic Administration

- Agency grades/scores
 - Advantages
 - As a basis for assessing progress
 - As a basis for identifying well managed agencies/agency best practices
 - Would draw the attention of policy makers and encourage investments in management capacity
 - Disadvantages
 - Scores become the focus
 - Induce gaming

Creating & Supporting a Management Quality Improvement Center for Federal Managers



Components of the Learning Center

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- In order to facilitate a government-wide community of federal managers and leaders interested in improving management practices, the Task Force recommends establishing a “Management Quality Improvement Learning Center(s)” which should be a repository of:
 - Reliable and consistent methods to diagnose agencies dimensions that lead to a better performance
 - Successful practices that agencies have used to improve organizational health and management practices

Main Tasks of the Learning Center

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- Support needs of agency leaders and federal managers
- Promote insights on how to benchmark against other agencies in constructive ways
- Develop diagnostic tools that transcend political administration and leadership changes
- Promote a bottom-up approach to diagnosing and improving management quality to include senior, middle, and front-line managers

Next Steps: Roadmap for the Learning Center

1. Identify potential champions (orgs & individuals; inside & outside govt)
2. Develop and pilot one or more program protocols
3. Develop a repository of tools, promising practices, case studies
4. Create/support communities of practice (geographic-based, agency-based, function-based)



Thank You

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Please get in touch if you have any additional feedback, questions, or are interested in being involved in next steps:

- Jason Briefel, Senior Executives Association: Jason.Briefel@seniorexecs.org
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Back-Up Slides

Our Progress: Management Quality Characteristics, Indicators and Drivers [Organizational Performance]



Outcome Dimensions/ Lagging Indicators

- Effective Leadership
- Right-sized/ right-skilled workforce
- Engaged Employees
- Effective Planning
- Effective Performance Measurement and Management
- Effective resource management
- Continuous improvement culture
- Inclusive Culture

Potential Assessment Questions/ Data Sources

- Employee Viewpoint Survey
- Performance goals and measures

Support Dimensions / Leading Indicators/ Drivers

- Strength of human capital management function
- Investment in employees
- Strength of planning and performance management functions

Potential Assessment Questions/ Data Sources

- Questions



What metrics or assessment tools already exist to assess these dimensions?

Our Progress: Management Quality Characteristics, Indicators and Drivers [Organizational Resilience]



Outcome Dimensions/ Lagging Indicators

- Leadership
- Governance and decision making
- Future focus
- Change Readiness
- Engaged Employees
- Right-sized/ Right-skilled Workforce
- Operating in networks/ collaborating across silos
- Leveraging internal knowledge
- Situational Awareness

Potential Assessment Questions/ Data Sources

- Employee Viewpoint Survey
- Performance goals and measures

Support Dimensions / Leading Indicators/ Drivers

- Strength of human capital management function
- Investment in employees
- Strength of planning and performance management functions

Potential Assessment Questions/ Data Sources

- Questions



What metrics or assessment tools already exist to assess these dimensions?

Our Progress: Management Quality Characteristics, Indicators and Drivers [Organizational Agility]



Outcome Dimensions/ Lagging Indicators

- Mission
- Metrics for Success.
- Customer-Driven Behavior
- External networks
- Speed
- Empowered, Highly-Skilled, Diverse Cross-Functional Teams and Networks
- Innovation
- Persistence
- Evidence informed solutions
- Organizational leaders

Potential Assessment Questions/ Data Sources

- Employee Viewpoint Survey
- Performance goals and measures
- Customer satisfaction measures

Support Dimensions / Leading Indicators/ Drivers

- Strength of human capital management function
- Investment in employees
- Strength of planning and performance management functions

Potential Assessment Questions/ Data Sources

- Questions



What metrics or assessment tools already exist to assess these dimensions?