

To: John Palguta, PPS Vice President for Policy and Research
Fr: Amy Gee
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RE: Extreme Hiring Makeover

MEMORANDUM

The cumbersome Federal hiring process results in a prolonged period before a position can be filled and a loss of qualified candidates as they are being employed elsewhere. Since more than half of current Federal employees are reaching their retirement age, we must find ways to improve the hiring process in order to recruit the most qualified replacements (Lundberg 2006). I suggest we improve the hiring process by streamlining the required procedures, creating active recruitment strategies, and using practical candidate assessment tools.

Cumbersome Procedures Prolonging the Start of the Hiring Process:

The existing Federal hiring policy, particularly with the involvement of many various procedures significantly prolongs the hiring process. Different individuals in HR may be involved in classifying and mapping a corresponding pay scale to the position. Yet other individuals may be needed to approve each of these items before an ultimate controlling unit approves recruitment. The entire process is very inefficient and can take months or even up to a year before a position can begin recruitment. In an era where new public administration must focus on improving efficiency and effectiveness of its process, these cumbersome procedures must be streamlined (Pollitt 2007 and Nigro, Nigro, & Kellough 2007).

Recommendations: The establishment and approval process of a position can be streamlined so the involvement of less procedures or time is needed to begin recruitment. A specific period, such as 30 days, should be established as the timeframe to create and approve a position for posting. Creating a deadline helps to improve the overall efficiency of an organization by forcing the agency to stay on top of the tasks needed to accomplish the matter (Forster 2004). Instead of going back and forth to review and approve different aspects of a position, such as classification vs. compensation, one process should be used to fulfill these logistic needs prior to having a single approval process to review all items at the same time.

Recruitment Fails to Capture Interest of Potential Candidates

Another issue that contributes to the inefficiency of the hiring process is the government's passive recruitment approach with a lack of marketing for open positions and job announcements written in a dull and confusing manner. Unlike businesses and corporations that actively participate in career fairs or college recruiting, the government typically puts a job posting on its website or publishes the information on a bulletin

that is only available in its local offices. The government's passiveness in its administration hinders it from accomplishing a desirable outcome, further contributing to the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of governmental processes (Bryson & Alston 1996 and Glazer & Rothenberg 2001). The government's passive recruiting strategies fail to capture a broad range of potential candidates who might have wanted to work for the government

Recommendations: The Federal government must take a proactive approach to improve the marketing of its available open positions. The government should actively promote its vacancies through the media, career fairs, colleges, and community centers. Being proactive in recruitment is the key to create the best possible pool of candidates for hiring (Petten 2000). Instead of writing long daunting job announcements that often focus on organization history and needs, job announcements should be written in an encouraging language that focuses on the specific skills and abilities that can be utilized and developed in the position. Instead of focusing on what the hiring department wants from the candidate, job descriptions should also include what the department can offer to create a welcoming atmosphere for potential candidates.

Incompatible Candidate Assessment Tools

A third major issue of the hiring process is a lack of compatible candidate assessment tool that could successfully map qualified candidates to available positions. Standardized employment tests and general ranking systems based on education and experience may not provide insights to a candidate's personality, work ethnics, and overall "fit" for the position. The government's rigid systems and lack of flexibility further result in ineffective operations and decisions (Pennington 2000 and Rusaw 1998).

Recommendations: In order to find the best possible match for a position, the government must be flexible in terms of assessing the skills and personality needs for that particular position. The hiring decision should not be limited to just the three candidates with the top standardized test scores. A unique assessment may be created tailoring to the needs of a specific vacancy. In addition, results of the in-person interview should be weighted equally as standardized test scores when making a hiring decision. Flexibility in the assessment process is necessary to improve the accuracy and efficiency of hiring selection decisions (Hunt 2007).

The existing Federal hiring process is extremely cumbersome and often results in a mis-match of candidates to available positions. Implementing the suggestions to streamline the required procedures, creating active recruitment strategies, and using flexible candidate assessment tools should be able to improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the hiring process.

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