

BALANCING A JOINT ACCOUNT-ABILITY

Human Resources
Program Evaluation
After Decentralization



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Overview

- Where we were - traditional central system
- A new vision leads to a plan
- Implementation
- The first year
- Results, maintenance and the future
- Lessons learned



Background

- 60,000+ classified employees
- 40,000+ unclassified employees
- Social Services, Corrections, Universities, Hospitals, etc.
- “Quasi-state” agencies: Housing Authorities, Levee Boards, Ports, etc.



Pre-Approval of all Transactions

- 10,000 transactions per month
- 15,000 transaction back-log
- Individual compliance review
- Error resolution/correction



Existing Flexibility

- Direct hire for unskilled & highly specialized
- Certifiable scores
- Promotional contracts
- Pay options
- Allocation authority



Compliance vs. Effectiveness

- Focus on individual compliance
- Extremely limited overall review
- Role of HR to agency and to Civil Service
- Customer satisfaction ratings

 People high ~ ~ Process low 



The Case for Change

- One size does NOT fit all
- Decentralization can work
- Decentralization intensifies need for support
- DSCS resources will remain limited
- Organize around customer not function
- Increased demand for accountability



The Vision - ASCEND 2020

- Decentralize approval authority
- Create Assistance Teams
- Establish HR Accountability Program



PLANNING



Talking with Customers

- Governor's Office
- Agency Heads
- Legislators
- HR Directors



Work Flow Redesign Effort

- Steering Committee & Work Groups
- Mixture of representation
- Constitutional foundation
- Short & long term recommendations
- Pilot program



Common Concerns

- Greater flexibility
- Greater accountability for results
- Need for manager/supervisor training



Focus of Evaluations

Compliance yes,
but greatest emphasis on
overall results of HR practices



Evaluation Priorities

- Decisions with greatest impact on agency performance:
 - Staffing - hiring & promotions
 - Training
 - Individual performance evaluation



The Plan

- Three-year review cycle
- In-between “Drop-In” Visits
- Levels of review: Full Program vs. Basic



Staffing and Starting

- Four full-time Evaluators
- Initial training
- Start with the basics... but **START!**



IMPLEMENTATION



Getting Down To Specifics

- Who?
- What?
- How?
- When?
- Documenting



Who To Review - Considerations

- 500+ entities vs. 4 Consultants
- Classified vs. unclassified
- Agency size: 1 - 5,000+ employees
- Locations: rural to metro
- Fulfilling our merit system role
- Cost vs. Benefit



What To Review

- Human Resource programs only
- Avoid duplication with Legislative Auditor's financial audits (payroll items)
- HR issues arising from decentralization
- Special requests by Director



How To Review

- Baseline assessment of HR programs
- Decisions impacting agency performance
- Training
- Individual performance evaluation
- Rule compliance on transactions sampled



When To Review

- At least once every 3 years
- Avoid peak work times
- Checks in-between full reviews



Levels of Review

- Full HR Program Evaluation
- Basic Compliance Review
- Drop-In Visits



Full HR Program Evaluation

- Major state agencies
- Others with 50+ classified positions
- Usually a Director of HR position



Basic Compliance Reviews

- Entities with 10 - 50 classified employees
- Usually no Director of HR position



Drop-In Visits

- Conducted at larger agencies in years when Full HR Program Evaluations not done
- Spot check of HR files



Documenting: HR Program Evaluation Report

- Assesses HR program and compliance
- To HR Director, supervisor, agency head, Legislative Auditor, Civil Service Commission
- Oral report at public meeting



Documenting: Basic Compliance Review Report

- Main focus is compliance
- Report to HR person and supervisor, agency head, Legislative Auditor, C.S. Commission
- Oral report at public meeting



Documenting: Drop-In Visits

- Letter to HR Director and agency head
- Notes any problems or non-compliance
- Provides contact for Assistance



Earning Immediate Interest

- Of Accountability Consultants
 - Educate & train, make first year assignments
- Of DSCS
 - Establish relationships with other Divisions
- Of agencies to be evaluated
 - Initial visits and questionnaires



Methodology

- Background research
- Agency submitted information
- On-Site records audit
- Report findings & recommendations



Background Research

- Internal sources
- Agency supplied
- Public records - internet search



Internal Sources of Info

- Contracts/agreements with DSCS
- Policies and special authorities granted
- Annual reports
- Generating computer reports



Public Records - Internet Search

- Agency web-site
- Enabling statutes
- Budget allocations
- Public reports of other reviewing agencies
- Newspapers



Agency Supplied Info

- Agency completes questionnaire
- Copies of agency policies and forms
- Discussions with HR Director by phone/e-mail



Developing Questionnaire

- 12 major areas of Human Resources
- Background information on agency HR practices, insight into level of development
- Involves HR staff early in the evaluation process
- Sent 1-2 months ahead of site visit
- Revised as needed



Determine On-Site Sample

- Baseline, effectiveness & compliance
- Evaluation priorities & level of review
- Agency's "big business"
- Time constraints
- Special requests



Compounding Interest

- Alert agencies to upcoming on-site evaluation
- Conduct 2-3 day on-site evaluation
- Analyze data and ask additional questions
- Issue draft report and allow agency response
- Issue final report
- Public review of report at Commission Mtg.



On-Site Procedures

- Meet with HR Director on arrival
- Review documents and personnel files
- Consult with/interview HR staff as needed
- Exit interview with HR Director to discuss general observations and findings
- Report: time-frame and chance to respond



Determining Report Format

- Review other types of “audit” reports
- Purpose and audience
- Appendices & attachments?
- Production and cost considerations
- Time considerations



Determine Report Circulation

- Draft report to HR Director and supervisor w/deadline to respond
- Final report to the appointing authority, HR Director, supervisor, and HR Director of any parent organization
- Copies to Legislative Auditor, Civil Service Commission, Assistance team, on DSCS intranet (internal)



Monthly Accrual Rate

At any time, each consultant will be:

- Researching for next evaluation
- Writing report on review just completed
- Planning, conducting Drop-In Visits



MAINTENANCE

Determining When
to Make Adjustments



Adjusting Procedures

- Rules, Federal Laws, State Statutes change
- New goals set - end of first complete cycle
- New projects added
- Focus changes



Report Format

- Procedure changes reflected in report format
- Change in emphasis on specific area
- Change in basic outline of report
- End of base line - new goals
- Hybrid reports to address follow-up



Schedule of Evaluations

- Staffing levels
- Other demands: investigations, other projects
- Realistic goals
- Follow-up needs: good practices vs poorly run shop



Goals of Division

- Staffing levels
- Improvements in efficiency
- Agency Strategic Plan



What Surprised the Evaluated

- Statement of general facts about agency: agency did not like what the “mirror” showed
- Pass/Fail vs. development aid
- Recommendations vs. Rule violations
- Executive Officer involvement
- Appointing authority documentation
- Incomplete/inadequate records
- Lack of internal controls



Specific Lessons that Evaluated Learned

- Their perception vs. reality of Accountability “auditor”
- Evaluator cared to win their trust
- Evaluator strove for balance



What Surprised the Evaluators

- Knowledge level of HR staff varied greatly
- Agencies did not fully understand audit trail
- Agency resentment over increased workload
- Multiple HR software systems
- Confusion - more than 2 reports at once
- High adaptability & organizational skills needed



Specific Lessons that Evaluator Learned

- The obstacles faced on the other side
- What your data is really telling you
- Best Practices really became mundane



CONCLUSION



LESSONS LEARNED

- Managing Expectations
- Communication
- Culture Shift
- Coordinating with Assistance Teams
- Sanctions
- Measuring ourselves
- Value to Administration



Managing Expectations

- Preconceived notions
- Fear of being audited
- How to make “100”
- Environment: other audits, news, etc.
- Assessment vs. Assistance - “fix it for me”



Communication - External

- “Conversations” with Director
- Meetings with HR Groups big and small
- Questionnaire on web-site
- Public Reports to Commission
- Best Practices on web-site
- Common Pitfalls on web-site



Communication - Internal

- Among evaluators and with other staff
- Co-operation with Assistance
- Clarifying roles
- Feedback to policy-setters & trainers
- Singing from the same book



Culture Shift

- For agency HR officers
- For agency executives
- For our own staff -- becoming change agents



Value to Administration

- Consciousness raising
- Opening a dialog
- Managerial choices - cost/benefit
- Planning tool for agency



Coordinating Assistance

- Maintaining objectivity of evaluations
- Review of reports w/team
- Items for attention
- Resolving serious problems together



Sanctions

- Focus on agency responsibility
- Minor errors - day forward corrections
- Serious problems
 - Public Hearing
 - “On Probation”
 - Power of the press



Measuring Ourselves

- Follow-up visits
- Evaluating our systems & procedures
- Agency feedback



FINAL BALANCE

- Decentralization works
- Merit is more than mechanics
- Future of HR profession



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Questions ? ?

