



United States Merit Systems Protection Board

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NEW MSPB REPORT FINDS THERE ARE LESSONS TO BE LEARNED IN FEDERAL RECRUITMENT

The Federal Government could be facing major human capital challenges over the next several years as the result of an increasing number of employees eligible to retire, changing workforce demographics, and evolving mission needs. To meet these challenges and continue seamless service to the American public, the Government must be able to continuously recruit a high quality and diverse workforce that has a variety of knowledge and skills. A new report released by the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, *Managing Federal Recruitment: Issues, Insights, and Illustrations*, demonstrates that it is possible for the Federal Government to successfully compete for talent – through proactive and creative strategies.

“In looking at Federal recruitment, the most striking finding is the degree of variability among agencies,” notes Acting Chairman Neil A.G. McPhie. Agencies differ greatly in terms of support, resources, planning, implementation, and evaluation of their recruitment efforts. What remains consistent is the increase in attention recruitment has received over the past several years. Agencies are concerned about their ability to recruit the employees they need to accomplish their mission and have started acting on these concerns.

The report found that even with stepped up recruitment efforts, many Federal agencies still face a number of recruitment challenges. The Federal hiring process is long and complicated; many in the public view Federal jobs as less challenging, rewarding, and developmental than private and non-profit sector jobs; and budget constraints can limit recruitment activities and staffing. Further, labor market shortages, non-competitive salaries, and loss of human resources (HR) expertise can also negatively affect agency recruitment efforts.

Though these factors pose great challenges to agency recruitment efforts, the report lays out a number of steps agency Chief Human Capital Officers and HR staff can take to build strong recruitment programs. The key to success is gaining the support and involvement of agency leaders – particularly in distinguishing recruitment as a critical management function rather than solely an HR office responsibility.

To demonstrate that imagination is not a lost art in the Government, the report illustrates a number of strategies agencies are using to deal with some of their recruitment challenges. Included are examples from agencies that are leading the way to “green” on the President’s Management Agenda – including NASA, the Departments of State and Labor, and the Social Security Administration. The report examines how agency leaders are talking to college campuses, how applicants are “chatting it up” with Foreign Service officers, and how the IRS is trying to save the taxpayers’ money.

As noted by Acting Chairman McPhie, “With a little creativity and innovation, along with leadership support and adequate resources, we believe the Government can successfully meet its recruitment demands.”

The MSPB is an independent, quasi-judicial agency with responsibility for deciding Federal employee appeals from personnel actions taken against them, protecting the integrity of the civil service and other Federal merit systems, and conducting studies of the civil service and other merit systems in the Executive Branch. To request a printed copy of the report, e-mail STUDIES@mspb.gov; call (202) 653-6772, extension 1350, or write: Merit Systems Protection Board, Office of Policy and Evaluation, 1615 M Street NW, Washington, DC 20419. The report may be downloaded from the Board’s website at www.mspb.gov.

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