FEDERAL EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT:

The Motivating Potential of Job Characteristics and Rewards

A Report to the President and the Congress of the United States
by the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board

DECEMBER 2012

THE CHAIRMAN

U.S. MERIT SYSTEMS PROTECTION BOARD
1615 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20419-0001

The President
President of the Senate
Speaker of the House of Representatives

Dear Sirs:

In accordance with the requirements of 5 U.S.C. § 1204(a)(3), it is my honor to submit this U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) report, *Federal Employee Engagement: The Motivating Potential of Job Characteristics and Rewards*. An engaged, high-performing Federal workforce is especially important in an era of reduced resources and heightened expectations. Using Federal employee survey data and insights from personnel psychology, this report discusses how Federal agencies can design jobs and provide rewards to encourage employees to put forth their best efforts.

First, Federal agencies can do more to make Federal jobs truly motivating. We found that employees who believed their jobs had desirable characteristics such as skill variety, autonomy, and performance feedback were more likely to perform well. However, many Federal employees reported that their job lacked one or more elements necessary to a high level of motivation. Accordingly, Federal agencies should look for ways to modify jobs or working conditions to make better use of Federal employee's skills, insights, and initiative. That is, Federal agencies and managers should strive to make the promise of public service a reality, by affording employees the greatest possible latitude to use their talents to accomplish meaningful and challenging work.

Second, Federal agencies can make better use of rewards, both monetary and non-monetary. Fortunately, most Federal employees place great importance on non-monetary rewards, such as the opportunity to serve the public and the opportunity to perform challenging work. Unfortunately, many Federal employees did not see a strong connection between their work efforts and individual results (such as performance ratings) and outcomes (such as performance rewards). Steps that agencies can take to strengthen this critical connection include improving performance management practices and providing rewards that Federal employees truly value.

I believe you will find this report useful as you consider issues affecting the Federal workforce and Federal agency performance.

Respectfully,

Susan Tsui Grundmann

Federal Employee Engagement:
THE MOTIVATING POTENTIAL OF JOB CHARACTERISTICS AND REWARDS

A Report to the President and the Congress of the United States
by the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board

NOVEMBER 2012

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Motivating employees to perform at a high level and encouraging their engagement are essential to an efficient and effective Federal Government. Having skilled, engaged employees is more important than ever, especially in light of austere fiscal conditions, budget constraints, impending retirements, and public debate over the value of Federal employees and their work. Previous MSPB research has shown the importance of employee engagement for several desirable organizational outcomes, and has discussed the importance of supervisory performance management practices for employee engagement.[1] Building on that research, this report focuses on helping Federal agencies, Federal managers and supervisors, and other stakeholders better understand how job characteristics and rewards can support employee motivation and encourage engagement and performance. This report—

- Discusses the importance of 5 job characteristics[2] for supporting employee motivation: (1) skill variety, (2) task identity, (3) task significance, (4) autonomy, and (5) feedback;
- Examines the relationship between Federal employees' perceptions of these job characteristics with their motivation and performance, and discusses results from a diagnostic tool (the Motivation Potential Level) used to gauge the motivational quality of job characteristics;
- Provides strategies for improving job characteristics, such as job enlargement, enrichment, and rotation, as well as communicating how jobs contribute to mission accomplishment;
- Discusses the importance of connecting desired rewards to employees' effort and performance, for supporting employee motivation;
- Examines the importance that Federal employees place on various rewards such as awards and bonuses, personal satisfaction, and developmental opportunities;
- Examines employees' perceptions of the connections between their effort and performance and the rewards that agencies provide, and discusses results from a

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[1] U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, *The Power of Federal Employee Engagement*, September 2008; and U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, *Managing for Engagement—Communication, Connection, and Courage,* July 2009.

[2] Hackman, J.R., & Oldham, G.R. (1975). Development of the Job Diagnostic Survey. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 60, pp. 159-170; and Hackman, J.R., & Oldham, G.R. (2010). Not what it was and not what it will be: The future of job design research. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 31(2-3), pp. 463-479.

diagnostic tool (the Motivation Force Score) used to gauge the motivational quality of rewards;

- Provides diagnostic tools[3] (the Motivation Potential Level and the Motivation Force Score mentioned above) that Federal agencies can use to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement in job design and rewards, respectively; and
- Discusses elements of effective reward programs, such as using sound performance management practices, communicating the availability of rewards and conditions for receiving them, providing rewards that employees value, and making fair and transparent reward decisions.

Findings

Motivation Among Federal Employees

Most Federal employees view themselves as motivated, with 71 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement, "I feel highly motivated in my work." Agreement varied considerably across Federal agencies, ranging from 62 percent to 77 percent. This range suggests that motivation can be shaped by features of the work environment. Further, it is clear that there is room to improve motivation. We focused on how job characteristics and rewards could present opportunities for this improvement.

Job Characteristics

Job characteristics such as autonomy (the freedom to decide how to accomplish work assignments), skill variety, and feedback affect employee motivation and performance. For example, employees in jobs with high perceived levels of autonomy are more likely to be highly motivated—and perform at a higher level—than employees who believe that they have little autonomy.

Federal agencies have considerable opportunity to design jobs or adjust working conditions to make them more motivating. In our survey, we computed a Motivation Potential Level[4] to gauge how a survey respondent viewed the characteristics of his or her job.[5] Only 21 percent of Federal employees had a high Motivation Potential Level. This finding suggests that although at a general level Federal employees feel motivated in their work, job characteristics are an area where potential improvements in motivation can be made. In other words, agencies can take action to influence motivation through job characteristics.

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[3] These diagnostic tools are discussed in more detail in the body of this report. Also, see Appendix A for the items and procedure used to compute the Motivation Potential Level and Appendix B for the items and procedure used to compute the Motivation Force Score.

[4] This level was computed using a method adapted from Hackman and Oldham. See Hackman, J.R., & Oldham, G.R. (1975). Development of the Job Diagnostic Survey. *Journal of Applied Psychology,* 60, pp. 159-170; and Hackman, J.R., & Oldham, G.R. (2010). Not what it was and not what it will be: The future of job design research. *Journal of Organizational Behavior,* 31(2-3), pp. 463-479. Also, see Appendix A for the items and procedure used to compute the Motivation Potential Level.

Rewards

Federal employees are not motivated solely, or even primarily, by monetary rewards. For example, larger percentages of Federal employees rated non-monetary rewards such as, "The personal satisfaction I experience," "Having interesting work," "My job security," and "Being able to serve the public," as important to seeking and continuing employment with their organization than, "My awards and bonuses." In fact, of the eleven rewards that we asked about, eight non-monetary rewards were rated as important by more Federal employees than awards and bonuses. This pattern is encouraging, especially given the budget and resource constraints that many Federal agencies currently face.

However, Federal agencies can do more to design and deliver effective rewards. For rewards to be effective—to elicit effort and reinforce desired behaviors and results—Federal agencies need to give the right rewards in the right way. Employees who saw a strong connection between effort and outcomes (results achieved and the receipt of valued rewards) were more likely to perform at a high level than employees who viewed that connection as weak.

Unfortunately, most Federal employees did not see a strong connection between their work effort, performance rating, and rewards. In our study, we computed a Motivation Force Score[6] to gauge the strength of this connection. Only 23 percent of Federal employees had a high Motivation Force Score. Although Federal employees appear to value the rewards that agencies provide, many perceive the connection between their effort and performance or the connection between their performance and rewards as weak or unclear. In other words, rewards are another area where agencies can take action to influence motivation.

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[5] Fried, Y. & Ferris, G.R. (1987). The validity of the job characteristics model: A review and meta-analysis. *Personnel Psychology*, 40, pp. 287-322. Combining the five job characteristics into a single score was shown to be a valid predictor of important workplace outcomes including performance and attitude across many work contexts for both public and private organizations.

[6] The Motivation Force Score represents the motivational quality of an employee's rewards and perceived connections between effort, performance, and rewards. See Appendix B for the items and procedure used to calculate the Motivation Force Score.

Recommendations

Job Characteristics

Good job design—structuring jobs to maximize desirable characteristics—supports organizational efficiency and effectiveness. This is because job characteristics can impact employee motivation, a necessary ingredient for engagement and performance. Managers and supervisors should determine the extent to which their employees' jobs have motivating characteristics. Such characteristics include:

- Performing a variety of tasks that require a wide range of knowledge, skills, and abilities;
- Completing whole pieces of work or projects;
- Having a significant impact through work;
- Exercising autonomy in scheduling and performing work; and
- Receiving appropriate feedback.

More specific recommendations for these job characteristics can be found in the body and conclusion of this report.

In the event that improvements could be made to job characteristics to better support motivation and engagement, and to the extent permitted by mission requirements and employees' capabilities, managers and supervisors should work with relevant organizational leaders and employee representatives to design and implement changes. Improvements could include:

- Enlarging the duties of a job to increase the knowledge and skill sets that employees must apply to tasks;
- Rotating employees among jobs to increase their skill sets; or
- Enriching jobs by increasing employees' independence, responsibility, and accountability.

Agency leaders should also emphasize to employees the significance of their work and how it contributes to accomplishing goals; supports the organization's mission; and benefits the general public.

Rewards

Employees' perceptions of their rewards and the connection between the effort they exert, the success they anticipate, and the rewards they receive can influence their motivation and job performance. Sound supervisory performance management practices will be critical to help employees see connections between their effort, performance, and rewards. However, agencies need to give the right rewards in the right way. This includes:

- Offering a variety of rewards;
- Clearly communicating to employees the available types of rewards and the conditions for receiving them;
- Avoiding the creation of expectations for rewards that cannot or will not be met later;
- Identifying the rewards that employees value and when possible, accommodating such preferences when administering rewards. Agencies and managers should carefully consider the readiness of their organizational culture and systems before proceeding. In particular, agencies must take care to assure that employees are treated equitably—that "similarly situated employees are treated similarly"—even if they are not rewarded uniformly. For example, the standards for receiving rewards *should be consistent* across employees at the same performance level and the dollar-value of different rewards should be comparable for employees in a given position at the same performance level; and
- Administering rewards in a fair and transparent manner, consistent with applicable agency policies and procedures.

More specific recommendations for these reward practices can be found in the body and conclusion of this report.

INTRODUCTION

Background

The Federal Government is under increasing pressure to control spending and increase efficiency. At the same time, the rise in retirement eligibility and retirement rates among Federal employees means that many Federal workplaces are facing the loss of some of their most experienced employees. Yet, there have also been increasing demands for innovation and creativity. These challenges have made it more critical than ever for the Federal workforce to be composed of highly capable individuals who are passionate about their work and service to the public; committed to their jobs and organizations; and willing to go beyond the parameters of their job descriptions to generate effective work products and services for the American people. One strategy for cultivating such a workforce—in addition to formal mechanisms such as good performance management practices, succession management, and knowledge transfer—is promoting the engagement of individual Federal employees.

Previous research by MSPB has discussed drivers and outcomes of employee engagement,[7] as well as how organizations can influence engagement through supervisory performance management practices.[8] This report discusses two additional areas where organizations can take action to influence engagement: the motivational aspects of jobs and rewards.[9] We use and provide diagnostic tools—a Motivation Potential Level and a Motivation Force Score—to gauge the motivational quality of job characteristics and rewards, respectively.[10] Agency leadership can likewise use these tools to identify opportunities to sustain and potentially improve employee motivation within their organization.

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[7] U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, *The Power of Federal Employee Engagement*, September 2008.

[8] U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, *Managing for Engagement—Communication, Connection, and Courage,* July 2009.

[9] We note that in this report, the term "rewards" includes all aspects of employment that an employee might value, including non-monetary elements such as challenging work, personal satisfaction through public service, and inclusion in important conversations and decisions.

[10] The Motivation Potential Level uses employees' perceptions of their job characteristics as an index of their motivation and the Motivation Force Score uses employees' perceptions of their rewards and connections between their effort, performance, and rewards as an index of their motivation. These tools will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters. See Appendix A for the items and procedure used to compute the Motivation Potential Level, and Appendix B for the items and procedure used to compute the Motivation Force Score.

What is engagement and why is it important?

Previous research by MSPB, as summarized in the 2008 report, *The Power of Federal Employee Engagement*, suggested that employee engagement has three primary elements: (1) emotional and rational commitment to the job and the organization; (2) discretionary effort that produces sustained goal-directed performance; and (3) satisfaction from the job and its context.[11] This study demonstrated that employee engagement is linked to several important organizational outcomes. For example, the average level of employee engagement in Federal agencies was significantly associated with agency-level program results/accountability as measured by the Office of Management and Budget's Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART). Further, agencies with lower levels of engagement had higher levels of intention to leave the agency among their employees. Agencies with the highest rates of average sick leave use, equal employment opportunity (EEO) complaints, and instances of work-related injuries also had lower levels of employee engagement. It is clear that having engaged employees is desirable to Federal agencies, especially during challenging times.

In *The Power of Federal Employee Engagement*, we discussed six drivers for engaging Federal employees:

1. Pride in one's work and workplace: Do employees find their work meaningful? Would they recommend the agency as a place to work?

2. Satisfaction with leadership: Do the organization's leaders—from first-level supervisors to career executives to agency heads—provide clear vision and sound direction? Are they good stewards of the public interest and public employees?

3. The opportunity to perform well at work: Do employees know what is expected of them and have the resources and support they need to succeed?

4. Satisfaction with the recognition received: Does the organization reward excellence? Are rewards truly based on performance?

5. Prospects for future personal and professional growth: Does the organization give employees an opportunity to maintain and improve their skills?

6. A positive work environment with some focus on teamwork: Are employees treated with respect? Do their opinions count? Is the workplace collaborative or competitive?

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[11] U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, *The Power of Federal Employee Engagement*, September 2008.

Appendix C lists the survey questions associated with these drivers. These drivers suggest three areas where organizations can potentially influence engagement: supervision, job characteristics, and rewards.

Engagement and the Influence of Supervision. As discussed in MSPB's report, *Managing for Engagement—Communication, Connection, and Courage*, supervisors can influence engagement through performance management practices including assigning work, communicating expectations, monitoring and evaluating performance, offering feedback, providing developmental opportunities, managing poor performance, and administering rewards and recognition. Analysis of survey results revealed that employees who were fully engaged were much more likely to agree that their supervisor had good management skills (87%) than those employees who were not engaged (14%).

Engagement and the Influence of Job Characteristics and Rewards. The engagement drivers of pride in one's work, satisfaction with leadership, and perceptions of a positive work environment can be viewed as characteristics of the *job.* Similarly, satisfaction with recognition, prospects for growth and development, and opportunity to perform well can be viewed as *rewards* provided by the job. These linkages facilitate discussion of where agencies can focus their efforts to encourage employee engagement.

Engagement and Motivation. Linking the six drivers of engagement to job characteristic and reward areas also allows us to draw from extensive research conducted in these areas. Although such research has focused on how job characteristics and rewards influence employee *performance motivation,* it can be useful for understanding employee engagement because motivation and engagement are similar concepts. Recall that engagement is the nexus of job commitment, discretionary effort, and satisfaction. Performance motivation (or simply "motivation") has been defined as "a set of energetic forces that originates both within as well as beyond an individual's being, to initiate work-related behavior, and to determine its form, direction, intensity, and duration."[12] Motivation drives *what* employees do, *how* they do it, *how hard* they will try, and *how long* they will persist in a given endeavor. It follows that an engaged employee is a performance motivated employee and that research pertinent to motivation will have insights for engagement.

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[12] Pinder, C.C. (1998). *Motivation in Work Organizations*, p. 11. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Purpose of Study

Motivating employees to work more effectively toward the organization's goals and mission accomplishment is perhaps the most basic task of Federal leaders and managers. As pressures mount to do more with less, organizations must reexamine what factors are central to sustaining and increasing their employees' productivity. Engagement and motivation are critical to this goal and agencies are encouraged to foster conditions that promote them. The drivers of engagement discussed in MSPB's previous research suggest that there are three areas where agencies can take action supportive of engagement. The first, good supervisory performance management practices, was a focus of our report *Managing for Engagement—Communication, Connection, and Courage*. The other two, namely the motivating aspects of job characteristics and rewards, are the focus of this report.

The first chapter of this report focuses on job characteristics, such as the variety of skills required, and their effect on motivation. The second chapter focuses on rewards, specifically employees' views about the relationship between their effort on the job and how that effort is recognized. Both chapters use diagnostic tools to provide insight into whether agencies are designing jobs and providing rewards in ways that are conducive to motivation, as well as to identify opportunities for improvement. The chapters also discuss actions that agency leadership can take to sustain or better support employee motivation and encourage engagement and performance in these challenging times.

Merit Principles Survey 2010 Methodology

This report is based on data from the 2010 Merit Principles Survey (MPS 2010), a survey that MSPB periodically conducts in support of its statutory responsibility to assess the health of Federal merit systems. On the MPS 2010, we asked employees what motivates them, how important these motivators are, the job characteristics they find motivating, and the degree to which employees see a connection between their efforts, their supervisor's view of their performance, and rewards. See Appendix D for a copy of the MPS 2010 survey. We used two diagnostic tools—a Motivation Potential Level and a Motivation Force Score—to gauge the motivational quality of job characteristics and rewards, respectively.[13] Agency leadership can likewise use these tools to identify opportunities to sustain and improve motivation, within their organizations.

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[13] These tools will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters. See Appendix A for the items and procedure used to compute the Motivation Potential Level, and Appendix B for the items and procedure used to compute the Motivation Force Score.

Survey Sampling and Distribution

The MPS 2010 was distributed to 71,970 full-time, permanent, Federal employees to solicit their perceptions of their jobs, work environments, supervisors, and agencies. We oversampled certain populations to ensure sufficient responses from select agency bureaus or components. Therefore, responses were weighted to ensure that the results are representative of the Federal Government as a whole. Survey participation was voluntary. We received valid responses from 42,020 individuals, for a response rate of 58 percent. Appendix E provides a detailed description of the survey methodology.

Presentation of Results and Terminology

Six response options were provided for most of the survey questions: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, and Don't Know/NA. To simplify presentation and interpretation of results, we have usually:

- Combined the two positive responses (Strongly Agree and Agree) into a single positive response (Agree);
- Combined the two negative responses (Strongly Disagree and Disagree) into a single negative response (Disagree); and
- Excluded the response of "Don't Know/NA" from our tabulations.

In this report, we use the following terms:

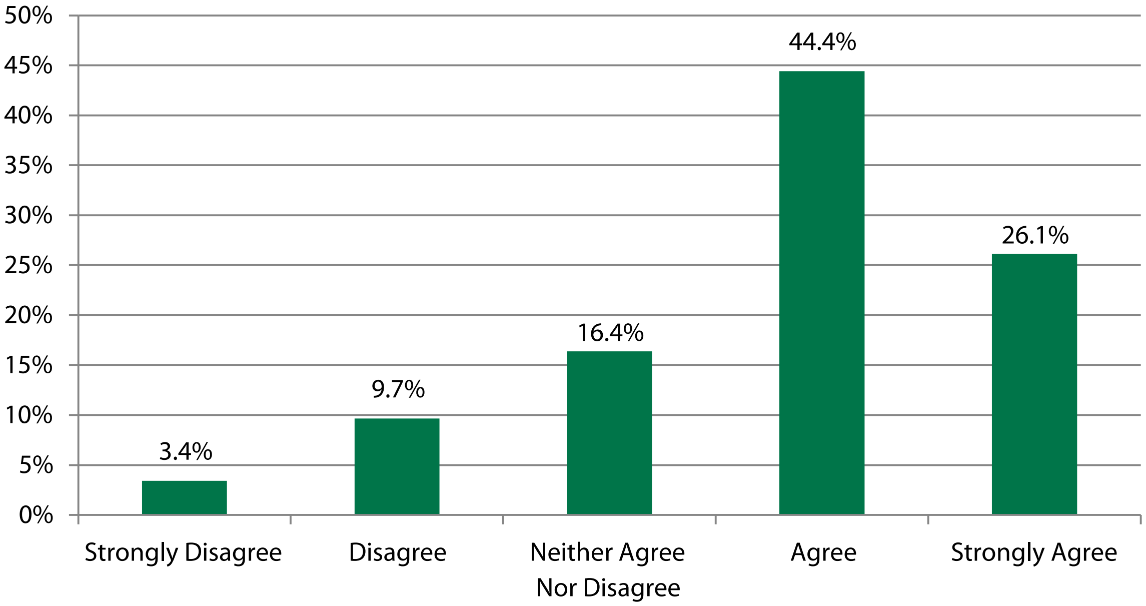
- Employees—the entire Federal workforce as represented by the survey participants.
- Survey participants or respondents—the employees who responded to the pertinent MPS 2010 questions.
- Individual workers—employees who are not supervisors or team leaders.
- Team leaders—non-supervisors who provide other employees with day-to-day guidance in work projects but who do not have official supervisory responsibilities such as approving leave or conducting performance appraisals.
- Non-supervisors—individual workers and team leaders combined.
- Supervisors—employees who have official supervisory responsibilities, such as approving leave and conducting performance appraisals for individual workers and team leaders.
- Managers—employees other than executives who supervise one or more supervisors.
- Executives—Both career and noncareer members of the Senior Executive Service or its equivalent.

- Leaders—all employees with supervisory responsibilities including supervisors, managers, and executives.
- Organization—an agency, office, or division.
- Work unit—an employee's immediate work unit headed by the employee's direct supervisor.

ENCOURAGING ENGAGEMENT—THE MOTIVATING ASPECT OF JOB CHARACTERISTICS

Federal agencies are responsible for managing employees in accordance with the Merit System Principles codified at 5 U.S.C. § 2301(b). One of these principles states that the Federal workforce should be used efficiently and effectively. This principle suggests that jobs should be designed to encourage motivation and engagement. While it generally appears that Federal employees are motivated in their work (see Figure 1), it is also evident that there is room for improvement. This chapter discusses how job characteristics can present an opportunity to sustain or potentially improve employee motivation.

Figure 1: Agreement with the statement, "I feel highly motivated in my work."



Effect of Job Characteristics on Motivation

There are several theoretical perspectives on what drives employee motivation. One perspective, the Hackman and Oldham Job Characteristics Model, asserts that when an employee perceives his or her job as meaningful, valuable, and worthwhile, and feels personally accountable and responsible for the results of his or her work, he or she will want to perform well.[14] This model further suggests that characteristics of the job contribute to how motivated employees will be in performing their work. These characteristics include: (1) skill variety, (2) task identity, (3) task significance, (4) autonomy, and (5) feedback. Research supports that these five characteristics are strongly related to work motivation, as well as to a lesser degree job performance and absenteeism.[15]

We measured each of these five characteristics on our MPS 2010 to explore how Federal employees perceive the motivating quality of their jobs, and to increase our understanding of how to drive engagement. Below, we describe each job characteristic.

Skill variety is the diversity of knowledge, skills, and abilities required for the job. Increasing skill variety may improve employees' perceptions of the meaningfulness and value of their jobs and fuel their motivation. For example, a research analyst who performs only data entry and analysis could receive training on report writing that enables him or her to write summary reports of the data analysis findings. We measured this job characteristic by asking employees if they agreed that their jobs allow them to perform a variety of tasks that require a wide range of knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Task identity is the degree to which a task that an employee is asked to complete is experienced as a whole task from beginning to end versus as a smaller piece of a larger task, or the continuous repetition of a single task. Generally, a job which allows employees to complete entire tasks will be judged as more meaningful, and employees will exert more effort to accomplish these tasks. Improving the task identity of a job may positively impact employees' perceptions of their jobs, which would support their motivation and engagement. For example, involving a researcher in every step of a study, from design to data collection to analysis to report writing, would likely encourage the researcher to put forth more effort and feel more connected to the project, than if the researcher was only involved in one of these components. We measured this job characteristic by asking employees if they agreed that their jobs allow them to complete a single piece of work (rather than bits and pieces) from beginning to end.

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[14] Hackman, J.R., & Oldham, G.R. (1975). Development of the Job Diagnostic Survey. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 60, pp. 159-170; and Hackman, J.R., & Oldham, G.R. (2010). Not what it was and not what it will be: The future of job design research. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 31(2-3), pp. 463-479.

[15] Fried, Y. & Ferris, G.R. (1987). The validity of the job characteristics model: A review and meta-analysis. *Personnel Psychology*, 40, pp. 287-322.

Task significance is the importance that employees attach to job tasks and activities. Jobs with tasks of greater perceived significance, and a clearer connection between employees' actions and organizational goals, generate more effort. The more removed a job is from the mission, the less significant that job may seem. For example, consider the seemingly "stand alone" task of writing a vacancy announcement. If an employee performing this task is unable to see the task's function in or connection to the chain of influences that ultimately accomplishes the agency's mission, the employee may not fully appreciate the significance of the job task. Such an employee may be inspired to exert greater effort and to feel engaged in the work by knowing precisely how such a task impacts mission accomplishment—from a clear description of the job and its duties to effective recruitment strategies to favorable hiring to successful performance on the job. We measured this job characteristic by asking employees if they agreed that their jobs have significant positive impact on others, either within the organization or on the public in general.

Autonomy is the degree of freedom that employees have to make decisions about how to accomplish their work. Normally, the more freedom employees have to make decisions and to direct the activities of their work, the greater their motivation to perform that work. Such latitude in decision making would also support employee engagement. Freedom to act independently varies with the job, the supervisor, the organization, and the agency policies and procedures. In an effort to reduce human error, some jobs may constrain the response options of employees so much that employees begin to feel disempowered and bored. For example, a security officer may have so many standard operating procedures that there is little room for individual variation and initiative. For this employee, the standard operating procedures within an organization may be so extensive that even the smallest task is scripted. Good managers will look for opportunities to provide trusted employees with more latitude and discretion where unique situations call for unique solutions. We measured this job characteristic by asking employees if they agreed that their jobs give them the freedom to make decisions regarding how they accomplish their work.

Feedback is the mechanism by which employees receive knowledge of results of their work effort. The more that a job provides ways by which employees can understand how they are performing, the more employees will be able to monitor and correct their behavior to achieve better results. However, jobs vary in the quantity, quality, and immediacy of feedback. For example, an information technology specialist may know immediately how her efforts resolved a customer's computer difficulty. Conversely, a research analyst may have to wait years to see the results of his efforts and any interim performance appraisal may be difficult given the abstractness of the work products. We measured this job characteristic by asking employees if they agreed that they receive information about their job performance and the effectiveness of their efforts, either directly from the work itself or from others.[16]

How Motivating are Federal Jobs?

We calculated a Motivation Potential Level[17] for each survey respondent as an indicator[18] of how likely he or she was to be motivated by his or her job characteristics.[19] The Motivation Potential Level can range from 1 to 125. A score of 1 means that the respondent perceived that his or her job had none of the five characteristics, whereas a score of 125 means that the respondent believed his or her job provided all five characteristics to the maximum degree possible. Thus, the greater the Motivation Potential Level, the more favorably an individual regards his or her job characteristics and the higher the motivation he or she is presumed to have.

We sorted respondents' Motivation Potential Levels into three groups, namely low-level (ranging from 1 to 41.7), mid-level (ranging from 41.8 to 83.3), and high-level (ranging from 83.4 to 125). As Figure 2 shows, approximately 27 percent of the employees had a low-level Motivation Potential; 52 percent had a mid-level Motivation Potential; and 21 percent had a high-level Motivation Potential.[20] In other words, 79 percent of employees did not have a highly favorable view of their job characteristics. This finding suggests that although at a general level Federal employees feel motivated in their work, job characteristics are an area where potential improvements in motivation can be made. Agencies can take action to influence motivation through job characteristics. Strategies for potentially improving job characteristics will be discussed at the end of this chapter.

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[16] For each of these questions, respondents were given the following options: Don't Know/NA, Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, and Strongly Agree.

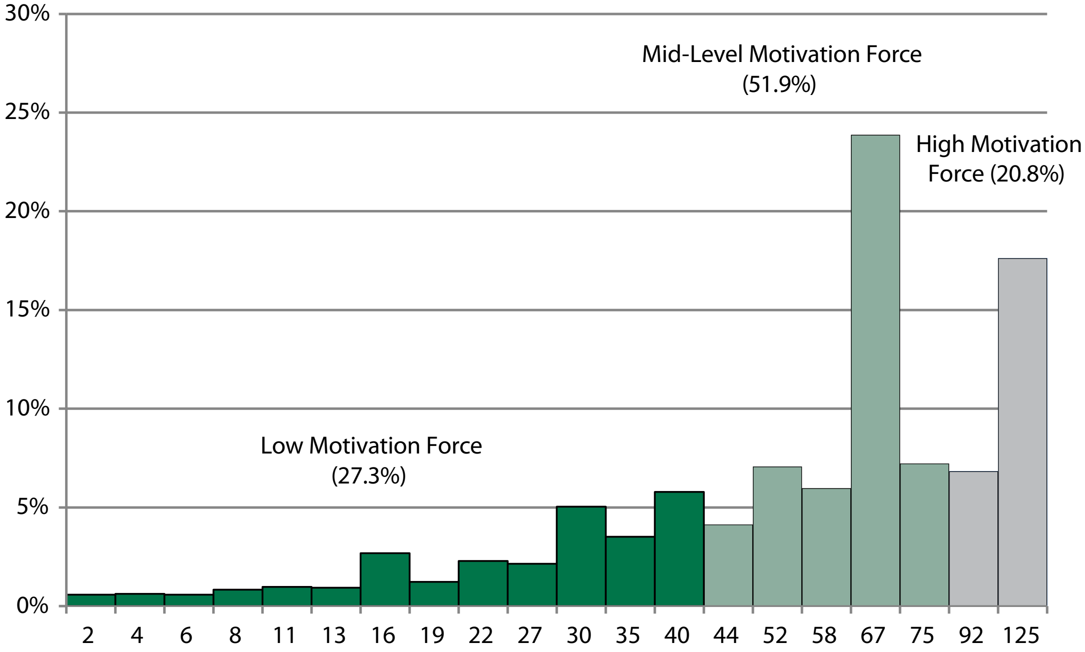
[17] This level was computed using a method adapted from Hackman and Oldham. See Hackman, J.R., & Oldham, G.R. (1975). Development of the Job Diagnostic Survey. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 60, pp. 159-170; and Hackman, J.R., & Oldham, G.R. (2010). Not what it was and not what it will be: The future of job design research. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 31(2-3), pp. 463-479. Also, see Appendix A for the items and procedure we used to calculate the Motivation Potential Level.

[18] Fried, Y. & Ferris, G.R. (1987). The validity of the job characteristics model: A review and meta-analysis. *Personnel Psychology*, 40, pp. 287-322. Combining the five job characteristics into a single score was shown to be a valid predictor of important workplace outcomes including performance and attitude across many work contexts for both public and private organizations.

[19] The score is "potential" to acknowledge that there is more to motivation than the five job characteristics. Although skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback are important motivators, there are other influential factors, some of which we discuss in the next chapter.

[20] Supervisory level made a small difference in the percentage of employees at each Motivation Potential Level, with supervisors being less likely than non-supervisors to have low motivation potential (21.1 percent versus 28.2 percent), more likely to have mid-level potential (54.7 percent versus 51.6 percent), and more likely to have high motivation potential (24.2 percent versus 20.3 percent). Thus, supervisory responsibilities appear to have only a minor role in how employees characterize their skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback, as defined here.

Figure 2: Distribution of Motivation Potential Levels



The survey results depicted in Table 1 provide some direction on why so many survey respondents had middle- and low-level Motivation Potential.

Table 1: Responses to Survey Questions about Job Characteristics

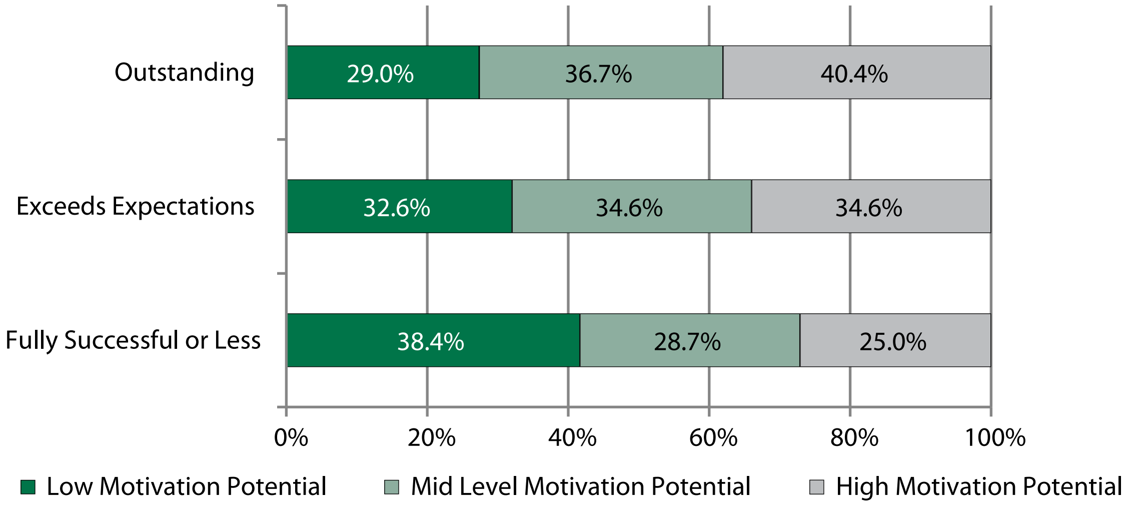
Job Component	Agree	Neither	Disagree
Skill Variety: My job allows me to perform a variety of tasks that require a wide range of knowledge, skills, and abilities.	85%	8%	7%
Task Identity: My job allows me to complete a single piece of work (rather than bits and pieces) from beginning to end.	58%	18%	24%
Task Significance: My job has a significant positive impact on others, either within the organization or the public in general.	84%	12%	4%
Autonomy: My job gives me the freedom to make decisions regarding how I accomplish my work.	74%	14%	12%
Feedback: I receive information about my job performance and the effectiveness of my efforts, either directly from the work itself or from others.	74%	17%	10%

Although a substantial majority of Federal employees agreed that their jobs require varied skills, have a significant positive impact, and provide autonomy, and feedback, far fewer employees agreed with the "task identity" characteristic. Further, a relatively high percentage of Federal employees disagreed that their jobs have task identity. It appears that many Federal employees perceive their jobs as being one part of a larger job rather than as entailing a complete set of tasks that comprise a single start-to-finish function. The scope of the Government's activities and program considerations such as efficiency, specialization, and accountability may dictate a formal division of labor that prevents employees from working on every aspect of a project or seeing a project to completion. In other words, there may be limits to task identity in some Federal jobs that are necessary for agency mission accomplishment.

Why Does the Motivation Potential Level Matter?

Employees' perceptions of their job characteristics can influence their job performance. As depicted in Figure 3, there is a clear relationship between survey respondents' Motivation Potential Levels and their actual job performance.[21] Employees at a "Fully Successful or less" performance level were more likely to have low motivational potential than were employees at higher levels of performance ("Exceeds Expectations" or "Outstanding"). Conversely, employees at the "Exceeds Expectations" or "Outstanding" performance levels were more likely to have high motivational potential compared to employees achieving "Fully Successful or less" performance.

Figure 3: Proportion of Employees at Three Motivation Potential Levels by Job Performance Level



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[21] To determine whether employee job performance is linked to Motivation Potential Level, we cross-referenced performance appraisal ratings obtained from the Office of Personnel Management's Central Personnel Data File for fiscal year 2010 with the Motivation Potential Levels for those respondents evaluated under a 5-point performance appraisal rating scale. We classified respondents who had an appraisal rating of 5 as "Outstanding," respondents who had a rating of 4 as "Exceeds Expectations," and respondents who had ratings of 3, 2, or 1 as "Fully Successful or less." We combined ratings at levels 3 and below because ratings at level 2 and 1 are too infrequent to allow individual analysis.

Thus, maximizing the skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback that Federal jobs offer may improve employees' views of their jobs, which can increase their motivation levels, and ultimately result in higher performance as reflected in their performance appraisal ratings.[22] However, we acknowledge that motivation is not determined solely by job characteristics or other agency-controlled conditions. For example, the work ethic and personal circumstances of an employee also play a role. Although important, these within-person determinants of motivation are more difficult to recognize, measure, and change than overt job characteristics.

Key to Motivation: Improving Job Characteristics

There are several approaches that agencies can take to modify job characteristics to support employee motivation and engagement. Three broad approaches are described below.

Job Enlargement expands employees' responsibilities within their current job to increase their knowledge and skill sets. For example, the job of a recruiter[23] may be enlarged to include the responsibility for on-boarding the selected individuals. Being responsible for integrating the new hire into his or her job and environment would require the recruiter to use new skills and would enable the recruiter to see a more direct impact of his or her work, as well as allow for the completion of a whole piece of work. In terms of job characteristics, enlargement could increase skill variety, task significance, and task identity.

Job Rotation assigns an employee tasks typically performed by others to broaden knowledge and skills. Typically, this involves cross-training in the duties of different jobs. For example, a recruiter could be cross-trained in the fundamentals of employee benefits and compensation. Such cross-training would enable the recruiter to develop different skills and perform new functions, giving the organization more flexibility in assigning work. In addition to benefiting individual employees and managers, job rotation can also help organizations disseminate and preserve staff expertise and institutional knowledge.

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[22] We note that these results are correlational; an association (correlation) between two variables does not mean that one causes the other. An alternative explanation is that general workplace satisfaction/engagement may account for both favorable job characteristic perceptions and job performance. However, we believe that employees' perceptions of their job characteristics are important to job satisfaction and engagement, and that efforts to improve one are likely to improve the other. The previously discussed Job Characteristics Model which was central to our research also helps identify practical opportunities for work diagnosis and improvement. See Hackman, J.R., & Oldham, G.R. (1975). Development of the Job Diagnostic Survey. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 60, pp. 159-170; and Hackman, J.R., & Oldham, G.R. (2010). Not what it was and not what it will be: The future of job design research. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 31(2-3), pp. 463-479.

[23] We use this title for brevity. Under the General Schedule pay system, the official title of an employee in this role would be Human Resources Specialist (Recruitment) or Human Resources Specialist (Recruitment and Placement).

Job Enrichment provides an employee with more independence, responsibility, and accountability in performing assigned tasks. For example, jobs that may have previously had standard templates for report writing and many levels of review may be enriched by allowing employees to decide how to write, organize, and present pertinent information, with minimal review. Having more control and ownership of work products can be motivating for those employees who are capable of self-management. Further, shifting some of the task management functions to such capable employees can free supervisory resources for other matters.

Considerations for Improving Job Characteristics. The nature of the work being performed, the specific employees involved, human resources policies, and the needs of the organization can affect the scope that agencies and managers have to modify jobs, responsibilities, or work processes. Employee or organizational constraints may make a particular strategy infeasible or impractical. For example, not all employees will be good candidates for the increased responsibilities associated with job enrichment. The rules governing position classification may place bounds on how far management may vary job tasks. A collective bargaining agreement might limit management's discretion in assigning different roles to different employees at various times. Agency leaders should recognize that in some occupations, enlarging a job could be impractical and compromise mission accomplishment. Such issues must be considered when proposing changes to job duties.

Additionally, since job enlargement, rotation, and enrichment involve changes to job duties that can benefit the employee, it is critical that they are administered in a manner consistent with merit system values and rules. Leaders who implement these approaches and their associated opportunities must do so in a fair, objective, and transparent manner.

These considerations notwithstanding, managers are encouraged to work with their employees, relevant organizational leaders, and employee representatives to determine what (if any) adjustments to job characteristics can be made, and to design and implement these changes. Table 2 outlines questions that managers can ask to gauge employees' satisfaction with the characteristics of their jobs.

Table 2: Questions for Gauging Employee Satisfaction with Job Characteristics[24]

Job Characteristic	Question: Is the employee satisfied or likely to be satisfied with…
Skill variety	• The variety of knowledge, skills, and abilities required? • The level of variety in duties, tasks, and activities? • The degree to which the job offers opportunities to learn and grow in competence and proficiency?
Task identity	• The degree to which the job provides for completion of a whole and identifiable piece of work from beginning to end?
Task significance	• The difference that he or she can make to others through the job? • The importance of the job compared to other jobs in the organization?
Autonomy	• The level of independence and discretion allowed in making decisions about work sequence, methods, procedures, or quality control? • The degree to which the job allows for participation in work-related decision-making?
Feedback	• The clarity of performance expectations (for example, quality, quantity, timeliness)? • The availability of feedback about job performance? • The frequency of performance feedback? • The level of acknowledgment or recognition received for work accomplishments? • Access to communication channels and flows of information?

Key to Motivation: Linking the Job to Mission Accomplishment

Agencies should ensure that employees can see connections between their work and agency mission accomplishment. As shown in Figure 4, the greater the extent to which employees believed the efforts of their agency are successful, the higher the Motivation Potential Level they expressed. Conversely, employees who regarded their agencies as less successful in accomplishing their missions tended to have lower Motivation Potential Levels. Notably, more than half of employees who disagreed that their agencies are successful had a low Motivation Potential Level.[25]

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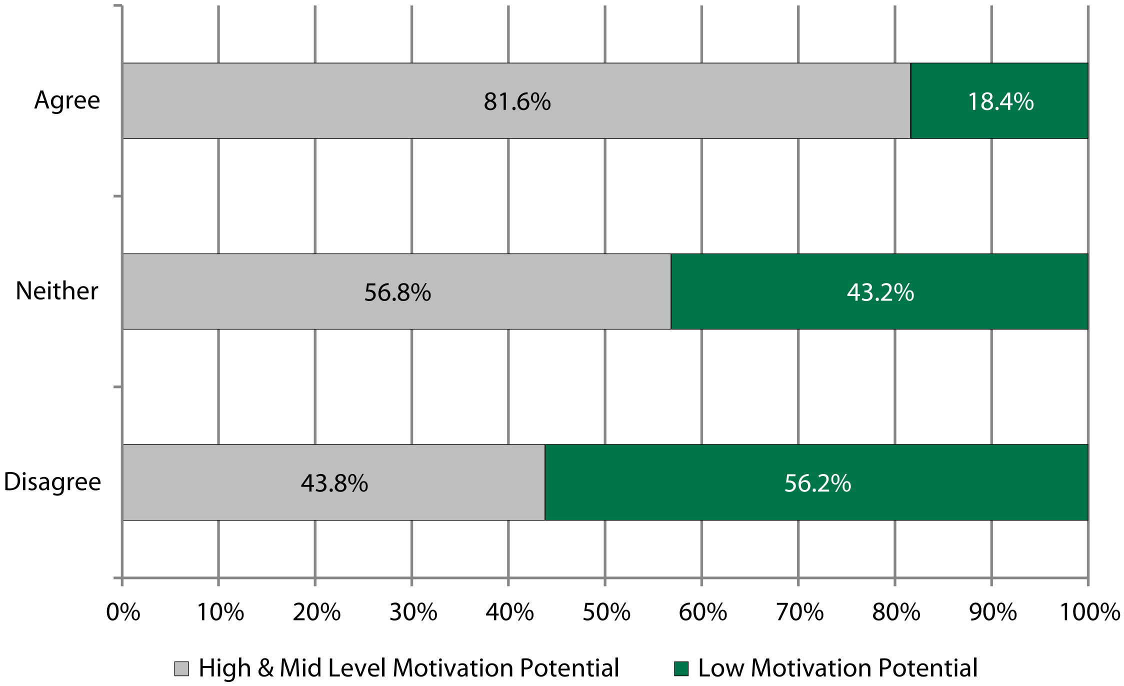
[24] Campion, M., & Thayer, P. (1987). Job design: Approaches, outcomes, and trade-offs. *Organizational Dynamics*, 15, pp. 66-79.

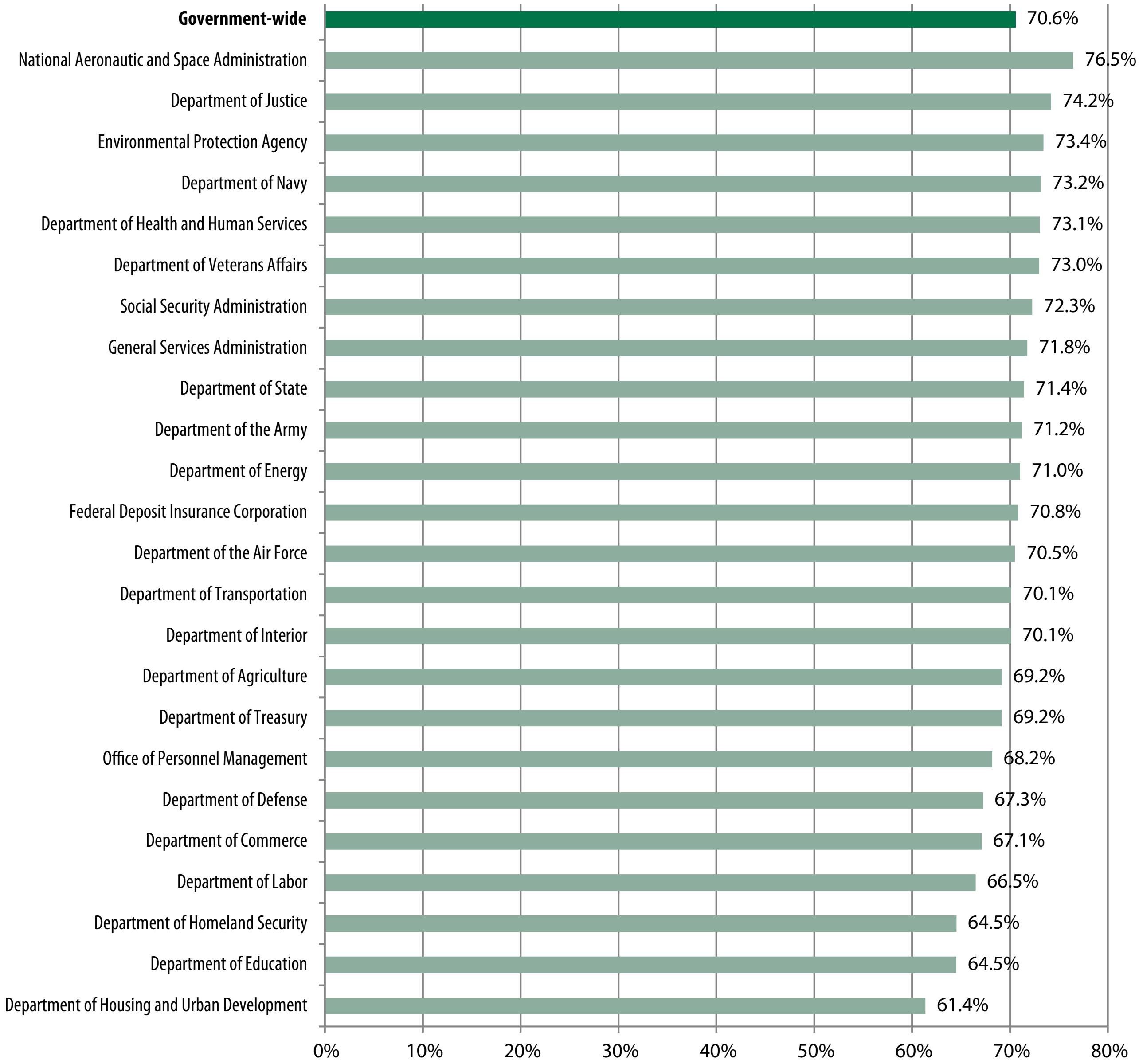
[25] Total responses to the items, “My agency is successful in accomplishing its mission,” and “I would recommend my agency as a place to work,” were both correlated with total agreement to the item, “I feel highly motivated in my work,” $r = .39$ and $r = .53$ respectively, $p < .05$. A correlation (r) expresses the degree of relationship between two sets of numbers and ranges between 0 and $|1|$ with a correlation of 0.5 considered to be large, 0.3 moderate, and 0.1 small. The p expresses the probability that a correlation of that size could have happened by chance. A $p < .05$ means that the correlation is probably not due to chance.

Figure 4: Distribution of Motivation Potential Levels by agreement with the statement "My agency is successful in accomplishing its mission"



Showing employees how and why their work matters may be easier in some organizations than others, given differences in mission, types of job, and visibility and immediacy of outcomes. Indeed, the data presented in Figure 5 show that employees tended to report higher levels of motivation in agencies that have highly visible products or programs, or that provide service directly to individuals. Conversely, employees working in agencies that have less direct or immediate impact (for example, missions accomplished through regulation or grant administration) tended to report lower levels of motivation.

Figure 5: Agreement with the statement, "I feel highly motivated in my work."



Similarly, it is especially important to link work to agency mission and success for employees whose work is farther removed from the agency's services or products. To illustrate, a Federal employee who helps predict an earthquake or warns the public about a hurricane can easily understand the importance of his or her work to the agency's mission and the American public. The connection may be less clear to many other Federal employees. For example, do contracting officers appreciate how the contracts that they award contribute to their agency's mission? Do information technology staff members see how the software they design or acquire makes it possible for their agency to work more effectively and better serve the public? From a motivation and engagement standpoint, such connections are important to every employee.

Further, establishing clear connections between employees' work and agency success has implications beyond employee motivation. For example, it can affect an organization's ability to attract the workforce needed for future success. Previous MSPB research has found that "word-of-mouth" plays an important role in recruiting and selecting a high quality workforce.[26] Agencies perceived as successful do not only have more motivated employees; they also have employees with greater willingness to recommend the agency as an employer to others.[27]

Linking employees' work to the agency's mission and success begins with the strategic planning process. The Government Performance And Results Act Modernization Act of 2010 (GPRAMA; P.L. 111-371, 5 U.S.C § 306(d)), requires that agencies ". . . solicit and consider the views and suggestions of those entities potentially affected by or interested in such a plan" during the strategic planning process. Agency employees are clearly affected by and/or are interested in the agency's strategic plan. The strategic planning process gives employees a better understanding of the agency's goals, services, and products; shows employees how their particular duties and jobs link to agency goals; and conveys the importance of employees in accomplishing the agency's work. The process can be motivating for employees by giving them a stronger sense of buy-in to the agency's mission.

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[26] U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, *Attracting the Next Generation: A Look at Federal Entry-Level New Hires*, Washington DC, January 2008; and *Accomplishing Our Mission: Results of the Merit Principles Survey 2005*, February 2007.

[27] Total responses to the item, "I would recommend my agency as a place to work," were correlated with total responses to the item, "I feel highly motivated in my work," $r = .53$, $p < .05$.

ENCOURAGING ENGAGEMENT—THE MOTIVATING ASPECT OF REWARDS

In accordance with the Merit System Principles at 5 U.S.C. § 2301(b), agencies are responsible for providing appropriate incentives and for recognizing excellent employee performance. Linking rewards to performance is a key part of performance management, and can motivate employees to engage in sustained high performance.[28] Although it generally appears that Federal employees are motivated in their work, it is also evident that there is room for improvement. This chapter discusses how rewards can present an opportunity to sustain or potentially improve employee motivation, and provides strategies for administering rewards to support motivation. Focusing on rewards is especially fitting because Federal employees, compared to private sector employees, tend to see weak relationships between their performance and the rewards they receive.[29] The Office of Personnel Management's (OPM's) 2010 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey results showed that less than half of the survey respondents see a relationship between their job performance and the rewards that they receive. We examined the motivational aspects of rewards to help agencies better link rewards to performance and better comply with the Merit System Principles.

Effect of Rewards on Motivation

To better understand how (and whether) rewards are supporting employee motivation and performance, we drew from the perspective of expectancy theory.[30, 31] Expectancy theory suggests that rewards (such as pay and promotions) work best when employees believe there is a strong link between the amount of effort they exert and the rewards they receive.[32] As illustrated in Figure 6, for rewards to be effective, agencies must provide the right rewards in the right ways.

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[28] Latham, G.P., Locke, E.A., & Fassina, N.E. (2002). The high performance cycle: Standing the test of time. In S. Sonnentag (Ed.), *Psychological management of individual performance*, pp. 201–228. Chichester, England: Wiley.

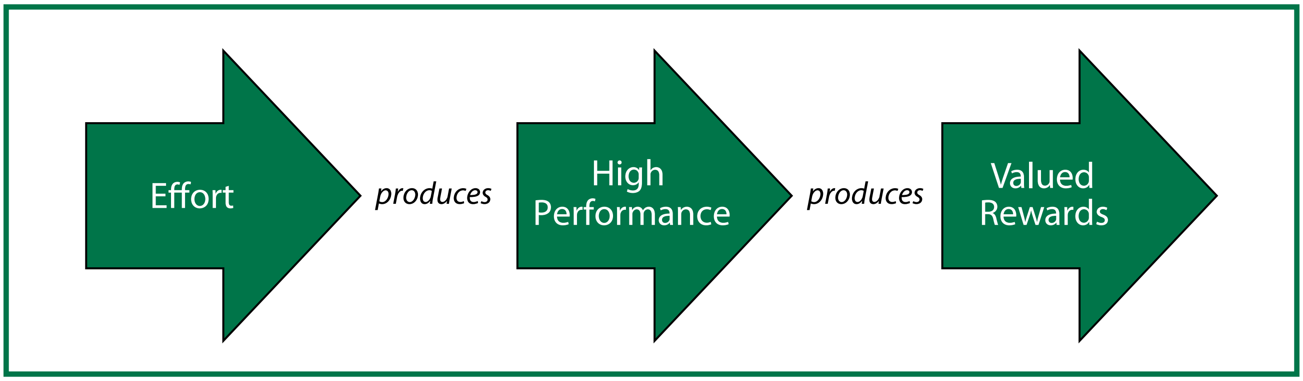
[29] Coursey, D., and Rainey, H. (1991). "Organizational Behavior and Processes in the Public Sector," co-edited symposium, *Public Productivity and Management Review*, 14, pp. 351-414; and Rainey, H.G. (2003). *Understanding and managing public organizations* (3rd Ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

[30] Vroom, V.H. (1964). *Work and motivation*. New York: Jon Wiley & Sons, Inc.

[31] Van Eerde, W., & Thierry, H. (1996). Vroom's expectancy models and work-related criteria: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 81, pp. 575-586. The authors showed that objective measures of work effort were related to the various components of the expectancy model and found that expectancy theory was highly predictive of attractiveness or preference ratings of jobs, occupations, and organizations and predictive (to a lesser degree) of indicators of job performance.

[32] Van Eerde, W., & Thierry, H. (1996). Vroom's expectancy models and work-related criteria: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 81(5), pp. 575-586; and Vroom, V. H. (1964). *Work and motivation*. New York: Jon Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Figure 6: Expectancy Theory: Interrelationship of Effort, Performance, and Rewards



First, employees must believe that their effort will make a difference. This means that Federal managers need to create conditions for employee success, so that working harder and working smarter will lead to better performance, and not to exhaustion and frustration. For example, an employee may exert great effort to complete a project if she believes this effort will shorten the completion time. However, if completion time remains unchanged because needed information is withheld from the employee, her motivation will likely be diminished.

Second, employees have to believe that high levels of performance will be rewarded. For example, an employee may believe that completion of a project will make him more competitive for a valued training program. Yet, if the organization announces that funding is no longer available for training, he may lose motivation.

Finally, employees must value the rewards that they are given. Very simply, “carrots” do no good if employees do not want them. For example, the organization might grant a time off award to recognize an employee’s performance. However, if the employee does not value additional time off, the employee’s motivation is not likely to increase.

How Motivating are Rewards in the Federal Government?

We identified eleven ways that Federal employee performance can be rewarded and asked employees how important each reward was in terms of seeking or continuing employment in their organization.[33] As Figure 7 shows, responses varied widely.[34]

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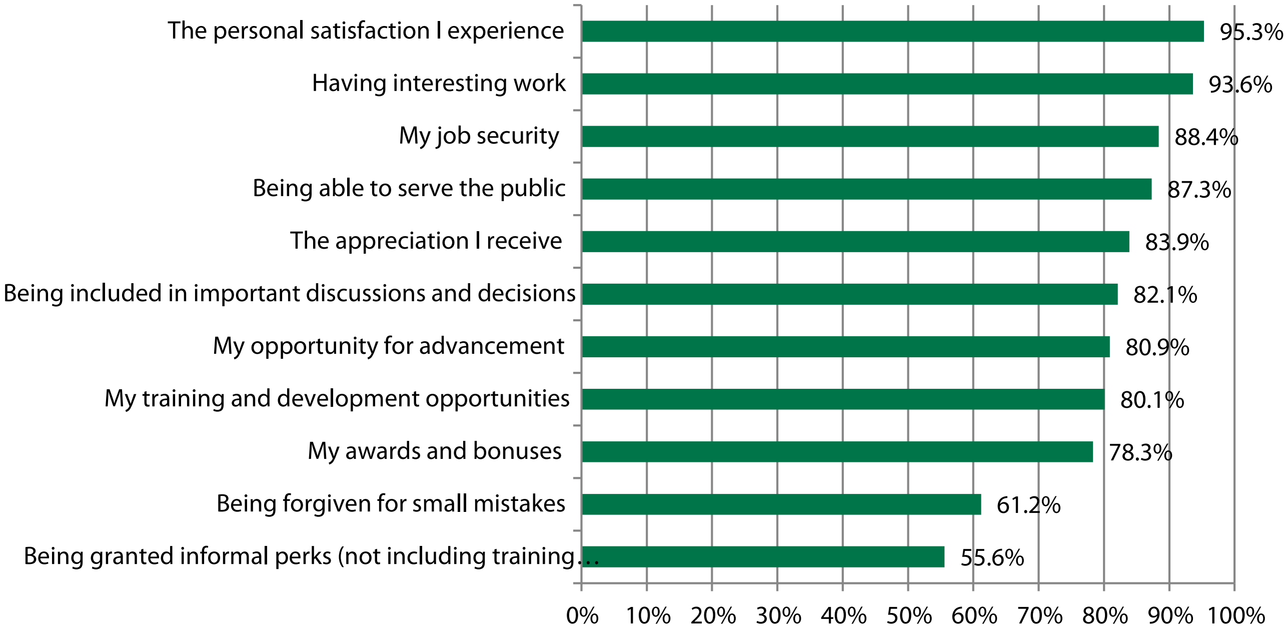
[33] As noted previously, “rewards” denotes desired outcomes that an employee might attain through employment. To the extent that rewards are contingent on performance, and within an organization’s latitude to provide, rewards are also “incentives” in that an employee may exert effort to acquire them. Here, the term reward conveys both meanings unless stated otherwise.

[34] The results presented are intended to generalize across the Federal Government. However, because we encourage agencies to identify their own employees’ preferences for specific rewards, we offer data and assistance to Federal agencies interested in examining their results. Upon request, MSPB’s Office of Policy and Evaluation (OPE) can provide selected tabulations and analyses of MPS 2010 responses for those agencies or subagencies from which we received responses sufficient for reliable generalization. These agencies and subagencies are listed in Appendix F.

Particularly noteworthy is that a larger percentage of Federal employees rated non-monetary rewards such as personal satisfaction and having interesting work as important compared with awards and bonuses. In fact, of the eleven rewards that we asked about, eight non-monetary rewards were rated as important by more Federal employees than awards and bonuses. The attractiveness of non-monetary rewards is encouraging as many Federal agencies currently face fiscal constraints. Clearly, there are a variety of options for rewarding employees that do not rely on money.

Figure 7: Percentage of Employees Finding Each Reward Important or Very Important to Seeking and Continuing Employment in Their Organization



To examine employees' perceptions of the connection between their effort, performance, and rewards, we computed a Motivation Force Score[35] for each survey respondent. The assumption underlying this score is that an individual who values a reward and believes that the reward will result from performance is likely to expend effort to accomplish work and perform well. The score reflects how much an employee values each of the 11 rewards and how well each reward is seen to be connected to his or her performance. The Motivation Force Score ranges between 1 and 250, based on: (1) the employee's belief that effort results in performance; (2) the employee's belief that performance results in rewards; and (3) the employee's desire for rewards. A score of 1 indicates that the respondent holds the most unfavorable beliefs about effort, performance, and rewards and is minimally motivated. A score of 250 indicates that the respondent holds the most favorable beliefs and is maximally motivated.

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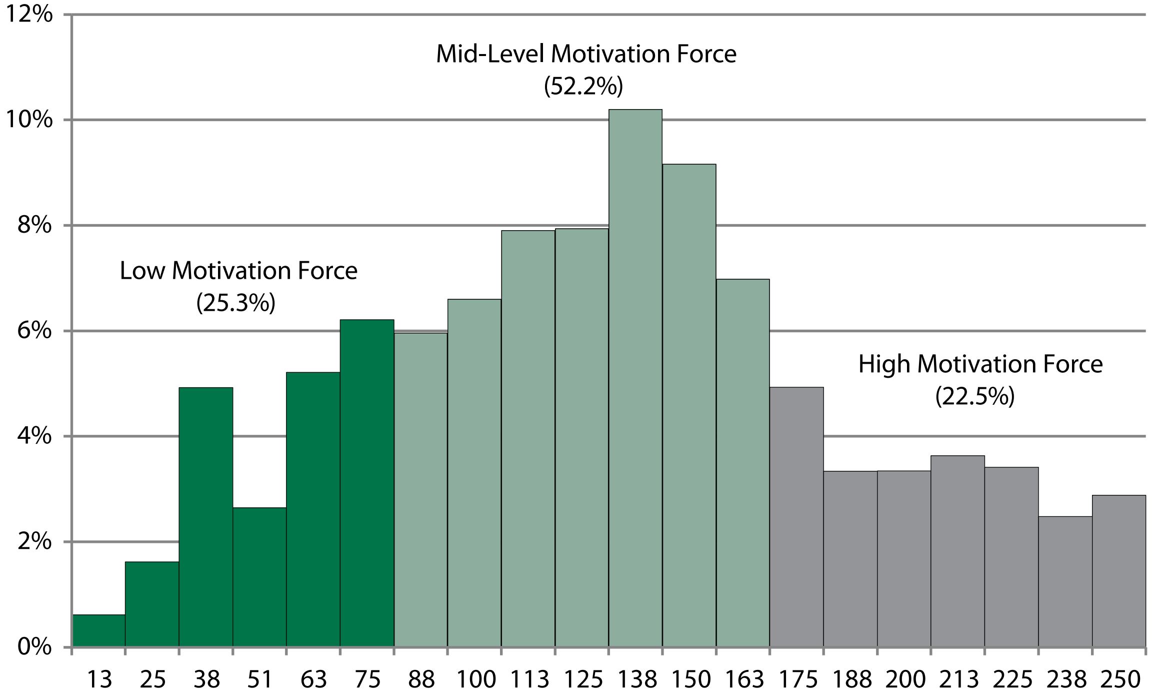
[35] See Appendix B for the survey items and process we used to compute the Motivation Force Score.

We sorted survey respondents' Motivation Force Scores into three groups: low-level (ranging from 1 to 83.3), mid-level (ranging from 83.4 to 166.6), and high-level (ranging from 166.7 to 250). As Figure 8 shows, 23 percent of the workforce has a high-level Motivation Force Score; 52 percent has a mid-level score; and 25 percent has a low-level score.[36] In other words, 77 percent[37] of Federal employees did not perceive strong connections between the effort they expend, the performance that results, and the rewards that they most value. This finding suggests that although at a general level Federal employees feel motivated in their work, rewards are an area where potential improvements in motivation can be made. Strategies for administering rewards to support motivation will be discussed at the end of this chapter.

Figure 8: Distribution of Motivation Force Scores



The survey results shown in Table 3 provide possible explanations for why relatively few employees had a high Motivation Force Score.

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[36] Supervisory level made a small difference in the percentage of employees at each Motivation Force Score level, with supervisors being less likely than non-supervisors to have a low motivation force (20.8 percent versus 25.8 percent), more likely to have a mid-level force (53.4 percent versus 52.1 percent) and more likely to have high motivation force (26 percent versus 22.1 percent). Thus, when it comes to how well rewards drive effort, supervisory status is not a major factor.

[37] This outcome is similar to findings discussed earlier for the Motivation Potential Level of job characteristics where 20.8 percent of the Federal workforce had high-level Motivation Potential; 51.9 percent had mid-level Motivation Potential; and 27.3 percent had low-level Motivation Potential.

Table 3: Responses to Survey Items on the Connection between Effort, Performance, and Rewards

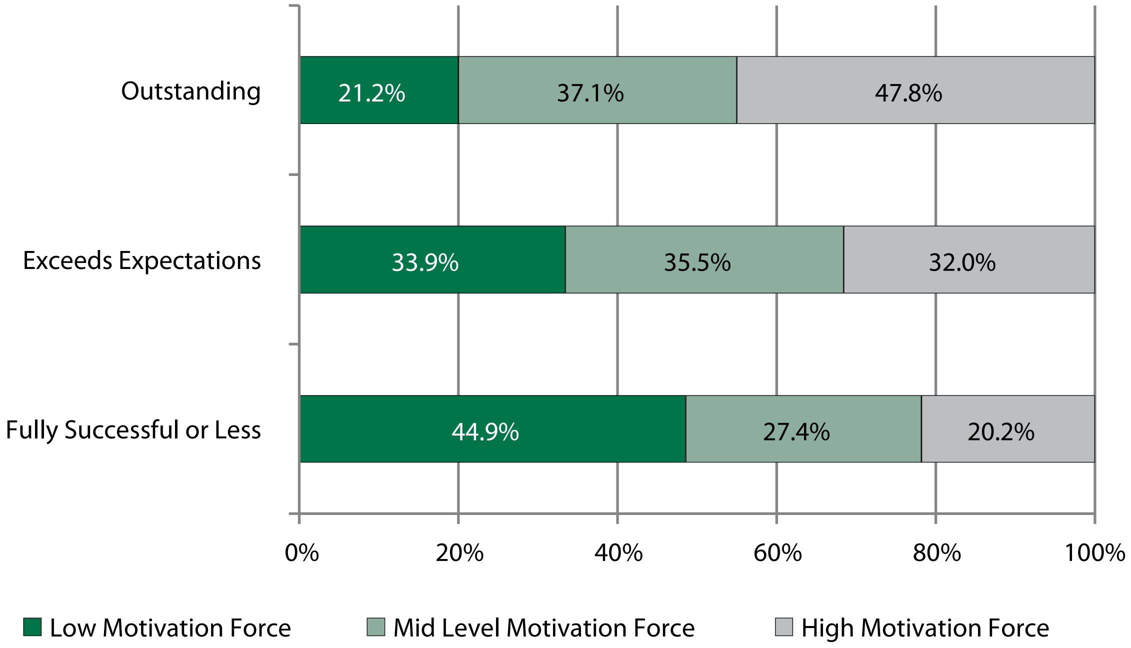
Linkage and Survey Item	Responses		
Linkage: Effort →Performance	Agree	Neither	Disagree
When I put forth my best effort, I achieve a high performance appraisal rating.	60%	21%	19%
The harder I try, the more I am able to achieve my work goals and objectives.	63%	24%	13%
Linkage: Performance→Reward The better I perform on the job…	Agree	Neither	Disagree
…the more interesting work I receive.	37%	38%	25%
…the more I feel appreciated.	51%	27%	22%
…the greater the personal satisfaction I experience.	84%	11%	6%
…the more I am included in important discussions and decisions.	44%	30%	26%
…the greater my job security.	42%	39%	20%
…the higher my awards and bonuses.	35%	30%	35%
…the greater my opportunity for advancement.	33%	30%	37%
…the more I am granted informal perks.	22%	38%	40%
…the more I am forgiven for small mistakes.	32%	41%	27%
…the better my training and development opportunities.	31%	38%	32%
…the more I feel I am serving the public.	76%	18%	6%

First, many Federal employees do not see a strong connection between their effort and outcomes. Only 60 percent of Federal employees agreed that effort results in a high performance appraisal rating, and only 63 percent agreed that greater effort translates into greater achievement of goals and objectives. Second, many Federal employees do not see strong connections between their performance and most of the rewards we examined. For example, only 33 percent agreed that better performance leads to greater opportunity for advancement. Fortunately, connections could be strengthened through sound performance management practices, and the motivational quality of rewards could be improved through effective administration procedures. These strategies will be discussed in more detail at the end of this chapter.

Why Do Connections Between Effort, Performance, and Rewards Matter?

Employees' perceptions of the connection between their effort, performance, and rewards can affect their performance. Figure 9 shows that there is a relationship between employees' Motivation Force Scores and their performance appraisal ratings.[38] Employees at the "Fully Successful or less" performance level were more likely to have low Motivational Force compared to employees at the "Exceeds Expectations" or "Outstanding" performance levels. Conversely, employees at the "Exceeds Expectations" or "Outstanding" performance levels were more likely to have high Motivational Force compared to employees achieving the "Fully Successful or less" performance level.

Figure 9: Proportion of Employees at Three Motivation Force Score Levels by Job Performance Level



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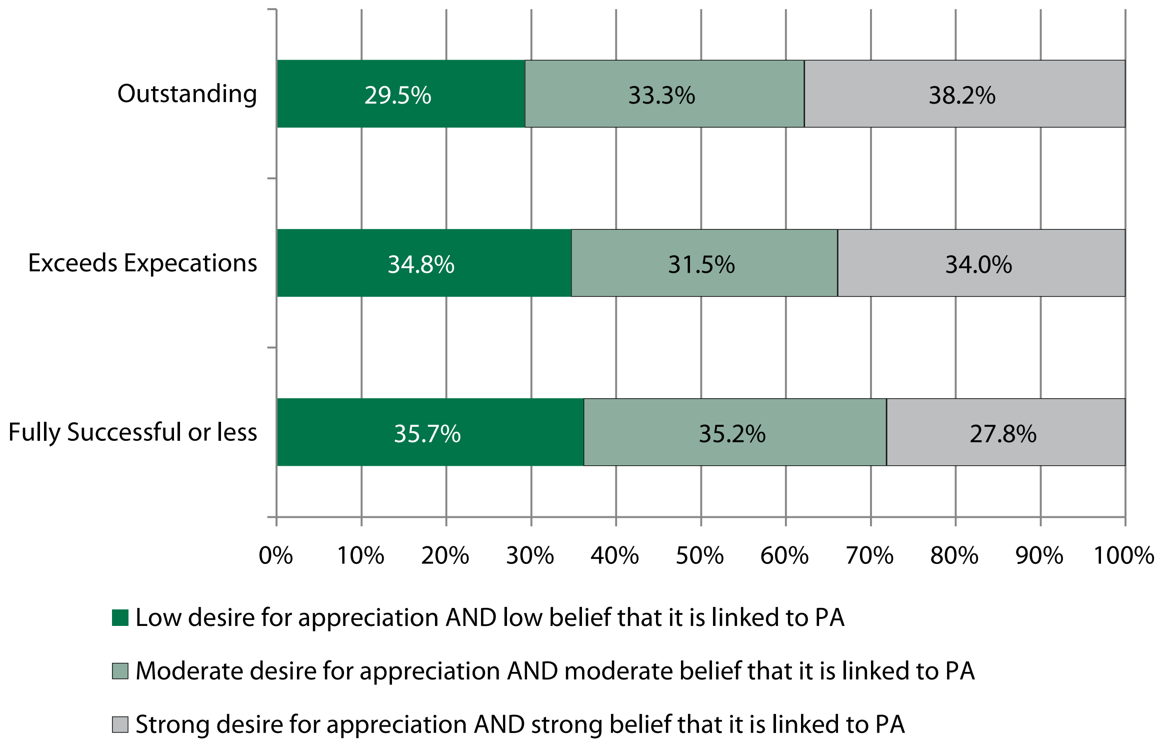
[38] We used the same criteria to categorize performance levels as "Outstanding," "Exceeds Expectations," or "Fully Successful or less" as we used for the Motivation Potential Level calculations. Specifically, for only those employees under a 5-level performance appraisal rating system, we classified employees rated a 5 as "Outstanding," employees rated a 4 as "Exceeds Expectations," and employees rated a 3, 2, or 1 as "Fully Successful or less." We combined the 3, 2, and 1 levels of performance into one level because ratings at the lowest levels (2 and 1) are highly infrequent and do not justify their own categories.

Our survey findings also suggest that employee performance can be influenced by the specific rewards that employees receive. In other words, reward type matters. We found that the more strongly an employee valued a specific reward and the more strongly he or she believed that high-level performance would help obtain that specific reward, the greater the likelihood that the employee was in a high performance appraisal rating category. Figure 10 uses the reward of "feeling appreciated" to demonstrate how employees' desire for a reward and their belief that the reward was tied to performance were related to their actual performance appraisal rating category.

Figure 10: Level of Performance by Strength of Desire for Feeling Appreciated and Belief that Performance Leads to Feeling Appreciated



As depicted, a larger percentage of employees who had an "Outstanding" performance appraisal rating had a **strong** desire for feeling appreciated and a **strong** belief that high performance led to feeling appreciated, than did employees who had a "Fully Successful or less" performance appraisal rating. Conversely, a larger percentage of employees who had a "Fully Successful or less" performance appraisal rating had a **low** desire for feeling appreciated and **low** belief that high performance would result in feeling appreciated than did employees who had an "Outstanding" performance appraisal rating.

In summary, for rewards to motivate employees, supervisors and managers must establish connections between employees' effort, performance, and rewards. Supervisors and managers should also understand that rewards are not all equally motivating. In other words, when it comes to choosing rewards for employee performance, "one size does not fit all." Accordingly, supervisors and managers should seek to understand the specific reward desires of their individual employees and make reasonable efforts to provide those rewards for good performance.

We acknowledge that tailoring rewards to employees' preferences presents significant challenges. Agencies will need to find ways to give individual employees a greater voice in rewards while ensuring fair and equitable treatment, as required by the second merit principle. That is, revised reward policies and practices will need to treat similarly situated employees similarly, while moving away from a "one size fits all" approach. For example, the standards for receiving rewards *should be consistent* across employees at the same performance level and the dollar-value of different rewards should be comparable for employees in a given position at the same performance level. Agencies will also need to find ways to balance employee choice with mission requirements, including the ability to manage finances and workload.

Further, agency leadership will need to ensure that the criteria for receiving different rewards are clearly communicated and that reward decisions are fair, transparent, and grounded in good performance management practices. These reward considerations will be discussed in more detail below. Together, these considerations underscore the importance of dialogue between leaders and managers, and between managers and their employees or employees' representatives, on the feasibility and appropriateness of tailoring rewards, and on strategies for effectively and fairly doing so. Ultimately, agency leadership will need to weigh any considerations for tailoring rewards against the potential benefits of tailoring rewards.

Key to Motivation: Administer the Right Rewards in the Right Way

There are several considerations for administering rewards to support employee motivation and engagement. We discuss four key considerations below.

Use Sound Performance Management Practices. In addition to being critical for effective workforce management and employee engagement,[39] good performance management practices will be essential for helping employees see connections between their effort, performance, and rewards. To help employees see these connections—and therefore help support their motivation—supervisors should communicate clear performance expectations to employees; review employees' effort and progress towards goals; provide employees with honest, specific, and timely feedback; objectively evaluate employees' performance; make fair and transparent reward decisions; and address poor performance. Supervisors should also tailor their management style and practices to the needs of different employees.

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[39] U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, *Managing for Engagement—Communication, Connections, and Courage*, July 2009.

MSPB research has found agencies can do more to select and prepare supervisors for their performance management responsibilities. Specifically, some supervisors may not have been properly informed of the extent of supervisory duties when they applied for their positions; may not have been hired based on their management skills; may not have received appropriate training including performance management training; and may not be evaluated on their supervisory behaviors.[40] Agencies should work with their supervisors to determine any skill inadequacies and implement developmental measures[41] as appropriate.

Communicate Available Rewards and Conditions for Receiving Rewards. Managers and supervisors should discuss available reward options with their employees. This includes clearly specifying to employees the conditions for receiving each type of available reward. For example, prior to the start of each performance appraisal cycle, supervisors should make employees aware of the rewards and incentives that might be available to recognize the meeting of certain milestones, achievement of specific results, or the attainment of specific levels of performance. Such a discussion should be repeated if any rewards become more or less available, or if the criteria for earning a reward changes. Employees may have understandable expectations that if their performance resulted in a certain type or level of reward in the past, the same performance level will result in a similar type or level of reward in the future. It is critical that managers and supervisors do not create expectations or make explicit or implicit commitments concerning rewards that may not be met. Further, managers and supervisors should avoid, whenever possible, promising one type of reward and then giving another.

Meeting employees' expectations for rewards is critical for both monetary and non-monetary rewards, but may be especially important for monetary rewards in the current austere economic climate. Candor is key. If agencies are honest with their employees about the actual or potential lack of money for rewards, the effects on motivation will be less severe than if agencies remain silent, making and then breaking an implied (or actual) promise that high performance would result in a financial reward.

Provide Rewards that Employees Value. As discussed previously, Federal employees differ in the rewards that they value. Although money is important to a large percentage of Federal employees, our data show that even higher percentages of Federal employees rated several types of *non-monetary* rewards as important. Therefore, when looking at motivating and engaging employees, the dollar value of the reward should not be the only—or even the most important—consideration. What matters most is identifying the rewards that employees value and making these rewards available for agreed upon levels of performance. Unfortunately, little guidance is available as to what types of rewards are more or less effective for motivating and engaging particular employees. However, agency leaders could consider surveying their employees on reward desires and then working with relevant employee representatives to enact any policy changes necessary to design reward systems to offer such rewards. Yet, agencies and managers should carefully consider the readiness of their organizational culture and systems before proceeding. In particular, agencies must take care to assure that employees are treated equitably—that "similarly situated employees are treated similarly"—even if they are not rewarded uniformly. For example, the standards for receiving rewards *should be consistent* across employees at the same performance level and the dollar-value of different rewards should be comparable for employees in a given position at the same performance level.

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[40] U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, *A Call to Action: Improving First-Level Supervision of Federal Employees*, May 2010, pp. 35-36. Only 26 percent of new supervisors receive training on how to develop performance goals and standards; only 25 percent receive training on reviewing employees' work progress; only 28 percent receive training on documenting employee performance; only 17 percent receive training on conducting performance discussions; and only 24 percent receive training on giving positive feedback and coaching.

[41] Measures may require both short-term and long-term strategies. In the short-term, agencies may need to provide supervisors with more extensive performance management training. Additionally, agencies could encourage mentoring and feedback from other successful supervisors. In the long-term, agencies may need to adopt more firm strategies. This may include changes in how supervisors are selected, developed, and evaluated to ensure that they have the appropriate competencies to successfully manage the workforce.

Make Fair and Transparent Reward Decisions. Reward decisions have the potential to be perceived as fair or unfair by employees. Individuals tend to compare their perception of their inputs to outcomes with their perception of others' inputs to outcomes.[42] If individuals perceive inequity in this comparison, they tend to experience dissatisfaction as well as tension which they will seek to remedy through strategies that could include reducing future inputs. Given that employees' work efforts and performance levels could be perceived as inputs and their rewards could be perceived as outcomes, employees' perceptions regarding the fairness and equity of their ratios of inputs to outcomes relative to other employees' ratios are likely to have implications for their motivation at work. Data from our 2005 Merit Principles Survey indicates that the most likely reasons for employees' dissatisfaction with awards and recognition were that either other employees did not receive awards/recognition that they were perceived as deserving, or that other employees received awards/recognition that they were perceived as not deserving.[43] Additionally, in our report, *Managing for Engagement—Communication, Connection, and Courage*, we discussed that only about half of Federal employees believe that: (1) recognition and rewards are linked to performance; (2) they are rewarded for providing high-quality products and services to their customers; or that (3) promotions in their work unit are based on merit. Further, in *The Power of Federal Employee Engagement*, we showed that agencies in which such opinions prevail tended to have lower organizational effectiveness and higher turnover.[44] Clearly, it is critical that reward decisions are perceived as fair, transparent, and based on employee merit.

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[42] Adams, J.S. (1965). Inequity in Social Exchange. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in Experimental Psychology*, vol.2, pp. 267-299. New York: Academic Press.

[43] U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, *Accomplishing Our Mission: Results of the Merit Principles Survey 2005*, February 2007, p. 54.

[44] U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, *The Power of Federal Employee Engagement*, September 2008.

CONCLUSION

Motivating and engaging employees is essential to an efficient and effective Federal Government. A committed, capable workforce is especially important in light of austere fiscal conditions, budget constraints, impending retirements, and regular attacks on the value of the Federal workforce and its services. Previous MSPB research has shown that employee engagement contributes to a variety of desirable organizational outcomes and has discussed how organizations can influence engagement through effective supervisory performance management practices.[45] Building on that research, this report discussed how job characteristics and rewards can influence employee motivation and support employee engagement and performance. We used and provided diagnostic tools—a Motivation Potential Level and a Motivation Force Score—to gauge the motivational quality of job characteristics and rewards, respectively.[46] Agency leadership can likewise use these tools to identify opportunities to sustain and potentially improve employee motivation within their organization.

Motivation Among Federal Employees

Most Federal employees view themselves as motivated, with 71 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement, "I feel highly motivated in my work." Agreement varied considerably across Federal agencies, ranging from 62 percent to 77 percent. This range suggests that motivation can be shaped by features of the work environment. Further, it is clear that there is room to improve motivation. We focused on how job characteristics and rewards could present opportunities for sustaining and potentially improving motivation.

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[45] U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, *The Power of Federal Employee Engagement*, September 2008; and U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, *Managing for Engagement—Communication, Connection, and Courage,* July 2009.

[46] See Appendix A for the items and procedure used to compute the Motivation Potential Level, and Appendix B for the items and procedure used to compute the Motivation Force Score.

Job Characteristics

Job characteristics such as autonomy, feedback, skill variety, task significance, and task identity can influence employee motivation. To gauge how likely an employee was to be motivated by his or her job characteristics,[47] we computed a Motivation Potential Level.[48] Only 21 percent of Federal employees had a high Motivation Potential Level; meaning that most Federal employees did not report feeling highly positive about their combined job characteristics. That matters, because employees' perceptions of their job characteristics are related to their perceptions of their agency's success and their job performance. The greater the extent to which employees believed the efforts of their agency are successful, the higher the motivation level they expressed. Further, employees who perceived their jobs as meaningful, involving a variety of activities, and representing an entire function (rather than pieces of a larger job), were more likely to have higher performance ratings than employees who perceived their jobs to be low on these characteristics. Similarly, employees who had jobs that offered them freedom to decide how their work should be done and that provided them with performance feedback tended to have higher performance than employees in jobs that did not offer these characteristics. Clearly, there is considerable opportunity to adjust job characteristics in ways to better motivate employees.

Rewards

Employees' perceptions of the connection between the effort they exert, the success they anticipate, and the rewards they receive can influence their motivation and job performance. However, agencies need to give the right rewards in the right way.

Most Federal employees are not motivated primarily by monetary rewards. For example, larger percentages of Federal employees rated non-monetary rewards such as, "The personal satisfaction I experience," "Having interesting work," "My job security," and "Being able to serve the public," as important to seeking and continuing employment with their organization than, "My awards and bonuses." In fact, of the eleven rewards that we asked about, eight non-monetary rewards were rated as important by more Federal employees than awards and bonuses. The importance of non-monetary rewards to Federal employees is encouraging in light of the budget and resource constraints that many Federal agencies currently face.

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[47] Fried, Y. & Ferris, G.R. (1987). The validity of the job characteristics model: A review and meta-analysis. *Personnel Psychology*, 40, pp. 287-322. Combining the five job characteristics into a single score was shown to be a valid predictor of important workplace outcomes including performance and attitude across many work contexts for both public and private organizations.

[48] This level was computed using a method adapted from Hackman and Oldham. See Hackman, J.R., & Oldham, G.R. (1975). Development of the Job Diagnostic Survey. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 60, pp. 159-170; and Hackman, J.R., & Oldham, G.R. (2010). Not what it was and not what it will be: The future of job design research. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 31(2-3), pp. 463-479. Also, see Appendix A for the items and procedure we used to compute the Motivation Potential Level.

To gauge employees' perceptions of the connection between their effort, performance, and rewards, we computed a Motivation Force Score.[49] We found that only 23 percent of Federal employees had a high Motivation Force Score; the majority of Federal employees did not see a strong connection between the effort they exerted, the performance rating that this effort generated, and the valued rewards that the performance garnered. This connection has practical implications for individual and organizational performance: employees who had a high Motivation Force Score were more likely to receive a high performance rating than employees with a low or mid-level score. Performance also appears to be influenced by the type of rewards an agency provides. Rewards are most effective when they are highly valued. We found that the more strongly an employee valued a specific reward and the more strongly he or she believed that high-level performance would help obtain that specific reward, the greater the likelihood that the employee was in a high performance appraisal rating category.

In summary, rewards can make a difference in employee motivation and performance when they are linked to effort and performance and when they are desired by employees.

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[49] See Appendix B for the items and procedure we used to compute the Motivation Force Score.

Recommendations

Job Characteristics

Good job design—structuring jobs to maximize desirable characteristics—supports organizational efficiency and effectiveness. This is because job characteristics can impact employee motivation, a necessary ingredient for engagement and performance. There are several ways to improve the motivational potential of Federal jobs. To the extent permitted by mission requirements and employees' capabilities, managers and supervisors should—

- Examine the characteristics of particular jobs to determine if they are conducive to employee motivation and supportive of employee engagement. In the event that improvements could be made to job characteristics to better support motivation and engagement, managers and supervisors should work with relevant organizational leaders and employee representatives to design and implement changes. Improvements could include: expanding the duties of a job to increase the knowledge and skill sets that employees must apply to tasks; rotating employees among jobs to increase their skill sets; or enriching jobs by increasing employees' independence, responsibility, and accountability;
- Assign employees work that they find interesting and meaningful, and which allows them to perform a variety of tasks that require a wide range of knowledge, skills, and abilities;
- Structure assignments to enable employees to complete a whole piece of work from beginning to end, or to participate in every stage of a project;
- Give employees autonomy in areas such as scheduling work and determining how and when to do job tasks. This could include seeking employees' input on strategies for effectively completing work; allowing employees to be involved in and make decisions about their work processes; and generally have more *control over their jobs.* Structure and direction are important, but an excess of either can be counterproductive. Jobs composed of tasks that are overly constricted by rules and procedures, or that require supervisor authority for small variations, may reduce employee motivation and result in suboptimal levels of performance;
- Provide honest, specific, and timely feedback in a manner that is tailored to employees' needs. Feedback helps employees understand the effectiveness of their efforts, areas where they can develop, and future actions they can take to better meet expectations and attain high levels of performance. Yet, there is not one feedback schedule that is appropriate for all jobs or for all employees within a job. Discretion must be used to determine the appropriate frequency and level of review and feedback for each employee based on his or her needs; and

- Emphasize to employees the significance of their work and how it contributes to accomplishing goals; supports the organization's mission; and benefits the general public.

Rewards

Employees' perceptions of the connection between desired rewards and their effort and performance can influence their motivation. However, agencies need to give the right rewards in the right way. Therefore, we recommend that—

- Supervisors exercise sound performance management practices to help employees see connections between their effort, performance, and rewards. This includes communicating clear performance expectations to employees; reviewing employees' effort and progress towards goals; providing employees with honest, specific, and timely feedback; objectively evaluating employees' performance; making fair and transparent reward decisions; and addressing poor performance. Supervisors should also tailor their management style and practices to the needs of different employees;
- Agencies offer a variety of rewards to give supervisors flexibility in selecting rewards that are most desired by their employees. Discussions with employees and employee representatives may be necessary to determine which rewards should be available, and policy changes may be required;
- Supervisors clearly communicate to employees the available types of rewards and the conditions for receiving them. This may require ongoing discussions with employees as rewards (such as money) become more or less available. Regardless of which rewards are available, it is critical for employee motivation that supervisors do not create expectations for rewards that cannot or will not be met later;
- Supervisors identify employees' preferences for rewards and, when possible, accommodate such preferences when administering rewards. Yet, agencies and managers should carefully consider the readiness of their organizational culture and systems before proceeding. In particular, agencies must take care to assure that employees are treated equitably—that "similarly situated employees are treated similarly"—even if they are not rewarded uniformly. For example, the standards for receiving rewards *should be consistent* across employees at the same performance level and the dollar-value of different rewards should be comparable for employees in a given position at the same performance level; and
- Supervisors administer rewards in a fair and transparent manner, consistent with applicable agency policies and procedures. Sound performance management practices will help supervisors ensure that they are fairly and objectively evaluating employees' performance and making accurate distinctions among employees based on merit for reward purposes.

APPENDIX A: MEASUREMENT OF THE MOTIVATION POTENTIAL OF JOB CHARACTERISTICS

We computed a Motivation Potential Level for each survey respondent using his or her level of agreement (that is, Don't Know/NA, Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, and Strongly Agree) with each of the items in Table 4.

Table 4: Motivation Potential Level Scale Items

Job Characteristic	Merit Principles Survey 2010 Item
Skill Variety	My job allows me to perform a variety of tasks that require a wide range of knowledge, skills, and abilities.
Task Identity	My job allows me to complete a single piece of work (rather than bits and pieces) from beginning to end.
Task Significance	My job has a significant positive impact on others, either within the organization or the public in general.
Autonomy	My job gives me the freedom to make decisions regarding how I accomplish my work.
Feedback	I receive information about my job performance and the effectiveness of my efforts, either directly from the work itself or from others.

The following formula was used to calculate a Motivation Potential Level:

Motivation Potential Level =

$$((\text{Skill Variety} + \text{Task Identity} + \text{Task Significance}) \div 3) \times \text{Autonomy} \times \text{Feedback}$$

This motivation formula has a substantial research history and was originally developed and tested by Hackman and Oldham in their 1975 paper, Development of the Job Diagnostic Survey. Journal of Applied Psychology, 60, pp. 159-170. However, the original formula proposed by Hackman and Oldham required 15 items for computation; we adapted this method to compute our Motivation Potential Level by only using the 5 items in Table 4.

The Motivation Potential Level for our survey respondents had a range of 1 to 125, with a score of 1 indicating that the respondent did not agree that his or her job had the five job characteristics, whereas a score of 125 indicated that the respondent agreed that his or her job provided all five characteristics to the maximum degree possible. For interpretation and discussion purposes, we partitioned the Motivation Potential Level range into three equal-sized bins, namely low-level (1 through 41.7), mid-level (41.8 through 83.3), and high-level (83.4 through 125) Motivation Potential.

APPENDIX B: MEASUREMENT OF THE MOTIVATION FORCE OF EFFORT, PERFORMANCE, AND REWARD CONNECTIONS

We first computed a Motivation Force statistic for each employee *on every one of the 11 rewards*. The Motivation Force statistic for each reward is the product of an employee's response to three items measuring the extent to which: (1) effort results in performance; (2) performance yields the particular reward; and (3) the particular reward is desirable. Thus:

Motivation Force = MFi = (Q1) x (Q2) x (Q3)

Where…

Q1 = An employee's response to the question, "When I put forth my best effort, I achieve a high performance appraisal rating." Response options for this question were: Don't Know/NA, Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree.

Q2 = An employee's response to the question, "In my work unit, the better I perform on the job, the greater my opportunity for…(the specific reward)." Response options for this question were: Don't Know/NA, Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree.

Q3 = An employee's indication of how important each job factor was to him or her in seeking and continuing employment in his or her organization. Response options were: Don't Know/Can't Judge, Unimportant, Somewhat Unimportant, Neither Important nor Unimportant, Somewhat Important, and Very Important.

Therefore, each employee had eleven Motivation Force statistics (one for each of the 11 rewards).

We then combined the eleven Motivation Force statistics for each employee into one Motivation Force Score for each employee. The Motivation Force Score for each employee is the sum of the employee's highest Motivation Force statistic and the average of the employee's remaining 10 motivation force statistics.

Motivation Force Score = MFh + (∑MFi / 10)

Where…

$\mathbf{MF}_h$ = the highest Motivation Force statistic among the 11 computed statistics

$\mathbf{MF}_i$ = the individual Motivation Forces statistics for the 10 rewards other than the $\mathbf{MF}_h$

Thus, the Motivation Force Score formula gives equal motivational weight to the reward most motivating to the employee and to the combined motivating influence of the other rewards. It reflects, in a single number, how much an employee values each of the 11 rewards and how well each reward is seen to be connected to his or her performance.

The Motivation Force Score for our respondents had a range of 1 to 250. A score of 1 indicates that the respondent holds the most unfavorable beliefs about effort, performance, and rewards and is minimally motivated. A score of 250 indicates that the respondent holds the most favorable beliefs and is maximally motivated. We partitioned the Motivation Force Score range into three equal-sized bins, namely low-level (scores ranging 1 through 83.3), mid-level (scores ranging 83.4 through 166.6), and high-level (scores ranging 166.7 through 250) Motivation Force.

APPENDIX C: MSPB'S ENGAGEMENT SCALE QUESTIONS

The engagement scale consists of 16 items to which respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement (*i.e.*, Don't Know/NA, Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree Nor Disagree, Agree, and Strongly Agree). The 16 items and their associated theme ("engagement driver") appear below:

Pride in one's work or workplace

1. My agency is successful at accomplishing its mission.
2. My work unit produces high-quality products and services.
3. The work I do is meaningful to me.
4. I would recommend my agency as a place to work.

Satisfaction with leadership

5. Overall, I am satisfied with my supervisor.
6. Overall, I am satisfied with managers above my immediate supervisor.

Opportunity to perform well at work

7. I know what is expected of me on the job.
8. My job makes good use of my skills and abilities.
9. I have the resources to do my job well.
10. I have sufficient opportunities (such as challenging assignments or projects) to earn a high performance rating.

Satisfaction with the recognition received

11. Recognition and rewards are based on performance in my work unit.
12. I am satisfied with the recognition and rewards I receive for my work.

Prospect for future personal and professional growth

13. I am given a real opportunity to improve my skill in my organization.

Positive work environment with some focus on teamwork.

14. I am treated with respect at work.

15. My opinions count at work.

16. A spirit of cooperation and teamwork exists in my work unit.

Appendix D: The 2010 Merit Principles Survey

U.S. MERIT SYSTEMS PROTECTION BOARD
1615 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20419-0001

July 2010

Dear Federal Colleague:

Your opinion counts! The U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) asks that you take a few minutes to participate in our Merit Principles Survey 2010, a Government-wide survey of Federal employees that covers a variety of workforce issues, including prohibited personnel practices and whistleblower protections issues, along with other workplace issues that impact employees' abilities to carry out the missions of your agency. Because you are part of a random sample of Government employees, your views about your work and work environment will represent those of the larger Federal workforce. This is an opportunity for you to inform policy by voicing your opinions and concerns about workforce issues.

This survey is an important part of MSPB's responsibility to assess the soundness of Federal merit systems. Your responses will help us recommend to the President, Congress, agency leaders, and other decision makers how to improve the Federal workplace. The information you share will make a positive difference!

Your responses to this survey are voluntary and strictly confidential. Only MSPB staff and our survey support contractor staff will have access to the surveys and no data will be disclosed to anyone that could be used to identify individual participants.

On average, the survey will take about 30 minutes to complete. It may be completed at your work site or at home. We request that you complete the survey within the next five days and return it in the postage page envelope or fax it to 202-563-7211.

Additional information about the Merit Principles Survey is available by visiting www.mspb.gov/studies. If you have questions about this survey, please email us at MPS2010@mspb.gov or call our survey hotline at 1-888-581-7922.

Thank you! We appreciate your help.

Sincerely,

John Crum, Ph.D.
Director, Policy and Evaluation

Privacy Statement

MSPB wants to assure survey participants that your involvement in the Merit Principles Survey 2010 is both voluntary and confidential. This Privacy Statement identifies MSPB's authorization to conduct the survey and explains how we will manage the data we receive.

- The purpose of collecting this information is to study how well the Federal Government is managing its workforce in adherence to the merit system principles. The results of the survey will be shared with the President, Congress, and other Federal decisionmakers to be used in developing policy that supports both merit and mission accomplishment.
- Collection of the information is authorized by 5 U.S.C. § 1204.
- Your responses to this survey are completely voluntary. There is no penalty if you choose not to participate. However, we encourage your participation to ensure that our data is complete and representative of the Federal workforce.
- Only MSPB staff and our survey support contractor staff will have access to individually completed surveys. In accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974 (Public Law 93-579), no data will be disclosed that could be used to identify individual participants.

Marking Instructions

- Place a √ in the box next to your response.
- Please use a No. 2 pencil or blue or black ink.
- Please print when you write in your response.
- To change your answer, cross out the incorrect answer and put a √ in the correct box. Also draw a circle around the correct answer.

~~☑ No~~
☑ Yes

Definitions of Survey Terms

Executives are members of the Senior Executive Service or equivalent.

Leaders are an agency's management team. This includes anyone with supervisory or managerial duties including supervisors, managers, and executives.

Organization means an agency, office, or division.

Supervisors are first-line supervisors who do not supervise other supervisors; typically those who are responsible for employees' performance appraisals and approval of their leave.

Team leaders are those who provide employees with day-to-day guidance in work projects, but do not have supervisory responsibilities or conduct performance appraisals.

Work unit means an employee's immediate work unit headed by the employee's direct supervisor.

Demographics

1. **How many years have you been a Federal civil service employee?**
   - ○ Under 1 year
   - ○ 1-3 years
   - ○ 4-7 years
   - ○ 8-11 years
   - ○ 12-15 years
   - ○ 16-19 years
   - ○ 20-23 years
   - ○ 24-27 years
   - ○ 28-31 years
   - ○ 32-35 years
   - ○ More than 35 years

2. **Are you Hispanic or Latino?**
   - ○ Yes
   - ○ No

3. **Racial category or categories in which you most belong? (Please mark ALL that apply.)**
   - ○ American Indian or Alaska Native
   - ○ Asian
   - ○ Black or African American
   - ○ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
   - ○ White

4. **What is your current education level?**
   - ○ Less than a high school diploma
   - ○ High school, equivalent diploma, or GED
   - ○ Some college credits but no degree
   - ○ Associates' college degree
   - ○ Bachelor's college degree
   - ○ Master's degree
   - ○ Professional degree (e.g. J.D., M.D., D.D.S.)
   - ○ Academic or scientific doctorate (Ph.D.)

5. **What is your Supervisory status?**
   - ○ Non-Supervisor (You do not supervise other employees.)
   - ○ Team Leader (You are not an official supervisor; you provide employees with day-to-day guidance in work projects, but do not have supervisory responsibilities or conduct performance appraisals.)
   - ○ Supervisor (You are responsible for employees' performance appraisals & approval of their leave, but you do not supervise other supervisors.)
   - ○ Manager (You are in a management position and supervise other supervisors.)
   - ○ Executive (Member of the Senior Executive Service or equivalent.)

6. **Under what pay system are you working?**
   - ○ General Schedule
   - ○ Wage Grade
   - ○ Executive (Senior Executive Service)
   - ○ Other

7. **If you selected other, which best describes your pay plan?**
   - ○ Occupation-specific pay plan
   - ○ Agency specific pay performance or pay banding system (wide bands with progression based primarily on performance ratings)
   - ○ Agency specific, but similar to the General Schedule (pay system of narrow grades and steps with progression based primarily on tenure)
   - ○ Not sure or other

8. What is your parental status? (This includes biological parent, adoptive parent, stepparent, foster parent, custodian of a legal ward, in loco parentis, or actively seeking custody or adoption of a person under the age of 18, or 18 or older but incapable of self-care because of physical or mental disability.)

○ I am a parent
○ I am not a parent

9. Do you have caregiving responsibility (though not in the role of "parent" as described above) for a person 18 years or older, who may or may not live with you, (e.g., a related adult such as a parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, sibling, step or half relation, in-law, or unrelated adult with whom you have a legal or otherwise significant relationship, etc.) AND who is incapable of, or needs significant assistance with self-care, transportation, household management, or other similar support.)

○ I am a caregiver of such a person
○ I am not a caregiver of such a person

Engagement

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree ↓	Agree ↓	Neither Agree Nor Disagree ↓	Disagree ↓	Strongly Disagree ↓	Don't Know/NA ↓
1. My agency is successful in accomplishing its mission	○	○	○	○	○	○
2. The work I do is meaningful to me	○	○	○	○	○	○
3. My work unit produces high quality products and services	○	○	○	○	○	○
4. Overall, I am satisfied with my supervisor	○	○	○	○	○	○
5. Overall, I am satisfied with managers above my immediate supervisor	○	○	○	○	○	○
6. I know what is expected of me on the job	○	○	○	○	○	○
7. My job makes good use of my skills and abilities	○	○	○	○	○	○
8. I have the resources to do my job well	○	○	○	○	○	○
9. I would recommend my agency as a place to work	○	○	○	○	○	○
10. I have sufficient opportunities (such as challenging assignments or projects) to earn a high performance rating	○	○	○	○	○	○
11. Recognition and rewards are based on performance in my work unit	○	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly Agree ↓	Agree ↓	Neither Agree Nor Disagree ↓	Disagree ↓	Strongly Disagree ↓	Don't Know/NA ↓
12. I am satisfied with the recognition and rewards I receive for my work	○	○	○	○	○	○
13. I am given a real opportunity to improve my skills in my organization	○	○	○	○	○	○
14. I am treated with respect at work	○	○	○	○	○	○
15. My opinions count at work	○	○	○	○	○	○
16. A spirit of cooperation and teamwork exists in my work unit	○	○	○	○	○	○
17. At my job, I am inspired to do my best work	○	○	○	○	○	○
18. My supervisor provides constructive feedback on my job performance	○	○	○	○	○	○
19. My supervisor provides timely feedback on my job performance	○	○	○	○	○	○
20. I have the opportunity to perform well at challenging work	○	○	○	○	○	○
21. How likely is it that you will leave your agency in the next 12 months?	○	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly Agree ↓	Agree ↓	Neither Agree Nor Disagree ↓	Disagree ↓	Strongly Disagree ↓	Don't Know/NA ↓
22. The performance and/or conduct of other employees are the primary reasons my job performance is not higher	○	○	○	○	○	○
23. The performance and/or conduct of my supervisors and managers are primary reasons my job performance is not higher	○	○	○	○	○	○
24. Barriers to success, such as constraining rules or work processes, under-informed coworkers, or office politics, are the primary reasons my performance is not at a higher level	○	○	○	○	○	○
25. Lack of resources, such as more staff, a larger budget, or more equipment and supplies, is a primary reason my performance is not at a higher level	○	○	○	○	○	○

26. Are you or will you become eligible to retire within the next 12 months?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Don't Know

Motivation

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree ↓	Agree ↓	Neither Agree Nor Disagree ↓	Disagree ↓	Strongly Disagree ↓	Don’t Know/NA ↓
1. My job allows me to perform a variety of tasks that require a wide range of knowledge, skills, and abilities	○	○	○	○	○	○
2. My job allows me to complete a single piece of work (rather than bits and pieces) from beginning to end	○	○	○	○	○	○
3. My job has a significant positive impact on others, either within the organization or the public in general	○	○	○	○	○	○
4. My job gives me the freedom to make decisions regarding how I accomplish my work	○	○	○	○	○	○
5. I receive information about my job performance and the effectiveness of my efforts, either directly from the work itself or from others	○	○	○	○	○	○
6. When I put forth my best effort, I achieve a high performance appraisal rating	○	○	○	○	○	○
7. The harder I try, the more I am able to achieve my work goals and objectives	○	○	○	○	○	○

Continue on next page

8. In my work unit, the better I perform on the job…

	Strongly Agree ↓	Agree ↓	Neither Agree Nor Disagree ↓	Disagree ↓	Strongly Disagree ↓	Don't Know/NA ↓
a. …the more interesting work I receive	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. … the more I feel appreciated	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. …the greater the personal satisfaction I experience	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. …the more I am included in important discussions and decisions	○	○	○	○	○	○
e. … the greater my job security	○	○	○	○	○	○
f. … the higher my awards and bonuses	○	○	○	○	○	○
g. …the greater my opportunity for advancement	○	○	○	○	○	○
h. …the more I am granted informal perks (not including training opportunities)	○	○	○	○	○	○
i. …the more I am forgiven for my small mistakes	○	○	○	○	○	○
j. … the better my training and development opportunities	○	○	○	○	○	○
k. … the more I feel I am serving the public	○	○	○	○	○	○

9. In each of the following questions, please indicate how important each job factor is to you in seeking and continuing employment in your organization.

	Very Important ↓	Somewhat Important ↓	Neither Important Nor Unimportant ↓	Somewhat Unimportant ↓	Unimportant ↓	Don't Know/Can't Judge ↓
a. Having interesting work	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. The appreciation I receive	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. The personal satisfaction I experience	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. Being included in important discussions and decisions	○	○	○	○	○	○
e. My job security	○	○	○	○	○	○
f. My awards and bonuses	○	○	○	○	○	○
g. My opportunity for advancement	○	○	○	○	○	○
h. Being granted informal perks (not including training opportunities)	○	○	○	○	○	○
i. Being forgiven for small mistakes	○	○	○	○	○	○
j. My training and development opportunities	○	○	○	○	○	○
k. Being able to serve the public	○	○	○	○	○	○

10. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree ↓	Agree ↓	Neither Agree Nor Disagree ↓	Disagree ↓	Strongly Disagree ↓	Don't Know/NA ↓
a. I feel highly motivated in my work	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. The give and take of public policy making doesn't appeal to me	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. Meaningful public service is important to me	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. I am not afraid to go to bat for the rights of others even if it means I will be ridiculed	○	○	○	○	○	○
e. I am prepared to make enormous sacrifices for the good of the agency	○	○	○	○	○	○
f. I am often reminded by daily events about how dependent we are on one another	○	○	○	○	○	○
g. Making a difference in society means more to me than personal achievements	○	○	○	○	○	○

Merit Systems Principles and Prohibited Personnel Practices

1. My organization...

	Strongly Agree ↓	Agree ↓	Neither Agree Nor Disagree ↓	Disagree ↓	Strongly Disagree ↓	Don't Know/NA ↓
a. …recruits a diverse pool of applicants for job vacancies	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. …holds fair and open competition for job vacancies	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. …selects the best-qualified candidates when filling jobs	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. …treats employees fairly	○	○	○	○	○	○
e. …takes steps to prevent prohibited discrimination	○	○	○	○	○	○
f. …takes steps to rectify prohibited discrimination	○	○	○	○	○	○
g. …pays employees fairly	○	○	○	○	○	○
h. …recognizes excellent performance	○	○	○	○	○	○
i. …rewards excellent performance	○	○	○	○	○	○
j. …holds employees to high standards of conduct	○	○	○	○	○	○

My organization...

	Strongly Agree ↓	Agree ↓	Neither Agree Nor Disagree ↓	Disagree ↓	Strongly Disagree ↓	Don't Know/NA ↓
k. … puts the public interest first	○	○	○	○	○	○
l. … uses the workforce efficiently and effectively	○	○	○	○	○	○
m. …eliminates unnecessary functions and positions	○	○	○	○	○	○
n. …makes good use of employees' skills and talents	○	○	○	○	○	○
o. …focuses employee attention and efforts on what is most important	○	○	○	○	○	○
p. …provides employees with the resources needed to get the job done	○	○	○	○	○	○
q. …addresses poor performers effectively	○	○	○	○	○	○
r. …retains its best employees	○	○	○	○	○	○
s. …provides employees with necessary training	○	○	○	○	○	○
t. …provides employees with opportunities for growth and development	○	○	○	○	○	○

My organization...

	Strongly Agree ↓	Agree ↓	Neither Agree Nor Disagree ↓	Disagree ↓	Strongly Disagree ↓	Don't Know/NA ↓
u. …protects employees against reprisal for whistleblowing	○	○	○	○	○	○
v. … protects employees against reprisal for exercising a grievance, complaint, or appeal right	○	○	○	○	○	○
w. … protects employees against arbitrary action	○	○	○	○	○	○
x. … does not engage in favoritism	○	○	○	○	○	○
y. …protects employees from political coercion	○	○	○	○	○	○
z. …has made it clear that it prohibits discrimination based on a person's sexual orientation	○	○	○	○	○	○

Continue on next page

2. **In the past two years, have you been treated fairly in each area listed below**?

	Yes ↓	No ↓	Don't Know/NA ↓
a. Career advancement	○	○	○
b. Awards	○	○	○
c. Training	○	○	○
d. Performance appraisals	○	○	○
e. Job assignments	○	○	○
f. Discipline	○	○	○
g. Pay	○	○	○

3. For each item below, please indicate the option that you think best describes the situation.

In the past two years, an agency official (e.g. supervisor, manager, senior leader, etc.) in my work unit has…

	This has NOT occurred in my work unit ↓	This has occurred in my work unit, but I was not personally affected by this ↓	I was personally affected by this ↓	Don't Know/NA ↓
a. …discriminated in favor or against someone in a personnel action based upon race	○	○	○	○
b. …discriminated in favor or against someone in a personnel action based upon age	○	○	○	○
c. …discriminated in favor or against someone in a personnel action based upon religion	○	○	○	○
d. …discriminated in favor or against someone in a personnel action based upon sex	○	○	○	○
e. …discriminated in favor or against someone in a personnel action based upon national origin	○	○	○	○
f. …discriminated in favor or against someone in a personnel action based upon disabling condition	○	○	○	○
g. …discriminated in favor or against someone in a personnel action based upon marital status	○	○	○	○
h. …discriminated in favor or against someone in a personnel action based upon political affiliation	○	○	○	○
i. …discriminated in favor or against someone in a personnel action based upon sexual orientation	○	○	○	○
j. …discriminated in favor or against someone in a personnel action based upon status as a parent or caregiver	○	○	○	○
k. …discriminated against someone in a personnel action on the basis of off-duty conduct which was entirely unrelated to the job	○	○	○	○

In the past two years, an agency official (e.g. supervisor, manager, senior leader, etc.) in my work unit has…

In the past two years, an agency official (e.g. supervisor, manager, senior leader, etc.) in my work unit has…

	This has NOT occurred in my work unit ↓	This has occurred in my work unit, but I was not personally affected by this ↓	I was personally affected by this ↓	Don't Know/NA ↓
l. …tried to pressure someone to support or oppose a particular candidate or party for elected office	○	○	○	○
m. …tried to influence someone to withdraw from competition for a position for the purpose of helping or injuring someone else's chances	○	○	○	○
n. …tried to define the scope or manner of a recruitment action, or the qualifications required, for the purpose of improving the chances of a particular person	○	○	○	○
o. …obstructed someone's right to compete for employment	○	○	○	○
p. … solicited or considered improper employment recommendations	○	○	○	○
q. … advocated for the appointment, employment, promotion, or advancement of a relative	○	○	○	○
r. … advocated for appointment, employment, promotion, or advancement of a personal friend of the agency official	○	○	○	○

In the past two years, an agency official (e.g. supervisor, manager, senior leader, etc.) in my work unit has…

	This has NOT occurred in my work unit ↓	This has occurred in my work unit, but I was not personally affected by this ↓	I was personally affected by this ↓	Don't Know/NA ↓
s. …took or threatened to take a personnel action against an employee because the employee disclosed a violation of law, rules, or regulations or reported fraud, waste, or abuse	○	○	○	○
t. ... took or threatened to take a personnel action against an employee because the employee filed an appeal or grievance	○	○	○	○
u. …knowingly violated a lawful form of veteran's preference or veteran's protection laws	○	○	○	○
v. … inappropriately favored a veteran	○	○	○	○

Continue on next page

Whistleblowing

For the purpose of this section, the term "wrongdoing" refers to the creation or toleration in the workplace of a health or safety danger, unlawful behavior, fraud, waste, or abuse.

1. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree ↓	Agree ↓	Neither Agree Nor Disagree ↓	Disagree ↓	Strongly Disagree ↓	Don't Know/NA ↓
1. My agency actively encourages employees to report wrongdoing.	○	○	○	○	○	○
2. If I disclosed wrongdoing, I would be praised for it at work.	○	○	○	○	○	○
3. I feel that I could disclose wrongdoing without any concerns that the disclosure would make my life harder.	○	○	○	○	○	○
4. My agency has educated me about the purpose of the Office of the Inspector General.	○	○	○	○	○	○
5. My agency has educated me about how I can anonymously disclose wrongdoing.	○	○	○	○	○	○
6. My agency has educated me about what my rights would be if I disclosed wrongdoing.	○	○	○	○	○	○

7. In your opinion, how adequate or inadequate is the protection against reprisal for federal employees who report wrongdoing?

○ Very adequate
○ Adequate
○ Neither adequate nor inadequate
○ Inadequate
○ Very inadequate
○ Don't Know/Can't Judge

8. If you were to observe or have evidence of wrongdoing, how important would it be to you that you be able to report it without disclosing your identity?

○ Very important
○ Important
○ Somewhat important
○ Not important
○ Don't Know/Can't Judge

9. To what extent do you understand the role of each of the following organizations when it comes to responding to reports of wrongdoing?

	Great Extent ↓	Some Extent ↓	Little Extent ↓	Not at All ↓
a. The U.S. Office of the Special Counsel (OSC)	○	○	○	○
b. The Government Accountability Office (GAO)	○	○	○	○
c. Your agency's Office of the Inspector General (OIG)	○	○	○	○
d. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)	○	○	○	○

10. If you were to report wrongdoing to one of the following organizations, and asked that your identity be kept confidential, to what extent do you believe that the organization would keep your identity secret?

	Great Extent ↓	Some Extent ↓	Little Extent ↓	Not at All ↓
a. My agency's Office of the Inspector General (OIG)	○	○	○	○
b. The U.S. Office of the Special Counsel (OSC)	○	○	○	○
c. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)	○	○	○	○
d. The Government Accountability Office (GAO)	○	○	○	○
e. The U.S. Congress	○	○	○	○
f. The Media	○	○	○	○

11. If you were to report wrongdoing to one of the following organizations, to what extent do you believe the organization would give careful consideration to your allegations?

	Great Extent ↓	Some Extent ↓	Little Extent ↓	Not at All ↓
a. My agency's Office of the Inspector General (OIG)	○	○	○	○
b. The U.S. Office of the Special Counsel (OSC)	○	○	○	○
c. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)	○	○	○	○
d. The Government Accountability Office (GAO)	○	○	○	○
e. The U.S. Congress	○	○	○	○
f. The Media	○	○	○	○

12. If tomorrow you were to observe a health or safety danger, unlawful behavior, fraud, waste, or abuse, to what extent do you think that each of the following would factor into your decision on whether or not to report the wrongdoing?

	Great Extent ↓	Some Extent ↓	Little Extent ↓	Not at All ↓
a. Concern that I would be suspended, demoted, or fired	○	○	○	○
b. Concern that I had sufficient proof	○	○	○	○
c. Concern that it might not be serious enough	○	○	○	○
d. Concern that the event might not rise to the level of fraud, waste, abuse, unlawful behavior, or a safety or health danger	○	○	○	○

If tomorrow you were to observe a health or safety danger, unlawful behavior, fraud, waste, or abuse, to what extent do you think that each of the following would factor into your decision on whether or not to report the wrongdoing?

	Great Extent ↓	Some Extent ↓	Little Extent ↓	Not at All ↓
e. Belief that nothing ***would*** be done to stop it	○	○	○	○
f. Belief that nothing ***could*** be done to stop it	○	○	○	○
g. Belief that it would not happen again	○	○	○	○
h. Belief that someone else had already reported it	○	○	○	○
i. Concern that I would be seen as disloyal	○	○	○	○
j. Concern that it might negatively impact my relationship with my co-workers	○	○	○	○
k. Concern that it might get someone in trouble	○	○	○	○
l. Concern that it might harm the reputation of my organization/agency	○	○	○	○
m. Concern that it might cause other things to be investigated	○	○	○	○
n. Concern that it might affect my performance appraisal	○	○	○	○
o. Concern that it might affect my ability to get a performance award	○	○	○	○
p. Concern that it might affect my ability to get training	○	○	○	○
q. Concern that it might affect my ability to get a promotion	○	○	○	○
r. Concern that management might become less tolerant of any small mistakes I might make	○	○	○	○
s. Concern that management might become less willing to grant me any favors that are optional for them	○	○	○	○
t. Concern that I might be retaliated against in another way not mentioned above	○	○	○	○
u. A lack of knowledge about to whom I should report it	○	○	○	○

If tomorrow you were to observe a health or safety danger, unlawful behavior, fraud, waste, or abuse, to what extent do you think that each of the following would factor into your decision on whether or not to report the wrongdoing?

13. How important, if at all, would each of the following be in encouraging you to report an illegal or wasteful activity?

	Very Important ↓	Somewhat Important ↓	Neither Important Nor Unimportant ↓	Somewhat Unimportant ↓	Unimportant ↓	Don't Know/Can't Judge ↓
a. The activity might endanger people's lives	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. The activity was something you considered serious in terms of costs to the Government	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. Something would be done to correct the activity you reported	○	○	○	○	○	○

How important, if at all, would each of the following be in encouraging you to report an illegal or wasteful activity?

	Very Important ↓	Somewhat Important ↓	Neither Important Nor Unimportant ↓	Somewhat Unimportant ↓	Unimportant ↓	Don't Know/Can't Judge ↓
d. The wrongdoers involved in the activities would be punished	○	○	○	○	○	○
e. You would be protected from any sort of reprisal	○	○	○	○	○	○
f. You would be positively recognized by management for a good deed	○	○	○	○	○	○
g. Your identity would be kept confidential by the people to whom you reported the activity	○	○	○	○	○	○
h. The activity was something you considered to be a serious ethical violation, although the monetary costs associated with it were small	○	○	○	○	○	○
i. You would be eligible to receive a cash award	○	○	○	○	○	○

14. How likely would you be to "blow the whistle" when the wrongdoer is:

	Very Likely ↓	Somewhat Likely ↓	Neither Likely Nor Unlikely ↓	Somewhat Unlikely ↓	Very Unlikely ↓	Don't Know/Can't Judge ↓
a. Your supervisor	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. A higher level supervisor	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. A coworker (in your work group)	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. A Federal employee outside your work group	○	○	○	○	○	○
e. A contractor or vendor	○	○	○	○	○	○
f. A political appointee in your agency	○	○	○	○	○	○

15. During the last 12 months, did you personally observe or obtain direct evidence of one or more illegal or wasteful activities involving your agency? (Note: Do not answer "yes" if you only heard about the activity in the media or heard about it as a rumor.)

○ Yes
○ No

If you answered no to question 15, please skip to the Disabilities section on ***page 17****, if you answered yes to question 15, please continue on the* ***next page****.*

16. If you answered yes to question 15, then please select the activity below that represents the most serious problem you personally observed. (Please mark only one.)

- ○ Stealing Federal funds
- ○ Stealing Federal property
- ○ Accepting bribes or kickbacks
- ○ Waste caused by ineligible people receiving funds, goods, or services
- ○ Waste caused by unnecessary or deficient goods or services
- ○ Use of an official position for personal benefit
- ○ Waste caused by a badly managed program
- ○ Unfair advantage in the selection of a contractor, consultant, or vendor
- ○ Tolerating a situation or practice which poses a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety
- ○ Other serious violation of law or regulation

17. Where did this activity occur or originate? (Please mark ALL that apply.)

- ☐ Your workgroup
- ☐ Outside your workgroup but within your agency
- ☐ Another Federal agency
- ☐ Contractor or vendor
- ☐ Other

18. If a dollar value can be placed on this activity, what was the amount involved?

- ○ More than $100,000
- ○ $5,000-$100,000
- ○ $1,000-$4,999
- ○ $100-$999
- ○ Less than $100
- ○ A dollar value cannot be placed on the activity
- ○ Don’t know/Can’t judge

19. How frequently did this activity occur?

- ○ Once or rarely
- ○ Occasionally
- ○ Frequently
- ○ Don’t know/Can’t judge

20. Did you report this activity to any of the following? (Please mark ALL that apply.)

- ☐ I did not report the activity (*skip to disabilities section on page 17)*
- ☐ Family member or friend
- ☐ Co-worker
- ☐ Immediate supervisor
- ☐ Higher level supervisor
- ☐ Higher level agency official
- ☐ Agency Inspector General (IG)
- ☐ Office of Special Counsel (OSC)
- ☐ Government Accountability Office (GAO)
- ☐ Law enforcement official
- ☐ Union representative
- ☐ News media
- ☐ Congressional staff member or member of Congress
- ☐ Advocacy group outside the Government
- ☐ Other

21. If you DID report this activity, were you identified as the source of the report?

- ○ Yes, I was identified
- ○ No, I was not identified (*skip to disabilities section on page 17)*

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22. If you were identified, what was the effect on you personally as a result of being identified? (Please mark ALL that apply.)

- ☐ I was given credit by my management for having reported the problem
- ☐ Nothing happened to me for having reported the problem
- ☐ My coworkers were unhappy with me for having reported the problem
- ☐ My supervisor was unhappy with me for having reported the problem
- ☐ Someone above my supervisor was unhappy with me for having reported the problem
- ☐ I was threatened with reprisal for having reported the problem
- ☐ I received an actual reprisal for having reported the problem

23. Within the last 12 months, have you personally experienced some type of reprisal or threat of reprisal by management for having reported an activity?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No (*skip to disabilities section on page 17*)

24. Did the reprisal or threat of reprisal take any of the following forms? (Please mark ALL that apply.)

	I was threatened with this ↓	This was done to me ↓
a. Poor performance appraisal	○	○
b. Denial of promotion	○	○
c. Denial of opportunity for training	○	○
d. Denial of award	○	○
e. Assignment to less desirable or less important duties	○	○
f. Transfer or reassignment to a different job with less desirable duties	○	○
g. Reassignment to a different geographical location	○	○
h. Suspension from my job	○	○
i. Fired from my job	○	○
j. Grade level demotion	○	○
k. Shunned by coworkers or managers	○	○
l. Verbal harassment or intimidation	○	○
m. Required to take a fitness for duty exam	○	○
n. Other	○	○

Continue on next page

25. In response to the reprisal or threat of reprisal, did you take any of the following actions? (Please mark ALL that apply.)

- ☐ I took no action
- ☐ Complained to the Office of Inspector General within my agency
- ☐ Complained to some other office within my agency (for example, the Personnel Office or EEO Office)
- ☐ Filed a complaint through my union representative
- ☐ Filed a formal grievance within my agency
- ☐ Filed an EEO (discrimination) complaint
- ☐ Filed a complaint with the Office of Special Counsel
- ☐ Filed an action with the Merit Systems Protection Board
- ☐ I took an action not listed above

26. Please indicate the extent to which each of the following was important to your decision to report or not report wrongdoing.

	Great Extent ↓	Some Extent ↓	Little Extent ↓	Not at All ↓
a. Concern that I would be suspended, demoted, or fired	○	○	○	○
b. Concern that I had sufficient proof	○	○	○	○
c. Concern that it might not be serious enough	○	○	○	○
d. Concern that the event might not rise to the level of fraud, waste, abuse, unlawful behavior, or a safety or health danger	○	○	○	○
e. Belief that nothing ***would*** be done to stop it	○	○	○	○
f. Belief that nothing ***could*** be done to stop it	○	○	○	○
g. Belief that it would not happen again	○	○	○	○

Please indicate the extent to which each of the following was important to your decision to report or not report wrongdoing.

	Great Extent ↓	Some Extent ↓	Little Extent ↓	Not at All ↓
h. Belief that someone else had already reported it	○	○	○	○
i. Concern that I would be seen as disloyal	○	○	○	○
j. Concern that it might negatively impact my relationship with my co-workers	○	○	○	○
k. Concern that it might get someone in trouble	○	○	○	○
l. Concern that it might harm the reputation of my organization/agency	○	○	○	○
m. Concern that it might cause other things to be investigated	○	○	○	○
n. Concern that it might affect my performance appraisal	○	○	○	○
o. Concern that it might affect my ability to get a performance award	○	○	○	○
p. Concern that it might affect my ability to get training	○	○	○	○
q. Concern that it might affect my ability to get a promotion	○	○	○	○
r. Concern that management might become less tolerant of any small mistakes I might make	○	○	○	○
s. Concern that management might become less willing to grant me any favors that are optional for them	○	○	○	○
t. Concern that I might be retaliated against in another way not mentioned above	○	○	○	○
u. A lack of knowledge about to whom I should report it	○	○	○	○

Disabilities

1. **My agency has policies and procedures for dealing with reasonable accommodation requests.**

○ Strongly agree
○ Agree
○ Neither agree nor disagree
○ Disagree
○ Strongly disagree
○ Don’t know/NA

2. **Contact information is readily available for the Disability Program Coordinator and/or the Selective Placement Program Coordinator at my department/agency.**

○ Strongly agree
○ Agree
○ Neither agree nor disagree
○ Disagree
○ Strongly disagree
○ Don’t know/NA

3. **My organization is committed to offering equal employment opportunities to people with disabilities.**

○ Strongly agree (skip to question 5)
○ Agree (skip to question 5)
○ Neither agree nor disagree (skip to question 5)
○ Disagree
○ Strongly disagree
○ Don’t know/NA

4. **Select from among the following reasons for why you believe your agency is resistant to hiring people with disabilities. (Please mark ALL that apply.)**

☐ Lack of funds
☐ Unfamiliarity with specific hiring authorities
☐ Unfamiliarity with providing reasonable accommodations
☐ Belief that disabled persons will have difficulty performing the job
☐ Belief that disabled persons will require too much time and attention
☐ Belief that disabled persons will disrupt the workplace
☐ Other : ______________________________

____

☐ Don’t know

5. **Do you have a physical or mental impairment?**

○ Yes, and it substantially limits one or more major life activities. Major life activities may include walking, seeing, standing, sitting, breathing, bathing, etc.
○ Yes, but it does not affect a major life activity.
○ No (If no, skip to the leadership impact section on page 19)
○ I prefer not to answer (If you prefer not to answer this question, skip to the leadership impact section on page 19)

Continue on next page

6. Please select your physical or mental impairment(s) from the list below. Check all that apply in the squares on the left. For each impairment selected, identify the level of severity as either mild, moderate, or severe using the scale on the right.

↓	**I have this condition**	**Mild ↓**	**Moderate ↓**	**Severe ↓**
☐	Physical Movement Impairment (for example: missing a hand, partial or full paralysis, arthritis that creates some loss of ability to move a body part)	○	○	○
☐	Sensory Impairment (for example: partial or total blindness, deafness, muteness)	○	○	○
☐	Neurological Impairment (for example: epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's)	○	○	○
☐	Developmental or Learning Impairment (for example: attention deficit, dyslexia, autism)	○	○	○
☐	Psychological Impairment (for example: PTSD, depression, obsessive compulsive, phobias)	○	○	○
☐	Chronic Health Condition (for example: diabetes, hypertension, cancer, heart disease)	○	○	○
☐	Other Disability	○	○	○
☐	Not Disabled			
☐	I would prefer not to answer this question			

7. Have you identified yourself as having a disability on any official forms with your agency?

○ Yes
○ No
○ Don't Know

8. Do you have documentation that substantiates your disability?

○ Yes
○ No
○ Don't Know

9. Were you hired under the Schedule A hiring authority for persons with disabilities?

○ Yes
○ No
○ Don't Know

10. Have you requested reasonable accommodations to assist you with accomplishing your work?

○ Yes
○ No
○ Don't Know

11. Are you receiving reasonable accommodations?

○ Yes
○ No
○ Don't Know

12. *If, in the past 2 years you have been treated unfairly in the area of career advancement,* do you feel the reason you have not been treated fairly in your career advancement is because of your disability?

○ Yes
○ No
○ Don't Know /Not Applicable

Continue on next page

Leadership Impact

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements regarding non-military senior executives.

1. I work closely with a politically appointed Senior Executive (SES).

○ Strongly agree
○ Agree
○ Neither agree nor disagree
○ Disagree
○ Strongly disagree
○ Don’t know/NA

2. I work closely with a career Senior Executive (SES).

○ Strongly agree
○ Agree
○ Neither agree nor disagree
○ Disagree
○ Strongly disagree
○ Don’t know/NA

The following items are intended to reflect your opinions about non-military *political* senior executives.

3. *Political* senior executives in my organization…

	Strongly Agree ↓	Agree ↓	Neither Agree Nor Disagree ↓	Disagree ↓	Strongly Disagree ↓	Don’t Know/NA ↓
a. … have good management skills.	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. … work hard to fulfill the mission of the agency.	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. … communicate well.	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. … work well with other career senior executives.	○	○	○	○	○	○
e. … respect the career staff.	○	○	○	○	○	○
f. … respect the merit process when making hiring decisions.	○	○	○	○	○	○

The following items are intended to reflect your opinions about non-military *career* senior executives.

4. *Career* senior executives in my organization…

	Strongly Agree ↓	Agree ↓	Neither Agree Nor Disagree ↓	Disagree ↓	Strongly Disagree ↓	Don’t Know/NA ↓
a. … have good management skills.	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. … work hard to fulfill the mission of the agency.	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. … communicate well.	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. … work well with other career senior executives.	○	○	○	○	○	○
e. … respect the career staff.	○	○	○	○	○	○
f. … respect the merit process when making hiring decisions.	○	○	○	○	○	○

Union Partnership

1. **Are you a dues-paying member of a union?**
   - ○ Yes
   - ○ No. But my position is covered by a bargaining agreement
   - ○ No. I am not sure if my position is covered by a bargaining agreement
   - ○ No. I am not eligible to be a member of a union
   - ○ Don't Know/Can't Judge

2. **My agency's management and unions work well together to:**

	Strongly Agree ↓	Agree ↓	Neither Agree Nor Disagree ↓	Disagree ↓	Strongly Disagree ↓	Don't Know/NA ↓
a. Improve employee work-life balance	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. Improve the efficiency of agency operations	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. Improve employee performance	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. Improve overall agency performance	○	○	○	○	○	○

Telework

1. **In the last year, how many days, on average, did you telework – work from home or from another location such as a telework center? (This does not include field work.)**
   - ○ 4 or 5 days per week
   - ○ 2 or 3 days per week
   - ○ 1 day per week
   - ○ On an *ad hoc* basis, less than 1 day per week
   - ○ Never

2. **In the event of an emergency (e.g., security incident, pandemic, or major weather event), do you know what you must do to maintain continuity of operations?**
   - ○ Yes
   - ○ No
   - ○ Not sure

Workplace Violence

Workplace violence is defined as violent acts directed towards a person at work or on duty (e.g. physical assaults, threats of assault, harassment, intimidation, or bullying).

1. **My agency takes sufficient steps to ensure my safety from violence occurring at my workplace.**
   - ○ Strongly agree
   - ○ Agree
   - ○ Neither agree nor disagree
   - ○ Disagree
   - ○ Strongly disagree
   - ○ Don't know/NA

2. **During the past two years, have you observed any incidence of workplace violence?**
   - ○ Yes (identify on the next page the type and consequence of the event and mark whether it resulted in physical injury or damage to/loss of property).
   - ○ No (skip to next section- professional affiliation on the next page).

3. Please identify the type and consequence of the event and mark whether it resulted in physical injury or damage to/loss of property.

	This occurred ↓	Resulted in physical injury ↓	Resulted in damage to/loss of property ↓	Don't Know ↓
a. A violent act by a criminal who had no other connection with the workplace, but enters to commit robbery or another crime.	☐	○	○	○
b. A violent act directed at employees by customers, clients, patients, students, inmates, or any others for whom your organization provides services.	☐	○	○	○
c. A violent act against coworkers, supervisors, or managers by a present or former employee.	☐	○	○	○
d. A violent act committed in the workplace by someone who doesn't work there, but has a personal relationship with an employee (e.g., an abusive spouse or domestic partner.	☐	○	○	○

Professional Affiliation

1. Federal employees may obtain information about the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to do their current job. Such information may come from several different sources. To what extent do you personally consider each of the following a good source of information about the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to do your current job?

	Excellent Source of Information ↓	Good Source of Information ↓	Neither a Good Nor Poor Source of Information ↓	Poor Source of Information ↓	Very Poor Source of Information ↓	Don't Know/NA ↓
a. Former job	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. Your Co-workers	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. Your Supervisor	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. Your Agency	○	○	○	○	○	○
e. The Office of Personnel Management	○	○	○	○	○	○
f. A Professional Organization or Trade Association	○	○	○	○	○	○
g. Other	○	○	○	○	○	○

The name of the professional organization or trade association referenced above is?

____

○ Not Applicable

The other source of information referenced above is?

____

○ Not Applicable

2. Consider the most important knowledge, skill or ability needed to perform your current job. Which of the following general categories best describes that knowledge, skill or ability (please mark only one).

○ Knowledge (Facts and other information, including job knowledge, academic subjects, laws, policies, and regulations)

○ Language (Reading, writing, learning other languages, editing, preparing lengthy documents and preparing and giving speeches or presentations)

○ Social (Abilities that help us get along with other people, ranging from basic interpersonal skills and teamwork to more specialized abilities to negotiate, manage conflict, and foster diversity)

○ Reasoning (Abilities based on logic and mathematics, including such practical abilities as analysis, troubleshooting, and computer programming)

○ Motivation (Personal characteristics that affect employee willingness to perform work, including resilience in the face of difficulty, integrity, and public spiritedness)

○ Mental Style (Long-term "mental habits" such as flexibility, creativity, ability to deal with complexity, rapid learning ability, and decisiveness)

3. In your own words, can you briefly rephrase the most important knowledge, skill, or ability, you selected?

____

____

____

____

____

4. My agency does a good job ensuring that people with my kind of job possess this most important knowledge, skill or ability.

○ Strongly agree

○ Agree

○ Neither agree nor disagree

○ Disagree

○ Strongly disagree

○ Don't know/NA

APPENDIX E: OVERVIEW OF THE MERIT PRINCIPLES SURVEY 2010 METHODOLOGY

The Merit Principles Survey (MPS) is a Governmentwide survey of Federal employees that periodically solicits their opinions and experiences related to their careers and agency human resources practices and leadership. The 2010 survey content and methodology are summarized below.

Survey Topics

Topics covered in the 2010 MPS included—

- Employee engagement—employees' perceptions of their connection to their work, their workplace, and their organization, and factors that influence that connection, such as pride in work, leadership, and career development opportunities;
- Workforce motivation—employees' perceptions of the effect of their job characteristics and performance-reward linkages on work effort;
- Adherence to merit system principles—managements' adherence to values such as selection based on ability, effective use of the workforce, and protection of employees from coercion and reprisal;
- Fairness—employees' perceptions of the fairness of their treatment in various aspects of human resources management;
- Prohibited personnel practices—employees' perceptions of discrimination and other improper or illegal personnel practices;
- Leadership—employees' perceptions of the career and noncareer executive leaders in the agency;
- Disability—issues related to the agency's employment of persons with disabilities, including affirmative employment and reasonable accommodation practices;
- Whistleblowing—the observation and reporting of possible wrongdoing in the workplace and the consequences of any report made; and
- Competency requirements—employees' perceptions of the critical requirements for their current jobs and sources of information about those requirements.

Survey Sampling and Administration

The 2010 MPS was administered to permanent, full-time Federal employees in the 18 departments and 6 independent agencies listed in Table 5. Those departments and agencies accounted for approximately 98 percent of the permanent, full-time Federal workforce as of September 2009. Thus, the survey results provide a good representation of Federal employee opinion Governmentwide.

Table 5: Departments and Independent Agencies Participating in the MPS 2010

Departments	Independent Agencies
• Department of the Air Force • Department of the Army • Department of the Navy • Department of Defense • Department of Agriculture • Department of Commerce • Department of Justice • Department of Labor • Department of Energy • Department of Education • Department of Health and Human Services • Department of Homeland Security • Department of Housing and Urban Development • Department of the Interior • Department of State • Department of Transportation • Department of the Treasury • Department of Veterans Affairs	• Environmental Protection Agency • Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation • General Services Administration • National Aeronautics and Space Administration • Office of Personnel Management • Social Security Administration

Employees were selected through stratified random sampling drawn from records in OPM's Central Personnel Data File. The strata (groups surveyed) were designed to provide usable measures of employee opinions by supervisory status (non-supervisor and supervisor) and department or agency. For some departments, the sampling plan was designed to also provide usable results for selected major components or bureaus.

For almost all employees, the survey was administered online through email invitations and a dedicated, secure web site. At the request of the Department of Transportation, MSPB distributed paper surveys to approximately 1,300 employees in the Federal Aviation Administration who could not receive or respond to an online survey. All employees were informed that survey participation was voluntary and that their responses would be strictly confidential and that only MSPB staff and survey support contractor staff would have access to surveys. Further, employees were assured that no data that could be used to identify individual participants would be disclosed to anyone.

Response Rate and Weighting

Survey distribution, return, and acceptance figures are shown in Table 6. Returned surveys were reviewed for completeness and, for paper surveys, legibility. Ultimately, MSPB accepted 42,020 surveys, for a final response rate of 58 percent, as shown in Table 6.[50]

Table 6: Merit Principles Survey 2010 Distribution, Return, and Acceptance

Format	Distributed	Returned		Accepted (Valid)	
Electronic (web)	70,675	42,800	61%	41,680	59%
Paper	1,295	362	28%	340	26%
Total	71,970	43,162	60%	42,020	58%

The sampling plan required oversampling (surveying a higher proportion of the population) of some groups to provide statistically reliable results. Accordingly, MSPB calculated response weights to produce results that are representative of Governmentwide employee opinions. All survey results in this report are weighted unless stated otherwise.

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[50] To be accepted, a survey had to contain valid (nonmissing) responses to 25 or more core items.

APPENDIX F: AGENCIES AND SUBAGENCIES FOR WHICH ANALYSES ARE AVAILABLE

Analyses are available for agencies and subagencies that had sufficient survey response rates to permit reliable generalizations from survey data. These agencies and subagencies are listed below. Analyses can include descriptive statistics of responses to survey items, motivation/engagement scale scores, Motivation Potential Levels (motivational effect of employees' perceptions of job characteristics), and Motivation Force Scores (motivational effect of employees' perceptions of the connection between their effort, performance, and rewards). To request one of these analyses or another analysis, please contact MSPB's Office of Policy and Evaluation at STUDIES@mspb.gov.

Agencies

- Department of Agriculture
- Department of the Air Force
- Department of the Army
- Department of Commerce
- Department of Defense
- Department of Energy
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Department of Homeland Security(DHS)
- Department of the Interior
- Department of the Navy
- Department of Transportation
- Department of Treasury
- Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
- Environmental Protection Agency
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration
- Social Security Administration

Subagencies

- Agriculture— Forest Service
- DHS—Bureau of Customs and Border Protection
- DHS—Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement
- DHS—Transportation Security Administration
- Transportation—Federal Aviation Administration
- Treasury—Internal Revenue Service
- VA—Veterans Benefits Administration
- VA—Veterans Health Administration

U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board
1615 M Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20419

Official Business
Penalty For Private Use $300

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FEDERAL EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT:

The Motivating Potential of Job Characteristics and Rewards

A Report to the President and the Congress of the United States
by the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board
December 2012