Change Management: Effect on Employee Morale

Business and Operations Advisory Committee
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Elements of Change

• Planning
  – Broad context
  – Specific action plans
  – Assessment of potential impacts

• Communication and Training

• Implementation
  – Impacts: who, how, reality & perception
  – Moving from new to established

• Assessment
  – Modification as needed
NSF Context for Change

• Federal environment
  – Federal employees “taking it on the chin”
    • Pay freeze; bonus and incentive award reductions
    • Continuing rumors of hiring freeze, benefit changes
    • Budget pressures (travel, conferences, equipment, contractors, etc.)
  – Increasing demands for accountability
    • ARRA reporting, extension to other requirements
    • GPRA Modernization Act of 2010
    • Efficiencies
NSF Context for Change (2)

- Scientific environment: Need for more
  - Interdisciplinary
  - Transformative research
  - Reach for societal benefit
  - International components
  - Diversity, broadening participation
  - Career/life balance

Change in nature of work
Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey

- Government-wide administration, now annually
- NSF administers to all full-time employees
  - Special provision for temporary employees, IPAs
  - Starting in FY 2011, breakout by directorate/office
  - Response rate: 55% in FY10, 63% in FY11 (government-wide is ~50%)
- OPM provides basic analysis, comparison to federal government
- Partnership for Public Service creates “Best Places to Work” rankings
• Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey Results
  – **High satisfaction** compared to rest of government: telework, health and wellness programs
  – **Low satisfaction** compared to rest of government: workload
  – **Continuing issues:** workload, fairness in performance management and recognition, communications (particularly from leadership), effective management of diversity & inclusion
  – **Steady decline** in overall satisfaction with NSF work environment
Change and Employee Morale at NSF

• Change is a constant at NSF
  – Planning, communications, training add to **workload** for those involved in initiating change.
  – Absence of planning, communications, training adds to **workload** on implementation of change and exacerbates **continuing issues** and **decreasing satisfaction**.

• As a learning organization, NSF needs to examine past change efforts for
  – Lessons learned on change impacts
  – Creative strategies for producing positive outcomes
NSF Action Plans

• Accentuate the positive
  – Telework
    • Pilots on telework approaches
    • Enhancing remote access
    • Updated training for managers and employees
    • Automated telework application
    • Tracking of time spent in telework
  – Career/Life Balance
    • Career/Life Balance Fair communicating full range of health and wellness opportunities at NSF
    • Expanding flexibilities in hours of work
NSF Action Plans (2)

• Obtain more detailed information
  – Disaggregate results
    • By directorate and office in FY2011
    • By type of appointment in FY 2011
    • By division (where possible) in FY 2012
  – Create NSF-specific questions to clarify areas for improvement (for FY 2012 FEVS)

• Use the more detailed information
  – Share effective practices
  – Develop plans at level of directorate or office
  – Address situations where issues are more pronounced in specific populations within NSF
NSF Action Plans (3)

• Provide more internal support in key areas
  – Enhanced guidance and discussion among supervisors around performance management
  – Enhanced training for supervisors around performance management, diversity and inclusion, and labor relations
  – Enhanced training opportunities for all staff; emphasis on individual development plans

• Enhance mechanisms for communication (Weekly Wire, IdeaShare, new InsideNSF)

• Enhance capability for collaboration (SharePoint tools; training on working in teams; virtual meetings)
NSF Action Plans (4)

• Draw on external sources that can provide assistance
  – The research literature
  – Advisory Committees (e.g., B&OAC)
  – Contractors, where appropriate
  – Non-profit organizations (e.g., Partnership for Public Service, NAPA, etc.)
  – OPM
Changes Underway – Some Examples

• Efficiencies
  – Modified approach to bonuses and incentive awards
  – Mobile devices
  – Changes to Independent Research & Development
  – Panels: refreshments; virtual panels
  – Travel: less travel; greater use of non-refundable tickets

• Systems
  – webTA – web-based time and attendance system
  – SharePoint updates

• Programmatic
  – Revisions to merit review criteria
  – INSPIRE, CREATIV, SAVI, etc.
Moving Forward…

• **To Sustain Morale in an Environment of Change**
  – Improve communications throughout NSF
  – Keep everyone in the loop
  – Address Workload Issues
    • Continue/increase career-life balance initiatives
    • Streamline processes
    • Use of technology
  – Focus on the future, rather than the past
  – Ensure appropriate levels of training for staff and supervisors
  – Look for “win-win” approaches that enhance the reality and perception of fairness
NSF Would Like to Know

• How the AC members have addressed issues around employee morale in change management strategies, with a focus on effective practices for maintaining or enhancing morale;

• What experience AC members have with the impact of change on workload and perceptions of workload; are there strategies for minimizing the impact of change on workload?

• How AC members recognize and reward those who embrace the challenge of change when resources for doing so are scarce.