Federal Strategic Workforce Planning

Improving Effectiveness of Planning for Workforce of the Future Through Analytics

Strategic Workforce Planning (SWP) is a comprehensive process essential to ensuring an organization has the right people...in the right positions...with the right skills and competencies...at the right time. However, for SWP to be effective and provide insights to leadership, the incorporation of workforce data analytics is essential. Human Capital (HC) organizations typically have multiple systems with different functions, and they are proficient in extracting routine reports on data such as headcounts, workforce composition, status of recruitment actions, performance ratings and awards, training completions, etc. But many lack the specific skills and ability—and time—to analyze the right data proactively, which is necessary to enable achievement of long-term goals. Workforce data analytics integrates the use of technology, metrics, data and processes. When approached comprehensively, these analytics elevate human resources (HR) data from a transactional to a strategic lens and inform decision-making by executives, senior leaders and managers.

An effective SWP process facilitates the evaluation of an organization's readiness to meet its mission, anticipates changes, identifies vulnerabilities and supports implementation of mitigating strategies.

This white paper provides solutions to improve data analytics that effectively support workforce and succession planning as well as compliance with regulations.

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Meeting Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Guidelines

BMA acknowledges that Federal HR teams face challenges in executing operations to ensure the day-to-day needs of their customers are met while also conducting long-term planning to meet HC needs of the future. Numerous regulations are applicable to administering daily operations. However, OPM has also implemented Federal guidelines in 5 CFR 250, Subpart B that require developing programs based on comprehensive workforce planning and analysis. These programs must align to agency strategic plans and goals to ensure that HC programs and service delivery focus on the mission and big picture. This includes but is not limited to monitoring and addressing skills gaps within Mission-Critical Occupations (MCOs); developing and retaining an effective workforce; identifying vulnerabilities to attrition and loss of knowledge; ensuring leadership continuity; and developing mitigation strategies that enable the reduction of HC risks and gap closure.

Challenges

There are many challenges to effective workforce and succession planning. While external factors driving change, skills and competency requirements as well as future needs must be considered, the use of workforce data analytics is a critical component. Data analytics are key as is analysis of empirical information about an organization's current state based on the experience of managers. These inputs must be examined collectively to effectively facilitate mid- to long-range forecasting and planning to mitigate HC risks. Challenges can result from such factors as problems with recruitment and retention of the right talent; skills and competency gaps; workload imbalances; and an aging workforce.

BMA knows that addressing these challenges may be exacerbated by the HR Team's real and perceived understanding of the organization, its structure and performance goals linked to the mission. Often, the urgency of the day hinders planning for the future.

We have seen organizational challenges and impediments to accomplishing the mission as a result of skills and competency gaps as well as attrition—both the inability to retain top talent in a competitive job market and the loss of knowledge when seasoned professionals leave or retire and the expertise walks out the door with them. Workforce vulnerabilities can adversely affect achievement of an organization's goals.

The process of changing how an organization examines the state of its workforce, identifies risks, addresses gaps and *proactively* plans to meet its future needs can be daunting.

But it is achievable.

> *Workforce planning is the foundation for managing an organization's human capital and furthers an agency's ability to hire qualified individuals to pursue its mission.*
>
> OPM: How to Create a Workforce Plan that Supports Mission Accomplishment Using Human Capital Analytics

Solutions

Workforce Data Analytics Inform SWP Process

The BMA approach starts with developing an understanding of the organization's mission, strategic direction, alignment of programs and functions, strategic goals and annual performance targets. Sources of data may include existing Agency and HC strategic documents; a review of operating plans and targets; analysis of feedback from past studies or reviews to evaluate results of improvement measures; surveys to obtain input from leaders and managers; and the development of specific data-driven analytics methods based on multiple indicators.

We then conduct talent and position risk assessments, gap analysis and other data analytics to validate such factors as the talent profile; potential threats to mission accomplishment posed by vacant positions; critical skills and competencies needed; vulnerabilities due to the potential loss of knowledge; deficiencies in skills and competencies that can hinder success; changing workload, program and functional requirements; and imbalances in workload distribution.

Armed with the programmatic and people insights of the assessment, BMA leverages its years of Human Capital Management (HCM) and SWP experience to analyze the impacts of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). Findings and results are documented in a formal report to inform decision-making, recommendations for mitigation strategies and action planning, including insights from research of industry HC data and trends and collaboration with the HR Team. Multiple areas of focus and strategies may be recommended, and roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders are also identified.

Subsequent to completing the report, next steps involve communication and collaboration with the HR Team and key stakeholders to develop a phased implementation plan. Talent and position risk results will facilitate the prioritization of actions based on risk levels.

> *The final step enables a repeatable process through monitoring and evaluating results; analyzing organizational changes; identifying where course corrections and revisions are needed; and informing the cycle and depth of the next SWP study...whether it should be an abbreviated or full SWP review.*

Implementation Methodology

BMA's project design and implementation methodology includes project management services to stand up and coordinate the workforce data analytics approach—to build or augment an existing SWP program—as well as supporting activities and responsibilities to ensure milestones are met and expected outcomes are achieved. Our phased approach involves understanding the client's current state; defining what a change capability will look like and the client's projected future state; and developing a plan to implement strategies and action plans during the transition and change management state.

Having a clear understanding of where the organization is now—with a focus on mitigating its vulnerabilities—

facilitates improvements in achieving and sustaining 'mission readiness' by building a solid HCM foundation for the **Workforce of the Future**.

Developing a Culture of Continuous Process Improvement

BMA's goal is to deliver and coordinate implementation of an executable approach to workforce data analytics to help customers establish a culture of continuous SWP improvement focused on efficiency, with a continual drive toward future readiness and mission achievement.

Why BMA

BMA excels at helping clients develop a pragmatic approach to data analytics and SWP that supports mission achievement by mitigating HCM risks and strengthening readiness of an organization's HC assets. Since any transformation impacts the entire organization, we work to obtain early and sustained buy-in from leadership, managers, staff members and the HR Team—everyone charged with making change happen. Our repeatable process offers a holistic approach to ensure desired outcomes. With a forward-thinking, inventive team to lead you, a proactive and sustainable SWP program is truly possible.

Our Team Lead

Zakiyyah M. Colley Day

Zakiyyah M. Colley Day is a former director of SWP & Succession Planning for U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer. She led the multi-year plan development for HC programs for HUD's **2018-2022 HC Operating Plan (HCOP), 2020-2021 HCOP Update, 2018-2022 Strategic Workforce Plan** and numerous SWP studies. She applies qualitative and quantitative analytics to inform decision-making, drive high performance and improve business operations and processes.

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