

## FAX BACK FORM

Please fill out the following information and fax to Cheryl Thomas at (202) 606-1540.

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What Human Resources topics/questions would you like OPM-ES to address in upcoming issues of this newsletter?

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Do you have any comments or suggestions for improving this newsletter?

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Thank you for your input!

If you would like additional copies of this newsletter, or if you have further questions or comments, please send an email to [esbulletin@opm.gov](mailto:esbulletin@opm.gov). And be sure to check out our website at [www.opm.gov/employ](http://www.opm.gov/employ).

*“Analyzing workforce trends and projections, determining skills gaps and needs, and devising succession planning strategies form the foundation for true empowerment of managers.”*

Obtaining quality information about candidates makes possible quality decisions. Many tools exist to help make those decisions, including structured interviews, work sample assessments, and objective tests. The decision on which tools to use should be based on factors such as validity, applicant sources, resources, and cost.

### APPROPRIATE RETENTION

When you think about retention, do you think about retaining the knowledge base of the employees, or the employees themselves? It is important to make this distinction. More and more, Federal work is becoming project-based. As this trend continues, and it will, managers must be able to quickly identify where their employees' strengths can provide the greatest contribution. Because our organizations are requiring broader and more adaptive competencies, managers need to retain those employees that possess these competencies.

OPM is working to define qualifications based on competencies. This will enable managers to shift gears quickly to meet the needs of new projects, and to staff the projects with current employees possessing the required competencies to perform the necessary work. Looking at this from a business perspective, appropriate retention is the return on investment for the time spent in recruiting, developing and utilizing appropriate assessment tools, and making the proper selections.



# Employment SOLUTIONS

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### IN THIS ISSUE:

*Clear  
Organizational  
Mission and Goals*

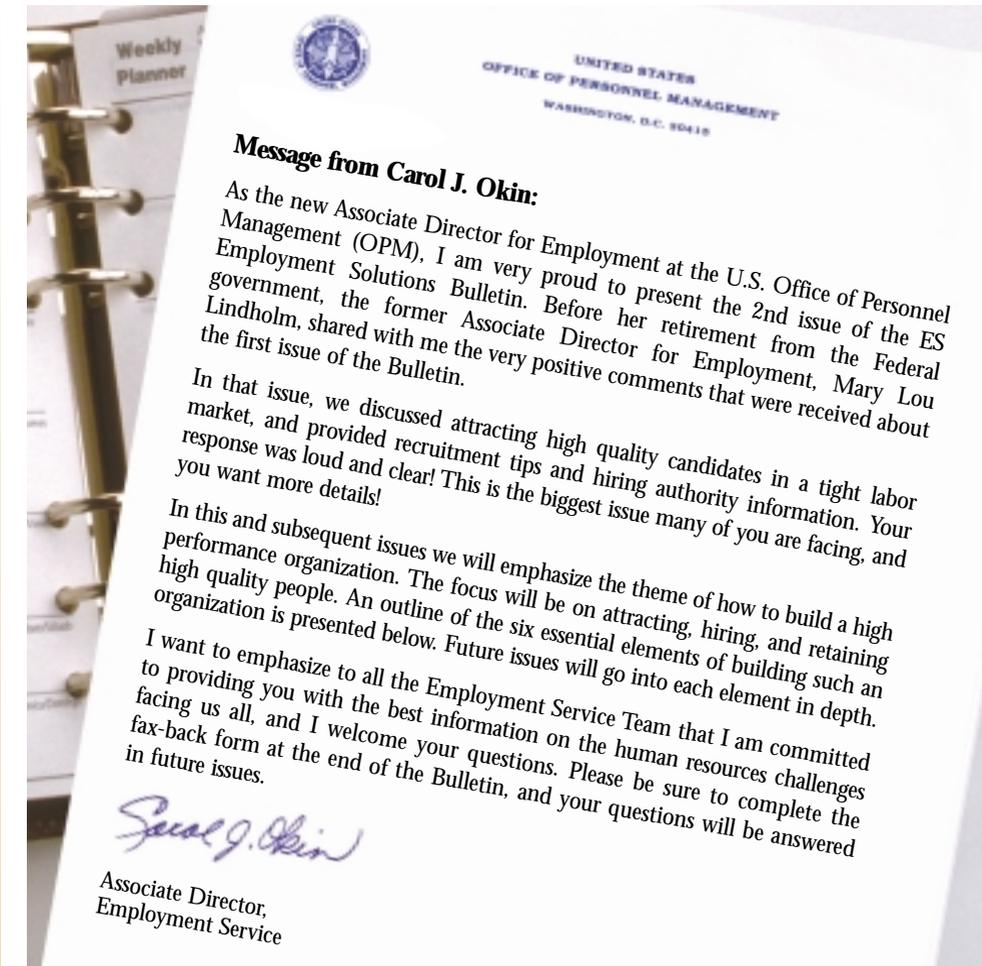
*Effective Workforce  
Planning*

*Accurate  
Identification of  
Critical  
Competencies*

*Efficient  
Recruitment*

*Valid, Innovative  
Assessment*

*Appropriate  
Retention*



**OPM's research** has identified six elements that are essential to building a high-performance organization:

- Clear Organizational Mission and Goals
- Effective Workforce Planning
- Accurate Identification of Critical Competencies

- Efficient Recruitment
- Valid, Innovative Assessment
- Appropriate Retention

Effective managers need to be fully aware of these elements and how to incorporate them into their own managerial strategic plan.  
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(continued from front cover)

Effective human resources professionals need to be fully aware of these elements and how to incorporate their knowledge of Federal personnel administration into aiding managers in building the plan.

### CLEAR ORGANIZATIONAL MISSION AND GOALS

To attract today's quality candidates, organizations must make these candidates feel there is a match between their personal goals and the organizational goals. To create and foster a positive image, the organizational mission and goals need to be stated clearly and need to include an inspiring vision. It is important to ask yourself the following questions:

- What is your organization's image?
- Is the image you have today the image you need for the future?
- Will your organization need to reinvent its image?



*“There is a match between their personal goals and the organizational goals.”*

The answers to these questions must be considered when assessing whether your current workforce will be sufficient to assist you in meeting tomorrow's goals. They will also help you understand where your recruitment or retention focus should lie and what actions need to be taken to get you where you need to be in a timely manner.

### EFFECTIVE WORKFORCE PLANNING

Managers must pay constant attention to knowing and understanding the current workforce and emerging workforce trends. Analyzing workforce trends and projections, determining skills gaps and needs, and devising succession planning strategies are critical for developing strategies to manage change. These activities form the foundation for true empowerment of managers. They provide the facts managers need so they know where to assign resources, how to plan for the future work of the organization, and where to focus their energy to produce a high performance organization.

Fortunately, OPM has developed a new model to help agencies carry out the important function of workforce planning. A fully automated prototype of this model has been developed and is being reviewed by stakeholder

agencies. Once reviewing of the prototype is completed, OPM will design a beta version of the tool based on the stakeholder input. The fully functional Workforce Planning and Analysis System will be ready for implementation by the end of FY 2002.

### ACCURATE IDENTIFICATION OF CRITICAL COMPETENCIES

Accurate identification of the competencies required for satisfactory performance in a position greatly increases the chances of achieving a good match between candidate and position. This requires a thorough analysis to identify the critical competencies required to perform the duties of the position.

The manager is in the best position to know which competencies are the most important. To assist managers to identify competencies, OPM is reviewing the qualification standards for various positions and rewriting them in the competency-based format. The result is a job profile containing the competencies required for each occupation, broken into general and technical categories. The requisite competencies are presented in a very different format from what is familiar to most of us. Most of us are accustomed to minimum qualification standards that require experience



*“An accurate preview of the competencies required for satisfactory performance in a position greatly increases the chances of achieving a good match between candidate and position.”*

to be valued in terms of time spent performing duties. Instead, the job profile presents the observable and measurable competencies represented by the optimal candidate.

Because it is not always practical to assess for all of the competencies of a particular position, agencies may choose to select competencies directly related to the position they are filling from the general and/or technical categories. The selected competencies will become part of the results-based performance plan and the career development plan for the position.

### EFFICIENT RECRUITMENT

Efficient recruitment requires customized recruitment messages to be developed and delivered. It also requires good understanding of what different recruitment strategies will reap in terms of producing a high quality, diverse applicant pool. Choosing the wrong strategy may produce too many or too few applications to consider. Efficient recruitment strategies produce the

required results in the shortest time. The appropriate uses of hiring authorities means more than adhering to the laws, rules, and regulations regarding those authorities. It also means achieving efficient use of resources. The flexibilities in the authorities permit hiring new employees for either short- or long-term assignments.

Choosing the proper hiring vehicle to meet your workload needs serves many purposes. It saves time, resources, and money. It improves credibility and understanding of the processes used. Presenting what a Federal job offer is worth in terms of salary AND benefits helps the applicants weigh their offers.

### VALID, INNOVATIVE ASSESSMENT

Assessing the background of the applicant is the most important step in achieving proper selection. Unfortunately, in the past this part of the process has taken the longest to achieve. Now, however, web-based



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assessment tools offer new methods for evaluating applicants. Online application, resume collection, and testing are now common practice. The future holds the promise of having applicants demonstrate performance through computer simulations.

OPM is currently exploring the concept of “Online Portfolios” — virtual centers of data exchange between organizations and applicants. The information shared can be organizational, such as realistic job previews, benefit information, and job opportunities. An applicant portfolio can give examples of job performance, such as resumes, academic and work accomplishments, work samples, certifications, interview results, and assessment scores. OPM is also evaluating and implementing innovative, web-based assessments, such as online interviews and e-certifications, as well as online testing. These types of assessments are currently being used in the IT job profile pilot.

(article continued on back page)