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An Idea Whose Time Has Come

In January 2001, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) issued a study that identified serious deficiencies in the Federal Government's supervisor leadership.¹ The report found:

- agencies need to do a better job of using OPM-developed leadership competencies in selecting first-level supervisors;
- most agencies still emphasize technical expertise and not leadership competencies in making selections of supervisors;
- supervisors believe that leadership development is a low priority for their agency; and
- many supervisors believe poor performing supervisors are ignored while effective supervisors are not adequately recognized and rewarded.

Because the most experienced supervisors are eligible to retire, OPM concluded that the Federal Government needed to make the selection and development of first-level supervisors a top human resource management priority. Otherwise, agencies risk the danger of not being able to carry out

¹ U.S. Office of Personnel Management, *Report of a Special Study, Supervisors in the Federal Government: A Wake-up Call*, January 2001.

their missions. The need is even greater now as we meet the challenges of the post September 11 world.

The President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency (PCIE) and the Executive Council on Integrity and Efficiency (ECIE) Human Resources (HR) Committee heeded this warning and began working with the Federal Executive Institute (FEI) to develop an Inspector General (IG)-specific leadership course in which all the attendees would be from the IG community. This 2-week course has received rave reviews from those who have attended the first couple of sessions. The belief is that this is a terrific course for leadership development in the IG community. Unfortunately, it is only offered twice a year, costs about \$6,000, and cannot accommodate more than 60 managers per year.

In 2003, the Postal Service OIG worked with OPM to develop specific supervisor training for its first- and second-level managers. OPM modified its 2-week basic course for supervisors to address some of the specific challenges that we have at the Postal Service where most Federal personnel, contracting, and appropriation laws are not applicable. Postal Service personnel provided some of the hands-on training. We concluded that our supervisors and managers learned more about how to do their jobs from this kind of tailored training. Even though this training was very successful, we found that it was still missing a key ingredient—instructors who had knowledge and an understanding of the IG mission and who could apply this knowledge during lectures and team exercises.

The successes of the FEI course, developed by the HR Committee, and the OPM Postal Service course, led Postal Service Inspector General Dave Williams to resurrect an idea that had been floating around the IG community for a few years, namely, that the IG community needs its own management and supervisor training. No one else knows our mission like we do.

For many years, the IG community has recognized the benefit of IG specific audit and

investigative training. The Inspectors General Auditor Training Institute and the Inspector General Criminal Investigator Academy have long been recognized as organizations that provide important training in audit and investigative best practices from an IG perspective. But when it came to finding training for supervisors, with the exception of the FEI course discussed above, IGs had a similar experience to that of the Postal Service OIG. The IG community had to sift through the training courses offered by a number of qualified sources, some of which are quite expensive and yet still lacking specific focus on OIG issues faced by first- and second-level supervisors.²

Currently, there are over 1,000 IG managers (GS-14 and above) working in the IG community. Most IGs face a shrinking budget where travel and training funds are often the first to be cut. The tuition charges of even government-sponsored training such as that offered by OPM and FEI often exceed our budgets and force us to send only a few supervisors, if any, to the kind of training that OPM has identified as absolutely critical for agencies to carry out their mission.

To address the problem of finding affordable training that is relevant to the IG mission, the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) OIG has decided to create the Inspector General Management Institute (Institute). Two senior managers with more than 40 years of combined IG experience were assigned to head up this effort. The purpose of the Institute will be to serve as a centralized organization to develop and provide managerial training focused on the unique needs of the IG community. The Institute will be located with the Investigative Academy in Arlington, Virginia, and will provide a centralized location for the development and presentation of progressive training for all IG

² The Office of Personnel Management, Federal Executive Institute, USDA Graduate School, agency in-house courses, and private institutions such as the Brookings Institute and Learning Tree are among some of the sources offering supervisor training.

managers. It will also provide an opportunity for networking among IG offices as well as for sharing best practices since everyone attending the course will be an IG employee. By developing an organization that will provide affordable training for all OIG managers, the Institute will ensure that consistent, relevant training is available for all.

Subsequently, we briefed the PCIE and ECIE and then met with the PCIE/ECIE HR Committee whose members agreed to function as an advisory, ad hoc Board of Directors to the Institute. Inspector General employees from numerous offices have been involved in getting the Institute off the ground. Some have participated in focus groups to assist in designing a curriculum that covers a variety of topics that are both timely and important to the IG community. Several other IG employees served on a technical panel to select a contractor to develop the final curriculum. Many IGs have already indicated that they intend to send their supervisors to the basic supervision and management course. The instructors will primarily be current and former OIG managers with professional instructional skills to assure that the course material is recent and relevant and who can relate the material to the day-to-day problems facing OIG supervisors and managers. Among the subjects currently under development for the first introductory course are:

- Organizational Design for the OIG
 - Effective integration of audits, investigations, and inspections
 - Organizational structure
- Managing Human Capital in an IG Environment
 - Recruitment and retention
 - Performance appraisals
 - Career development
- Managing Performance and Investments
 - Budgeting
 - Contracting
 - Resource management
- Teleworking
- Effective IG relationships
 - Agency management
 - Other Federal and state agencies
 - Congress and GAO
- Managing IG Public and Congressional Affairs
 - Press relationships
 - Testimony preparation
 - Congressional staff relations
- OIG Crisis Management
 - Handling the “hot” audit or investigation
 - OIG under attack
- Managing Product Reviews
 - Effective OIG report writing
- Managing Change and Continuous Improvement
 - Changes in administration or agency leadership
 - Changes confronted with a new IG
 - Supervising a “multi-generational” office
- IG Leadership Theories and Concepts
- Aspects of a Well Run OIG
- Managing Yourself in an IG Environment
- Managing IG Operations

The initial 2-week course is designed for all OIG managers, GS-14 and above, and will be limited to 25 students per course in order to maximize the learning environment. The courses will be designed to include lectures and significant practical exercises. It will also include breakout sessions for first- and second-line supervisors. In addition, we are planning a 1-week follow-up course for senior executive service members where the participants would be assigned a long-term group project to address a significant issue facing the community. The group would develop solutions and publish their findings in *The Journal of Public Inquiry* as a best practice or model policy.

Tuition for the course will be reasonably priced because of a number of factors. First, existing facilities will be used. Second, in order to make the course relevant to the OIG community, many instructors/course developers will be detailed from IG offices and have significant OIG experience. Other instructors will be chosen on a contractual basis, based in large part upon their demonstrated managerial experience in an IG office. Finally, since the majority of OIG managers are local to the training location, IG offices will not incur the travel and per diem expenses normally associated with managerial training from other sources. The first pilot of the 2-week course will be conducted in late fall of 2004. Upon the successful completion of the pilot course, we hope to offer the course between six and eight times in 2005. Eventually, we hope that this introductory course will become mandatory for any new OIG supervisor or manager to attend before assuming their duties.

Our plans for 2006 include turning many of the modules that will be presented in the introductory course into specialized, advanced courses. For instance, the basic course will only have time to briefly touch upon relationships with Congress. We plan to offer a much longer course that

addresses how to prepare and present testimony to Congress, as well as developing relationships with your oversight committees. The specialized course would involve the actual preparation of testimony and presentation of such testimony before some current or former congressional staffers. It could also include meeting with congressional staffers on Capitol Hill.

The creation of the Institute, and the design and presentation of its curriculum, marks a significant step in the continuing development and refinement of the IG community. Through the cooperative development of the curriculum, and through the sharing of good and bad lessons learned, the IG community can build upon its 26-year history, and address the growing challenge of designing and managing the IG office of the future. We hope that you will support the Institute. We fully expect that over time it will become the provider of choice for the entire IG community.

To preview the course offerings or to register for courses, visit the Institute's Web page at www.igmi.uspsoig.gov. For information, send an e-mail to registrar@igmi.uspsoig.gov or call (703) 248-2281. 📠