

**Office of the
Administrative Assistant
to the
Secretary of the Army**

2004 Organizational Assessment Survey Analysis



Prepared By
Strategic Planning Office
April 27, 2005

Executive Summary

The Office of the Administrative Assistant (OAA) to the Secretary of the Army administered an organizational assessment survey in 1999, and again each year between 2002 and 2004. The survey, a web-based tool, focuses on the six perspectives identified in the Army Performance Improvement Criteria, based on the Malcolm Baldrige Performance improvement Criteria of

- Customer and Market Focus
- Strategic Planning
- Process Management
- Human Resource Focus
- Leadership
- Information and Analysis

Although the surveys were distributed to all employees, participation in the surveys was voluntary. Employees were allowed to complete the surveys during work hours and their input was confidential in nature. The surveys consisted of about 62 questions and took an average of 30 minutes to complete.

In 1999, the first year we conducted the survey, the response rate was 56 percent representing 1,353 responses. Because it was the organization's first effort, interest in the survey and management support was high which attributed high level percentage of participation. In 2002 and 2003, the response rates were much lower at 11 percent and 18 percent, respectively. In 2004, the response rate greatly exceeded expectations at 45 percent representing 1,079 responses. The increased response rate in 2004 can be attributed to Executive Directors' involvement and subordinate managers encouraging employees to take time to complete the survey.

1. Overall Results

Employees of the OAA report a high level of awareness of the strategic direction of the organization. They seem satisfied with leadership and feel the atmosphere of the workplace is supportive. Staff members appear to know their customers and feel a commitment to providing innovative solutions. For the most part, they seem to feel the tools and training are available to get their jobs done right.

The survey found that in spite of an often tumultuous environment, shrinking resources, and significant changes in the leadership structure, OAA employees have accepted change with professional, can-do attitudes and a willingness to fulfill the mission.

Overall survey results indicate a steady improvement in the amount of agreement by the percent of employees, those who answered either "agree" or "strongly agree" to the questions in the survey. The Overall percent of agreement rose from 45 percent in 1999 to 65 percent in 2004.

2004 Organizational Assessment Survey Analysis

Similar progress was made in the overall improvement reflected in the mean score on the Likert scale of 1-5 which rose from 3.29 in 1999 to 3.60 in 2004. Individual perspective increases are shown in ExSum Table 1 below.

APIC Categories	Agree		Mean Score	
	1999	2004	1999	2004
Customer & Market Focus	48%	75%	3.38	3.90
Strategic Planning	50%	68%	3.35	3.78
Process Management	46%	63%	3.29	3.67
Human Resources Focus	51%	70%	3.29	3.74
Leadership	46%	64%	3.23	3.66
Information and Analysis	40%	54%	3.16	3.54

ExSum Table 1: 1999 – 2004 APIC Categories and Mean Score Comparison

Additionally, by extrapolating questions from the various perspectives in the survey, we can identify improvements in areas such as training, communication, awards, and our propensity to use measures to determine our success. Specific improvements in these areas are shown in ExSum Table 2 below.

Topical Subjects	Agree		Mean Score	
	1999	2004	1999	2004
Training	50%	72%	3.4	3.81
Communication	38%	60%	3.20	3.60
Awards	49%	55%	3.22	3.45
Measuring Results	46%	61%	3.35	3.71

ExSum Table 2: 1999 – 2004 Topical Subjects and Mean Score Comparison

2. Positive Indicators

The OAA continues to move forward as evidenced by our survey. We are improving in all categories and in every question with a steady overall upward trend. In general, the initiatives undertaken by the OAA to date seem to have had a positive impact on the workforce. ExSum Table 3 highlights the percent of improvement in the four most improved perspectives and identifies some of the initiatives that may have positively impacted these scores. Many other initiatives were undertaken by various organizations within the OAA, and these results may have impacted their individual results and as such would have an impact on OAA organization-wide results.

2004 Organizational Assessment Survey Analysis

Focus Area	Percent Improvement	Supporting Initiatives / Activities
Customer and Market	27%	Implementation of ICE starting in 2002
Human Resource	19%	Performance Management System Improvements starting in 2002
Strategic Planning	18%	Development of Strategic Plans at Level 1 and Level 2 Starting in 2000
Leadership	18%	Post 9/11 Events, and Mentoring Program and Leadership Program Starting in 2003

ExSum Table 3: Perspectives with Improved Scores and Related Initiatives

The largest increase in agreement is in the Customer and Market Focus perspective. The increase is a likely representation of implementing customer focused initiatives such as customer service training in ITA in 1999-2001 and the selection and implementation of the Interactive Customer Evaluation (ICE) system for the OAA in late 2002.

The increase in the Strategic Planning perspective can be partially attributed to the OAA leadership's formation of the OAA Strategic Planning Office in 2000, and the resulting strategic planning activities conducted. Some of these activities, beginning as early as 2000, include workshops for strategic planning at all levels of the organization. For example, in 2002 OAA wrote and published the first OAA Strategic Plan, and in 2003 each functional area began developing strategic plans as well. In the Strategic Planning perspective, the largest decrease in the number of respondents that either disagreed or strongly disagreed came in the area of leadership's involvement in planning. This was also the area that saw the most increase in agreement without a significant change in the number of respondents that chose "not applicable" or "don't know" thereby indicating the organization is moving in the right direction.

In the Human resource perspective, the OAA began developing and deploying measurable performance standards beginning in 2001 using the Total Army Performance Evaluation System (TAPES). These activities may have contributed to the increase in awareness and agreement that personnel are working toward measurable objectives.

In the Leadership perspective significant increases were evident in several areas. In a comparison of survey results between 2003 and 2004 increases were noted in organizational values, policy and mission statement development, ethical and receptive leadership, and dealing with difficult decisions.

These increases are likely a result of the implementing activities during 2002 and 2003 resulting from the events of 9/11 such as emergency escape mask training, evacuation procedures and drills, implementation of the CENS notification system, and frequent

updates of employee emergency notification information. Additionally, implementation of the OAA Organization Day events beginning in 2002 may have had an impact on this perspective as well. Finally, in the leadership perspective, the establishment of a mentoring program and a leadership candidate programs in 2003 would have contributed to the increase in agreement that leaders are open to suggestion.

3. Continued Challenges

Although we continue to show improvement, in all categories and in every question, we did not see the level of improvement in two categories that we would have hoped.

Focus Area	Percent Improvement	Supporting Initiatives / Activities
Process Management	17%	No coordinated OAA-wide activities.
Information and Analysis	14%	Communication Plan developed but not deployed in time to impact results.

ExSum Table 4: Perspective with Least Improved Scores and Related Initiatives

In the Process Improvement perspective, the smallest increase in agreement came in the areas of understanding what our essential processes are and having customer focused work processes. These scores indicate a lack of focus in the process improvement area and a lack of understanding of customer requirements. However, designing processes to meet customer requirements recorded an improvement in agreement. Additionally, the percent of respondents answering not applicable or don't know in 1999 decreased in 2004, and the percent who chose agree or strongly agree increased indicating that the organization is moving in the right direction.

In the Information and Analysis perspective, employees indicate that we need to do a better job of using measurement and benchmark data, and ensure better data accuracy. Data should be made available for use by employees to ensure the effectiveness of our work processes.

Although mostly positive, In the Customer and Market Focus perspective there was only a slight increase in the number of employees that feel people in their organization know their customers. This may indicate that management and employees need to do a better job of identifying both internal and external customer.

Finally, the comparison of 2003 to 2004 data shows a general slow down of most of the improvement gains mentioned above. Although the overall downward trends are slight, a full 50 percent of the survey questions saw a decrease in mean scores between 2003 and 2004. Some of this decrease could be a result of the disparity between percent of employees that responded in 2003 compared to 2004.

4. Benchmark vs. Industry

Not all organizational assessment surveys are the same, but many organizations use a survey based on the Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Performance Improvement. As a result, we are able to compare ourselves to similar organizations in some broad categories to determine where we are in our journey of improvement.

We've compared our scores to the organizational survey results from three similar organizations' groups - the City of Ft. Lauderdale employees, the government of Canada public service employees, and the Office of Administration of the University of California Davis. Results from these organizations' surveys were made available through the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and the organizations themselves.

In comparison, our employees score highest among all respondents in feeling they have the adequate training and resources on hand to do their jobs.

However, we score lower than comparable organizations in disseminating corporate strategic direction. Likewise, we are challenged to improve communication within the OAA. When comparing our communication scores to those of the employees of the Canadian government, 70 percent of the Canadian respondents replied positively versus 53 percent of OAA respondents.

This is our first attempt at benchmarking survey results. Although our numbers show a need for improvement, the results are not totally discouraging. In three of four benchmark areas, around 70% or more of OAA respondents reply favorably. Additionally, the surveys' results of comparable organizations show our targets are reasonable and achievable.

2004 Organizational Assessment Survey Analysis

Focus Area	OAA	City of Ft. Lauderdale	University of California Davis	Canadian Government
Adequate Resources Available	69%	58%	60%	66%
Training	83%	50%	52%	75%
Strategic Direction	72%	40%	82%	74%
Communication	53%	55%	61%	70%

ExSum Table 5: OAA Comparison to Other Governmental Organizations

5. Recommendations

The organization has made a great deal of improvement in many areas. It is not recommended that we develop new initiatives. Rather focus on strategic initiatives already identified to target areas where the need for improvement is evident. Implementation of some of these strategic initiatives is underway, while others have not yet begun. In order to continue the rate of improvement we have seen in the past and increase improvement in areas that are lagging, the following activities are recommended:

- a. Short Term: Continue to focus on previously identified Strategic Initiatives. Complete implementation and ensure that results are communicated to the organization as a part of the implementation plan for each initiative.
- b. Long Term: Increase results in the Process perspective by initiating process Improvement activities using Lean Six Sigma. Choose those processes that have the most potential for achieving significant improvements. Be sure to involve the workforce and communicate results. Pay particular attention to processes in the areas of Human Resources, Leadership, and Information Analysis as these areas saw the largest decreases in mean scores between 2003 and 2004 results.
- c. Strategic: Expand the use of measures across the organization. Use measures in conjunction with implementation of strategic initiatives and process improvement activities to ensure results. Publish measurement results.
- d. Update the OAA Strategic Plan, and identify clear measures to accomplish each goal.

6. Summary

Bottom line - we are an improved organization from where we started five years ago. We have initiated activities that changed our organization as evidenced by the upward trend in our results from 1999 to 2004. We need to continue our efforts to implement our strategic initiatives and standardize and measure the results.

Two areas warrant particular attention: Process Management and Information and Analysis. Process Improvements activities will offer us the best return for our investment in terms of time, resources, and customer satisfaction. The Information and Analysis perspective includes communication and marketing initiatives, and our measurement system and will ensure we stay focused and make our improvements permanent.

What gets measured gets improved!