

DOCUMENT RESUME

07158 - [B2547570]

[Review of the Job Enrichment Program at Ogden Air Logistics Center]. FPCD-78-77; B-163762. September 6, 1978. 3 pp.

Report to John P. White, Department of Defense: Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower, Reserve Affairs and Logistics); by H. I. Krieger, Director, Federal Personnel and Compensation Div.

Issue Area: Personnel Management and Compensation: Employee Conflicts of Interest (301).

Contact: Federal Personnel and Compensation Div.

Budget Function: National Defense: Department of Defense - Military (except procurement & contracts) (051).

Organization Concerned: Department of Defense; Department of the Air Force: Ogden Air Logistics Center, Hill AFB, UT; Herzberg and Associates.

The job enrichment program at the Ogden Air Logistics Center, Utah, was initiated in January 1974 under contract to Herzberg and Associates to increase workforce productivity by restructuring jobs to provide workers with increased accountability, responsibility, communication, and feedback on the acceptability of their performance. The program was also designed to increase job satisfaction and quality of working life. Because of sizable reported savings and productivity gains, the program is being implemented throughout the Air Force Logistics Command (AFLC). A review of the program revealed that, at the inception of the program, there was no definitive plan to systematically evaluate its impact. Little evaluation was accomplished and, where it was attempted, evaluation was not adequate to show overall program impact. The program costs tended to be understated and reported savings overstated. A plan for a 3-year systematic evaluation of program costs and benefits was delayed because of resistance from union officials to one of the data collection devices. It appears that AFLC does not know the extent to which the program is achieving the goals for which it was designed. Therefore, further expansion of job enrichment within the AFLC and the Department of Defense should be limited to demonstration-type projects which are subject to sound evaluation procedures until favorable program results can be documented. (RRS)

7570



UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

FEDERAL PERSONNEL AND
COMPOSITION DIVISION

B-163762

SEPTEMBER 6, 1978

The Honorable John P. White
Assistant Secretary
Manpower, Reserves and
Logistics

Dear Dr. White:

We have completed a review of the job enrichment program at the Ogden Air Logistics Center, Utah.

This program was initiated in January 1974, under contract to Herzberg and Associates. It was designed primarily to increase workforce productivity by restructuring jobs to provide workers with increased (1) accountability, (2) responsibility, (3) direct communication with those they need to work with, and (4) direct feedback on the acceptability of their performance. The program was also purported to increase job satisfaction and quality of working life.

Recently, the program has received rather widespread attention and publicity because of sizable reported savings and productivity gains. For example, Ogden ALC officials advised us that since the program's inception in January 1974, through December 1977, savings of \$7.1 million were attributed to the program. Program costs for the same period were \$1.7 million. The program is now being implemented throughout the Air Force Logistics Command (AFLC) and AFLC officials project that ongoing program costs will be about \$3 million a year. We also understand that other DOD components are seriously considering job enrichment-type programs.

Because of significant costs and savings reported from the program, its rather rapid expansion within AFLC, and the potential for further expansion of the program throughout DOD, we reviewed the extent to which AFLC was evaluating the program to assure itself that the program was, in fact, achieving its intended results. We believe that, in any program of major size, sound evaluation methods and procedures should be built in at inception. In this way, management can better assess not only whether the program is achieving its intended results, but also what factors contribute to, or inhibit, program success. In this regard, implementation of job enrichment-type efforts in recent years have been far from universally successful. Much remains to be learned about the

FPCD-78-77
(962110)

conditions under which job enrichment can be expected to work. Sound evaluation research can provide much of the needed knowledge.

We found that, at the inception of the program in 1974, there was no definitive plan to systematically evaluate its impact. We were told that the immediate concern was to get the program off the ground. As a result, little evaluation was accomplished and, where it was attempted, it was not adequate to clearly show overall program impact. On the basis of limited work, we found that the program costs tended to be understated and reported savings overstated. These cases were discussed with AFLC and Hill officials at the completion of our review.

In September 1976, an AFLC implementation plan was published which provided guidelines for AFLC-wide implementation of the program and called for the development of an evaluation plan. An independent study group was established within AFLC to design the evaluation, and in January 1978, the evaluation plan was published. It provided for a 3-year long systematic evaluation of program costs and benefits, including the program's effects on productivity and job satisfaction. The evaluation plan was scheduled for implementation in June 1978; however, we were told that because of resistance from union officials to one of the data collection devices (the Quality of Worklife Survey), implementation has been delayed. On July 6, 1978, the AFLC Commander advised us that he has directed that all other portions of the evaluation program continue and that the Air Force Audit Agency be involved to the extent possible with validating evaluation methodology and data collection activities.

We endorse the AFLC's plans for an overall evaluation. We are concerned, however, with the planned continued rapid expansion of job enrichment within AFLC before any results of the evaluation program are available for analysis.

In our opinion, AFLC does not know the extent to which the program is achieving the worthy goals for which it was designed without an objective, soundly designed evaluation. Accordingly, we urge that the further expansion of job enrichment within AFLC and DOD be limited to demonstration type projects which are subject to sound evaluation procedures, until favorable program results can be documented.

We are sending copies of this letter to the Assistant Secretaries of the Air Force for Research, Development and Logistics; and Manpower, Reserve Affairs and Installations, and to the Commander, AFLC. In view of the possible expansion of job enrichment programs to the other services, as well as the implementation of other behavioral efforts to improve

productivity and quality of working life, you may want to reenforce to these services the need for sound evaluation planning early in the programs.

Sincerely yours,



H.L. Krieger
Director

cc: Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (RD&L)
Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (MRA&L)
Commander, Air Force Logistics Command