GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

Actions to Strengthen and Sustain GPO's Transformation

What GAO Found

Federal government printing and dissemination are changing due to the underlying changes to the technological environment. The Public Printer and his leadership team understand the effects of this technological change on GPO and have begun an ambitious effort to transform GPO and reexamine its mission. Federal agencies are publishing more documents directly to the Web and are doing more of their printing and dissemination of information without using GPO services. At the same time, the public is obtaining government information from government Web sites such as GPO Access rather than purchasing paper copies. As a result, GPO has seen declines in its printing volumes, printing revenues, and document sales. To assist in the transformation process under way at GPO, GAO convened a panel of printing and information dissemination experts, who developed a series of options for GPO to consider in its strategic planning. The panel suggested that GPO:

- develop a business plan to focus its mission on information dissemination as its primary goal, rather than printing;
- demonstrate to its customers the value it can provide;
- improve and extend partnerships with agencies to help establish itself as an information disseminator; and
- ensure that its internal operations are adequate for efficient and effective management of core business functions and for service to its customers.

GPO can also use other key practices that GAO identified to help agencies successfully transform, such as involving employees to obtain their ideas and gain their ownership for the transformation. GPO fully applied one of these practices, related to ensuring that top management drives the transformation, and has partially implemented each of the remaining eight practices. To fully implement the remaining practices, GPO needs to take actions including establishing its mission and strategic goals and developing a documented plan for its transformation.

GPO has taken some initial steps to adopt the best practices of other public and private sector organizations, most notably with respect to human capital management. GPO is actively implementing the recommendations GAO made in October 2003 (see GAO-04-85). For example, GPO reorganized the human capital office into customer-focused teams devoted to meeting the human capital needs of GPO's operating units. Continued leadership attention is needed to build on the initial progress made in information technology and financial management. For example, GPO should implement an information technology investment management process to help management choose, monitor, and evaluate projects, and GPO should train its line managers to effectively use financial data.