

Reaching Out for a Common Goal: Recruiting for a Diverse Workforce



By Ms. Dianne Ryder, Editor in Chief

Recently, I sat down with Ms. Loretta Haley, director, DCMA Equal Employment Office (EEO) mission support center; Ms. Anita Boush, DCMA equal employment manager; and Ms. Rosemary Waddon, DCMA

Human Resources (HR) specialist to talk about some of the joint outreach programs EEO and HR are working on.

Dianne Ryder: Tell me about some of the joint outreach efforts.

Loretta Haley: Since the establishment of the EEO Mission Support Center, we have had more of an opportunity to work hand in hand with HR to try to bring to fruition some of our consolidated EEO and service-oriented initiatives. As we examined the center's

infrastructure, we looked to see what areas we needed to concentrate our efforts in to make ourselves more visible to our customers internally and, at the same time, try to draw in applicants to help make our workforce more diverse.

As a result, we have established structured workgroups in the EEO community to address those areas where we need to make improvements or heighten awareness. Some of those areas were in outreach, marketing, recruiting and training — everything that would enable us to work collectively with HR toward meeting human capital goals within the Agency's integrated recruitment plan (of which we are an integral part).

All of those areas naturally coincide with HR initiatives, so we wanted to ensure that we brought up any issues that we knew had come up through our community to bounce that off HR. For example, our training workgroup discovered some EEO training discrepancies posted in the HR [Web] portal; so we made contact with Clo Taylor, the director of the Workforce Development Center, and she corrected the problem immediately. The result: improved service to our customers and improved processes, so the workgroups *are* working. It also gives us an opportunity to participate in training that HR may be conducting but we have an interest in from an EEO perspective — a practice that has led

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to several joint ventures. An example of this is when Anita Boush and Cecilia Anderson [HR] teamed up in mid-August to conduct training in Baltimore, Md., for the Special Programs Division diversity council.

Anita Boush: A couple of the initiatives that deserve recognition are the Asian federal career advancement summit held May 2006 in Washington, D.C., where EEO and HR collaborated to set up and man an outreach/marketing booth at the summit. The summit, the first of its kind [and] sponsored by the Department of Labor, was developed to resolve shortages of Asian Pacific Americans in senior executive and management positions. It focused on providing management insights, skills training and other career opportunities to help Asian Pacific American government

employees maximize their potential. DCMA was among many federal agencies that participated in the exhibits, which allowed agencies the opportunity to conduct outreach to over 800 Asian Pacific American federal employees, distribute information about DCMA’s programs and initiatives and recruit and promote DCMA’s employment/development programs. EEO and HR also collaborated on a very similar outreach effort at the Tuskegee Airmen convention in Phoenix, Ariz., in August 2006, where there was an opportunity to meet more than 1,000 convention attendees. The convention brought together seven aerospace organizations focused on exposing minority youths to aviation and aerospace technology to motivate them to become aviators in the future. We collected more than 50 résumés for consideration from



From left: Ms. Anita Boush, Ms. Rosemary Waddon and Ms. Loretta Haley discuss some of their joint initiatives. (Photo by Ms. Dianne Ryder, DCMA Public Affairs)

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federal civilian employees as well as active-duty military personnel seeking post-retirement employment with DCMA.

DR: This synergistic relationship with HR seems like a “no-brainer” — is there a reason this wasn’t happening before the establishment of the center?

LH: It’s not that it wasn’t happening before *at all*, it’s just that when we came together as a result of the realignment and established our overarching goals for the center collectively it came to our attention that we could make some improvements. Before, the EEO offices individually reported to the district directors, so people were off doing their own things. We had (and still have) a small policy office with three individuals. It was just impossible for us in the policy stance to keep a grip on what was going on across the Agency.

AB: I’d like to add that [the collaboration between this office and HR] has always been done on a policy level, but it didn’t trickle down to the operational level. It wasn’t until the realignment of the center that we were able to get that structure from an operational standpoint.

LH: Now everything we do as a center, we do collectively — we strive for uniformity, consistency in approaches in

dealing with our customers and assurance that the senior leadership knows through awareness and face-to-face visits that the center is here and of the services we provide. For example, before, there was no uniformity in how EEO training was taking place — in one location you may have had EEO staff actually conducting the training, in other locations, you had EEO staff using collateral duty special emphasis program managers going out doing training and at some entities you had contractors doing the training — there was no consistency. So the establishment of the center really is helping to improve the visibility of available services to our customers across the board in all areas; training is only one example. I think that’s what the difference is: it’s not that it hadn’t been happening, it’s just that there wasn’t any uniformity or consistency — no correlation in the timeliness in which things got done, none of that ... the dots just weren’t connecting.

DR: So how did you go about “tightening up the process” and making sure everyone got on the same page?

LH: Everything that we do, I try to make it a collaborative effort across the center. We have three equal employment managers [EEMs] for the different sites — one for headquarters, one for Boston and one for Carson [Calif.]. If I, as the center director, do not communicate with the entire center staff, I communicate with my EEMs constantly so we stay in sync about what we’ve done or we need to do in a particular area on any given day. On the other hand, the whole center staff developed our overarching goals, mission and vision. We had a teleconference and everyone was in on it, so there’s an element of cohesiveness. That is how we formed the workgroups. It’s essential that

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the workgroups actually *work* — that execution takes place — because their success impacts the entire Agency.

DR: Are you using the newly established EEO Web site as a tool to advertise your outreach efforts?

LH: Absolutely we are. On our services across the board, events that are coming up, any specific topics that we know of, issues that need to get out to the community at large. It’s a wonderful Web site! We encourage you to visit us at <http://home.dcma.mil/cntr-dcmaco/index.htm>.

DR: Obviously a benefit to DCMA as a result of this collaboration is the ability to recruit a more diverse workforce, but is it too early to accurately measure the success rate of these efforts?

LH: In so far as changing the numbers, yes, it’s a little too early.

AB: But you know, it also benefits the Agency with respect to streamlining, standardizing and consolidating the processes — everybody is getting the same information. It is extremely valuable ... because with the Agency’s realignment there may have been a completely different process in one organization on how to request, for example, a reasonable accommodation [for a disabled employee]. Now, no matter where you are in the Agency, you’re going to get the same information, and that’s very beneficial.

LH: That’s right. It’s also another example of how collaboration works in that EEO, HR, general counsel and other stakeholders, such as information technology and facilities,

have come together to develop a uniform set of guidelines for requesting reasonable accommodation.

AB: I think that it’s going to be so beneficial to the Agency because it will reduce the Agency’s liability as well as expedite processes.

Rosemary Waddon: In addition to minimizing the requests, it’ll help employees know the processes so they’re not talking to 10 different people, and it’ll improve productivity.

DR: How do EEO and HR coordinate on the *Hire a Hero* program?

RW: We’re out recruiting — we’ve been to a couple events just recently. We went to the Army facilities in San Antonio and Augusta, Ga., where we talked to disabled veterans and collected their résumés. In addition, we have visited and continue to visit Walter Reed Medical Center in Washington, D.C. Upcoming events for *Hire a Hero* include visiting Norfolk, Va., to recruit disabled Naval veterans.

And regarding other recruitment programs, on Nov. 2, we went to the University of Virginia for the diversity career day, and we just did a job fair at Morgan State University, which is a historically black college, and also at Virginia State University for our Keystone Program. We also went to the University of Mary Washington and just got back from the University of California, Los Angeles. We have even more events coming up — spring will really be our big recruitment time, since most students graduate in the spring.

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– Ms. Anita Boush*