

APPENDIX

GLOSSARY OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT TERMS AND CONCEPTS



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Action Learning A training technique by which management trainees are allowed to work full time analyzing and solving problems in other departments. This is a variant of job rotation, but applied to new hires with a more focused developmental objective.

Adverse Action Any action by an employer that results in a loss or disadvantageous change in work condition for the employee; typically, the legal definition of adverse action is confined to those personnel decisions (termination, demotion, significant change in job assignment) for which a grievance may be filed. The current trend under reinvention is to reduce the range of adverse actions so as to provide public managers with expanded flexibility in the use of human resources.

Adverse Impact In the context of workplace discrimination, “adverse impact” is the phenomenon in which a protected category under various employment rights laws (Title VII, EEOA, ADA, ADEA, etc.) suffers from a discriminatory employment practice; the actions on the part of the employer need not be intentional; an adverse impact exists if protected classes are not hired or otherwise rewarded at a rate at least 80% of the best-achieving group (“the 4/5ths rule”).

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) The use of less formal procedures to resolve conflicts. A widespread phenomenon in many legal areas (landlord/tenant disputes, child custody), ADR is also very popular in HRM as a means of expediting the handling of grievances. Many jurisdictions now require that grievances be mediated prior to the holding of a formal hearing.

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees The largest and most expansive public employee union in the United States

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) A 1990 statute that prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals in all phases of the HRM process who have physical or mental impairments that limit one or more major life activities; impaired individuals who can fulfill the essential requirements of the job cannot be denied simply because the employer would be required to alter the work environment, modify

work schedules, modify equipment, or provide special training or services. Employers must show an “undue hardship” in order to avoid the necessity to “reasonably accommodate” impaired applicants.

Appointment The hiring decision. Employees who are offered a position are said to be appointed. The term is also used to distinguish between elective and appointive positions; those who are appointed occupy civil service positions of one type or another, either classified or unclassified.

Assessment Center Test protocol in which a battery of job-related devices is used to mimic actual conditions that might exist in the workplace; applicants are evaluated by a group of trained assessors who monitor their performance during such exercises as leaderless groups, problem-solving exercises, in-basket simulations, etc. Especially useful in evaluating abstract qualities (leadership, interpersonal competence, ability to handle stress,) assessment centers enjoy extraordinarily high levels of reliability but are expensive to develop and utilize.

Attitude Surveys An increasingly popular means of probing the thoughts of citizens and/or employees by distributing questionnaires; the instruments solicit feedback on satisfaction levels with the work environment, modes of supervision, pay, employment policies, and any number of related topics. Attitude surveys are a highly effective means of taking the temperature of the labor force, and can be inexpensively designed and administered (e.g., distributed in pay envelopes on an annual or semi-annual basis.) Anonymity is essential for reliable results.

At-Will Doctrine Common law principle that workers are hired at-will and thus can be fired at will. That is, workers retain no property or liberty interests in employment and are therefore subject to termination or other sanctions without cause. While still a dominant legal principle in the private sector, the at will doctrine has been eroded by statutory and judicial initiatives over the years. Exceptions to the at-will doctrine include all anti-discrimination provisions, grievance rights extended by statute, and other job protections included within civil service systems and union collective bargaining agreements.

Behaviorally-Anchored Rating Scale (BARS) More advanced form of the classic rating scale used in performance evaluation; BARS include descriptive phrases of various levels of performance in order to provide the evaluator with “anchors” that focus judgments and improve the validity of the evaluation process. For example, if the trait “meeting deadlines” is being assessed, a behaviorally-anchored set of options might include “the employee can be counted on to always meet deadlines and even turn projects in early,” to “the employee fails to meet critical deadlines even when verbally warned by the supervisor.”

Biodata A means of screening applicants for hiring or promotions that collects information about hobbies, early life experiences, and other behavior patterns that might reflect on ultimate job performance. Candidates typically are asked to complete questionnaires concerning such topics as the age at which they obtained their first job, when they established their first savings account, what types of organized sports they participated in, etc. Biodata is widely used in the private sector and has been found to be very reliable. Its use in the public sector has been impeded somewhat by fears that it is too intrusive. One major exception is the military, which places great faith in biodata results for selection of candidates for flight training, OCS, etc.

Bona Fide Occupational Qualification (BFOQ) A defense used by employers charged with discrimination. To pass judicial muster, the BFOQ must be grounded in a job-related necessity that might allow a protected category to be excluded from some jobs. There are no racial BFOQs, but some gender-based ones have been upheld. The trend is moving away from this concept, fewer and fewer BFOQs are permitted, and employers are being required to make reasonable accommodations.

Bonus A means of providing financial rewards to employees. Bonuses imply one-time payments; the salary “increase” does not become part of the worker’s base salary. For this reason, politicians are attracted to the use of bonuses, whereas insightful employees are not as enthusiastic. A relatively new phenomenon is the use of on-the-spot bonuses (\$50, \$100, \$500) that supervisors can grant to employees who perform above and beyond the call of duty. These are popular among employees, largely because of the psychological impact rather than the instrumental reward.

Bounties The payment of financial rewards to incumbent employees who recommend candidates for jobs in high-need fields, such as nursing and information technology. A form of job referral that is growing within government, a typical bounty system will pay the referring employee \$500 or \$1000 after the new worker is hired and placed in a position, and then an additional amount when that person completes the probationary period. Long used as an essential means of recruitment in the private sector, worker referrals are just now becoming common in public agencies.

Broadbanding Probably the most significant innovation in job classification and pay, broadbanding has two facets. First, the number of narrow job classifications is reduced in order to define positions more broadly (e.g., instead of Accounting Technicians 1-5, and Accountants 1-5, the only job description would be “Accountant”.) Second, the old system of multiple pay grades is collapsed into broad bands that contain enormous salary ranges. With the creation of a broadband system, managers have much greater flexibility in hiring new workers at higher salaries, in changing the job assignments of employees, and in granting significant pay increases to meritorious workers.

Bumping The process by which employees with greater seniority and/or higher numbers of retention points take the jobs of those with fewer retention rights in Reduction In Force (RIF) situations or other forms of staff cutback.

Cafeteria Plan A popular approach to benefits management in which employees are permitted to select from among a menu of benefit options. The employer generally sets an outer limit (usually a predetermined percentage of the employee's salary, such as 30%,) and then the worker is free to allocate that amount among such options as life insurance, medical insurance, retirement contributions, daycare, and the like. This approach to benefits management is extraordinarily popular because it eliminates the "one size fits all" approach and permits employees with differing objectives and responsibilities to take control over their own finances.

Career System A generic means of referring to any personnel system that contains an identifiable career ladder and visible promotional opportunities. Implicit in the concept is that employees are pursuing careers, meaning that they enjoy some form of job protection and are provided (ideally) with enrichment opportunities (training, job rotation, etc.)

Certification The process by which an applicant for a civil service job is judged to be qualified to perform the functions of the targeted position. Candidates may be certified through any number of screening mechanisms, ranging from formal merit system examinations to simple evaluations of an application form.

Full-List Certification To increase managerial discretion over selection decisions, full-list certification is a growing practice. Instead of permitting the appointing authority to interview and select from among only a small slice of the most highly qualified applicants (see "Rule of 3"), managers are provided with the entire list of applicants who have been deemed qualified.

Selective Certification For some jobs, the number of qualified applicants is very limited. To aid recruitment, managers are occasionally permitted to engage in selective certification, which means that the hiring authority can directly select from among those who have the requisite credentials. This might also be termed "targeted" certification.

Civic Duty Leave Employees are granted paid time off to engage in activities that are philanthropic or otherwise advance charitable and/or public causes. Maricopa County (AZ), for instance, has a highly developed program that enables workers to volunteer for such diverse causes as Habitat for Humanity, voter registration drives, and United Way.

Civil Rights Act of 1991 A law that was specifically intended to negate the effect of a series of U.S. Supreme Court decisions that had effectively killed much of the equal opportunity agenda in public policy; the Act places the

burden of proof back on employers in discrimination lawsuits, and permits compensatory and punitive damages.

Civil Service A general term used to connote the public personnel system. Also referred to as merit systems. To some, the concept implies public employees generally, whereas others interpret it to mean the single-point-of-entry format in which applicants are screened through highly elaborate entry systems and then provided with high levels of career protections once hired.

Civil Service Commission A bi-partisan commission appointed to oversee and police the operations of merit systems. Once a familiar component of the personnel systems in most states and large cities, commissions have been in steep decline for many decades. Their disappearance is largely attributable to the fact that they often became much too protective of public workers, thereby making civil service systems overly bureaucratic. The U.S. Civil Service Commission was abolished in 1978 and replaced by the Office of Personnel Management. Similar fates have befallen almost every state civil service commission, and most of the urban ones. In their place, executive personnel systems have emerged.

Civil Service Reform (CSR) Act of 1978 President Jimmy Carter's most significant domestic achievement (according to him), the CSR of 1978 was intended to restore managerial accountability and flexibility to the federal personnel system. It abolished the Civil Service Commission, created the Senior Executive Service, reduced job protections for employees, and was intended to introduce pay-for-performance. The Act set off a flurry of similar reforms in state and local governments, and signaled the beginning of the reinvention movement within HRM.

Classification The fundamental building block of classical HRM systems in government, job classification is a vestige of the Scientific Management School (Frederick Taylor). It involves a job analysis to assess the essential character and value of the job being performed, the creation of a job description to delineate job duties, the arrangement of similar jobs into classes, and the assignment of pay scales based on the goal of "equal pay for equal work." Job classification ultimately came to be viewed as highly restrictive on managerial discretion, and an impediment to reassignments and to rewarding good performers. Although still very common, they are being reconfigured through broadbanding, senior executive service systems, and related strategies.

Classification Series Levels within a position classification that indicate increasing difficulty and responsibility (e.g., Administrative Assistant I, II, III, and IV - each new level carries greater responsibility and compensation.)

Classification Specifications A formal summary statement of the duties required of a position, and the qualifications necessary to perform those duties; these specifications are identified through a position analysis.

Classified Employee A worker who is covered by whatever classification scheme (usually one that is statutory in origin) exists in the jurisdiction. Typically, classified workers are part of a uniform salary system, and they share all the other terms of employment that apply (the same holiday schedule, benefits choices, and the like). One important distinction between classified and unclassified workers is that those who are classified almost always have explicit grievance rights that are delineated in law; the situation for unclassified workers varies from location to location.

Collective Bargaining Unlike their counterparts in the private sector, public workers are not covered by the Wagner or Taft-Hartley Acts (National Labor Relations Acts). The choice as to whether or not they are empowered to engage in collective bargaining with their employers rests with federal, state, and local political authorities. Unless their political leaders proactively grant collective bargaining privileges, public employees have no right to demand that management engage in discussions over working conditions, salaries, etc. Thus, the range of topics that public employees can bargain over in unionized settings ranges from almost nothing, to the full panoply of issues that arise in business and industry. Many states grant no collective bargaining rights at all, which essentially means that public employee unions are nonexistent in those settings.

Competency-Based A growing emphasis in several areas within HRM, the idea is to ground important personnel functions in measurable job-related outcomes. Testing and evaluation have long been sensitive to the need for job-relatedness, whereas training is the new hotbed of competency-based experimentation. The objective is to ensure that money spent on training and employee development is truly focused on content that enhances relevant employee competencies. Measurement activities are therefore a major analog to any competency-based program.

Compressed Workweek A form of flextime that permits employees to work more than an eight hour day in order to reduce the total number of days worked each week.

Computer-Assisted Testing Entry examinations that are given to applicants, often on a walk-in basis, that are automatically scored. Some of these tests are designed to evaluate a candidate's qualifications very quickly by monitoring responses to "easy" and "difficult" questions and then patterning the rest of the exam to the appropriate skill level of the individual. In addition to saving the applicants much time, the tests are much more accessible, non-threatening, and reliable than most of the older paper-and-pencil exams.

Confidential Employee Within unionized settings, an employee who may not be included in a collective bargaining agreement or belong to the union because he or she exercises responsibilities that involve working with managers involved in contract negotiations; in other contexts, the appointive employees who serve at the pleasure of high-level elected officials and judges; the secretaries and personal assistants of judges, politicians, and the like are unclassified employees without any specific job protections.

Consensus Bargaining Where any form of collective bargaining exists, consensus bargaining offers the potential to create a win-win relationship for both management and labor. The idea is to establish labor-management partnerships through the bargaining process. In so doing, a collaborative problem-solving approach is used instead of the adversarial model that typifies labor-management relations elsewhere.

Consultative Model As it applies to HRM, the role of the office of human resources is being transformed from one of control to that of service to line managers. This goal is accomplished in part by establishing a consultative approach to the delivery of HRM services. Personnel within the OHR serve as consultants to client agencies, providing an array of advice and technical support (instead of looking over the line managers' shoulders and trying to enforce volumes of strict rules and regulations.)

Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) Automatic pay increases that are tied to some measure of economic activity, such as the Consumer Price Index. A traditional fixture in public pay systems, COLAs are becoming less common as the pressures for merit-based pay increases build.

Critical Incidents Usually applied to performance appraisal, the identification of important successes and failures in a job. An employee's performance is compared against these critical incidents in order to provide the worker with behaviorally produced (observable) feedback. For instance, critical incidents for police officers might include citizen complaints, response time to calls, case clearance rates, and similar measures.

Decentralization In the HRM context, decentralization is the antidote to old merit systems that were unduly centralized and bureaucratic. Decentralization is the current rage. It involves the empowerment of line managers to make most operational decisions concerning HRM, and not requiring such actions (promotions, pay adjustments, reclassifications, reassignments) to be processed through a central office. The obvious goals are increased flexibility and responsiveness.

Defined Benefit Plan A form of pension, defined benefit plans exist primarily in government (their use in the private sector has almost

ended, and there is a likelihood that they will come under increasing fire in public agencies.) A worker's pension is guaranteed, and fixed to a formula that is usually driven by the number of years worked, a given percentage multiplier (e.g., 2% is common), and the highest salary earned as computed in many ways (highest year, highest twelve consecutive quarters, etc.) Compared to defined contribution plans, these are considered to be unduly generous, expensive to the public, and the source of a huge amount of unfunded liability (i.e., insufficient funds exist in the pension program to pay off promised benefits, a difference that will be made up by taxpayers.) Although expensive, they represent one of (if not the) most powerful inducements for individuals to pursue a public service career.

Defined Contribution Plan The increasingly popular option to defined benefit plans, employees in a defined contribution pension system make their own choices about how their retirement contributions will be invested. Employers provide matching funds, but take no active role in investment decisions. The employers' liability is thereby limited to whatever matching funds have been promised. Once the employee severs service, the employer's obligation to that worker ceases.

Discipline The process by which employee shortcomings are confronted and potentially punished. Most public agencies follow a progressive discipline procedure that specifies the appropriate sanctions for each offense. Such policies are usually intended to foster consistency in the treatment of employees, as well as to encourage improvement before serious punishment is invoked.

Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) A relatively recent fixture in large jurisdictions, EAPs provide an outlet to workers who need help dealing with personal and/or professional problems. One of the personnel functions that is most likely to be outsourced, EAPs are usually targeted at substance abuse, mental difficulties, marital and family discord, and behavioral problems (anger management). Most research shows that they pay for themselves by returning troubled workers to a productive status.

Executive Personnel System The antithesis of civil service commissions, the executive personnel system places direct responsibility for HRM in the hands of the chief executive of the jurisdiction (President, Governor, Mayor, City Manager.) That person is empowered to hire and fire the personnel director at will, thereby giving him or her much greater control over HRM policy.

Exempt Employee Under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), a worker who is not considered to be "hourly." That is, a "salaried" employee who can be obligated to work schedules that conflict with the require-

ments of the FLSA. Workers who are professional, managerial, and technical are almost always exempt.

Exit Interview Interviews, usually conducted by the Office of Human Resource (OHR), with any and all employees who are leaving the agency for any reason; their purpose is to elicit information about the job or related matters that might give the employer better insight into what is right or wrong about the organization.

Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) Federal legislation that, by virtue of a 1985 U.S. Supreme Court decision (*Garcia v. San Antonio Metropolitan Authority*), applies to state and local government. The law sets minimum wage requirements, maximum hour ceilings, compensatory time policy, and other conditions of employment. It is a serious challenge for public managers because so many civil service jobs require odd schedules that do not fit nicely into the 8-hour day, five-day week format (police, fire, EMS, social workers, etc.)

Flextime Work schedules that grant employees some flexibility in determining their hours of work. Highly advantageous for workers with children or other family obligations, flextime has been found to be one of the most expedient means of promoting worker satisfaction at almost no cost.

Flexplace Allowing employees to work at home or some other off-site setting. This is becoming far more common thanks to computer technology, the travails of commuting in large cities, and the simple fact that one's presence in a central office is no longer a necessity for many organizations.

Forced Distribution A means of evaluating workers that requires the assessor to distribute the employee according to a pre-established formula. "Grading on the curve," in which workers may be allocated to four quartiles, or even according to more draconian systems (10% in the top category, 20% in the next category, and so on.) This approach is used often due to the tendency of managers to inflate their subordinates' evaluations to the point that the process becomes meaningless. The dilemma is that forced distribution destroys the morale of almost all the workers.

Fringe Benefits Those components of an employee's compensation package that are not formally counted as "salary." On average, different kinds of insurance, pensions, and other benefits cost public agencies about 35% of every employee's total salary.

Gain Sharing Bonuses given as rewards to each member of a work team or group when they meet or exceed a performance objective; an alternative approach in some agencies is to cannibalize positions that become

vacant in order to distribute the resulting funds in salary increases among the remaining workers (this is possible only in “lump sum” agencies in which salary and civil service restrictions don’t preclude such flexibility.)

Grade Creep A negative consequence of narrow job classifications, the tendency of jobs to undergo a continuing process of upgrading or reclassification upwards because this is the primary way that competent employees can receive substantial pay increases. The ultimate effect is that most jobs are classified at a higher level than is warranted by the actual duties being performed.

Grievance A formal complaint lodged by an employee concerning any adverse action as defined in the jurisdiction’s enabling legislation and/or personnel manual. Grievances ordinarily are first heard by a group of employees assembled for that purpose, who then make a recommendation to the governing body of the jurisdiction (or to the city manager, county manager, etc.) The array of grievable matters varies greatly, but the trend is toward narrowing the number. For example, reinvention has resulted in transfers and reassignments being removed from the list of potential trouble spots. In contrast, unions persistently seek to expand the number of grievable concerns, extending even into areas such as office assignments and supervisory demeanor.

Griggs v. Duke Power Company The 1971 Supreme Court case that revolutionized HRM by requiring that testing devices be job-related. Ultimately the impact touched every component of the personnel function, including performance appraisals, interviews, application forms, and any other procedure intended to screen candidates for jobs or promotions.

Hatch Acts Legislation intended to forbid public employees from engaging in partisan political conduct; the federal Hatch Act has been enormously liberalized in recent years, whereas many states continue to enforce “little Hatch Acts” that preclude such behavior as running for partisan office, actively campaigning for candidates, and (at the extreme) parking a car with a partisan bumper sticker in an agency parking lot.

Hiring The process by which employees are recruited and selected into the organization. Sometimes referred to as “staffing,” this function is often one of the most serious obstacles to public agency performance. Due to excessive civil service restrictions covering such processes as job notification, waiting times, authorization cycles, and the like, the hiring process can take so long that it drives away good applicants.

Incentives Any strategy or benefit that is used to encourage improved performance from employees. Extrinsic incentives, such as raises and bonuses, are the standard methods of boosting morale and output. The current trend is toward greater use of intrinsic incentives (various forms of recognition, or developmental incentives like tuition assistance.)

“IBM Model” Also referred to as the consultative model, IBM is thought to have introduced the decentralized approach to HRM that is now ascendant. Under this format, the OHR serves as a resource for line managers, providing consultative and technical assistance and not emphasizing control functions.

International Personnel Management Association (IPMA) The largest organization of public sector personnel managers. IPMA is centered in Alexandria VA, publishes a journal (Public Personnel Management,) and maintains both a web site and a research program focusing on HRM Best Practices.

Interview The oral component of a selection process. Because they legally constitute tests, interviews should follow a regularized set of questions (the patterned interview) and be scored as objectively as possible. Despite efforts to improve their validity, research shows that they are effective at only one thing: determining a candidate’s “likeability.”

Panel Interview To heighten their poor validity and reliability, many organizations have begun to employ group interviews in which several employees – preferably, those who will work most closely with the person hired – sit in on the interviews and are asked to provide feedback.

Job Announcement An advertisement to attract applicants for a vacant position. Merit systems commonly enforce strict rules concerning the number and duration of job announcement postings. To the extent that these requirements are eased, the position can theoretically be filled more quickly.

Job Classification [See Classification] The process by which jobs are evaluated and organized into classes and pay grades.

Job Design Another term for job classification, or the initial process in which positions are dissected in order to establish their basic components and relative importance to the organization. The term has also been used more recently to imply a proactive effort to alter the content of jobs in order to make them more challenging and interesting for their occupants [See Job Enlargement and Job Enrichment].

Job Enlargement Also called “horizontal job loading,” job enlargement involves the expansion of an employee’s responsibilities within the same level of the organization. It most likely involves job rotation (see below), or other efforts to increase the variety of tasks performed by a position incumbent. It is thought to increase motivation and job satisfaction.

Job Enrichment Also called “vertical job loading,” job enlargement calls for increasing the responsibility and authority of the employee. By being given the opportunity to make a wider range of decisions concern-

ing the work being done, the employee's job is theoretically enriched. Job enrichment is an essential component of almost all contemporary approaches to organizational behavior and motivation.

Job Evaluation The process by which jobs are analyzed in order to rank them within an organization; a fundamental component of the classification process in which the jobs are categorized according to their characteristics and relative importance. Related to position analysis, in which the individual job is scrutinized in order to identify its most important duties, responsibilities, and Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSA).

Job Instruction Training (JIT) Listing of each of a job's basic tasks, along with key points for each that is used to provide step-by-step training for employees.

Job Register The list of applicants for civil service jobs that have been judged to be qualified and eligible for appointment. Depending upon limiting factors - such as the Rule of 3 - the register may contain only a few names or the names of every applicant who meets basic qualifications.

Job Rotation The planned movement of a worker among different jobs at a similar level in the organization in order to expand his or her experience. In addition to providing a helpful motivational edge, job rotation is highly regarded because it makes more workers interchangeable (in the event of illness or turnover), and it aids in the development of employee skills.

Job Satisfaction The extent to which employees are happy or satisfied with their current working conditions. This construct is usually measured through attitude surveys in an effort to pinpoint problem areas. There is no proven link between job satisfaction and performance (productivity,) although one would logically expect such a relationship to exist. The link between job satisfaction and turnover has been proven. Unsatisfied workers are far more likely to seek alternative employment.

Job Sharing Dividing one full-time position between two or more part-time employees. This strategy is often prompted by cost-savings, since part-time employees rarely earn benefits. Also, those who share jobs are almost always more productive than one full-time employee because they are relatively "fresh" (a typical schedule calls for one employee to work mornings, and the other afternoons).

Labor-Management Committees Special cooperative groups assembled in unionized settings to work out mutually agreeable solutions to common problems. A normal fixture in settings in which consensus bargaining exists, but not as common where more adversarial labor relations predominate.

Lateral Entry The practice of permitting outsiders (non-employees) to enter a public organization at any level instead of starting at the bottom and working one's way up; a major contributor to the openness of civil service systems. Lateral entry clashes with promotion-from-within, which is favored by unions and almost all incumbent employees.

Longevity Pay Pay based on the length of one's service. This can be a somewhat confusing topic currently because longevity pay has several dimensions. Most "merit systems" are in actuality seniority systems in that one's salary goes up incrementally (and automatically, thanks to COLAs) each year. Performance has little or nothing to do with the increase. Recently, however, longevity pay has resurfaced in a more positive light in some areas in which worker retention is problematic. Where high turnover exists, significant pay increases are granted on (e.g.) an employee's first, third, and fifth anniversary in order to encourage him or her to stay in the organization over a longer period of time.

Management by Objectives (MBO) A type of performance management developed by Peter Drucker in the 1950s and wildly popular for many years; still evident in the teachings of TQM, worker empowerment, and employee motivation. The process involves joint goal-setting by the supervisor and subordinate, the identification of explicit objectives, and the assessment of worker performance solely on the extent to which those objectives have been achieved at the end of the review cycle (six months or one year.)

Mediation An alternative dispute resolution process whereby a mediator who is an impartial third party acts to encourage and facilitate the resolution of a dispute without prescribing what it should be. The process is informal and non-adversarial, with the objective of helping the disputing parties reach a mutually acceptable agreement.

Mediation-Arbitration An alternative dispute resolution process that provides for the submission of an appeal to an impartial third party who conducts conferences intended to resolve the grievance, but who can also render a decision that is final and binding on the parties if the dispute cannot be mediated.

Mentoring Process by which an experienced employee provides guidance and advice to younger or less seasoned subordinates or peers. Proactive systems of mentoring - in which willing mentors are expressly assigned to targeted subordinates - are effective means of developing employees for future promotions and easing their transition into the workplace.

Merit Pay Basing salary increases on performance instead of other factors, especially job tenure. Although widely acclaimed, merit pay has

been notoriously difficult to implement in many public settings for a variety of reasons (inadequate performance appraisal systems, insufficient resources for meaningful raises, inability to measure the ambiguous work product of many civil servants, etc.)

Merit Principle The assumption that “the best shall serve.” Hiring, promotion, salary, and other HRM decisions should be based upon competition and the premise that the most deserving workers should receive the rewards.

Merit System In stark contrast to the merit principle, the merit system has evolved into a creature that rarely resembles what one might expect from reading the definition of merit principle. Due to many historical and political factors, merit systems are often very bureaucratic and overly protective of undeserving workers. As such, merit systems have acquired a very bad reputation among line managers, and are seen as an impediment to effective public administration. Most of the reforms currently taking place within the HRM field are intended to ameliorate the worst traits of contemporary merit systems. Merit systems are also known referred to a civil service.

Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) The federal agency that retained the adjudicatory responsibilities of the old Civil Service Commission when it was abolished by the CSRA of 1978. In addition to hearing employee appeals from adverse actions in the federal civil service, the MSPB is charged with protecting whistleblowers from retaliation.

Motivation That quality or construct that propels any individual to undertake an action. Within management, motivation is regarded as being essential to productivity, although the connection has never been demonstrated empirically (at least not to the satisfaction of most scholars.) Motivation is related to, but not the same as, morale and job satisfaction. For example, a worker might be highly motivated by his or her job, but only because it provides an opportunity to socialize with other employees. Figuring out the correct formula for how to motivate - and more important, how to direct that motivation to productive ends - is one of the primary challenges of the management profession.

National Association of State Personnel Executives (NASPE) An organization consisting of the fifty (plus or minus one or two) state directors of personnel administration from each state capital. The secretariat is located at the Council of State Governments, and the organization is known for its efforts to identify and disseminate needed HRM reforms.

National Commission on the Public Service Also known as the Volcker Commission (Paul Volcker), this group issued a famous report in 1989

that summarized the problems within the civil service and identified a reform agenda. The report - Leadership for America: Rebuilding the Public Service - pinpoints the primary maladies of the public service (poor pay, bad image, slow and unresponsive procedures,) and delineates what needs to be done to improve the situation in the federal government.

National Commission on State and Local Public Service The state and local equivalent of the Volcker Commission report, this group arrived at essentially the same conclusions. The document is also referred to as the Winter Commission Report, Hard Truths and Tough Choices: An Agenda for State and Local Reform. The study was based at the State University of New York-Albany, and was spearheaded by Dr. Frank Thompson, Dean of the School of Public Administration.

National Performance Review (NPR) Former Vice-President Gore's initiative to reinvent the federal government by making it more business-like and efficient. The basic report, Creating a Government That Works Better and Costs Less, contains many recommendations that relate directly to the HRM function. Many authorities consider the NPR reports to be some of the better statements of the reform agenda for public sector HRM.

Needs Assessment The identification of the training and development programs that would be useful to an organization, a group of employees, or a specific individual.

Nonexempt Employee An employee who is covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act and who is, therefore, subject to both the minimum wage and overtime requirements of the law.

Office of Personnel Management (OPM) The federal agency that assumed responsibility for the HRM function once the Civil Service Commission was abolished in 1978. The creation of OPM represented the move to an executive personnel system in which the President enjoys a direct line of authority over the civil service. The OPM director serves at his pleasure.

Office of Human Resources (OHR) A general term applied to the "personnel department" in any jurisdiction. With few exceptions, the OHR is located within the office of the chief executive. Current wisdom holds that the OHR should become less involved in rule enforcement and more helpful in assisting line managers to perform their HRM responsibilities.

On-the-Spot Hiring The ability of a recruiter to offer a job applicant a position at the conclusion of an interview. This contrasts dramatically with the slow and cumbersome recruitment process that often exists in government, and is used most extensively for a small number of high-

need jobs. The federal government permits some on-the-spot hiring, provided that the applicants' grade point averages are 3.0 or above.

On-Site Interviewing To enhance recruitment efforts, some interviews are conducted at work sites or job fairs rather than requiring applicants to travel or to make other accommodations. This approach is representative of a large number of aggressive outreach efforts mounted by some public agencies to counteract recruitment difficulties.

Organizational Development (OD) A vast array of theories and strategies aimed at changing the attitudes, values, and beliefs of employees; focuses on altering the organizational "culture," in order to make it more trusting and open; uses "action research" in which data are collected from the organization's members and fed back systematically in order to promote problem-solving and self-awareness.

Orientation The process of introducing new employees into the organization and socializing them to prevailing norms and expectations. Public agencies typically do a very poor job of this, while private corporations often invest far more energy into the enterprise. Research clearly demonstrates that effective orientation programs reduce turnover, lower the anxiety levels of new workers, and reduce their tendency to acquire bad work habits from co-workers.

Outsourcing Turning some functions over to private organizations through contractual agreements rather than delivering the services through public agencies. HRM functions are especially ripe for outsourcing, since some large corporations have proven that a centralized OHRs are not a necessity. The functions that are most amenable to outsourcing include benefits administration, payroll, and records management.

Participatory Management An approach to management that assumes workers can and will assist in making their organizations run better; the involvement of employees in decision-making that was once reserved to managers; a major explicit goal of reinvention ("empowerment"), and a precursor to motivation in the minds of many theorists.

Part-Time Employee An employee who may or may not fill an approved position, but who does not work the legally recognized number of hours per week to qualify for full-time status (37.5 to 40 hours, generally). Part-time workers rarely receive fringe benefits, although a few states (Nebraska, e.g.) have recently extended some benefits to these individuals. Part-time employees are hired and fired outside of the normal civil service requirements, usually enjoy few if any career protections, but are increasingly popular because they fill a need cheaply.

Patronage A personnel system in which employment, benefits, promotions and rewards are distributed on the basis of personal favoritism or

partisan loyalty. The opposite of a merit system, in that patronage places greater value on responsiveness and accountability, not on professionalism and job qualifications.

Pay Band A broad range of salaries that applies to significant numbers of job classification (or categories). Pay bands exist within broadbanding systems. They are often used to replace a step pay system in which employees automatically move up one step for each year of service. The existence of broad pay bands provides managers with greater discretion over salary increases.

Pay for Performance [See Merit Pay]

Pendleton Act The seminal piece of civil service legislation in the United States; passed in 1883, the statute created the first significant federal merit system and provided for open competition for public jobs, selection on the basis of job-relevant knowledge, lateral entry, and the creation of a bi-partisan Civil Service Commission to protect against politicization of the civil service.

Performance Appraisal (Evaluation) The performance of employees is rated on an annual or semi-annual basis. Usually the responsibility of the employee's supervisor, evaluation instruments are notoriously inadequate. One of the most common strategies is the rating scale, which essentially consists of a checklist of traits that the supervisor assesses on a Likert-type scale (1-5; 1-7.) As the most common source of employee frustration and claims of "favoritism," there has long been widespread experimentation with performance appraisal methodologies.

Personnel Ceiling As part of their role in controlling appropriations, many legislative bodies impose caps on the number of employees that can be hired in the jurisdiction. These may be aggregate caps (ceilings,) or they may be broken down by agency. Once an agency has capped out, it must either stop hiring or find alternative means of accomplishing tasks if more workers are needed. Two strategies that are often used to bypass personnel ceilings include the hiring of temporary and part-time workers. Neither of these groups is usually included under the ceiling, and both categories of workers are exempt from civil service restrictions.

Personnel Generalist The increasingly popular model for employees within OHRs, the generalist perspective is based on the premise that HRM workers ought to be "jacks of all trades." By being schooled in the entire array of personnel functions, they are not likely to get bogged down in bureaucratic minutiae. Moreover, their ability to provide one-stop-shopping assistance to line managers is thereby enhanced. The path to implementing the IBM Model (consultative role) is through the creation of a core of personnel generalists.

Personnel Specialist At one time, employees in OHRs might spend their entire careers confined to one functional area (classification, pay, evaluation, training, benefits administration, etc.) Not only did this situation narrow their perspectives, but it required line managers to solicit the assistance of several different specialists to resolve most problems. Over-specialization was thus one of the chief problems within the HRM profession, and created a large number of pathologies that still plague some jurisdictions.

Privatization [See Outsourcing]

Probationary Employee A newly hired worker who has not yet completed the probationary period and therefore has acquired no right or expectation of continued employment. Probationary employees can be fired at will and have no grievance rights (unless they allege discrimination on the basis of race, gender, age, sex, and other protected categories.) As a means to avoid making too many hiring mistakes, the current trend is to extend the probationary period. Six month probationary periods have almost all been doubled to one year, while two year probationary periods are becoming increasingly common.

Productivity Bargaining As a means of labor-management cooperation, this occurs when the union offers to exchange heightened output for wage concessions or other demands. In effect, the union seeks to purchase improved working conditions or benefits by promising to reduce staffing ratios, accomplishing more work, or even giving back old prerogatives to management. This strategy works best in areas that involve easily measured outputs (such as garbage collection.)

Progressive Discipline Disciplinary procedures that specify the exact consequences of each possible employee misdeed. Usually, the procedure delineates a large number of potential offenses (tardiness, theft, insubordination,) each one of which is accompanied by the appropriate sanction (written warning for first offense, suspension without pay for second offense.) These procedures are intended to provide a consistent and uniform system of punishment in order to insulate the organization from allegations of favoritism.

Quality Oriented Position Management System (QOPMS) An approach to HRM that focuses on quality improvement through the targeted applications of training and professional development opportunities; improvement plans are carefully crafted for each position, and these are typically based upon a careful job analysis that identifies critical tasks and Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSA)s for each job.

Rating Scale The cheapest, easiest, and yet most flawed of all performance appraisal strategies. A form that lists various traits or work characteristics and requires the manager to check boxes or record a

number beside each trait. Highly subjective, often not at all job-related, and a very poor basis on which to counsel employees on how to improve their performance.

Realistic Job Preview A film, tour, or other form of introduction to prospective employees that provides them with a clear understanding of both positive and negative aspects of the job applied for; intended to save time and money by running off those who may quit after going through expensive screening and/or training processes.

Reasonable Accommodation The legal necessity for an employer to try to make necessary adjustments in work processes, schedules, equipment, and the like in order to accommodate individuals with handicaps, or even those who practice a certain religion [See ADA]. Problem areas surface with great regularity in regard to religious practice, especially among groups whose Sabbath is not Sunday or whose religion precludes any kind of contact with unmarried women. Such individuals might demand preferential schedules (e.g., getting off every weekend due to religious reasons) when such treatment represents an affront to other workers who must gain seniority before earning free weekends (as one tiny example.)

Recruitment The organization's intake function by which new employees are identified and screened. Public agencies once approached this task from the perspective that a huge reservoir of eager talent exists in society, while the reality of contemporary America has proven that only aggressive recruitment strategies are likely to pay dividends.

Reduction-in-Force (RIF) The elimination of positions due to financial exigencies or reorganization. Most civil service systems follow a rigid RIF protocol in which retention points are calculated and then employees compete against one another on the basis of their total score (usually a person earns one point for each year of service, perhaps with some measure of performance added in.) Although not widely advertised, targeted RIFs are an effective way of eliminating workers and/or programs that are no longer valued or which are otherwise unpopular with upper management.

Reengineering In the HRM context, two definitions apply to reengineering. The first is concerned with the reorganization of work so as to make it more motivating to workers and to contribute to other desired objectives. This is also known as job design, and includes such phenomena as job rotation and job enrichment. Some scholars refer to it as "working smarter". The other definition is confined to the HRM function. To reengineer an OHR is to decentralize operations to line units, to shed specialized functions, and to change the office's role to a service and consultative model.

Reinvention The broad and influential reinvention movement in Public Administration impacts HRM most directly. Almost all Best Practices emanate from the reinvention agenda. The most common themes are decentralization, empowerment of line managers, managing for results, strengthening accountability, and eliminating government's obsession with control functions. These translate into much greater flexibilities within recruitment, selection, evaluation, salary administration, and all other areas of the field.

Resume Database On-line posting of job credentials to promote both recruitment by employers and job hunting by applicants. It is estimated that about 80% of all managerial-level employees will find their jobs through Internet strategies within ten years.

Residency Requirement Rules enforced by many government jurisdictions that employees live within the boundaries of the state, city, or county; the legality of such requirements has consistently been upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court on several grounds (proximity in the case of emergency, providing support to the tax base that pays one's salary, and maintenance of an ethnic mix in central cities.)

Retention An organization's ability to hold onto its workers. Many public agencies face a retention crisis because of poor working conditions, non-competitive salaries, and a strong economy that increases their employees' external job opportunities. Finding ways to retain valued employees—such as longevity bonuses, re-“enlistment” incentives, and appealing to intrinsic motives - is a major preoccupation of most public managers.

Rank-in-Job An approach to career management that places a huge emphasis on job classifications and narrow position descriptions. The primary concerns of such a career system are to control the employees, to ensure that they have the appropriate credentials to perform the required duties, and to guarantee salary equity to the extent feasible. One's job classification defines the person, limits his or her ability to engage in other activities, and spells out the career ladder in excruciating detail. This approach to public sector careers is regarded as one of the major impediments to motivation, flexibility, and other desired outcomes.

Rank-in-Person Under a rank-in-person format, the worker is not bound to a narrow job classification or position description. Instead, the organization is free to assign and reassign employees where their talents best fit. The employees are viewed as a fluid pool of resources. Examples include university faculty and military officers. One's rank does not say much about that person's responsibilities or job duties. The relevant job description or rank does not preclude transfers to different assignments, or the assumption of greater responsibilities. All senior executive services are based on the rank-in-person approach to career management.

Right to Work Laws Legislation that outlaws labor contracts that make union membership a condition of employment; states enforcing stringent right to work laws are least likely to contain unionized labor forces.

Rule of Three Alternatively, the rule of one, five, ten, or even twenty. A restriction on appointing authorities that precludes them from considering any qualified applicants except those top few whose candidacy is authorized. Typically, the rule of three means that only the top three finishers on a civil service exam (or screening of resumes) can be interviewed and subsequently appointed. This is now viewed as an inexcusable restriction on managerial flexibility and discretion.

Schedule C A set of positions originally established by President Eisenhower that were explicitly available to the president for political appointment; the intent was to provide the executive branch with greater control over federal policy in the agencies, most of which were (at the time) staffed by civil servants with Democratic leanings. The Senior Executive Service, created in 1978 by the CSRA, further extended the president's ability to place political appointees in high-level posts that once were filled by career employees.

Self-Directed Teams Highly trained work groups that use consensus decision-making and broad authority to make most of the decisions concerning their goals, priorities, work processes, and timetables.

Selection The identification of those applicants who will be offered positions after the initial recruitment effort has been completed. Selection typically involves one or more examination protocols. A distinct trend is toward either unassembled exams (resume evaluation and interview), or some type of performance-based exam. Legal challenges to many other types of tests have reduced managers' enthusiasm for civil service tests and paper-and-pencil exams of all types.

Senior Executive Service (SES) The federal SES was created by the CSRA of 1978 when the supergrades (GS 16-18) were collapsed into a pool of managerial talent without their old position descriptions and job classifications. The idea was (is) to provide managers with much greater flexibility in the use of government executives. Workers can be transferred and reassigned with relative impunity, leading to greater efficiencies (perhaps) but also the increased chance of politically motivated abuse. Like it or not, the idea has caught on and has been copied by many states and localities. If not referred to as a SES, the alternative name is usually "Senior Career Service."

Shift Differential The amount of inconvenience pay that can be awarded to certain employees who are regularly assigned to shift-type work (evening, night, rotating, or split-shift,) provided that a majority of the hours worked are other than 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

Single Point of Entry A centralized recruitment, testing, and selection system operated by a federal, state, or local merit system. This used to be the norm, at the time that civil service examinations were given in mass settings to fill the halls of bureaucracy. Successful applicants would then be placed on the eligibility list (or job register) and referred to agencies looking for workers. Almost all of these centralized intake systems have been abolished (e.g., the federal PACE) and replaced with multiple points of entry. Currently, most recruitment and selection takes place at the agency or department level.

Skill-Based Pay One's salary is tied to the number of different tasks or skills known to the incumbent. This approach to pay administration encourages workers to continually develop and refine their skills, and thereby serves as a useful spur to motivation and employee development.

Skip-Level Interview Sometimes known as the executive interview, this strategy started at IBM; it involves a program in which employees are periodically invited to speak to a manager one or more levels above that of their own manager for the purpose of ensuring more fair and open communications throughout the organization.

Succession Planning The proactive process by which agencies anticipate vacancies and begin far in advance to prepare candidates to fill those positions. Careful planning allows the organization to design training programs, job rotation opportunities, and other developmental programs for individuals who exhibit promotion potential.

Taft-Hartley Act One of two major pieces of legislation that bestow unionization and collective bargaining rights on private sector workers. Does not apply to the public sector.

Temporary Employee A worker who is hired into a position that is not full-time (or perhaps even authorized within the personnel ceiling) and thereby exempt from civil service requirements. This means that the appointing authority exercises enormous discretion over who is hired and on what terms. Most civil service procedures restrict the employment of temporary workers beyond fifty weeks in any given year, but this condition is widely overlooked or circumvented.

Tenure The point at which an employee acquires a liberty and/or property interest in his or her position. Although usually discussed in terms of faculty, non-probationary employees in many civil service systems effectively have "tenure" because their jobs are protected from anything other than a "for cause" removal (or, perhaps, a declaration of financial exigency.)

Test An expansive concept that means any device that is used to screen or evaluate applicants in a competitive context. Thus, it includes

performance appraisals, interviews, application forms, promotional exams, etc. According to the EEOC, any test must be validated and cannot have a demonstrably adverse effect on protected categories.

Test Validation The process by which tests are evaluated empirically to assess their job-relatedness and to ensure that they do not systematically disadvantage any protected group. Content validation is the most common method. This involves the identification of a job's critical Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs), the preparation of test items that reflect these KSAs, and the review of these items by Job Knowledge Experts (JKEs) to confirm that the test instrument is fair, accurate, and job-related.

360 Degree Evaluation An approach to performance evaluation that collects feedback from the employee's supervisor, co-workers, subordinates, and perhaps even clients. The resulting "360-degree" look at the employee's overall job behavior is perceived as more complete and reliable than uni-dimensional approaches.

Title VII A provision of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that forbids discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin with respect to all facets of employment; the Title did not originally apply to state and local governments, a situation that was reversed in 1972 by the Equal Employment Opportunity Act.

Total Quality Management (TQM) Approach to management that relies on customers and clients for definitions of quality, on workers to provide information about how work should be done and might be improved, and on managers for implementing a program of "continuous improvement" as they refine and improve work processes.

Turnover Attrition from the workforce, often due to job dissatisfaction and other factors that might be responsive to managerial initiatives.

Unassembled Examination Employee screening through relatively informal means, such as the evaluation of a resume (or application form) and a subsequent interview. No formal examination is included. This has become the primary means of filling mid- and top-level jobs, and is also ascendant in lower level categories because of continuing dilemmas in the area of test validity. Obviously, as this trend continues, the critical importance of interview skills is compounded.

Unclassified Employee A worker who is not encompassed within the relevant classification plan. As a result, the worker is likely to lack a detailed job description, and his or her grievance rights will be different from those individuals inside the classified service. Unclassified employees often enjoy fewer job protections than other workers because they are grouped in such categories as Schedule C, political appointees, seasonal workers, and temporary workers. University faculty are also unclassified

because they operate in a rank-in-person career system and also have a separate means of bestowing job protections (the tenure system.)

Uniform Guidelines for Employee Selection Issued in 1978, these guidelines were a cooperative effort of the EEOC, the Departments of Labor and Justice, and the Civil Rights Commission. They spell out, in detail, the procedures that employers should use to ensure the fair and impartial treatment of all applicants.

Validation [See Test Validation]

Veterans Preferences The granting of additional points on testing results to individuals with military service. This is a highly controversial practice in some quarters because it works to the disadvantage of many women. It is especially problematic in the area of promotions within the federal — and some state - governments. Because many individuals might score 100 on the relevant exams, only veterans can receive the promotions because their scores are elevated by the preference points. Non-veterans are effectively excluded from consideration.

Volcker Commission [See National Commission on the Public Service]

Whistleblowing The practice of turning one's employer (or other) organization "in" for its misdeeds. The CSRA of 1978 expressly attempted to encourage a more ethical approach to government by virtually begging whistleblowers to approach relevant authorities with their stories. In exchange, the MSPB was empowered to protect the individuals from retaliation. To date, the law has been a disaster. Almost all of those who have blown the whistle since 1978 have been subjected to serious personal and professional repercussions.