

Other HRM Issues Transcript

Welcome, and thank you for standing by. At this time all participants will be in a listen only mode until the question-and-answer session of today's call at that time you can press star-1 to ask a question from the phone lines. I have to inform today's party today's call is being recorded -- if you have any objections you may disconnect at this time. And now I turn the call over to Mr. Tony John, thank you and you may begin your conference.

Thank you very much. Welcome to USDA Rural Development managerial training on other human resource management issues. Specifically today we will be talking about engagement and work-life balance. Housekeeping issues -- again, you can download this presentation and the also the four other handouts for this training by clicking on -- if you follow these arrows to the top right hand of your screen, there is three white pieces of paper. Really useful content there, including the slides.

I am excited to talk about today's training. In some ways, I wish -- we should have been smarter about the title. The fact that we are calling it other HRM issues gives people the impression that this isn't as important. This is the part of the training where we can hit the issues of the day.

What are the things that managers are really dealing with right now outside of regulation, and what are some practical suggestions and tools they can use to manage their folks better in a modern work environment? Also, as soon as the training is over, if you are taking the training with a group of other managers in the same room, please e-mail Allison Savage with a list of those e-mails. Just so everyone on the phone line knows, we are having technical difficulties getting the e-mail addresses from the contractor.

But as soon as we get those e-mails we are setting up surveys and giving people credit for participating in the training. But we will continue to do that. But typically you are going to give credit and an e-mail within two to four days based on how quickly we can get the e-mail addresses from the Live Meeting contractor. We appreciate very much your patience.

Again, my name is Tony John. Even though you guys have heard me almost every other week, it is good to see my face so you know I am just not a faceless person, I am a real person. I have kids and they are excited to do Christmas and they knocked over our Christmas tree this morning so that made for a fun morning before I came to work.

We're going to talk today -- the employee viewpoint survey is a survey that OPM uses to assess the state of the federal workforce, and they used to just do every other year. Now they do it every year. This is a useful tool, and managers, if you are unfamiliar with it, it is the federal employee viewpoint -- I know for a fact that you can see data at the state level and also the level for some of the departments in D.C.

Also, it is OPM policy -- I don't know if they have a different internal policy, but as long as you have a large enough team, you can see data your team level so as a manager you can say OK, here are some of our strengths as a team and here are some of our growth areas.

It enables managers to know where they are at and make informed decisions about what they want to do with her team. When managers and executives were told about one of the things they found out from taking their survey this last year, one of -- a couple issues popped out in the survey results. These are the things that they said keep them up at night. One, federal employee job satisfaction has gone down last three years. Job satisfaction has gone down. Up until that point, job satisfaction was going up.

Also, there are many federal employees that are about to retire. This isn't a newsflash. But due to the restrictions, the budget restrictions that we are all dealing with, and the pending retirements, a lot of federal managers are staying up at night worrying that they are going to be task to accomplish critical missions with less resources. And that is stressful. It is difficult to accomplish the same work without the same skilled workforce and the same budget. Both of those things are going down. I think that these issues -- it is understandable that managers are worried about them.

In this one particular article -- and you can download it, it is one of the handouts that we have , it has a confusing title . Such human capital 2014. You can download that to your computers. It is a report about survey results that talk about these issues, and then some of the things that agencies -- that these managers -- they surveyed 200 executive managers and identified seven major subjects that -- actually, nine topics that the agencies are targeting to fix those three issues.

Identifying skill gaps, recruiting the right people, training to employees, performance reviews, feedback, identifying the top performers, retaining the top performers, and doing valid succession planning. The question is what we can address here today, what is the practical thing. Right off the bat I can tell you we are not going to talk about skill gaps or succession planning. When you read the article -- again, it is a handout you can download, really, really interesting.

Be aware that the article is sponsored by a group that does succession planning. They pushed that as something that government agencies need to be doing. Government agencies need to be doing that and I cannot give you 2-our virtual training that will make a dent in your ability to do good succession planning. So we are not going to talk about that today. We have already talked about performance management. That takes some of these things right off the table.

We don't need to talk about feedback or identifying top performers, people who get the highest ratings. We are not going to discuss that today. And then also, we are going to talk about recruiting the right people in staff training -- anyway, we are going to be talking about those two things in future trainings. The last thing we have left over is we can talk about how we retain our top performers to reduce those things that managers were read out at night, reducing their worries about being able to do their mission when they have got less people and less budget and they have got decreased job satisfaction with their employees. I think a lot of the decreased job satisfaction comes from the difficulties within the report, but there's also other things that affect that.

Federal employees are even more in the political crosshairs then they used to. We have a very polarized political environment where both parties leverage the mistakes and successes of the federal agencies, and that can be frustrating when as a federal employee you are just trying to do your job to the best of your ability. When it comes to retraining top performers, which is the thing we will really attack today,

there are really 2 issues. My experience working with federal managers across the federal government, there is 2 areas where I think we can in two hours time to be practical advice -- give you practical advice on things you can do that increase your chance of retaining what you want to retain for your teams. We will talk about engagement and work-life balance.

With that in mind here is the agenda for today. We will talk about engagement and we will talk about the considerations that go into our employees' worklife balance , and other tools that agencies have to improve the balance in their employees lives, and then they will summarize those things. But first, to talk about engagement, what is engagement? It is probably the new it topic in the federal government. OPM is mulling over -- this is not my job, but the policy side of OPM is mulling over ways to encourage agencies to think more about how to engage their employees. What is engagement?

Researchers have found that there are three parts to engagement. One, when employees are committed to the job , have an emotional, rational commitment to their job to the second part is that they make discretionary efforts, they choose to make efforts towards accomplishing organizational goals. Finally, there is a third element of job satisfaction, that when employees are engaged they are inextricably satisfied. We can increase job satisfaction, which ca increase the likelihood that people will stay -- which can increase the likelihood that people will stay.

Engagement has been shown, it has been proven to improve performance. Employees that are engaged leave less and even get hurt on the job less. And significantly lower amount of intention for employees to leave the agencies when they feel they are engaged. That is why we care. The federal government -- you are reading about it , you can hear about it on federal radio, and you are going to start seeing potentially some things from OPM about it, that is why we care. What can you do? Engagement is a very nice -- it sounds really nice, it sounds very easy the abstract.

The question for you is what can you do to increase the engagement on your team. Too often I hear a couple things. One is that I get asked to give engagement training pretty frequently for federal managers. A lot of times they tell me that previously the executive team as try to engage the workforce by really emphasizing the importance of their work. They let people know, you know what, or agency does critical work on the American public and it is so important that we come through with that. These are five ways in which you can engage your team, and understanding the importance of your work is one of them. But there are other aspects as well.

The main 2 ways a manager can affect the engagement and the motivation of the team is by giving frequent, valid, useful feedback to their folks. That makes one third of the effect managers have an how engage their employees are and another third is made up by how autonomous employees feel. One of the things to consider when it comes to feedback, managers should ask themselves, do my folks get enough feedback to do their jobs well? If I am not sure, one thing to consider -- ask your employees, do they get enough feedback? Do they feel they have the feedback they needed to do their jobs well? Make sure they understand that you are going to give them as much feedback as you can. It is OK to be practical and transparent, saying "I have a lot of stuff on my plate and I want to give you as much feedback as I can to make the transparent decision about the feedback that you give."

Also, a lot of things pertaining to our previous training, which is why you actually saw this at the end of our performance management training. But we do our performance management practices well, the engagement lines of really well behind that. When we have, for example, good performance plans, it allows managers to effectively cut the cord and give employees autonomy to do what they are going to do, to accomplish results they want. Letting people have autonomy lets them know network -- lets them own their work that leads toward engagement.

With good performance management practices, with clarity articulated for employees what is expected of them and what is their contribution to your important team, and also, if you can throughout performance management and let people know not only world of element having a critical mission but our team and you as the employee has this role and if you do the performance plan this is how what you are doing leads to what world of element says is important. -- world of element says is important. If you want to change engagement of your folks, consider when it comes to task diversity, diversifying the responsibilities that people have, as long as it is in their skill set. Consider decreasing the scope of the work that they do to develop new skills.

Everyone knows if you do the same task over and over and over again, people get bored, and they become less engaged over time. One of my first poll questions of today is this -- when it comes to these interventions, which do you feel would increase the engagement of your team the most, of the things I kind of just talked about? And this is just to give you food for thought. If you think that this type of intervention make a big impact on your team or any sort of positive impact on your team, with any good goal it is important that you write that intervention down, or download the training and keep it on file to allow you to get food for thought for later. Again, many of you have chosen improving and increasing feedback. There is no technological cost for that.

But at the same time, the thing to think about, your time is definitely -- I'm not in denial is that -- I am not in denial of that could make sure that as you increase and improve feedback it is OK -- you don't have to ask your employee, OK, do you want more feedback, and they say yes, I want to hear from you every day Mr. supervisor and you don't say OK, we will have to meet every day for half an hour. Of course that is patently ridiculous. You have to make practical decision on how much feedback they need and working with your employees to make that work. This theory of these factors , job characteristics theory, you can look it up and even Google it. I am a psychologist, and this is some of the most useful organizational, psychological research out there.

Outside of the job characteristics, there are other ways to motivate employees, and one of those psychologists would say is by giving people the right boards for their job -- right rewards for their job. I know the video shared with you and hopefully many of you got the chance to watch it. It is 10 minutes. It is not a perfect or comprehensive book -- look at all the ways we can motivate employees. I also think that it is supposed to be kind of a motivational TED talk, and so there is some exaggeration in their. But I think the author brings up some really good points and I was interested -- if you can click on the Q&A link at the top of your screen, if you can type in what were some of the ideas that you got from the video , was there anything informative about how maybe federal managers manage their folks that are or reward their folks better based on what is in the video?

Some of the thoughts coming in. And I agree with it. And I see this little bit in the comments. One of the myths that managers are told is one of the reasons federal employees are not engaged is because it does not pay enough, and if we could give them a lot more money, everyone would be more engaged. And I think this -- the research does -- goes a long ways towards describing how many is not the end-all reward. Managers should think about other things that are as human beings more rewarding, like understanding purpose with the importance of the work that they are doing, or having something intrinsically knowing that you are making a contribution is something that matters. I thought it was really great food for thought. The point practical ways that I believe federal employees have a different thing that can potentially motivate them and different rewards that we can use as managers to get them engaged and to feel motivated so that they can have more satisfaction on the job.

Consider a variety of rewards. Sometimes I at least personally, the few times in my career when I have gotten e-mails from my boss' boss' boss. I love hearing from her and having her express appreciation for the work that I do, and even if it is just an e-mail come even if she is just regurgitating what my boss told her, it still feels good and I find it rewarding. I also found that while some agencies really focus on giving large end of the year bonuses, I have found that it can be useful to consider giving smaller spot cash rewards throughout the year more immediate to the time the good work was done, and also getting time off. In today's budget crunched environment, agencies are more able typically to use those types of rewards in a limited way that of giving potentially giving the large end of year bonus is that they were maybe used to. And so it is important that my managers consider other reports that they can hone and focus on things that our team finds rewarding.

So it is important to ask your employees what do they find rewarding and then do your best to reward your team accordingly. It is also important that even though you are tailoring your awards that -- I have worked with some managers that have run into thorny patches by rewarding people, some people with cash and other people with verbal acknowledgments, when -- sometimes the employees get wind of that and they feel they are being treated unfairly when the manager was trying to do the best to respond to what that employee said is fair. Also, I found when using rewards , it is very useful for managers to clarify during the visual meetings what rewards are available and what are the conditions for getting them. When managers make that clear, it changes -- it shakes -- takes some of the potential feelings of inequity off the table, when they care about other people getting rewards.

If we can consider increasing feedback, changing our reward -- the way we do rewards, and thinking about different ways to increase engagement, those are some simple ideas that you can use to change how engaged, how motivated your employees feel, and don't be too hung up on the fact that you might not have as much money as you used to to do those things. Of course it is reasonable and money is not just -- the budget we are seeing is not just about paying employees but it is also about buying tools and paying for training. Of course it is a concern. It doesn't stop managers from taking some forward steps to improve engagement. Some consideration of managers you should have in improving the work-life talents our employees have. Work-life balance can be defined as the balance between our work and our lifestyle. I think one of the important things about this work-life balance term that gets thrown around a lot is just the word itself implies that work is not a part of life, which is inherently wrong. Of course work is a part of our life. It is not just please to think -- not just these two things that hang in the balance.

We have a lot of things. It is not a sum-zero exchange. When we give more to work it doesn't automatically take from our life and when we give more to our social and family life it does not take away performance. Of the inventions -- a lot of the inventions I will bring up-to-date as been shown in research not just to make people feel happy, but there really is a business reason for these things. It increases retention levels and in many ways it increases production of -- that our employees -- it makes them perform better. That is something that managers can identify. A consideration that manager should have when it comes to increasing work-life balance is alternative work schedules. Alternative work schedules are successful, but managers have analyzed the job to make sure the different types of schedules fit the work to be done.

Typically in the federal government there are two types of AW S, flexible work specials -- flexible work schedules and compressed work schedules. My man identifies core hours I must be working. From 9:00 to 3:00 central time, I have to be fully available by my phone, at my computer. I have to be there, unless I have other work I'm doing -- if I'm traveling, etc. Those are the core hours I'm working every day. Besides that, I have two and half hours with a half hour lunch that I can put into other times of the day. Usually I put them in at the beginning of the day and I might start at 7:30 and go to 4:00. Sometimes I started 6:32 and -- start at 6:30 to end at 3:00. My coworkers and other teammates can see when I am available. This is a huge benefit, and the truth of the matter is that I often use it where I will work -- I will work from 9:00 to 3:00 and then work in a totally different time. Last night I put in two hours from 9:00 to 11:00 because that is what my life dictated to me.

It is OK that my supervisor -- as long as I am accomplishing those hours. I was able to participate in my son's preschool Christmas program. We were able to go see Santa Claus. I was still able to get my work done in a way that meets the needs of my customers and my stakeholders for the agency. It is very nice to have this type of flexibility. I don't have this, but other members of my team use a compressed work schedule. In the government we see two main types of compressed work schedules -- we see people working for days a week, 10 hours a day, but more typically I see people working nine days for every two weeks and a little bit less than nine hours a day. It still adds up to 80 hours a week. Again, this compressed work schedule oftentimes enables employees to free up a day to be off to do things with their family, social life, and the key is that the manager needs to do an assessment of the work.

It is the -- as the team mission going to suffer if we have a whole bunch of people on compressed work schedule? Typically Friday is the day off. The burden is on the managers to assess how many people we need to have in the office so that we can still meet the needs of our customers. Once a manager has done that, offering these types of alternative work schedules, it can make a big difference in people's lives. I have a coworker who has a significant other who lives four hours away. She oftentimes travels from Kansas City, where we are based out of, and she travels to Tulsa, Oklahoma to go see him. I know that this compressed work schedule and our core hours make big difference in her ability to manage that relationship. I do feel that our team and our supervisors care about having balance in her life. Caring is great, but my the manager really does it is business reasons.

My coworker is a superstar on our team and I believe that if she feels the work enables her to balance these things that are important for, we are less likely to lose her and she is a fantastic employee.

Losing her what her our team immensely -- losing her would hurt our team immensely. The great thing about these work schedules is that they don't cost the agency anything. Employees are still putting in that time, still working 80 hours a week, and are responsible -- it is just changing how that work is done. It can make a big difference in your attention levels and keeping people on your team. One of the other considerations, a major consideration, is telework. I have told a lot of rural development managers are no strangers to telework. A lot of people already work on virtual teams out in the field where you have employees that are spread around your region.

We are going to talk a little bit about what telework is and why it might be useful. What are some potential complications of it as well. And how do you manage those complications, and how do you make it work for you. This is, out of all the topics I get asked to do training on, telework is the most common. I spent a good portion of my work hours talking to federal managers about how to telework. It is workforce flexibility that enables people to perform the duties of the job from the approved worksite outside the normal work office. Teleworkers are doing their work from a different location. That is all it means. They are supposed to be doing the same work, doing it from a different location. There are different types of teleworkers. This training is really about -- we're talking about increasing telework.

We are talking about exploring people in your office to choose telework more. There are also employees who are full-time teleworkers that were hired as such. The home office, a different office is their location. Those in cannot be taken off telework. Their situation -- those employees cannot be taken off telework. The situation is what it is. 20% of the federal workforce could be teleworking, but they don't because of managerial resistance or there really hasn't been a thorough exploration of their job to figure out which things they could do from home or from another location, if not in the office. Participation in telework is voluntary and also a privilege. It is not a right. It can be required. They have created an operations plan, but in general, it is supposed to be voluntary, but most employees find it to be a huge benefit. Telework works. When managers look at these three things and leverage them strategically. One, they need to look at the agency telework policy and make sure that they are locked and loaded when it comes to enforcing that policy.

A lot of times the agency policies reflected in the employees' telework agreement that they sign with their manager. This telework agreement is a critical piece to the success. Also, always talk about the performance plan is a critical piece of making -- having successful teleworkers. Employees need to know with clarity what are the results that managers want. We will talk about these briefly. Here is a quick list based on my work with managers and the survey results that I have done. Here are some of the telework benefits that the agencies have experience. They have increased productivity. They have increased job satisfaction within the pockets that they have people doing telework.

They have reduced absenteeism significantly. Some agencies have been able to see reduced real estate costs three you have to embrace telework to see that happening. The people who are just teleworking once a week, that doesn't really reduced real estate costs. It also improves work-life balance, which is what we have been talking about. I have a question for those of you who have teleworkers on your team already, and even if you don't, what do you think is the biggest benefit of telework? This is just an opinion piece. There is no right or wrong answer here. I very much agree.

I think the job satisfaction, the increased job satisfaction is worth real things the teams. I will tell you a quick story about myself. I was hired the midst of the recent recession, and I will be honest, I never thought -- I always thought I would do work for consulting firm, but those jobs were few and far between when I graduated from graduate school. I started work for the government because there were other people for my program worked for OPM. Now that I am here, I have a flexible work schedule, and I telework at least two times a week, sometimes 308 could I have a-oriented work environment -- sometimes three a week. I have a results-oriented work environment. That is worth real salary to me. I had offers from the private sector only to come and work for their team, and when I was talking about it with my wife, we were weighing the pros and cons. We felt very strongly that these benefits that I have in the federal government, the work-life benefit that I wasn't going to get from the private sector company were worth -- we approximated that they were worth to our family about \$40,000 in salary.

It makes huge, huge difference for my likelihood of leaving. And those things are worth a lot to me. I ended up turning the job down because I wanted to remain best to maintain -- I wanted to maintain -- kind of like that video, I don't have a lot of money, but I have enough money to live, and I have a lot of benefits from working for the team that I do and it makes me less likely to be. -- makes me less likely to leave. Managers come when they are surveyed, what do they think are the biggest challenges, they identify themselves, actually, as the biggest challenge to expanding telework in their agency. Oftentimes that feedback comes from employees. Federal management -- in my opinion, federal managers are put between a rock and a hard place. There are things -- they are not ready to telework but in some ways they are pushing their managers to have employees do it.

The key is knowing what these challenges are, and making a plan before you really dive in to the deep end of the pool. Making sure technologies of today, what are the tools you are going to use, do you have the budget to purchase the tools if you don't have them, is your security systems -- are those up-to-date that you can work from home? Do you have the office coverage that you need? Is the nature of the work the right fit? Those are some questions that have to be answered. Another poll question I have -- what do you think is the greatest complication or hindrance to telework for your team? Interesting. Most people, as they should -- managers say the nature of the position.

That is exactly right. One of the things that we don't hit on to heart in this training but is true is that in order to telework successfully, you really have to do a really almost hour by hour approximation of the work that is getting done, and how much of that work is teleworkable, and the siding -- deciding, am I supposed to do a days work of duty from home maybe every other week or once a week? And make that strategic decision so that you can leverage this tool to increase the work-life balance. But if you do that assessment and can't do the work from other locations, it is what it is. You and I were work -- we can't -- until the nature of your job changes we can't have you telework.

You have to plan on the front end. How do you plan to make telework work? In order to be eligible for telework, employees need to have a fully successful performance rating. These are employees who would otherwise be in the office. In order to work outside the office and you can't have disciplinary actions taken against you in the last two years and another common problem is that you cannot have a violated subpart G, which is essentially that employees cannot have gambled or viewed pornography on

the government computers . Just because someone is eligible doesn't mean that they have to telework . It is within their expertise to make the decision, OK, is that what is best for my team? I will say in general it works best when managers start from the position of trusting their employees and finding out and telling that if it is not going to work instead of deciding on the front and -- there have to be business reasons for us to telework.

If they feel that the reasons for not teleworking -- you don't want people to telework. You also have to plan the telework schedule. You need to make sure that you establish what the performance expectations are make sure you have a discussion on what behaviors are acceptable and not acceptable for teleworkers. When it comes to the schedule, it has been my experience -- if you don't have a discussion of the beginning of the year , as substitutions work, how employees notify coworkers of how they are going to be part of the office , if you don't do that humans find a way to disappoint you. As Santa Claus told Blitze 1000 times, there is no teleworking on Christmas eve. If you haven't thought about these things on the front and, employees -- by Murphy's Law, they will always ask you about the weakest link. If you haven't thought about how substitution days work and they will inevitably come to USA, -- come to you and say, Mr. supervisor, I would -- I am going on vacation next week. I would like to move my telework day to move my telework data Friday. Is that OK?

You want to make sure you are consistent across her team. Once you are inconsistent and employees figure that out, then they get upset and people being able to move their telework days outside the policy, favorable treatment -- you have turned what should be a benefit for your team into a reason for complaints. You need to understand the policy language -- you just need to understand your policy and if you have prepared to enforce it, a lot of your agency telework policies are going to be reflected also in the telework agreement that you signed with your employees. It is so important -- of course, for in-office employees, it is important to clarify expectations. But it is just a notch more important even for employees that are working virtually. It is important that you ensure they understand what your expectations are. What is fully successful work look like?

Even though there are virtual and please, try to have the beginning of the year conversation face-to-face or at least over the phone. Just really try to avoid sending an e-mail and asking, hey, does this look good? Have a conversation about those if you can. Working virtually sometimes makes it difficult to address performance issues. If you have a real performance issue that is really important, meet in person, just like having that discussion at the beginning of the year. It is one of the difficulties of having people work outside of the office, that there is a tendency for virtual managers, they are more likely to wait until the end of the year to give feedback that should begin in a timely manner.

Just be aware that that is a complication. You have to be more deliberate. The word I would use is "deliberate." We have to be more deliberate about everything we do when it comes to performance management and managing employees to make a virtual work environment work. Here is a telework scenario. If you could respond by clicking on the question, the question and answer link again, a history of being easily distracted and getting off track -- although the results are acceptable, you wouldn't be able to manage if she was in a traditional office. How do you handle that situation?

We are getting some positive responses. And I think in general really, that is the right response. You should -- they don't have a performance problem, the results are always acceptable. In general that means you should be trusting Sandra to get your work done -- get her work and. Sandra is a cure. -- Sandra is a kindred spirit of mine. I'm a social person. When I come into the office I talk to people. I really like that. When I am teleworking a lot, I miss it. But I perform a little bit less well because they distract myself. However, if my results are always acceptable, my manager trust me to get that worked on. Maybe embedded in the scenario is the fact that Sandra's results are always rated as acceptable but maybe she doesn't have acceptable performance.

That is a performance management issue. You want to make sure that people's ratings reflect their actual work. But in general, with any of your employees, you give them a chance, and as long as there is a business case for it, as long as they can get the work done, as a manager that is what you care about. We will talk a little bit about how you make sure as a manager the work is getting done. How do you feel trust in that situation? We will talk about this when we get back but I want to give you 10 minutes of break. We will start back up again at 2:05. This is how we are going to take breaks from now on . If you look at the top corner of your screen does the feedback square.

If you can click on their cash made that purple cup -- click on the air, purple as if you have a question and when we come back and it back to green, I will know that people of come back and can start up again should make it purple for the time being and make it green when you return and I will know there is a critical mass of people back up the line and we will start up again at 2:05. Talk to you then.

OK, I think we have a majority of people that have made their feedback square screen. -- squares green. I appreciate people participating in this screening. And making it as useful as possible. So , I have done training and consulting with some agencies that are what I would call "telework hesitant." But I have also worked with agencies that are early adopters. One of the concepts that comes in really strong is that we need to have relationships of trust with managers in order to make teleworking work. It just doesn't work to have -- when managers don't trust their workers. If managers are asking for other administrative tasks to prove that they are working, that means that they are -- that there is not full trust. We also say a lot of times that there is a gaining trust process.

When my team first started teleworking more, we had to do more accountability reports of what we were going to do when we were out of the office. As my manager used those for three or six months, she realized she really wasn't looking at them. She really didn't care about them. And they weren't the results she was actually looking for. She had developed a relationship of trust that she could just let us work from home. She didn't need any extra reporting. Our team made up a word , Tele -trust. It's the trust managers need to allow their employees to independently work on tasks, to meet deadlines, and to focus on the results.

This was kind of the grease in the wheels in a virtual team. Yes, you can still do your job with extra administrative tasks, but it makes our team work slowly with other things we have to do. If we can just let people go about and accomplish the work, it enables us to not use time for things other than the actual results we care about.

Behavioral norms are really important for managers to feel and develop that trust for their folks. We found it is really useful to have discussions about team norms and how that at -- how that affects each individual you manage in a virtual organization. So, we really suggest that the teams considering increasing telework or who already have teleworkers -- or maybe you don't have teleworkers. You know, here is a truth that must be said. Teleworkers -- you know, almost everyone in the federal government works on a computer a good portion of the day. I know I do. Even my manager who -- she works in North Carolina -- but even if she was in Kansas City managing my work, if I had to come into the office, she would have to think of a different way of managing my performance. Other than look, Tony is a great employee and surely he is doing his work. She doesn't know I am doing my work. I am from Boston. I am obsessed with sports. It's just a problem that I have.

I will go to a website and read about sports all day long if left unchecked. It would be very easy for me anytime my manager wasn't looking to go to ESPN.com and read that, but I cannot do that a, because I am an employee and be, because I know what my supervisor is looking for. I know the results she wants for me and I know there are certain standards of timeliness and quality. There are also certain standards of how responsive I need to be two e-mails, phone calls, how we participate in meetings, what the -- how we communicate with each other. And all of those things are norms. Our team decided to create a team norms charter. When you have people working outside of the office, these are some of the things you would need to consider formalizing your rules of behavioral conduct for these things. How do folks use their calendars so that they let other people know when they're going to be in the office, when they're are not going to be in the office, -- calendar can be a really useful tool to let people know where you're going to be. Also, out of office messages.

What are your standards for those. What dear teams look like? Virtual teams , virtual employees have lots of meetings. All federal employees do, but the more virtual an employee is, the more likely they are to have lots of team meetings. It is important we use those team meetings constructively and not just for the sake of having a meeting. A really important keyword is the standard for response time to phone calls and e-mails. My team even has some standards on how we respond to critical e-mails and phone calls and noncritical e-mails and phone calls. How do we decide between the two and what are our time frames. Those are things that are very useful. A lot of information is oftentimes teams deal with that in formally. It's great to put it in writing and I will tell you why.

It's important that managers are not arbitrarily getting upset with employees because everyone has agreed to the same behaviors. My team created the virtual team charter. We talked about each of these topics. After we had that discussion, we all signed it. It's considered part of the code of conduct. If we violate it, our manager can consider removing us from telework. When we set about trying to create these norms, we thought it might take half an hour. It will not take that long. We are all pretty similar. We have been working as a team for a few years.

Clearly, we are going to have the same expectations. It took us five hours to have this discussion. We found out there were things we were doing the bothered others. When we made a standard, a reduced conflict. We let people know that they should not be expected -- a should not expect others to respond to e-mails and also that the way people were doing certain reports was a problem.

Everybody got on the same page since then. Since then, people are not as frustrated with each other, and if there is a problem, coworkers and managers alike come a there is a set process for dealing with it. I think this is one of the most useful tea -- things in dealing with a virtual team. There is an example of a blink -- blank team charter you can download as part of the handouts. You can download that any time as part of this training. With new reports about human engagement and the human capital in our government, and the surveys -- the federal employee survey results for the most recent year. Now, on top of this team charter that we signed, our supervisor also came up with a plan for herself about how she was going to make sure we had regular collaboration and communication, because we are not all over the same place. She is in North Carolina.

Other people are in Kansas City, St. Louis. It makes sure -- we needed to come up with a detailed plan to talk to each other. That the most critical feedback conversations are happening and that we have a plan. Our supervisor is set up our time. We have half an hour to talk each week. Sometimes we use it. Sometimes we don't. But it is a time set apart for her to get feedback and give feedback. Whether it is constructive or positive, and that way, even though there is distance between us, I am getting a lot of informal performance feedback throughout the year. It is ongoing. We also have team communication. Once a week, we have a half an hour to an hour team meeting. During that, we talk about all of the critical customers, the projects that each of us are reading and the work that we are going to be doing in the next week and what our workload looks like and if people can ask us to do projects with them in the upcoming week. We also take time -- because it is important to our team because we never see each other -- we take five minutes to answer icebreaker questions like what is your favorite Disney character, what is your paper it is your -- what is your favorite part of the holiday season?

If you could go back in history, who would you meet? That may seem silly, but even though I barely see my teammate, Ryan, I know things about him as a person. We have a little bit more of a person-to-person relationship because of what I have learned through hombre stations. He loves the Philip -- through those conversations. He loves the Philadelphia Phillies. I love the Boston Red Sox. And we can mimic watercooler talk using other tools. Even though we barely see each other, we have a more personal relationship. You can use instant messaging to do that. These are some tools we suggest agencies strongly consider. Agencies who really want to make telework work need to really think about their tools. Instant messaging is fantastic.

Not only does it allow me to send messages to Ryan about baseball, which is great, but I think it is really useful to know who is online right now and who is not. I do not have to go into my Outlook and look at my coworkers calendar. I can, at a quick glance, look at my instant messaging link Boxx and sea green, white, yellow, orange, I know who is available right now and who is not. That is useful when we have questions. It reduces the e-mail loads. You can send a document over link. It can be very useful. It is useful for agencies to think about how they share documents and how much bandwidth they have to download and upload things from there shared drives . Our agency had to really increase the bandwidth available to our drive so that people working outside the office could access it smoothly, so they could do their work in a timely manner. Also, some agencies use Outlook calendar. Others leverage Google calendar. And about those types of things and just make sure that everyone has the same tools.

I think one of the trains that has left the station is videoconferencing. I think in the next five years, we are going to be using a lot more videoconferencing because the price has come way, way down. People are still uncomfortable, even my team of generation X and Y people was initially uncomfortable with videoconferencing. It has changed the nature of the meetings and made the communication that much better. We have accomplished more in our team meetings in a shorter amount of time because we are able to see each other's body language. It is amazing how much we communicate via that. That's something to consider. Always work with your CIO to figure out what tools are available, but we really have liked using videoconferencing. Even though I never see Ryan face to face, I do see him virtually face to face once a week. Here is a common conflict that involves technology and working.

If we are working with agencies that have dove into the deep end of the pool when it comes to telework, they have problems with professional isolation and having their teams work together long-term. And collaborating. We have found that sometimes when people are just using e-mail to communicate with each other, it can sometimes be like the comments section on Internet articles and people feel empowered to say whatever they want to say. If you can diversify the tools that employees have available as a teleworker so that they are using telephone, videoconference, instant message and e-mails, you reduce the likelihood that people will start writing angry e-mails to each other, but when people just use e-mail -- that has actually been correlated with job dissatisfaction and people treating each other poorly. We suggest coming up with a communication standard operating procedure as part of your team charter. What type of meetings are you going to have?

Which ones do people need to call in and which ones did they need to be part of your life meetings, for example? Which meetings do people have to be part of them person? We also suggest coming up with rules of how you're going to run your team meeting. We have ice breakers and rules about how far in advance we have to get agendas from our supervisor. That way, we know exactly what we're going to talk about. We can use our time efficiently. When people get together for meetings, there is a chance of wasted time. There is so much federal time and money wasted in meetings, especially in virtual workers time, if we can focus on making those meetings successful, that is one practical thing we can do to make the workforce better. Here is another tactical thing we can do. She explains that her niece has a track meet at 3:00 p.m. and she would like to go.

If she switches her telework to Friday, she would not have to make the long commute. We have some fast readers. Really, yes, most are saying this is not a big deal. The key is, is your team going to be able to do the job. You also need to be prepared -- what is going to be your criteria for allowing others to change the telework day or not? You don't want to just do this because she is a good employee. But then you have to more problematic employee, Tony, and you don't trust him as much. The key is can you get the work done and be results focused? That has a huge impact on telework.

It lets employees know what results they are going to be asked for and it aligns their work to division goals. You can see another comment. This is every am -- every manager's worst nightmare. A teleworker laying around in a bathrobe not doing their work. The truth is, we don't even know what work we are looking for. And that goes back to what are we going to measure. This is an Einstein quote.

Often as organizations we are tested to measure something because it is measurable but not because it is something we actually care about. So this is the strategy. What are the things I want to reinforce for my folks? I gave you a whole performance stream I am not going to go back over, but using this kind of mad Libs format where you fill in the bring -- fill in the blanks ensures that you're being clear about what you expect from your folks. So , a critical element in managing folks working outside the office is that it not only identifies the results you're looking for, but how are you going to make sure those results get accomplished? Almost every manager I do one-on-one consulting with tells me Tony, how do I know that the work is getting done? That is my major concern. And the question I ask is, how do you know that people in the office are getting the word on?

And the key is getting the results you are looking for. There's ongoing feedback that you're getting in giving and an actual final result. All of these things, when assessed, enable managers to know that the work is getting done. It is not just an results but intermediate steps that lead to those and results. One of the tools we suggest you use -- and it's really not rocket science. Use an Excel spreadsheet to track results. This is an example of something from my team. We needed to create a return on investment white paper. You can see our teams work if you want. You can go to the -- boy, now I am blanking on it. It's the -- I cannot believe I cannot remember. But the key is that was one of the tax I had to participate in that. I wrote the white paper online. But at the beginning of the year, I knew from my supervisor what fully successful look like and what outstanding look like.

I write down every accomplishment , but this way, at the midyear and Andy are -- and year, I can give this to my supervisor and she knows what I have done based on our performance of what has happened. She does not have to gather this information herself, and it's OK to ask employees to do this. I would ask , especially managers of virtual employees, to keep a record of the things they do. I am not talking about hour by hour, but in my opinion, if you do not have people in the office telling you what they are doing hour by hour, people outside the office are not that different. This is a very different tool for managers to use for those performance discussions, and it saves everyone time.

Also, as a virtual employee, I know I am more likely to get credit for the work I have accomplished. One of the principles that is a foundational principle of telework is that managers need to be treating teleworkers and office workers the same way. They should have the same performance standards, the same productivity expectations, the same hours working. So, if you find yourself thinking boy, I don't know if I trust my teleworkers to get the work done, ask yourself critical questions. Why do you trust the people in the office? It's not that you shouldn't trust them, but I think a lot of that distrust comes from an EU's about the situation. And that's completely understandable and natural, but in today's working environment, workers can just as easily get on Facebook, get on ESPN.com , and spend a lot of time in the office working on other things and whenever their manager comes by, they bring up the PowerPoint reason Tatian or can't -- presentation or a contract. You have to know what you're looking for, otherwise, anyone, teleworker or not, can abuse the system.

Now, here is another telework scenario. So he complains that she is now working between 10-11 hours a day to complete the same work she used to complete in eight. What do you tell her? And all of these scenarios are based on real things. The truth of the matter is there are a couple of considerations.

One, Zoe is not supposed to be donating extra time to the government. That is against the rules. If she is not able to perform, if she is not able to do her job from home and she was able to do it in the office, that is a sign she should not be working from home. This is a sign she should not be working from home. I think having that discussion is fine. In my experience, it is actually more likely that employees that telework just work more. Speaking from personal experience, it is sometimes hard for me to shut it off. I don't consider myself a shining beacon of employment, but if people are asking me questions, it's hard to turn that off at the end of the day.

I think part of the reason people are producing more as teleworkers is they are converting commuting times to work times. What it is still work for me. The fact that I can pop out of the office and then walked down and play with my kids, the fact that I can leave to go on family vacation straight after work, those things mean a lot to me. Now, just because you sign a teleworker agreement doesn't mean you get to use that agreement forever. You could have conduct issues or performance workers. Or your organizational needs could change. Typical reasons for ending telework are often performance-based. Also, sometimes it is to deal with a performance issue. I one time requested that I reduce my telework because my kids were having a hard time with me being home but not being able to play with them. So I worked from the office more.

By the time I came back, my kids were over it and now I am able to telework more effectively. Ending an agreement always works better if you have communication throughout the process. If your employer understands and you have good reviews of performance, when employers feel like they are a partner with you it feels better than when you just arbitrarily end their agreement. -- end their agreement. Lastly today, we are going to talk about leave. It is important for managers to understand the basics of leave. If you are not a new manager, this isn't your first rodeo. I am not going to lecture on this. You can download the presentation and all of the presentation has bullets so you can use it in a useful way. Annual leave. The longer a person has been with a program, the more annual leave they get. If you can carry up to 240 hours, you can use it or lose it.

Employees have control over annual leave, but managers also have input on how it is used, and that is different than other types of leave. When it comes to sick leave, sick leave can be used for yourself or helping with family members in certain situations, including adoption. Sick leave is always accumulated at the same rate. One of the important things about sick leave is that managers do not have -- they don't have control over sick leave. The general principle is if an employee says they are sick, it is best practice to let them do the sick leave unless you have -- there is a pattern or a potential pattern of abuse.

Things to look for as a manager, if people are using sick leave every Friday or every Monday, that's a potential pattern of abuse. If people are using their sick leave almost as soon as they get it, they are always teetering on the edge of running out of sick leave, that is a sign that you have an abuse situation. There are some things managers can do to help monitor situations, and to help their employee and to make sure they are not abusing their leave to do things they are not supposed to. Also, there is leave without pay. As is in the title, they don't get paid. It's a temporary non-duty status that can be requested by the employee or the supervisor. They could use the family medical leave act.

They could use it for medical treatment if they are disabled veterans. Or they may need to leave to serve the country. In that case, their positions are held for them as long as they get approval beforehand. Leave without pay is different and a wall. AWOL is never good. It's potentially good and often employees will use vacation and sick leave before leave without pay. When it comes to leave without pay options, there is the family medical leave act. You can use that for your own purposes but also for your children or your parents' purposes. Be aware that your siblings are not necessarily considered your immediate family, so the FMLA does leave them out.

That's important for you to know. Particularly in the case of maternity and paternity leave, employees use their sick leave up and then if they need to they use FMLA. I will say this about benefits. Managers need to know this because we often have a larger team of them -- a larger team of consultants. We had to employees who have children. Both were considering leaving the agency because they were not sure if their spot was going to be held for them, and it was critical that my manager's manager knew the ins and outs of how to take leave and how to have their spot reserved for them. They were able to convert to other more flexible work arrangements when they did come back. And we were able to keep two superstars on our team because our managers could plan strategically for a flexible work environment.

Again, military leave can leave their positions -- members of the military can leave their positions without pay for a chunk of time. It's always useful to consult with experts, but it makes sense. If you serve the country, you can come back to your old position when you return. Also, administrative leave. The most common examples of this are when normal operations are interrupted by maybe a flood or extreme weather conditions, but also, administrative leave for the holidays. Those are things -- it's an A-Z position. Employees have no power over administrative leave. That is something that is granted. One thing that's important to know is who is a family member.

You can go to OPM leave standards and look at this length -- link. And it's different when it comes to sick leave as opposed to leave without pay. This is a typical scenario of abuse. An employee has 22 years of service, no sick leave. She uses sick leave as soon as she earns it. She has a variety of medical problems. She never asks for leave in advance. She uses around two days at a time. If you see this pattern, you potentially have someone who is abusing leave. I suggest you reach out to figure out what tools you can use to look at time and attendance and look at patterns in files to C, OK, we do have a pattern here, to figure out whether or not you have an abuse issue. Other quality of work life tools to consider. Access to employee assistance. Agencies have health and wellness programs.

There are financial counselors within each agency. This is really smart. They have found that because financial problems away on people -- way on people, they are looking for extra ways to earn money on the job. Legal problems are similar. A lot of people leverage employee appreciation meetings to show cast that showcase how much they value their employees. I suggest that agencies can leverage personal e-mails from consecutive -- executive or upper-level management to help people feel rewarded. Some final take away. And again, if you have questions, go to the Q&A button and asked them and we will answer them. As federal managers, we manage teams that are increasingly dissatisfied with large groups of employees retiring. Now we are at a critical stage.

As managers, we need to think of a practical -- I hope today you can think of one thing to do differently that you did not think of before, that might jog your memory to say oh, that might be a good idea. Decide how to leverage something practical to retain good employees. And there are good business reasons for that. I am sure you are nice people as well, but we don't necessarily do these things because we are nice. There are real things that help us accomplish our mission to the American public. Establishing norms and using a virtual team charter -- we have found that to be almost a universal success. It can be a way to increase trust between managers and employees so that managers feel comfortable knowing that the work is going to get done and that people are going to be responsive to e-mails and not just be out and about doing whatever they want.

Respecting, trusting, engagement, work life balance, these lead to a high-performing satisfying -- satisfied employee that does good work. I challenge you. If you have a process you want to do differently, write it down soon because a lot of our best laid plans we forget about if we don't write them down. I am going to go to the question and answer link that we have here. Let's see. How would a supervisor deal with a situation where an employee's husband is a distraction at work? Call three or four times per day. Is stopping in several times per day.

Family members are often welcome, but this has gotten out of hand. That's a unique problem. I think the way to bring it up is having a face-to-face discussion with the employee, especially if there is a clear-cut way in which it is getting in the way of work. It's a natural thing to bring up with employees. It's not always pleasant, but as a manager, you should feel empowered to have the discussion with folks. You might think you're going to get flack for it, but if it is causing performance or conduct based issues and interrupting work, it is something a manager has to bring up. If it's something where they are getting Inc. recently negative, consider bringing in and alleviate her. A lot -- alleviate or.

is the maximum number of 240 hours of advanced leave based on an annual basis?

Yes.

Do I understand correctly that opposite sex domestic partners are considered family for leave?

Yes. Again, I am not a policy maker. So, there is a chance I misinterpreted the policy, but if you go to the link I shared, it can give you an idea of what is considered family. This says there is a problem he want to call attention to. Some people are hesitant to do this because it takes time away from other areas. Singing to the choir. The management spends too much time with one employee. Please suggest. OK. My suggestion is this. When it comes down to it, dealing with these problems is -- and my tongue is firmly planted in my cheek. It's one of the reasons managers are paid the big bucks.

Again, joking, but it is one of the reasons your managers. If you do not have time to deal with your problematic employees, that is something you need to discuss with your supervisor's supervisor to say OK, I have these good folks, but in order to deal with a performance or telework issue, I have too much on my plate. This is a sign that our workload is too high and we either need to rearrange the workload or bring other people onto the team. It really just boils down to that. If a manager does not have time to do their critical work duties, that is one of the things they need to bring up.

I can almost hear your eyes rolling in your head. I fully understand that. I know it is a difficult conversation to have. There are too many folks having performance or conduct issues for me to do my typical duties, but that is a discussion that needs to happen to have robust practices. If you don't have that, it is time to bring it up with a supervisor. Maybe do a cost-benefit analysis of how much time -- can you put more time into it? If you can't, consider bringing more people on or making a formal business case that you need someone else on your team.

Someone asked, can I refresh them on how to download handouts? If you click on the handout link, the second document is a PowerPoint. You have about 12 minutes before we end the meeting. Operator, can you take everyone off mute and enable them to ask questions if they would like.

One moment.

Again, at this time, people are --

all lines have been taken off mute.

Again, at this point, if people want to ask questions, I will answer them to the best of my ability.

Please press star six to mute or un-mute your line if it has been muted. Again, all lines have been taken off mute.

Tony, I have a question.

Fantastic.

I guess I have an interesting situation and that I try to look for successful ways to engage an employee that is toward the end of retirement and really here just because they have some time to kill.

OK. And you are trying to think of ways to engage that person.

I don't want him to be complacent, but sometimes they are just here.

I spoke to a manager in a similar situation to you, and some of the things she was able to leverage -- he leveraged that employee to come up with some new standards. This employee left feeling they were a subject matter expert. Being able to take their knowledge and put it in writing to help future generations was motivating for that employee. Also, the manager leveraged that employee to troubleshoot a lot of -- she made them kind of a team lead. Some employees like that other employees don't.

There is no silver bullet. I do know there are examples -- you cannot Google -- you can search the Internet and there are examples to try to motivate soon to retire employees, but I don't have any perfect solution. Treat them as you would any other employee and help them leverage the team by having them mentor or create operating procedures or troubleshoot areas.

We have asked people on our team -- we have had more experienced team members be involved in leadership team meetings, even though they weren't managers, to give an experience link to those leadership meetings. It is really useful. I have found it especially -- leveraging those same people, if they like being a mentor, it can be a very rewarding experience for those employees. Those are ideal people to mentor. Now, if your person wants to coast, they might coast. In some ways, their hands are tied. But mentoring can be a really useful thing. Those are some hand -- those are handful of useful ideas, at the most. Any other questions?

Someone asked over the Q&A function, how do you deal -- human beings don't like getting negative feedback, and negative feedback oftentimes leads to getting tied up in false complaints and false grievances. Makes the managers look bad and it takes up a lot of time. How do you provide actual feedback to not have complaints filed? This is a brilliant question.

In my opinion, part of the reason why the federal workforce files those complaints, there is an expectation that no one gets constructive criticism. I know I am talking from an idealized ivory tower of criticism, and I get that, but I do believe that as we have better performance management practices throughout the government and people are given real performance ratings in real ratings that reflect a work they actually did, and as we develop partner relationships with folks, we mitigate risks for false complaints. You can never fully protect yourself, but making sure that at the beginning of the year you have a conversation and that any constructive criticism they get from you as a supervisor is based on your mutual desire to succeed. It's not just an arbitrary thing you are sticking to them.

It is based on a mutual desire to succeed. It doesn't go in their personnel file. It so that you can help them become the best employee they can be. Again, all of that is very shiny and happy, but having all of that on the front and mitigates the risk that when you do give construct this feedback that you're less likely to get those complaints.

Again, when employees are fully engaged, they have found that all of those things are reduced when employees score high on engagement metrics. I think if we can make the change now, we are less likely to have these problems in the future. I really feel for that supervisor, because I know that is the real thing and my answers are academic and less practical. I apologize for that because I really do sympathize. I have worked with managers who are doing their absolute blast and there really needs to be a process of change that happens so that managers can feel that giving constructive criticism is not automatically going to lead to some sort of complaint against them when they're just trying to do their job. So, I understand. Any other questions?

As I always say, I will take that final pregnant pause as meaning no. These are the issues of today, right now. We're talking a lot about regulation and things that are possible, but this is really the hot button, pressing issue of the day. If we can do these better, people will be better managers. So I thank you for your time. I will leave the meeting up for another three minutes so that people can download what they want. Thank you very much and I will talk to you later.