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Monterey, California



THESIS

PROMINENT CONSTRAINTS FACED BY
GOVERNMENT MANAGERS

by

Robert T. Niedermuller

June 1983

Thesis Advisor:

John W. Creighton

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Prominent Constraints Faced by Government Managers

by

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B.S. California State Polytechnic University,
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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN MANAGEMENT

from the

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June 1983

ABSTRACT

The research focuses on identification of significant regulatory factors influencing the upper level managers of technically oriented Navy Activities. The most often cited constraints were civilian personnel and acquisition regulations. Other constraints identified were rotation of military managers, political influence, and lack of planning. It was concluded that personnel constraints were primarily a result of the poor working relationship between the personnel function and the functional organization. In the case of the acquisition system, the problem is mainly regulatory in nature, but may be alleviated through increased cooperation between the supply personnel and the requiring activity. The constraints are analyzed and methods to improve performance are suggested.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A great amount of research has addressed the identifiable factors that contribute to organizational effectiveness. Many of these studies have included public sector organizations, however, external regulation which constrains the public manager has been largely overlooked. However, in many cases these regulations are not rigid, but are open to some interpretation, and while this provides the manager an opportunity to adapt the regulations to best serve his organization, it also complicates his job. To be effective the Federal executive must manage these regulatory constraints, just as constraints dictated by the external environment must be managed in the private sector.

The public sector organization is subject to external influence in the areas of budget, personnel policies, and purchasing procedures, whereas in a private firm these issues are typically decided by internal groups [Ref. 1]. In these areas, and possibly others, there are externally imposed limits on the government managers control of their organization; these limits have a potential impact on the organizational effectiveness. The regulation in these three areas is fairly uniform, but not identical, throughout the Federal Government. However, it can not be expected to have the same impact on all managers since their organizations have varied cultures and missions.

There has been little research on the identification of these constraints and the effective strategies employed to alleviate or minimize their adverse effects. There is a potential wealth of information in understanding these constraints and successful approaches to managing them. While the same technique cannot be expected to work in all cases much can be learned from other's reaction to these constraints.

A. THE PURPOSE

The purpose of this thesis is to contribute to increased understanding of regulatory constraints faced by federal managers and to provide an analysis of specific constraints. Regulatory constraints which government managers perceive as most limiting their ability to manage their organizations will be identified and analyzed. The analysis of the constraints and the final recommendations should be useful to the Federal manager. The adaptation to external constraints, whether in public or private sectors, is one factor in the effective operation of an organization.

B. THE APPROACH

The study consisted of four phases. The first phase consisted of defining the breadth of organizations to be included in the study, and defining the organization and the external environment. The organizations included were five technical organizations within the Department of the Navy.

The organization was defined as the Department of the Navy. Therefore, any regulations originating outside of the Department of the Navy were considered as external regulation. This definition was based on the inability of the Department of the Navy to influence other government agencies significantly, their differing goals, and lack of a common management activity below the Executive or Congressional levels of government.

The second phase consisted of conducting interviews with 16 senior managers in the five organizations chosen. Those interviewed had positions which ranged from Staff of Commander, Naval Air Systems Command, to Department Head.

The third phase involved analysis of the data and identification of the constraints.

The fourth phase consisted of the analysis of the constraints and the definition of effective strategies to manage them. The constraints were viewed as influences from the external environment, and then analyzed using organizational development methods.

Chapter II provides a description of the organizations included in the survey, the individuals surveyed and a summary of the interview findings. In Chapter III the constraints identified are analyzed and contributing factors are examined. Chapter IV provides analysis resulting in definition of what are felt to be ideal methods to manage

the constraints, and identification of successful methods used by the managers surveyed. Chapter V contains the conclusions and general observations.

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE DATABASE

Those interviewed come from five different organizations and held upper management positions. The organizations were similar in many ways, but the responsibilities of the positions varied significantly. As a result the interview data are divided into two groups based on the managers responsibility.

A. THE ORGANIZATIONS

Within the Department of the Navy, the relationship of the organizations from which the interview subjects came is shown in Figure 1. The field activities , with the exception of Naval Ordnance Station (NOS), Indian Head, are part of Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR). The field activities are tasked with the engineering and technical support of the NAVAIR mission, while NAVAIR performs the managerial function. The NOS, Indian Head is under the Naval Sea Systems Command, and does some technical work for NAVAIR. While the organizations do face similar environments, there are some differences.

1. Naval Air Systems Command

NAVAIR is located in Arlington Va., in the Washington D.C. area. Their function is to manage the procurement and operations of major airborne weapons systems in support of the Naval Aviation mission. NAVAIR is one of

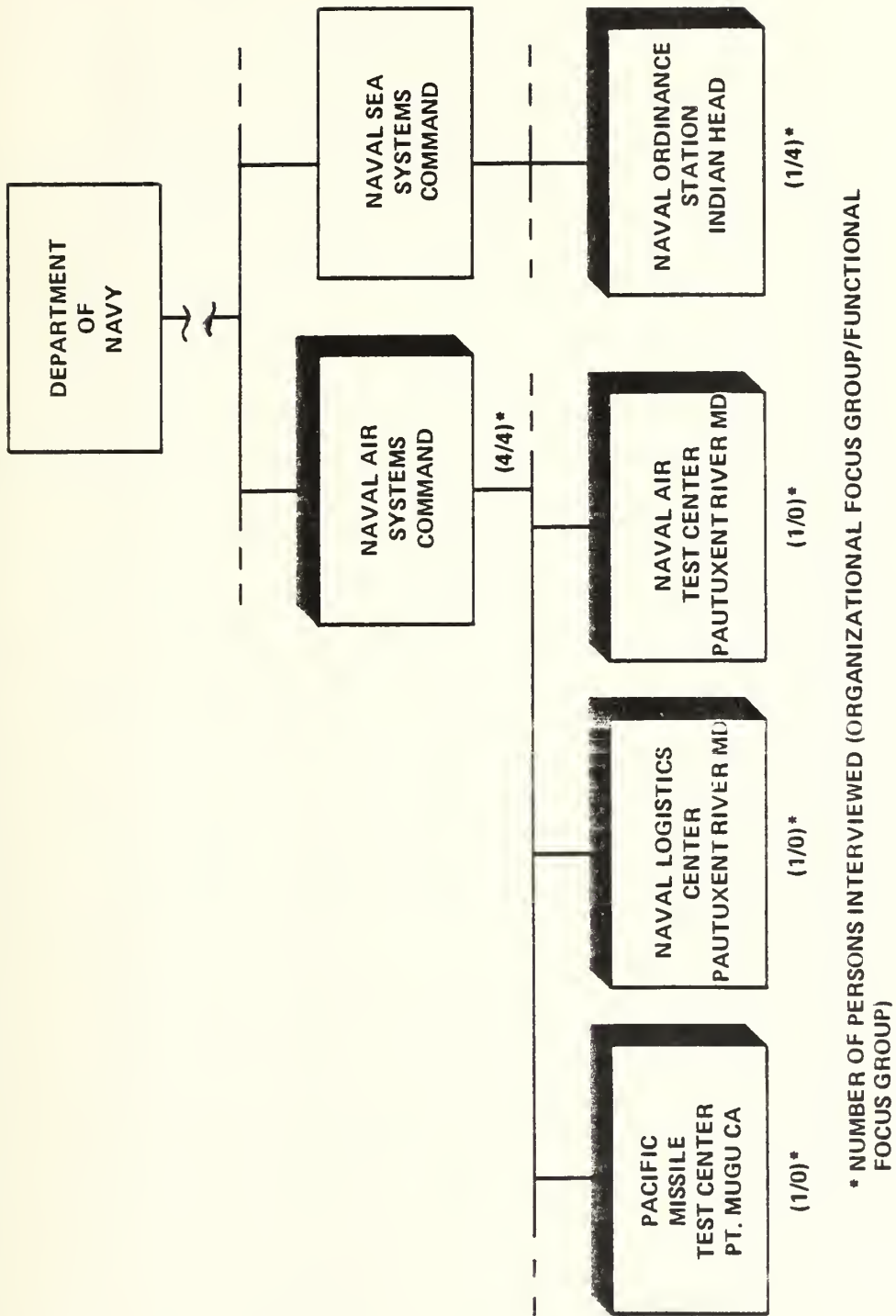


Figure 1. Organizations From Which Managers Were Interviewed

the Naval Systems Commands, in the line of authority from Secretary of Defense, Secretary of Navy, Chief of Naval Operations and Naval Material Command.

NAVAIR is the managing organization for Naval Aviation. Examples of it's responsibilities include long range "corporate" planning, prediction of necessary equipment, acquisition of specific systems, coordination of the field activities, and preparation of the Naval Aviation portion of the annual budget. These activities are both self generated and in response to requirements of superior organizations. An example of self generated output would be the required aircraft characteristics to deal with predicted threats, providing guidance to the field and subordinate activities, and managing major acquisitions. Examples of reactive output would be responses to Congressional inquiries, budget requests, implementing directives from superior commands, and all the "what if's" that abound in the Washington arena.

The environment of NAVAIR is highly variable. Many of the directives and rules which govern how they accomplish their job are politically motivated, and therefore subject to change. Additionally, with the current annual budget approval cycle and potential changes in the funding of major programs, this uncertainty can be extreme. The uncertainty is concentrated in the funding levels and technical environment of the weapons systems being procured. The

majority of the uncertainty is therefore resident within the programs managed by the organization. The mission and responsibilities of NAVAIR remain relatively stable.

2. The Field Activities

The field activities face a similar environment but there are some significant differences. The field activities, since they work for NAVAIR, are impacted by much of the same uncertainty. However, they are also buffered from some of the environment by the headquarters organization. The field activities do not have to provide as much reactive output to their superior activities, although they sometimes feel they do. As specialists in the technical aspects of a program, they do not face as much uncertainty as NAVAIR simply because of their narrower focus. This can be demonstrated by dividing the uncertainty faced by NAVAIR into two segments, one which impacts the managerial tasks, and one which impacts the technical tasks. NAVAIR could be considered as absorbing the bulk of the managerial uncertainty and passing most of the technical uncertainty on to the field activities. Thus, the field activities never see much of the uncertainty faced by NAVAIR, yet NAVAIR should be aware of most of the uncertainty faced by the field activities.

The field activities are also responsible for the maintenance and improvement of their technical facilities and personnel. Additionally, in the current environment they

are responsible to set the rate schedule for various services provided to NAVAIR, and to market their capabilities thus providing the funding they need to remain in operation. Many of the departments at these Field Activities are Navy Industrial Funded (NIF) and function like private business. In a NIF activity the organization receives funding only through "contracts" with sponsors, such as NAVAIR. They are paid on the basis of work to be performed. This allows a better cost accounting system, but results in some marketing behavior by the field activities.

B. DEPENDENCE ON SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

All of these organizations rely on service functions such as the comptroller, personnel, supply, and public works to provide specialized support. The support functions may be resident within the supported activity (as is generally the case with the field activities), or they may be shared between more than one command (as is the case with NAVAIR). These functions are regulated by organizations outside the activity they serve. The procedures which must be followed by these support functions are issued by regulatory organizations, and generally can not be influenced to a great extent by the supported organization. While this is a departure from the practice followed in most small private companies, there are some large private sector companies that operate in this manner. However, even when structured

in a similar manner, private sector support functions have a clearer understanding of corporate goals than do those in the Federal sector. One reason for the separation of functions and dual chain of authority in the government is to insure the fairness of the personnel and supply systems. In this way the separation of responsibility provides a check and balance, with no single organization able to exert total authority. Fairness to the general public is the key consideration, not the effective function of these organizations.

C. THE PERSONNEL INTERVIEWED

Those interviewed ranged from GS-15 to Senior Executive Service (SES). Their positions were both broad organization focused (such as Technical director of a field activity, or a staff planner at NAVAIR), and a narrow functional focus (such as a division head, responsible for a specific range of tasks generally supervising 80-200 people). The data from these two groups did differ somewhat, and they were separated during the analysis to provide sharper focus on the response differences. All but two had been in their current position over one year and most had over 10 years government service. Half of the organizational group had previous experience in private industry.

D. THE INTERVIEW FORMAT

The interview began with structured questions which gathered data about the managers organization, how he saw his job, and his approach to the job. There were then open ended questions regarding the major focuses of the position and areas where regulation constrained his approach to the job. A copy of the interview questions is provided in Appendix A. There were questions in the interview that were not necessary to support the conclusions drawn from the data. This can be attributed to the design of the interview format being broader than necessary to insure that data supporting different potential outcomes would be available.

The interview subjects were promised confidentiality of all responses unless permission was received to use specific information. This was to promote openness and honesty on subjects they otherwise may have considered potentially risky and been unwilling to share. All interviews were conducted at the interviewees' office or an office borrowed for the purpose. The interviews ran about one to one-and-onehalf hours each and only notes were taken to record responses. A review of the interview was dictated after the interview in those cases where more information was provided than could be noted during the interview.

E. THE INTERVIEW RESPONSES

Response data were divided into two groups. The division was based on the type of responsibility and the focus of the position. The first group dealt with the organization either as a whole or with a major portion of the organization. An example of a position in this group would be a Technical Director, or Planning Director. This group will be designated the organizational focus group, their responses can be found in Appendix B. The other group had a more functional or restricted view, where the organization itself became a significant part of their environment. Examples of this type of position would be an Engineering Department Head or Program Manager. This group will be called the functional focus group, their response data is found in Appendix C. Of the 16 persons interviewed, 8 were in each group.

The response to the question "What regulation or constraint have you found inhibit or limit you in managing your organization?" was the basis to be used for evaluation of the regulatory factors. These data were reduced by disregarding any response mentioned by only one person. The result was then tabulated as shown in Table 1 for both managerial groups. The personnel management function was the most frequently mentioned response (12 of 16 responses) by both groups of managers. The two managers in the organizational group who did not mention personnel

TABLE 1
SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW RESPONSE DATA

FUNCTIONAL GROUP (NUMBER OF RES.)	ORGANIZATIONAL GROUP (NUMBER OF RES.)	CONSTRAINT	TOTAL RESPONSE (%)
6/8	6/8	PERSONNEL SUPPORT	75%
4/8	3/8	ACQUISITION AND CONTRACTING	44%
1/8	2/8	ROTATIONAL MILITARY MANAGERS	19%
3/8	0/8	POLITICAL INFLUENCES	19%
0/8	2/8	INADEQUATE PLANNING	13%

regulations as a constraining factor have both developed different strategies which eliminates many of the problems mentioned by other managers. A discussion of these strategies will be made in Chapter 4.

In both groups the acquisition process was the second most frequent constraint mentioned, occurring in 4 of 8 responses in the functional group and 3 of 8 responses in the organizational group. This response is also considered significant since one member of the functional group had very little experience with the contracting process and did not mention it as a constraint. In the organizational group two respondents would be expected to have little direct experience with contracting based on their positions. Therefore, of those with some experience in the contracting process, between 50-60% (7 of 13) consider it a constraint in managing their organization.

The groups differ in the third ranked constraint, with the functional group considering political influence significant (3 of the 8), while the organizational group considered both rotational military managers and lack of planning as significant (each receiving 2 of 8 responses). The organizational group did not mention political influence as a constraint while they would seem to be more influenced by it than the functional group. It is hypothesized that the organizational group has a more global view than the functional group and therefore accepts

political influence as a reality of the job. It is also possible the functional group are impacted more by the effects of political changes than the higher level group.

The functional group listed one additional constraint: the public works department. The major complaint was that Public Works was unresponsive to the needs of the organization. The managers who listed this constraint were all from one field activity, so this may not be a typical problem. For this reason the problem will not be dealt with in depth.

In response to the question, "If you could change anything what would you change?", three of seven functional managers responses included at least some personnel constraints they would eliminate. None of the organizational managers responded with any personnel issues, but rather methods to increase the measurability of work (3 of 7) or some form of increased planning (2 of 7). This is attributed to the nonquantifiable nature of most jobs in the organizational group and the managers desire to be able to measure the effects of his actions and those of his subordinates.

F. CONCLUSIONS FROM THE INTERVIEWS

A strong pattern emerged which shows a consensus in both groups that the personnel and acquisition regulations are considered a management constraint. The political

influence, rotational military managers, and lack of planning, are each supported by two or three respondents.

The managers responses of changes they would like to be able to make may be an indication that the functional managers are more directly affected by personnel matters than the organizational managers. The organizational managers appear to prefer to be able to have more direct measurement of organizational performance. However it is the business itself, not regulation that currently prevents or obscures such measurement.

There are other issues mentioned by only one manager. Examples of these were the Naval Comptroller (NAVCOMPT) funding regulations, high grade limitation, excessive documentation requirements, and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) paperwork. There are two possible reasons these were considered a constraint by only one manager in the sample are the individuals personal management style, or their particular environment. All managers are not subjected to the same set of constraints. Many of these issues mentioned only once are valid constraints within a more restricted environment faced by some managers. These will not be examined, but should be considered potential constraints to Federal Managers in specific situations.

None of those interviewed expressed the opinion that regulations were rigid requirements, but more a framework to be understood. The intent of the regulation was more

important to most managers than the specific requirements. None expressed feelings which could be considered outside reasonable moral or ethical boundaries.

The conclusions drawn are applicable to the general environment in the organizations from which the sample was drawn. The major issues will be examined next from a theoretical basis, then current coping strategies examined.

III. ANALYSIS OF THE CONSTRAINTS

The significant constraints identified in the previous section will be examined individually, and a thorough understanding of the problem developed. Additional data, which could not be included in Appendices B and C, will be provided to illustrate causes and effects of the constraints.

The government manager has the same basic function as the private sector manager, [Ref. 2,3], to guide a group or organization in the attainment of a goal or series of goals. The basic skills of management are the same for both the government and private sector manager, as can be seen by the many who successfully transition, David Packard being one example. One of the differences between the two environments is the rules or constraints faced by managers. The private sector manager does face constraints, but they are different from those faced in the public sector. The main reason for this is the difference in the purpose of public and private organizations. The private organization must have a goal of profit, although additional goals may be present. The public organizations purpose is service, and not just to those who wish to avail themselves of the product, but to all of society. The public manager lacks the feedback mechanism of free trade that serves as the basic barometer of the private

manager. It is difficult to determine what value society as a whole, places on a given level of public service. The public business, or government, is funded by all the people, not only those who wish to participate as in the case of the private firm. As a result the government must be based on fair and equal treatment of all people and not the efficient or maximally effective operation. This is a key point yet is often overlooked. The private firm is organized to be effective and efficient, and these values are typically measured by objective measures such as profit, market share, sales growth and other quantifiable factors. Most regulations effecting government operations are designed to insure fairness and that individuals will not be able to manipulate the system for their personal gain. Examples of this are regulations affecting the spending of tax revenue on both personnel and purchasing, and rules on ethical behavior and conflict of interest for government employees.

The two prominent constraints identified in the interviews fall into the general area of regulation necessary to insure fairness in the exercise of government. While this means these regulations cannot be completely eliminated, an understanding of the intent of the regulations and the methods of dealing with the resulting constraints is worthwhile. The other constraints, lack of planning, military managers, and political influences will also be analyzed, but in less detail.

A. PERSONNEL CONSTRAINTS

The civil service regulations compose the bulk of regulation dealing with the civilian employees of the federal government. These regulations are designed to promote fairness in hiring, promotions, dismissal, and all other matters pertaining to personnel. They include Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and methods of classifying jobs skills, etc.

In order to carry out the responsibility of insuring fair employment practices in the government, the personnel function is organized as shown in Figure 2. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is the organization responsible for the regulation of the Civil Service Personnel Offices. Under the OPM there are regional offices that serve as overseeing agencies to the Civilian Personnel Offices that serve the various government organizations within a given region. The personnel office is also regulated by different internal organizations, as shown. In this case the DOD interprets the OPM regulations and issues guidance, which can be further interpreted. Each interpretation tends to be more restrictive.

The individual Civilian Personnel Offices that provide services to the various government organizations are not directly under the authority of OPM, but are regulated by them. These offices may serve either a single organization or several organizations depending on factors such as the

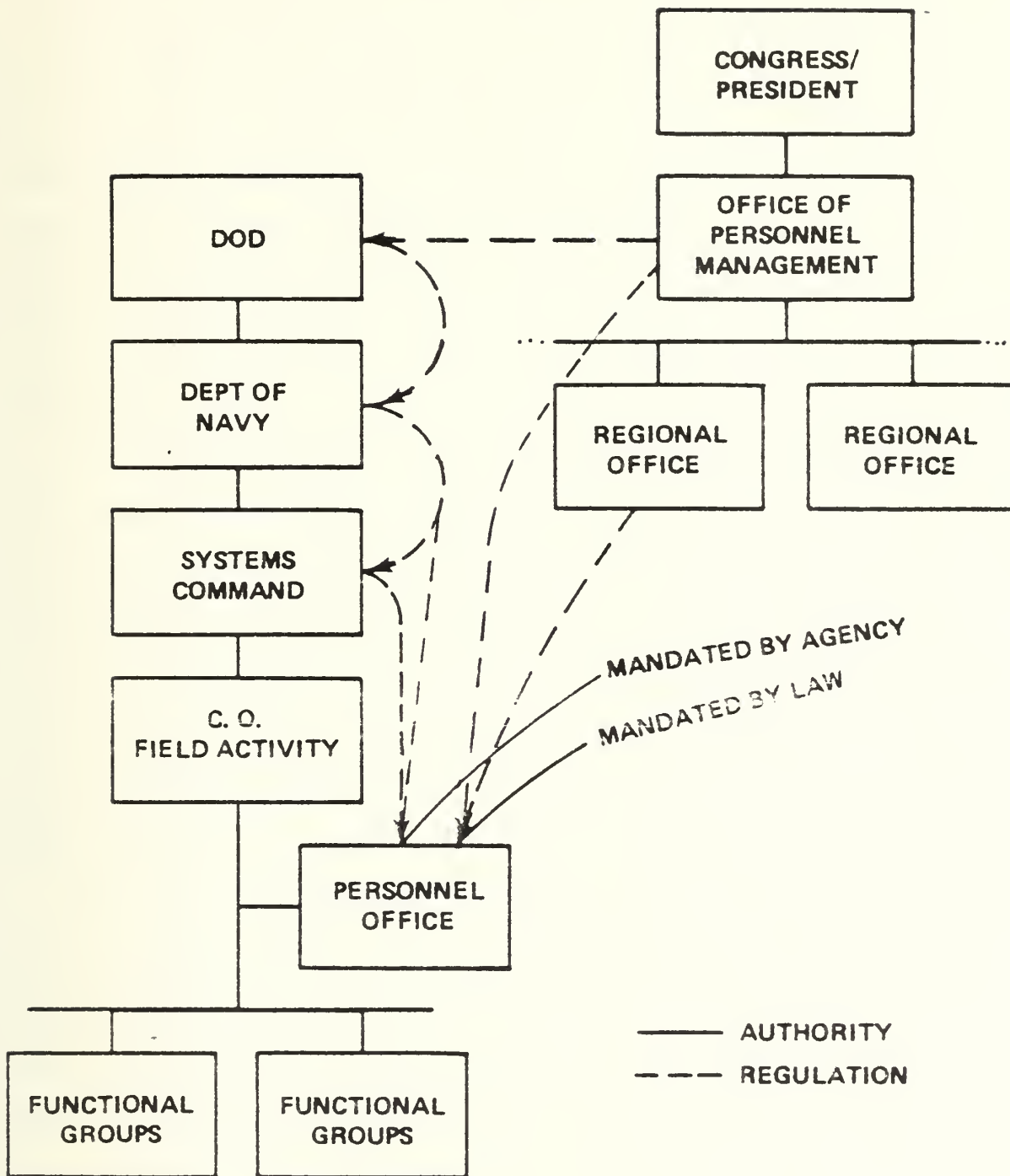


Figure 2. The Chains of Command and Regulation Which Impact the Typical Personnel Office.

size or geographic location of the organization. The personnel organization is in the chain of command of the organization being served, yet is also responsible to follow the regulations promulgated by OPM. This is to insure the personnel regulations will not be influenced to better meet the goals of the organization than the fairness they were set up to maintain. However, this is also a source of conflict between the organization and the personnel function.

The rewards system of the personnelist is based on both adherence to the rules and to good service to the organization. The major reward potential is from the organization being served since the personnel office is part of that organization administratively. Often, however, the functional organization does not take advantage of the reward potential to reward the types of behavior from which they would benefit the most.

The Civilian Personnel Office is also subject to audit by the representatives of the OPM. This is a potential punishment mechanism should the audit team find that the regulations have not been followed. In some cases, this can cause problems for the organization if the violations have been flagrant enough to warrant reversal of some previous actions. This is uncommon and would occur only in cases of obvious abuse of the civilian personnel system.

In many cases the regulations must be interpreted on a case by case basis, requiring the personnelist to make a decision based on personal judgment. There is some latitude in these interpretations, and to be in violation of the regulation requires that the action deviate significantly from the intent of the regulation. Therefore, the potential punishment for regulation violations is not significant in a well run Civilian Personnel Office. Thus, the major influence for the rewards system of the personnelist is the organization being served, not OPM. The more involved and knowledgeable the personnelist, the more likely that the interpretation of regulations will be those which best support the needs of the organization within the intent of the regulations.

Another source of conflict between the organization and the personnel function is a difference in organizational types. The organizations studied were product oriented government organizations and were not bureaucratic in form, but were actually organic in nature. It is necessary to define the usage of the term bureaucratic as used throughout this paper. Bureaucratic has two meanings, one a conventional usage which has come to be associated with government itself, red tape, and inflexible routines. The other, the definition of the term by German sociologist Max Weber, was that of "an organization which attempts to control extra-organizational influences ... through the

creation of specialized (staff) positions and through such rules and devices as regulations and categorization. ∴.the bureaucratic organization seeks to stabilize and routinize its own processes in the interests of internal efficiency." [Ref. 4]. Thus a bureaucratic organization is a regulated organization in which the employees are following established routines guided by formalized procedures. This description relating to the design or intent of the organization will be taken as the meaning of the term bureaucracy throughout this paper. The organic organization is generally more flexible and not rule oriented, but focused on the product, and is responsive to changes necessary to provide a quality product. Organic organizations are not inhibited by their structure, but willing and able to change to meet changing requirements. The organic organization, by definition, is more able to deal with the uncertain environment, the innovation required to cope with task uncertainty, and increased authority at lower levels in the organization, a "do what is necessary to get the job done" philosophy [Ref. 5].

The personnel system is generally bureaucratic or mechanistic, (or machine like, a nonidealized bureaucracy) in form. The ideal characteristics of the mechanistic organization according to Robey, [Ref. 6], are:

1. The overall goal and task of the organization is known.
2. Tasks can be divided into subtasks.
3. The overall task is simple enough so that expertise for planning its execution is concentrated at higher levels.
4. Valid measures of individual performance can be obtained.
5. Employees respond to the monetary rewards given to them for task performance.
6. Authority of administrators is accepted as legitimate.

The civilian personnel function, when evaluated using these six conditions, has bureaucratic traits. The organic organization possesses the opposite characteristics of the bureaucratic organization. When comparing the workers in these two types of organizations there are differences in the motivation, the task uncertainty, and lower members authority. This increases potential for conflict since the people in the organizations can have difficulty relating to each other since they work in different environments and different types of organizations.

The specific complaints from managers in the interview are listed below:

Unresponsive

Position Management Slow

Classification Slow

Reward System Not Adequate

Difficult To Hire

Difficult To Fire

Manager Has Too Little Control

The first three complaints deal with the quality of service provided, while the last four could be attributed to the Civil Service Regulations themselves. The regulations themselves are a significant constraint on the federal manager. As an example consider the process of terminating an employee for unsatisfactory service. There is little doubt that a government manager faces a more difficult process in firing an individual than a manager in private industry. One case documented shows a GS-4 clerk-typist who was terminated for leave abuse. The process took 18 months. In this case the employee did not exercise appeal rights or the case would have taken longer [Ref. 7]. According to the Personnel Management Project Final Report, in addition to the lengthy process leading to the termination, should an employee appeal the firing, "Managers embroiled in appeals often find that these processes consume all of their time and attention, to the detriment of all other work. The manager must have precise records to substantiate the action against the employee and must proceed with precision through many steps over a long period of time or lose a valid case on procedural grounds..." [Ref. 8]. While the comments refer

to the situation prior to the 1978 reforms, the process is still one which favors the employee and places the burden of proof on the manager. Given the time pressures most managers face many are unwilling to become involved in this process. This results in a feeling that it is realistically impossible to remove unsatisfactory employees.

The Presidents Reorganization Project, established by President Carter in June, 1977, recognized the problems cited and uncovered many more. The Civil Service Reform of 1978 was undertaken to resolve some of these problems but it has not had the impact that was intended. The government personnel system will never be as simple or responsive as private sector business, nor should it be. The government is the business of the people and it does need to be safeguarded from a return to the spoils system prevalent in the 1800's. However, things could be less regulated than present and still provide the necessary safeguards. A realistic assessment of the situation is summarized in the Personnel Management Project Final Report,

"Instead of creating highly complicated personnel systems to thwart dishonest people personnel systems must be designed for use by honest people. Rather than create systems which are unworkable for the vast majority of people who honestly and fairly administer them, separate procedures and organizations are required to stop and correct the few who abuse merit principles." [Ref. 9]

The recommendations which were intended to change the system to one designed for the honest person were part of the reform of 1978, but while there was some improvement

there is still a long way to go. In 1983 the Reagan Administration began talking of reform to make it easier to hire and fire the Federal worker. At this time it is unclear what direction these new reforms might take.

There are at least two possible reasons for the managers frustration over these regulations. One is that much of the regulation is non-functional, not just from the standpoint of the manager, but also from the view of a taxpayer. One example of a regulation like this is the "rule of three". This requires an organization wishing to hire a person not currently employed by the government hire from the top three people listed on the Civil Service Register for that occupation. Thus if a person is working in an organization as a temporary employee but is not listed as one of the top three people on the register for that job classification they could not be hired. The inflexibility of this regulation does not allow for special cases, but forces compliance. The final effect is that the manager is forced to hire an unknown person over a known good performer. Another possible reason for the frustration is the complexity of the requirements and an inability to "make the system work", either due to their lack of knowledge of the personnel system, lack of cooperation from the personnelists, or the rigidity of regulations. This second view is supported by the response of two of those interviewed who had no complaints about the personnel

system; one had developed good working relationship with the personnel organization, while the other had a former personnel person as an interface between his organization and the Civilian Personnel Office. Both reported they did not consider personnel a constraint. As an example of the dramatic difference possible with the same regulations, but different approaches, one of these activities reported that high grade positions take about 60 days to fill, while other organizations reported a time of nearly a year in many cases.

There clearly is a case to be made for part of the problem being a result of the managers lack of knowledge of the personnel system and a lack of cooperation between the personnel office and the managers. Regardless of the soundness of the regulations themselves, there is a lack of cooperation between the managers and personnel offices. This was supported in several of the interviews in which the feeling was expressed by calling personnel one of the "prevent groups" instead of the support groups. Other responses, such as "they work for OPM, not us" and "they could care less about getting the job done" are illustrative of the same attitude. This feeling is not surprising, given the different goals and structure (bureaucratic vs organic) of the functional organization and the personnel office. If some positive action is not taken these differences will cause continued difficulties between the two functions.

The regulations contain many elements which inhibit the federal manager from managing people the way most private businesses do. These include inability to reward potential, or even present, performance through salary adjustments other than Quality Step Increases, which are minimal rewards at best. The inability to promote based on the managers opinion and preference, but rather utilize the merit promotion system is another example. These are just two of the many constraints that could be mentioned, and result from the consideration of fairness rather than efficiency as the prime design factor of the personnel system. These regulations are not going to change, and the best hope of a government manager to cope with these problems is to work with the Civilian Personnel Office to insure maximum use of the latitude that is available.

To summarize the foregoing, the personnel function and the functional organizations have different goals, are structured differently, and as a result at times have trouble communicating. The personnel regulations themselves are designed to promote fairness, not efficiency, and do result in inefficiency and ineffectiveness in the operation of the functional organization. These two issues, the working relationship and the regulation itself, encompass all the complaints about the personnel system made in the interviews.

B. THE ACQUISITION CONSTRAINTS

The acquisition system has fairness as one of its primary goals, but it also has a secondary goal, efficiency. In this case efficiency is narrowly defined as the least cost purchase of goods and services. The basic goal of the acquisition system is that the required product be purchased from a qualified offeror submitting the lowest price. In this way the system can be fair by allowing any qualified source to bid on the contract, and be efficient by choosing the least expensive bid. The complaints from managers about the acquisition system were:

takes too long (one organization reported the average contract award took over 200 days)

awards to unqualified vendors result in poor products or terminations and reaward

small business set asides result in extra time and inferior products in many cases

supply people aren't doing their best

won't buy proven product, buy cheapest and it doesn't always work

too much documentation required (complaint of both functional and acquisition managers)

The acquisition system, like the personnel system, is typically considered a service organization, with its own chain of regulatory authority outside the organization it serves. The authority to contract is given to contracting officers in the form of a warrant, on a line of authority as shown in Figure 3. The individual contracting officer is

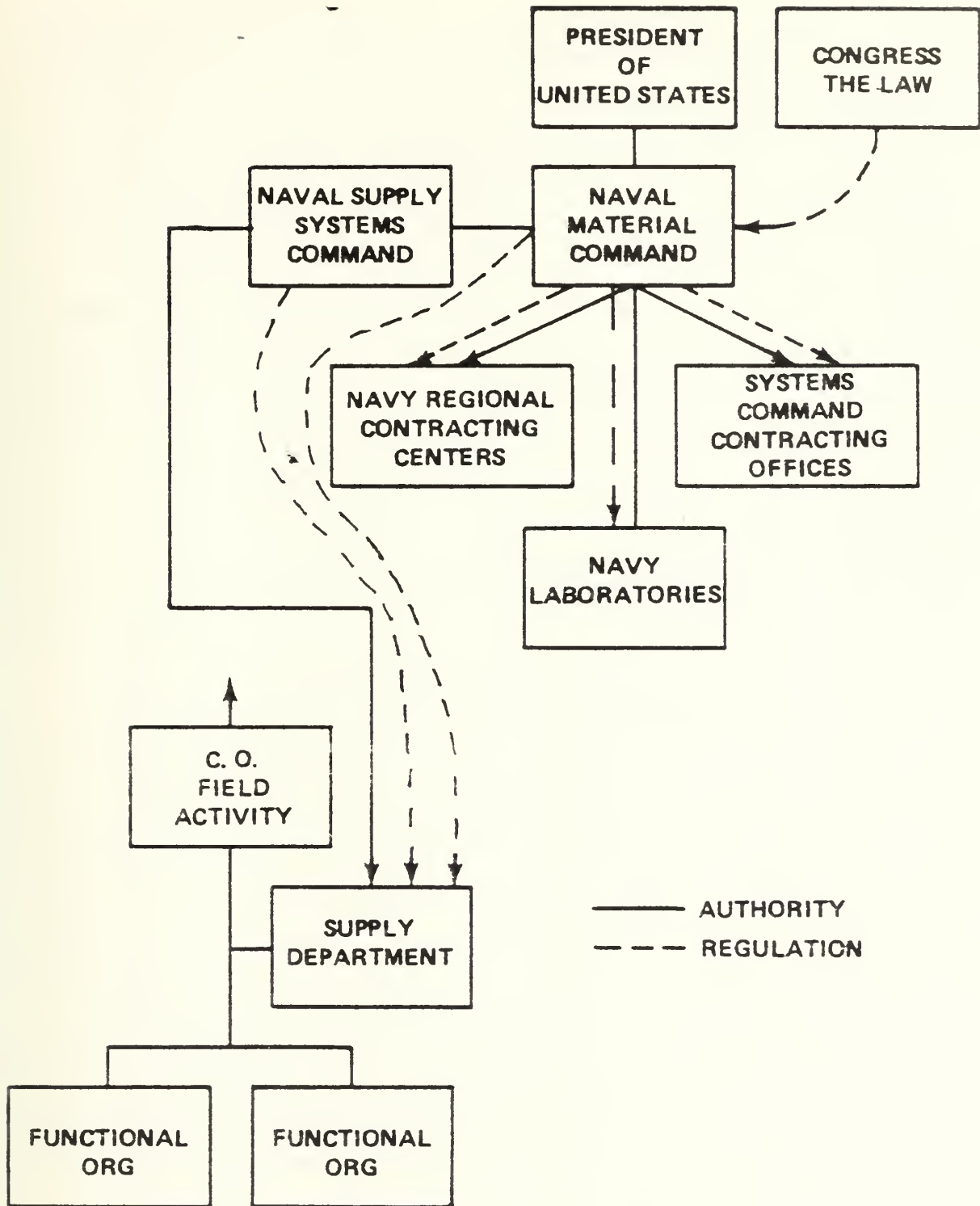


Figure 3. The Chains of Command and Contracting Authority Affecting a Typical Supply Department

responsible to his superior in this line, and is also personally responsible for his actions as an agent of the U.S. Government. This can include the recovery of funds from the individual contracting officer for actions considered not in the best interest of the government. Given responsibility to both the acquisition community the organization they serve, and the financial responsibility of the position, accuracy and documentation is very important to the contracting officer. There is a third influence in the case of a military contracting officer, the possible damage to their career a major investigation or mistake could cause.

In the acquisition system the emphasis is on accuracy and accountability as far as the individual is concerned, while in the functional organization the focus is on getting the job done. Therefore the goals of the two chains, command and authority, are not in complete agreement. This is a potential source of conflict.

Two major concerns expressed by the managers interviewed were the timeliness and quality of the product received. These are also concerns of the contracting officer, but are often secondary to the price and the accountability of the transaction. The concern shown by the contracting officer for organizational requirements is dependent on many variables, but one major factor is how the contracting officer has been treated by the organization and how much he

can identify with the requirement for the item. If the acquisition request is viewed only as one of many contracts being processed the organization can not hope for an award that considers anything but the least cost item which meets the requirements as understood by the contracting officer.

One other problem which occurs in government procurement is that since all people qualified can bid, the specification of the product is very critical. The term qualified in many cases is not very restrictive. Vendors have taken advantage of incomplete specifications to provide items which will not fulfill the intended use, in some cases even knowingly. The preparation of the specification is the responsibility of the requisitioner. Often this person has no training in this critical area. This often results in incomplete specifications which can result in many different contractual problems. This aspect of the problem is regulatory, since the purchase of a known quality item is not allowed, items must be competitively procured.

The Small Business and Affirmative Action regulation giving preference to certain businesses in the award of contracts also creates problems. Often these firms are marginally qualified and the end product is substandard, delivered late, or costs more than a product from an established firm. These additional regulations also complicate the job of the contracting officer while increasing the chance for failure in performance, according to the experience some of the managers surveyed.

In the acquisition system there exists a different line of authority, outside the organization being served, which is bureaucratic or mechanistic structure.

The supply function is oriented toward procedure and regulation, while the functional organization is more product oriented. The acquisition regulations are based on fairness and least cost, not responsiveness to the requisitioners needs. In some cases the people staffing the acquisition function may identify more with the regulation and control in the supply system than with the mission of the organization being served. All of these factors tend to cause dissatisfaction with the acquisition process.

C. OTHER CONSTRAINTS IDENTIFIED

Several other constraints mentioned by those interviewed, represented problems that do not have a global impact, but do influence particular managers. These will be analyzed briefly in this section.

1. Political Constraints

The political constraints mentioned in the interviews were the following:

changing political direction from new political appointees
political considerations that effect approval of documents at the Assistant Secretary of Defense level

These are both realities of working in the government environment. The government is to be responsive

to the people, and the government manager will always face this political influence as a result. The political input does not add to efficiency, but often promotes inefficiency. A prime example of the political input is the case of the B-1 Bomber program. It was canceled by the Carter administration, and the revived by the Reagan administration. It can be said again that government was not meant to be efficient. As long as we continue to have elections and political appointees to help the President carry out his policy, which has been approved at least in part by the voters, this will continue. This is not a bad system, but we must recognize the price we pay for this responsiveness.

2. Military Personnel In Key Positions

The complaints in this area were not directed at individuals but Military personnel in general who are cycled through key management positions in these organizations. The specific complaints are listed below.

rotational military managers in that they are short term managers and reinforce the short term perspective

military managers coming into the job not having the skills necessary to do it, it takes till near the end their assignment to become competent

It is difficult in any organization to fill a key executive position because there is some time associated with the new person learning how the organization functions and what it's needs are. This appears to be true in the

organizations studied, and while no recent examples of major problems as a result of this policy were offered there was a feeling by some that this was a constraint they faced.

One of the known problems that results from the use of military personnel in key positions is the short term perspective that results. This is a critical issue, and results more from the system used to appraise an officers performance than from a deficiency in military officers. If any manager is rated only on the current performance of their organization it will force a current perspective. Often necessary long term changes will not be made since they may have negative short term impacts which could reflect poorly on the officers performance during that period.

The complaint was also made that some officers coming into positions did not have the background necessary. This view is probably valid, most often in specialized positions. When this occurs it places extra burden on both the military manager and the civilians in the organization.

The reason that military personnel serve in these key positions is that these organizations are to serve the military and therefore it is reasoned should be headed by a military person. There could be many arguments made against this proposition, but the current system does serve well to keep the focus accurately on the military mission of the organization.

3. Lack of Planning

The comments relative to lack of planning are listed below:

inability to plan, mainly due to micromanagement by the DOD and congress

lack of coordination between the field activities and no one responsible to plan

The problems identified in these comments have different causes. In the first case the complaint is reflective of the political uncertainty of the environment. The complaint is that the high uncertainty makes the organization unable to plan. This is an admission that the organization is having trouble coping with the environment. The second comment is a result of a fault within the organization. This comment is reflective of one managers feeling that the organization above him in the chain did not do sufficient planning, and this lack of planning was making his job harder.

There were other comments that could be related to planning, such as the uncertainty of funding levels from year to year due to the annual appropriations cycle, most of the political influences listed above, and the effect of the short term military manager. These, taken with the business of defense itself, and the rapid technological change in that environment, together result in a very uncertain environment in which to plan.

These influences can also be seen, but to a lesser degree, in the private sector defense industry. These same influences are part of the reason for frequent cost increases in weapon systems [Ref. 10]. Just as private sector business must cope with this uncertainty and the attendant increased cost, so must the government agencies.

There is no reason that the planning necessary to coordinate business effectively can not be carried out. Part of the reason that more planning is not done is the inability to resolve some of the major issues affecting the organization. One possible reason for the lack of planning could be the major uncertainty in the political environment, which could be considered as overshadowing any planning that could be done. While uncertainty does make planning much more difficult it is still possible, and even more necessary, to have adequate planning in this environment. Another possible cause is the reliance on the Five Year Defense Plan as the planning document. This provides less than complete planning. Another cause is the absence of slack resources, both people and funding, within the organizations. Without some slack resources it is difficult to find the time to plan, since time will usually be devoted to pressing current issues. This is a common trap, and is probably at least partially responsible here. The staffing of key positions within the organization with military managers who are rated on what they do while in the

position, and not their long term effects no doubt also plays some part in the lack of planning. All of these things can affect the ability and the desire of the organizations leaders to plan properly.

IV. METHODS OF DEALING WITH EXTERNAL CONSTRAINTS

An effective manager confronted by a constraint will develop a strategy to minimize or exploit it. This section will identify strategies which can be applied to the constraints identified. Methods identified in the interview data and theoretical methods identified through a search of literature will be discussed. There is no one best solution for dealing with any one of these constraints, since the optimum method is dependent on several variables. These variables include the mission of the organization, its structure, the individual managerial styles of those involved and a myriad of external influences that may be present.

Each of the constraints will be discussed first on a theoretical basis in an attempt to define the ideal situation. Then possible ways to implement that solution and potential blocks to implementation will be discussed. The effective strategies of the managers interviewed will also be reviewed.

A. PERSONNEL

1. Ideal Condition

The current structure of the Office of Personnel Management and the existing regulations are assumed as given

throughout this discussion. Solutions developed will be based on the current constraints since this is what the manager will probably face for some time.

The manager might have the following reasonable expectations of the civilian personnel office:

a good understanding of the OPM regulations and their impact on the organization being served

efficient timely processing of personnel requests

understanding of the goals of the organization in general, and the problems faced by the manager in particular

willingness and ability to help the manager with personnel problems, to act as a consultant to help the manager do his job

Most managers in the Federal service would welcome a personnel office which would meet the criteria above. These are considered reasonable goals for a personnel office under the current regulation. The basic goal which will lead to improvement in all of these areas is to develop a supportive relationship between the Civilian Personnel Office and the managers. If this is done it will follow that the importance placed on an action by the manager will be shared by the personnelist. This requires a bi-directional commitment. Given that this requires a commitment of both the manager and personnelist there must be some requirements placed on the manager, just as ideal goals were set for the personnel office.

The manager, if he expects to work closely with the personnelist should:

have a basic understanding of the personnel regulations
have an understanding of the environment the personnelist
operates in
keep the personnelist involved in the organizations
function
have reasonable, and legal, expectations

This may well represent the personnelists ideal manager. Both the personnelist and the manager must get out of their own environment and into the others in order to develop an understanding of the total picture. Unfortunately, often each expects the other to understand their problems, and makes no effort themselves to understand the other. In fact, neither makes a real attempt to meet the other half way. As discussed in the previous chapter the difference in the structure of the organizations increases the differences faced by the two managers. This difference in roles and structure of the organizations creates initial conflict which the people involved in the process must overcome. If the manager and personnelist can begin the relationship understanding their differences and work together to build a working relationship, there is a good chance for success.

2. Methods to Attain the Optimum Condition

The methods here may differ, depending on the relationship of the personnel office to the organization, whether the office serves only one command or multiple commands.

In the case of personnel offices that serve only one organization, to reach the "ideal" condition described above we recall the expectations previously determined. The first two expectations a manager could have of the personnel office were:

a good understanding of the OPM regulations and their impact on the organization being served

efficient timely processing of personnel requests

These two expectations are specific behaviors that we wish the personnelists to have, and relate mostly to their skill and knowledge of their specialty. Rather than merely expect proficiency the effective manager will reward it. This doesn't mean necessarily monetary rewards, or even organization wide recognition. Personal recognition, showing of appreciation by saying "Thank you. You really did a great job on that.", will serve as one way to reinforce the behavior. Other rewards include increasing the stature of the personnel positions in the organization. Methods which are now used mostly in the technical organizations such as honorary awards or recognition for specific contributions would be appropriate.

The other two expectations of the personnel office relate to the relationship between the manager and the personnelist:

understanding the goals of the organization in general, and the problems faced by the manager in particular

willingness and ability to help the manager with personnel problems, to act as a personnel consultant to help the manager do his job

These both require a commitment on the part of both the personnelist and manager. The personnelist can only understand the goals and mission of the organization if they are included in the organizations planning and review process. Personnel must be made a functional part of the organization and participate in the management process if they are to lose their bureaucratic bias. What the manager is actually trying to do is change the personnel office from the OPM's regulatory representative to the organization into a representative of the organization to OPM. The result would be the local personnel office would act as a buffer organization between the OPM regulation and the organization. This is not as difficult to accomplish as it might seem. The ability of one organization to project their environment so others identify with their problems is a frequently used skill. One example is the conscription of government plant representative offices at major private defense plants to serve not as "the government's plant representative", but as "the plant's representative to the government". It often happens that these representatives identify more with the contractors viewpoint than with the governments [Ref. 11]. This happens because they are in the plant and begin to identify with the contractor because they are included in his problems more than those of the government. The government therefore becomes an external influence to them.

Including the Civilian Personnel Office in the functional organization does not reduce the regulation or provide a mechanism to subvert the regulations, but it can provide a more effective way for the organization to function. The same regulations must be upheld, but with the help of the personnel department there should be fewer cases of misapplication of regulations and more tailoring of regulation to meet the real needs of the organization.

In this cooperative environment there are also expectations which placed requirements on the manager, two of which relate to the managers self development:

- have a basic understanding of the personnel regulations

- have an understanding of the environment of the environment the personnelist operates in

There are many ways a manager can acquire this knowledge. The regional offices of the OPM offer classes on different aspects of the personnel system and regulations, or there are many books and regulations available for self study. The personnel office is the best source of helpful publications. While the prospect of spending time studying what is widely viewed as "somebody else's job" is not appealing to most managers there is one very important thing to remember: personnel was felt to be a significant constraint by 75% of those interviewed, a good manager will focus some of his time in this area. It is impossible for a manager to manage the human resources in his organization

without frequent use of the civilian personnel system, and it's very difficult to do this without the partnership of the Civilian Personnel Office.

The other two requirements that were defined for the manager were:

keep the personnelist involved in the organizations function

have reasonable, and legal, expectations

These both relate to the managers ability to keep the personnelist involved in his organization. There are several different approaches possible; the personnel office and the manager should work together in defining the best approach in their case. The tasks should involve getting personnel people into a working relationship with the functional managers. Examples of tasks would be working with the managers on staffing problems, growth plans, and personnel adjustments.

What type of changes would the organization expect to see if these things were done? The first would be a personnel office which would resemble more closely the typical private industry situation. This would be an office which was more of a staff function, responsive to management, and involved in the planning process of the organization. Personnel regulations are a major constraint, and will continue to be even with the cooperation of the Civilian Personnel Office. The strategic planning of the

organization should therefore take personnel regulation into consideration, and who better to fulfill that function - the Civilian Personnel Officer? This does not mean using the Civilian Personnel Officer to act as a part-time consultant as often happens in many organizations. They must be involved as a full member, equal to the heads of the functional organizations.

To be effective this strategy must be organization wide, not pursued by a few enlightened managers. The first contact should be between the head of the organization and the head of personnel. This will insure the management support in both organizations for the increased role. The personnel function may require additional billets. They should be given a broad view of the new requirements placed on them, and should respond with their ideas of the new requirements which will be placed on the organization. The involvement of the top management will insure the resources and structure to support the change and promote understanding of the new roles by their subordinates. Without top management support there can be some improvement, but it will be on a fragmented, vice organizational basis. As a result of the fragmented approach the change will be dependent on the support of individuals. Because of this a change of one or two key personnel can erase previous changes.

After the top managers have agreed on the changes, the other management personnel who will be involved can be briefed and included in planning. The organizations should provide any training needed, and include new reward systems and goals that will insure continued compliance of the personnel involved. This is not to infer that the change is not in the best interest of all concerned or that without external support it will be abandoned. The concern is to eliminate existing mechanisms which will inhibit the acceptance of the changes. An example of this would be the evaluation of a personnelist by the number of personnel actions processed per week. This would place importance on the volume of work done, not reward working with the managers to resolve personnel problems. Another value that may have to be dealt with is the group norms of both personnel and the functional organization. An adversarial relationship may exist if there is a long history of non-cooperation between the personnel function and the rest of the organization. If this is the case it will take some time before the change is accepted, and the actions and role of the top managers are extremely important in setting an example for other members of both organizations.

If the personnel organization is serving more than one command the process can be more difficult. Attempting to include the personnel office as described above may not be accepted. If it is not possible to effect an agreement of

this type, then there is an alternative, although it is not as desirable as the previous solution. The alternative solution is the establishment of a buffer organization to handle the coordination with the external personnel office. This buffer group will serve the interface and planning functions served by the personnel office in the previous case, and will interface with the personnel office to support the organizations needs. To be able to fulfill these functions the personnel in this office will need the same skills and abilities as a personnel specialist. They need to be involved in the personnel world in the same way as the personnelist, and yet be a part of the organization. This requires people qualified as personnel specialists serving within the organization. This function should relieve the managers in several ways. First, they will have help in personnel planning, second, they will have a knowledgeable person supporting their cause in the personnel office. The result should be less wasted time in improperly prepared paperwork, the ability to "talk the language" and hence get better support from the personnel office and, most of all, to have proper personnel planning supported within the organization. While this solution is not as effective as the previous case, it is better than many individual managers, or individual administrative assistants, dealing with the central Personnel Office.

3. Effective Relationships Observed

Two of the managers interviewed stated that they did not consider personnel regulations a constraint and responded that they had a good working relationship with the personnel department which minimized personnel problems.

The first case was one of a field activity which had a personnel office which served the tenant organizations resident on the one site. The strategy of the command was that described in the previous section. The personnel office was made a part of the organization, and came to share the same basic values as the organization itself. This was accomplished by planning on the part of the top manager of the organization, and his working with the personnel director to develop the desired relationship. There were several parts to his strategy which are:

- (1) Include the personnel director in the executive board, and schedule a review with the personnel function quarterly just as was done with the technical functions. In this way the personnel function had full, not limited involvement in the planning process, and was also accountable for responsiveness.
- (2) Define reasonable expectations the organization had of the personnel office, which in this case included the individual personnelists spending 40% of their time with the technical managers working on the personnel problems of the organization.

- (3) Provide adequate resources to the personnel function to meet the new requirements. Support the change with his actions, for example, the inclusion of the personnel office in the quarterly reviews.
- (4) Inclusion of people from the personnel office in management and stress workshops with the functional managers from the organization.

The personnel function is not considered a constraint by this manager, but is considered responsive to the organizations needs. As a measure of that responsiveness consider the personnel office in this organization can fill a high grade position in approximately 60 days, while a manager in another organization complained that high grade positions could take as long as a year to fill.

Another manager, in NAVAIR where they have a Civilian Personnel Office, shared with other commands in the area, reported he had a person with a personnel background handle all his organizations personnel matters. He reported no problems in the personnel area. In this case the "personnel agent" would help the organizations managers in planning the personnel actions and would act as the contact between the organization and the personnel office. It was the feeling of this manager that this procedure greatly speeded up the process, and provided a great deal of help to people within the organization. This is an example of a buffer "department" (in this case only one person) who

supports the personnel function within the organization and interfaces with the Civilian Personnel Office.

B. ACQUISITION

1. Ideal Condition

The current regulations governing the Navy acquisition system are assumed as fixed constraints which cannot be affected by an individual or organization. The solution developed will be based on the current regulations and structure, and is a method of improving the congruence and goals of the functional organization and the supply department. This will be discussed from the viewpoint of field activities, who receive contracting authority from NAVSUP.

The manager might have the following reasonable expectations of the supply department in performance of the acquisition function:

efficient and timely processing of acquisition requests
(help the manager shorten the procurement time when possible through expert knowledge)

close coordination when deviations from or questions on the original specification

understanding and consideration of the organizations requirements

willingness to help the manager in resolution of acquisition problems

These requirements are reasonable, in that they do not require any ethical compromise on the part of the supply

personnel, although they could require some increased time. It is difficult to estimate the additional man-hours required to support the expanded function, but it is suggested that it is not as great as imagined at first. In the long term it could result in decreased time requirements as non supply personnel become more knowledgeable in the system.

This increased knowledge of the system could come about through exposure to the working relationship with the supply personnel, or through classes designed to prepare the managers for working with the acquisition system. Many organizations now sponsor courses to improve the managers knowledge of the acquisition process, but they seldom discuss developing a positive working relationship with the contracting officer. The use of classes is more efficient than working with many managers or administrative assistants individually, and places much less of a burden on the supply people. Regardless of the training used the goal is to build a relationship between the contracting officer and the manager.

Those in the organization responsible for the preparation and tracking of acquisition requests would also have to fulfill certain expectations of the contracting officer:

be honest with the supply personnel

do sufficient advance planning so as to not place unreasonable or unnecessary requests on the contracting officers

sufficient knowledge on the part of the manager to be able to properly prepare acquisition requests, or know when extra help is required from the contracting officer

proper conduct on the part of the manager and his representatives when dealing with the contractor, and inclusion of, and providing information to, the contracting officer when warranted

The considerations above can be summarized as requiring that the manager or his representative have sufficient knowledge of the acquisition process, and proper consideration to include the contracting officer when required, and further, to develop a relationship with the contracting officer and build a team concept where both can share in the production of the final product. In this case the reward becomes the delivery of needed goods or services, not the award of the contract.

2. Methods to Attain the Ideal Condition

Since the structural problem encountered in the acquisition organization is much the same as that of the personnel office, most of the same principles apply. The general points, rewarding desired behaviors, commitment of both the manager and the contracting officer to work together, and the manager becoming knowledgeable of the acquisition regulations will not be discussed further, since they have been covered in the discussion of the personnel system. There are areas of difference that must be understood, and these will be discussed.

The contracting officer, even more than the personnelist, is bound by rigid bureaucratic requirements that are just as difficult for them to deal with as they are for the functional manager. The goal is to minimize the amount of time the acquisition takes and insure the delivered product meets the requirements of the requestor. The level of involvement of the contracting officer will be much less than that of the personnelist in terms of his involvement with the organization and its planning unless the organization is directed almost solely to acquisition itself. This is because the personnel function is more interwoven in the organization than acquisition function. But still, increased time requirements on the part of the contracting officer may be one of the most difficult aspects of the change to deal with. The contracting officer usually has little if any slack time, and so any increased requirements mean additional personnel or overtime for existing personnel. Even though acquisition is a supply function, an increase in supply billets can be made by the organization of which the supply function is a part. Therefore the organization must decide the level of support it requires and staff accordingly. This decision is also a signal to the supply function which will influence their attitude toward the organization.

In the case of personnel office the end goal is to include the personnelist more in the organization, to change

their potentially bureaucratic orientation to a product or service orientation. In the case of the acquisition problem, the concept is to move the manager and contracting officer closer, however most of the movement will be made by the manager due to the highly regulated environment of the contracting officer. The manager will be less limited by regulation than the contracting officer and should therefore plan, with the help of the contracting officer, an acquisition strategy that can be supported and provide for the organizations requirements.

One study done by a Supply Corps Officer determined that the approximate proportions of time expended on the award of a typical small contract were [Ref. 12]:

- 30% the contracting officer understanding and clarifying the acquisition request
- 30% researching potential sources
- 30% negotiation for purchase
- 10% paperwork

Cooperation between the manager and the contracting officer can decrease the first two considerations, the definition of the item and the search for sources (in the case of small acquisitions) considerably. By working with the supply personnel methods can be defined to improve the service, but the regulation is inflexible. There is improvement possible in the service provided by supply, according to the managers interviewed.

3. Effective Working Relationships Observed

During the interviews different approaches to contracting were observed, but in only two different organizations. Further, these organizations, one a field activity the other NAVAIR, have different enough environments in contracting that no valid conclusion can be drawn. The NAVAIR contracting is done under NAVMAT regulations, while the other activities have authority granted by NAVSUP. As a result the regulations differ significantly.

C. OTHER CONSTRAINTS IDENTIFIED

The other constraints that were identified are part of the government managers environment. Three of these constraints were mentioned earlier, political influences, rotational military managers, and lack of planning. The lack of planning due to factors within the control or influence of the manager is not included in this chapter since it is not a result of external constraints.

1. Political Constraints

The political influence of the elected officials on civil servants is inherent in the political design of our government. While it is not efficient, it is effective at providing some control, balanced by the size of the bureaucracy itself, to the citizenry. The existence of this influence must be accepted and planned for by the federal

manager. Too often this political uncertainty is the excuse for not planning. However this environment actually requires more planning. While proper planning can do a great deal to alleviate organizational impacts of changing political influence, it can not relieve the frustration the manager feels at times. Those interviewed generally felt that coping with political influences were part of the job, and although sometimes frustrated, they accepted the situation.

The manager must use their personal skills to cope in this environment, and can minimize the frustration and errors in anticipating future trends by:

1. Understanding the reasons behind the political involvement that are basic to our form of government
2. Keeping current, scanning the environment to anticipate political trends
3. Accept that political influences are a legitimate part of the environment.

2. Rotational Military Managers

The use of rotational military managers in these organizations is another constraint the manager can not influence, although it is possible to influence the individual officers who occupy the positions. The complaints indicated problems due to short duration of the assignment, and the resultant short term view held by many, the widely changing managerial styles of the individuals, and varying competencies in specialty areas. In dealing with the managerial style of the officer it is the interpersonal

skills of the civilian deputy that are most important. The deputy should be capable of understanding and interacting with the various recognized managerial types, such as the the McGregor X (highly structured work environment) or Y (self directed work environment) [Ref. 13], or the Likert type 1, 2, 3, or 4 (exploitive, benevolent, consultive, or participative) [Ref. 14].

The civilian deputy is in a position to attempt to resolve all the problems previously identified, since in that position they are the long term manager of the organization. Generally, they can only do this with the concurrence of the military manager. However, unless the civilian manager has lost the respect of the military superior, it is unlikely the officer would disagree with this approach. The civilian deputy should act as a buffer between the organization and the officer to improve the understanding and responsiveness of both. This does not infer the deputy should isolate the military manager. Quite the contrary, the goal is to improve his understanding of the organization and the organizations understanding of him. One thing that can help in this process is a Transition Workshop, run by a Navy Human Resource Management Team. The workshop clarifies expectations, anxieties and goals of both the new leader and the organizational managers. These can be requested by the incoming officer from the Navy Human Resource Management Center or Detachment in his area.

3. Lack of Planning

The lack of planning by the higher levels of the organizations is due in part to the uncertainty and reactive nature of some of these functions. Congress itself is primarily a reactive body that does little long term planning, which creates problems for lower level organizations by increasing their environmental uncertainty. The best method available for the manager to cope with this is to do additional contingency planning to insure the maximum stability in the organization. This will typically result in suboptimization, since the organization must be capable of reacting to various potential outcomes. While the frustration level may be high, most organizations appear to be doing a reasonable job of this now.

V. CONCLUSION

A. SUMMARY

The federal manager of a large organization faces challenges very similar to his civilian counterpart. The regulation of the processes of government are significant impacts on the federal manager, just as some federal regulation and law creates similar effects on private sector managers. In the interviews conducted, the overwhelming response of federal managers to the question of what were the constraining regulations they faced in running their organization were the personnel and acquisition regulations. Several other constraints were identified, but these two were the most cited responses. There is a significant difference between the federal personnel and acquisition systems and their counterparts in private industry. The federal system is generally less efficient, but is intended to insure fairness, not efficiency. The regulations are designed to protect the rights of employees or suppliers, often at the expense of the government.

In the case of the personnel system, the working relationship, not the regulations themselves were found to be the major problem. In most cases the personnel function is not included in the organization as a team member, but is treated as a bureaucratic requirement. Through changing this

viewpoint and the working relationship between the organization and the personnel office, significant improvement is possible.

The acquisition constraints identified are primarily due to regulation, but most organizations could better utilize the resources available from the contracting or supply offices. The required special knowledge and skills of the specialists are not being utilized as they should be. The improvement possible is not as marked as is the case in the personnel area.

B. THE ORGANIZATIONS

One of the unexpected findings was that the organizations represented by those interviewed were not bureaucratic in focus or structure. All of the organizations had a strong product or service orientation and most had a focus on individuals and the roles that those people were most effective in. The matrix structure was also common. All of these point to an organic organization, one which is adaptive and innovative. The business of these organizations is management and evaluation of high technology products. Their environment is uncertain not only due to political influence, but technological change in the weapon systems being procured. It is the strong focus on getting the job done and the uncertain environment which result in the organic nature of these organizations. The supporting

organizations, which tend to be bureaucratic, need to be included by the functional management if they are to understand the problems of the functional organization.

C. THE STATUS AND POTENTIAL

From the interview data the conclusion is drawn that most managers are not coping well with the personnel or acquisition systems. This is based on both the magnitude of complaints in these areas and the fact that only two of those surveyed appeared to have an effective working relationship with the personnel function, and none (excluding those working within acquisition) with the acquisition function. The strategies for establishing positive working relationships outlined in this paper (see Chapter 4) should be effective if applied. It appears that most managers have taken an approach of expediency due to other more demanding, or seemingly demanding, pressures. Most of the managers interviewed responded that they faced a situation of more to do than time to do it. This can lead to crisis management, and make these problems self-perpetuating. The increased effectiveness that is possible when a more effective relationship is established was demonstrated in one organization and proved to be significant.

The other constraints mentioned by the managers are less pervasive and are generally related more to specific

situations faced by a particular manager. These constraints, the rotational military manager, political influence, and lack of sufficient planning, seem to be handled well by most managers, even though the current situation does result in some frustration.

1. The Personnel System

The Civil Service Personnel system is designed for fairness, and is not effective as it needs to be to handle the difficult job of staffing the highly technical organizations that exist in some areas of the federal service. One of the major problems is the narrow focus of most civilian personnel offices on the processing of paperwork and not on the aspects that are, in reality, the most critical. These often overlooked areas include employee satisfaction, job design, structural design of the organization and many other aspects of the organization that relate to the management of the human resource. This situation has two potential causes. The first is that the personnel system is poorly designed and not adaptable to support of the organizational mission. The second is that the managers in the organization are not utilizing the personnel system effectively. The truth lies somewhere between these two extremes, and could be stated as a conclusion:

The personnel system, while not designed with the efficiency of function as a key consideration, is not now effectively utilized by most organizations. If it were effectively utilized the constraints identified would be decreased to a manageable level.

As developed in this thesis, the personnel function is not a support service, but is a necessary member of the management team. A very good definition of personnel management is given by Towle, Schoen, and Hilgert as:

"Personnel management consists of those management functions and activities related to the acquisition, development, and maintenance of human resources in a working organization. Successful personnel management implies that these functions and activities integrate the efforts of people with other resources of an organization in such a manner that the objectives of the company, the goals of individual workers, and the goals of society at large are all attained in the highest degree compatible with the work situation." [Ref. 15]

This definition is representative of the way most large private companies approach the personnel management process. There are several areas in which the federal system is weak or in some cases totally lacking. Examples of these are job design, career planning, organizational development, personnel planning, and worker motivation. The Final Staff Report of the Personnel Management Project

undertaken by President Carter in 1977 had very similar findings. Some of the recommendations made were: -

-Allocate additional resources to all fields of basic and applied personnel research.(Recommendation no.47)

-Direct agencies to establish executive development programs which are integrated with minorities and women. Assign standard setting, guidance, and monitoring responsibilities to the Office of Personnel Management. (Recommendation no. 48)

-Make greater uses of approaches to improving the quality of work life, such as job redesign, bonus pay plans flexitime, improved support services (e.g., van pooling, day care centers) to increase job satisfaction and productivity.(Recommendation no. 100)

-Undertake internal departmental personnel management reviews that include determining ways in which personnel management can a) cut unproductive red tape, b) provide greater help to employees in their development and c) ensure maximum equity of treatment.

(Recommendation no.101) [Ref. 16]

These recommendations and others relating to workforce planning and productivity measurement are examples of things which were not being done but were felt to be needed by the project staff. These have since been enacted in the Civil Service Reform of 1978, but are still generally lacking in

practice. The federal personnel regulations are still weak in the areas of providing for an efficient staffing function, job design and satisfaction, organization design, personnel development, and conflict resolution. These things can currently be done; but to be effective the Personnel Office must be part of the management team in the organization. Most personnel offices are relegated to the bureaucratic processing of staffing functions, but this is due to the direction, or lack of direction, of functional management, not the result of regulations. While the regulations do not require specific working relationships between the personnel office and the organization, a wide range of effective relationships can be structured within existing regulations. The working relationship between personnel and the organization can be changed a great deal by the management of the functional organization. The feeling of many of those interviewed was that Personnel was an adversary. As one manager put it, "they are a prevent department, not a support department." Both the attitude and functioning need to change and this is possible, with top management attention. For the manager who wishes to do this the process is not difficult, although it may require extra time initially. There is no one applicable solution to all organizations, but the following steps should provide a general framework for implementation.

- Step 1 Make a honest appraisal of the current situation, attitudes of the organization, strengths and weaknesses of the personnel office, make a commitment to yourself to change, and define the goal of the change.
- Step 2 Meet with the head of the personnel office and together develop an understanding of what goals may be realistic.
- Step 3 Meet with the leaders of the organization and discuss what personnel services are available now, and what could be provided that would benefit the organization. Plan for the inclusion of the personnel function within the organization, and plan to review progress toward the goals.
- Step 4 Have the head of the Personnel Office plan for necessary training and development to fill the new roles assigned to the organization. Support these plans, and possible billet increases.
- Step 5 Set the example. Support the change and encourage others to do so. Meet to evaluate the implementation and fine tune as appropriate.

This is a very rough outline of the process, but does provide an idea of the necessary steps. The implementation of a change process is an example of the type of thing that is often assigned to the personnel management

department in private companies. This is an ability that is lacking in most government organizations and is a good example of the type of help that could be available to managers if management decided to pursue a more highly developed personnel function.

2. The Acquisition Process

The outlook for the resolution of acquisition problems is not as good as it was for the personnel problems. The acquisition system is highly bureaucratic with little flexibility allowed. Therefore most of the change in this area must be brought about by the organizational manager through changes in the way he interacts with the acquisition function. These changes in turn will have an effect on the way the acquisition personnel view the organization and how they see the working relationship. In the personnel system the major problem is not the regulation but the working relationship of the two functions, whereas in this case the major problem is the regulations, and only secondarily the working relationship. If there is to be any improvement in the ability of the organization to do its job it will come about through better understanding of the regulation and the process of acquisition. The most efficient method of achieving this knowledge is through the cooperation of the acquisition specialist and the managers. Knowledge on the part of the managers alone is not enough, since the contracting officer is the only one allowed to purchase

government goods and is responsible for the legality of all such purchases. Because of this, the contracting officer must understand the acquisition sufficiently to insure the accuracy of all parts of the acquisition package. Only if the contracting officer and manager work together can the contracting officer move ahead immediately upon receipt of the acquisition request. Otherwise he must first validate the statements and check the criteria.

The steps necessary for implementing a strategy as suggested are no more uniform than the steps listed earlier to establish a better relationship with the personnel function. They are in essence the same general steps as listed before and will not be repeated here. If there is an organizational development consultant available from the personnel office it would be appropriate to assign them the responsibility (and commensurate authority) to bring about the desired change.

3. Other Constraints

The other constraints identified were not as global in nature, but were problems to individual managers. Federal managers are no different in this way from private sector managers who must also deal with constraints in their jobs. With only one exception, all of the managers interviewed had some knowledge of the regulations that were felt to be constraints, but not an unhealthy emphasis on them. (In the case of the exception, one manager had a singular focus on

the personnel system, the poor quality people he had working for him and a perceived inability to change the situation. This focus is probably more a result of that managers inability to cope with the position than the real effect of personnel constraints.)

In general, these constraints are dealt with in an individual nature by each manager based on his personal management style and abilities. To be able to identify these constraints accurately and define the most effective methods of dealing with them would require a much larger and more detailed sample than was undertaken here. Based on the interviews it seemed that the most effective managers did not consider regulations to be a significant constraint once they had defined a working strategy to neutralize the problem area.

D. OBSERVATIONS

Government regulation was accepted by most of the managers interviewed as a part of their environment. It seems that the constraints managers complain about most are those which they have not developed a method to cope with, although there is insufficient data to fully support this claim. While some regulations may have great potential impact they are only problems until a strategy is developed in response. This can be seen in the complaints and slowed business that often accompany new regulations, but once in

place coping strategies develop and the potential problems most often disappear.

Perhaps one reason the personnel constraints are not more effectively managed is that to do so requires a command wide strategy. According to the interview responses most upper level managers focus primarily on external issues. This could contribute to lack of management attention in this area.

These bureaucratic functions can "hide" behind the regulations and minimize their risks and disruption to their processes. This could be characterized by responses like "the regulations require...", "We can't do it that way, ..." and many other similar responses. These are signs of an independent, not integrated, office. Similar signals are sent by the functional managers when they respond with "people over there don't care", or "they are a prevent department".

The personnel and acquisition functions are far too important to allow uncooperative relationships to exist. However, in the Federal system the autonomous nature of these functions allows, or even encourages, dysfunctional relationships to develop. The effective manager can implement a strategy to develop a cooperative working relationship between these functions, with a resultant increase in organizational effectiveness.

APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How stable is the type of work the organization does?
2. How stable is the organizational structure?
3. How stable is the workforce?
4. Do you have a measurable output?
5. What is the primary focus you need for your job?
6. How many years ahead do you plan?
7. Do you consider yourself primarily a theory X or Y manager?
8. What is your job?
9. What are the elements you look for to see if your organization is operating effectively?
10. What makes your job most difficult?
11. How much do you concern yourself with the working climate in your organization?
12. What do you feel are the keys to running an effective organization?
13. What regulation or constraints have you found inhibit or limit you to manage your organization?
14. If you could change anything, what would you change?

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW RESPONSES-FUNCTIONAL FOCUS GROUP

The data presented in this appendix is a paraphrase of the responses to the interview questions, not a verbatim quotation. The individual intent of the response, as interpreted through the interview itself, was utilized in paraphrasing the data. Each question does not necessarily have a response from each interviewee, since in some cases a particular questions was not asked, and in others some questions were not answered in a manner that allowed a valid conclusion to be drawn. Those questions which had open ended responses include all responses. There is no attempt to characterize responses or draw conclusions other than those identified in this thesis.

The responses to closed end questions are formatted as follows:

1. The question is listed first.

- possible response 1 # affirmative/total responses

- possible response 2 # affirmative/total responses

Responses to open ended questions are formatted as follows:

2. The question is listed first.

- each respondents comments are begun with a hyphen
additional comments made by that respondent are listed
without hyphens

INTERVIEW RESPONSES
FUNCTIONAL FOCUS GROUP

1. How stable is the type of work the organization does?

-very stable 8/8

-fairly stable

-unstable

2. How stable is the organizational structure?

-very stable 5/6

-fairly stable 1/6

-unstable

3. How stable is the workforce?

-very stable

-fairly stable 3/5

-unstable 2/5

4. Do you have a measurable output?

-yes 3/5

-somewhat 1/5

-no 1/5

5. What is the primary focus you need for your job?

-local 1/6

-global 4/6

-both 1/6

6. How many years ahead do you plan?

-1	1/5
-2 to 3	2/5
-4 to 7	1/5
-8 to 12	1/5

7. Do you consider yourself primarily a theory X Or Y manager?

-X	4/6	(Although 3 of this group said they use theory Y principles)
-Y	2/6	

8. What is your job?

- planning, looking to the future and making sure we are ready, have the tools when we need them
- maintain contacts necessary to project the organization provide help on major problems or high visibility problems
- do budgeting;
watch trends know how and when to make adjustments in either
- make sure people in the organization are happy and have what they need to do their job
- keep things moving, don't get in the way, let the people do their jobs
work outside the organization, with higher levels to set policy
- see that groups below me perform in accordance with policy

9. What are the elements you look for to see if your organization is operating effectively?

- sponsor satisfaction
 - continued funding
 - stability of personnel in the organization
- satisfied sponsor
 - high workload
 - lack of complaints from both internal and external sources
- work on schedule, cost, and high quality
 - lower level supervisors have positive interest in personnel supervised, and have the respect of those supervised
- producing a quality product for the fleet
- getting good work out on time
- quantity of work output at a good quality
 - cooperative attitude toward customers
- quality of our responses
 - innovations used to solve problems
- do what we are tasked

10. What makes your job most difficult?

- paperwork, too much that comes down the chain of command should be turned back at higher levels
- MPS, it is unnecessary and wastes a lot of time

- bureaucratic requirements, mostly personnel regulations
 - inability to reward people
 - MPS, a waste of time
- lack of leadership direction, where are we going and how
 - conflicting regulations and guidance
 - restrictions on selection, promotion, etc.
 - limits on how I can spend money to upgrade facilities and equipment
- bureaucracy, specifically personnel, supply and public works
- lack of skilled people
- the review process, too many people can say no, no one person can say yes
- uncertainty of the environment, innovative thinking is required
 - lack of corporate memory, too high a turnover
 - the time it takes to fill billets
 - uncertain funding year to year, the lack of funding continuity
- low quality of people
 - personnel regulations that limit how you can move people around

11. How much do you concern yourself with the working climate in your organization?

- meet with lower level managers weekly to be aware of the morale in the organization
- spend time wandering around, talking with the people, they appreciate that
- get out and talk to everyone, and have employee groups that are used as a sounding board
- try to reward performance via the system
assign collateral duty to those who deserve it
socialize off job
- reward superior effort
- use performance awards to show appreciation
try to remove as many constraints as possible, so people can work with as little restriction as possible
- promote a professional attitude toward people
promote pride in work
- no

12. What do you feel are the keys to running an effective organization?

- good plan
good people and developing good people (rotation plan, making a global view person)
- having good, challenging work
reward good performance, using every means possible

- honesty and openness in management
 - action oriented people
 - human relations oriented managers and supervisors
 - product orientation
 - removal of ineffective people
 - planning
 - working with others in a constructive way
 - respect of the people
- quality supervision at lower levels
 - keep effective people in the key positions, if a person can't handle the job work with them, provide help, and if they still can't move them to a job they can handle
- promote people based on potential to do the job a grade level above the job they are applying for, that way you will get the best and avoid stagnation
- make expectations known
 - fair and equal treatment of all employees
- good communications within the organization, both ways
 - proper degree of discipline
 - give people enough responsibility they are in charge of the work, or at least part of the work they do
- communications, get people involved
 - make the supervisors work

13. What regulation or constraints have you found inhibit or limit you to manage your organization?

-supply

public works

EEO, the paperwork is too time consuming

-personnel, position management, classification

the hotline, where anyone can call and make an

accusation and it causes a lot of trouble for everyone

-personnel

procurement slow, buy from unqualified vendors, small

business regulations cause a lot of problems

financial management system lacks required information

-personnel

public works

supply

-excessive documentation requirements

many contracting regulations and requirements

differing interpretation and enforcement of regulations

personnel, difficult to hire, fire, lack of adequate

reward systems

MPS, insufficient merit pool

political biases of new administration

-political considerations that impact approval at the

Assistant Secretary of the Navy level

-personnel, regulations are OK, but the responsiveness

and consideration is unsatisfactory

- personnel, slow, takes too long to fill high grade billets (about 1 year), inadequate rewards available
- military managers rotating, disruptive
- changing political direction of new appointees
- personnel, can't pay to potential, but to billet
- good people move too fast, getting promotions, moving to other organizations

14.If you could change anything, what would you change?

- let managers manage their resources, don't impose ceilings, freezes, etc.
- ability to hire and fire with less regulation
- ability to reward more freely
- eliminate 75% of the Washington bureaucrats and their resultant requirements
- improve the physical work environment
- improve the reward system, remove limits so all good people can be rewarded, not just a few
- go to multi year appropriations from Congress to stabilize the funding fluctuations
- allow SYSCOM's more autonomy, less involvement by Secretary of the Navy and Congress.
- organize like a corporation (could not enumerate)

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW RESPONSES ORGANIZATIONAL FOCUS GROUP

1. How stable is the type of work the organization does?

-very stable 5/6

-fairly stable 1/6

-unstable

2. How stable is the organizational structure?

-very stable 5/7

-fairly stable 2/7

-unstable

3. How stable is the workforce?

-very stable 3/5

-fairly stable 2/5

-unstable

4. Do you have a measurable output?

-yes 1/4

-no 3/4

5. What is the primary focus you need for your job?

-local

-global 3/5

-both 2/5

6. How many years ahead do you plan?

-1	
-2 to 3	1/6
-4 to 7	2/6
-8 to 12	2/6
->12	1/6

7. Do you consider yourself primarily a theory X or Y manager?

-X	1/4
-Y	3/4

8. What is your job?

- make sure the people I am responsible for, who are like tools of the organization, are well cared for, make sure they have what they need to do their job.
- planning for the future, look at the effective use of people
- interface to other organizations to support our organizations position.
- see that the organization has the resources it needs to operate, support those needs to superior organizations
- structure programs, in terms of how we manage them, and insure that the product we produce is high quality
- serve as an ambassador to other organizations
- maintain good people in the organization
- interface manager between different groups
- general management of the organization

9. What are the elements you look for to see if your organization is operating effectively?

- perceptions of interfacing organizations;
resource management (how well they are utilized);
results of projects
- look at how resources are used, where the money goes
- the quality of the organizations output and the satisfaction of the user or customer;
feedback from the members of the organization on their view
- customer satisfaction, quality of the work output and timeliness and reasonable cost
- perceptions of higher authority
- good product, satisfaction of the user or customer
- quality and quantity of output as a function of the resources consumed
- product quality, timeliness, and customer satisfaction;
ability to complete assigned tasks

10. What makes your job most difficult?

- organizational inertia, cultural set;
a lack of corporate indicators;
"in box syndrome", cleaning out in box by passing along requests, no planning just reacting
- endless "what if" requests for information;
my own patience

- lack of adequate information to make decisions;
lack of planning and direction at higher levels
- bureaucracy of the Washington establishment
- insufficient information, both technical and administrative, we work in a very uncertain environment
- insufficient workforce, numerically for the assigned and necessary work
- Navy way of organizing, with a military bosses who rotates through, if the new person isn't good it can creat problems
- people and bureaucracy, a well placed person can subvert the tasks of many;
unwillingness of people to accept change

11. How much do you concern yourself with the working climate in your organization?

- very much, I am working to improve several areas which now send bad signal to the workforce
- quite a bit, decentralize decision making where possible, give credit for the work done, lots of recognition, recognition is better than money;
maintain open door policy, make sure people understand why I act they way I do even if they don't like what I do

-yes, took all the upper managers off for a retreat to look at how we do business;

have eliminated some paperwork that didn't serve any real purpose, and aggravated people

-yes, we have a program to clean up the facility, make it more habitable;

working on the little things that can improve worker satisfaction

-a subordinate takes care of that

-trying to increase awards;

took a survey of employees and are trying to improve areas singled out as needing improvement

12. What do you feel are the keys to running an effective organization?

-management competencies -future orientation

-human resource management

-systems viewpoint

-risk taker

-action oriented

-situational leadership style

-the trust of key people, and the loyalty both ways

-plan;

project a good image to other organizations;

take care of the people in the organization;

budget well up front, then let the individual managers manage, don't micro-manage

- provide a quality product;
 maintain a standard of excellence within the
 organization;
 reward good performance
- less direction, more guidance;
 involve people in the work, use their ideas, don't be
 critical;
 make jobs exciting, let people champion their own work
 and get the credit for it
- give everyone a job, a defined task;
 assign trust and tasks on an individual basis, based on
 ability
- satisfy the the customer;
 develop a good relationship with interfacing
 organizations

13. What regulation or constraints have you found inhibit or limit you to manage your organization?

- the tendency toward cultists in the government, with
 each level reacting to regulation and narrowing and
 changing the meaning, we need people who understand
 the whole system;
 too many SES position that are not really executive
 positions, so SES can't be moved around as intended;
 the civilian personnel system, fairness valued more
 than effectual, inability to do succession planning,

inability to compete in the marketplace for talent,
uncooperative personnelists;
rotational military managers in that they are short
term managers and reinforce the short term
perspective, they are competent for the most part, and
this is a military organization, so there is a case to
have military in the key positions;
inability to plan for the future, mainly due to the
micromanagement by the DOD and Congress;
-acquisition regulations, making it difficult to get any
type of contract out;
NAVCOMP funding constraints, which are blanket rules
for isolated cases;
personnel regulations, way too regulated in our ability
to deal with people, both on the reward and punishment
sides;
-lack of coordination between the field activities, and
no one responsible to bring it about;
-personnel, the difficulty in detailing people, the
promotion and competitive job filling requirements, and
EEO, especially having to justify in writing the
non-selection of minority applicants
-too many requests from people and organizations for
information and work that they do not have to fund,
resulting in more work than money and people to do it;

personnel, classification of positions such as a series 345 analyst, who does not need a degree to be classed, but if I need a degreed analyst, I must specify an engineer, since I can't require a degree in the 345 series;

EEO, increased burden of paperwork;

funding uncertainty and limitations

-inability to reward superior performance adequately; personnel constraints, in filling jobs, removing people everything;

the contracting process, too slow and unresponsive;

inability to reward people with salary increases for exceptional technical ability, unless they become managers, should have high grade technical specialists;

military managers coming in the job or have the skills necessary to do it, it takes till near the end of their assignment to become competent

-limitations due to the organization charter, which is too restrictive;

personnel, poor service, shoddy work, very slow (the comment was aimed at a particular office, not the whole system)

-acquisition procedures, the ability to award contracts is too restricted and slow

personnel system, rigid and unresponsive procedures in
hiring and firing;
high grade limitation

14. If you could change anything, what would you change?

- institute a cost center operation, know what people spend, put on a Navy Industrial Fund (NIF) basis
- increase the civilian sector senior planning;
include the field activities in the decision process;
- include profit motivation in the organization;
- more planning
- a control system to measure output
- less duplication in facilities
- give each command the authority to manage their own resources, do not impose unjustifiable workforce constraints;

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