

All,

Kriste Jordan and I decided to see whether, if we were to secure the participation of an interesting speaker, anybody else would actually come!! I'm pleased to report that this experiment was successful, and that ten of us had a neat dinner together this evening in Arlington, Virginia.

A brief recap of the event follows, so you know how simple yet satisfying it was. Accomplished people who are interested in delivering results in the public sector are to be found all over the country! If you want to do something where you are, but don't know how to start, let one of us know and we'll tell you how we set it up and what we learned.

In the Files area of this site (Human Capital folder), you will see several documents either by or about the work that Dr. Trinkka and staff have been doing to change the culture in the managerial and executive ranks of the IRS over the past four years. FYI, a new article was just posted. (Just realized I didn't get his bio - will post it when we have it - should be fun to read because he was a military jet pilot first!)

One topic of discussion was the leadership competencies that the IRS defined and now uses in place of OPM's (with OPM's blessing). They appear in the Leadership Competency Model that is explained in the posted documents. We heard about how the IRS came to embrace this model, how various competencies operate together to influence customers' perceptions, and how "fatal flaws" are addressed in a way that does not elicit an immediate defensive reaction.

Also, we heard "treat people as people" (don't start by assuming people are tax cheats or employees are liabilities) and "blur the lines between learning and work." Another discussion involved the productive use of 360-degree feedback (at the IRS, as feedback meant solely to enhance employee performance) as well as the non-productive (at another agency, as the primary rating mechanism). There was a lot of discussion about the conditions under which 360-degree feedback is effective. All in all, this was kind of cool.

The dinner drew employees from IRS, Education, FEMA, Price Waterhouse Coopers, and ASPA, as well as a significant other who is an intellectual property lawyer and a colleague who's headed over to the Corporation for National and Community Service (think Americorps) on detail. Kriste and I gave ourselves permission to put it on, for no other reason than that we wanted an opportunity to hear more from this man and he was willing to come. There are tons of opportunities out there, and we are finding that the "Senior Fellow" tag helps break the ice. We didn't think "event" and scale down; we thought "take this guy out to dinner" and scaled up. That kept the planning from becoming stressful (well, that and Kriste did all of the negotiation with the restaurant!!).

Just thought you might be interested. Anybody have any questions??

Sincerely,

Kitty Wooley
2001-2002 Fellow