How To: Make Greening the Workforce a Success

2024 NASA Cost & Schedule Symposium

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Working Together

Over the last year, we have worked together to find the best approach for the Langley PP&C workforce. We have learned a lot and look forward to sharing those lessons with you.

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Understanding the Current Workforce

- Significant portions of the talent can and are retiring
  - A "wave" is here![1, 2]
  - While previously, due to pensions, this was known – now it can be triggered by a bad day

- We need to invest now for the future[3, 4]

- And, green doesn't just mean young

–people are changing their careers

24%

Agency population that is retirement eligible (as of FY22) [5]
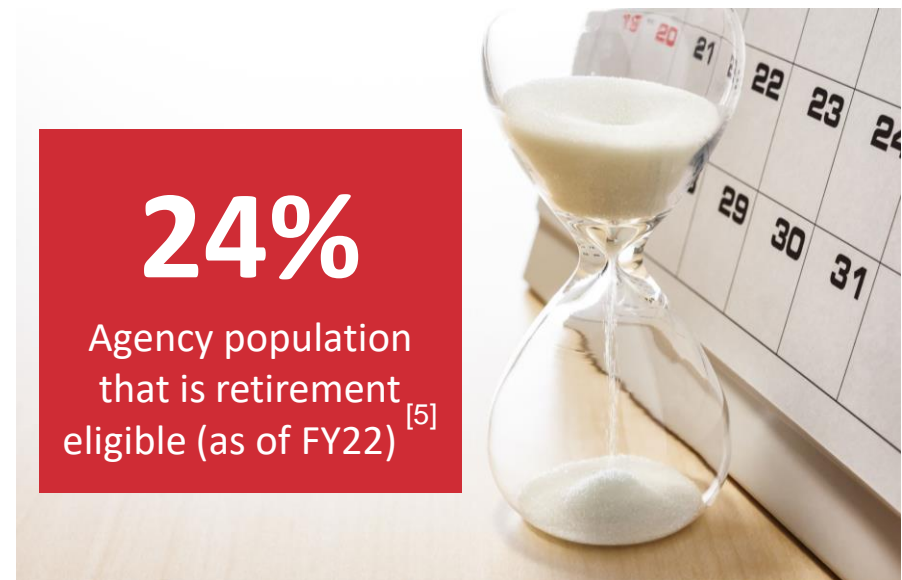
What Are The Benefits of Greening?

- Helps with organizational costs

- Different experiences bring in diversity of thought to the team

- Infusion of industry mindset in the government

- Refocusing on the human in the middle needs; utilizing technology where it fits best

- Investment now will help in 5-, 10-, and 20-years

- Helps reassess and use talents in more meaningful ways

- Inspiration – helping others find their place in space reminds us how special it is to work at NASA
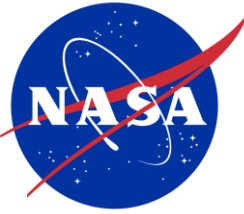
Some of Our Tips

1. Finding the right opportunities – matching the skillset to the support needed for each project, during each phase of the project
   - Reassess the support you currently have on existing projects too!

2. Cohort style – by bringing on a few new team members with similar skill levels at the same time, training can be easier

3. Hire for onsite work – when you are bringing in someone new to NASA, having days on site to work with the team, to network, and to have mentorship is key
   - Suggest starting with at least 3 days in the office a week (2 with the project, 1 with the mentor)

4. Be intentional with opportunities to give them new experiences
   - Make room for mistakes, psychological safety

Some (More) of Our Tips

5. Use every method possible for cultural and technical training
    - Mentorship
    - Coaching
    - Management
    - Courses
    - Make it personal

6. Utilize talents from previous experience and strengths to develop "new to NASA", not "new to the workforce"

7. Partnership between the contractor and government
    - Constant check-ins from different perspectives
   - Making sure expectations are clear

The Don'ts for New Team Members

1. Expect a 1:1 replacement for the senior team member! Integration, experience, knowledge, etc. combine to make a "senior" team member

2. Compare the new team member with an existing or former team members

3. Assume they know anything about NASA, especially acronyms and the culture

4. Expect them to come in with product knowledge aligned with how NASA uses the system

5. Abandon them – you need to support them from day one and have a plan for their future development

# Next Steps: Learning from the New Team Members What Worked
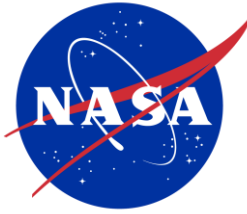
- Engage with them regularly, asking "how can I help you?" and "what did you learn recently?"

- Document what they didn't know so you can have that as a resource for the next new hire

- Learn what did work so you can formalize that into your onboarding process

  - Don't keep onboarding the same way as you "always did" …especially after COVID
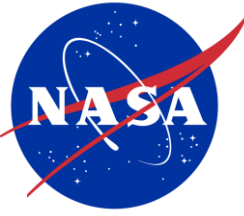
So, how did it really go?

- Example 1: A Scheduling Cohort

- Example 2: Empowering the Analysts

- Example 3: Focusing On Strengths to Find the Right Fit
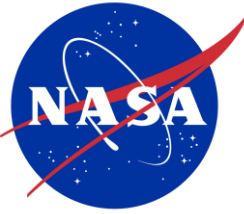
In closing, invest now for the future

- Retirement is inevitable, but also there are a lot of unknowns

- Invest now to build experience in the workforce of the future

- Plan to support the development of the new team members over a long period

- Embrace their strengths and experience to infuse new ideas to the team

- Communicate and keep learning!
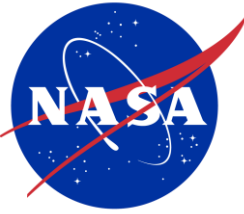
Questions?

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Back-up Slides
& Reference Material

Reference & Suggested Articles

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