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2 MAY 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Personnel

25X1A9a ATTENTION: [redacted]

SUBJECT: The Newly Proposed Fitness Report

1. The following comments are set forth to hopefully lend support for recommendations here.

2. This new Fitness Report product for which I sat as a sometimes Task Force member disenchants me with myself. Accordingly, I wish to set forth only enough critical substance to serve the objective below. It is probably demonstrable separately (other comments) that equally significant critical points could be made. I intend here not to cover the water front.

a. It is suggested: Section D - modified or not - should precede Section C.

b. It is suggested: Supervisory evaluation should have separate treatment, either markedly within this form, or separate entirely. My reasoning here is that we need above all things to increasingly nurture our very large supervisory group, and they are worth particular attention. By the same token, I am at a loss in trying to remember what we proposed to do with super-grades.

c. I do not accept at all six out of the seven descriptive clauses in Section B. These appear to me to contain such "fine lines of distinction" as to constitute a statistician's impractical dream.

(1) "Performs his duty in a barely adequate manner" must be unsatisfactory performance if our philosophy is to be - as it should - to seek always for improved performance on all fronts. Hence, I would eliminate No. 2 entirely, and state No. 1 as follows: PERFORMS HIS DUTY IN AN UNSATISFACTORY OR BARELY ADEQUATE MANNER.

(2) Item 3 - "Performs his duty acceptably" asks for as many different interpretations of the word "acceptably" as there may be supervisors. It is too relative. Hence I would drop Item 3 entirely.

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(3) Item 4 - no quarrel.

(4) Items 5, 6 and 7 call for an impracticable distinction, i.e., too much of a "fine line". I would reduce this to one much better clause, yet to be gestated.

(5) Contemplating the possibility of the Fitness Report as such, as an important instrument in any kind of merit recognition - and probably regardless of this - I suggest that provision be made for a prose justification for a rating of UNSATISFACTORY, or for a rating of OUTSTANDING. I deem this of high importance. An instruction in respect to this might be something like the following:

STATE FULLY YOUR REASONS FOR THIS RATING.

d. Section C necessarily would be revised if the preceding is accepted.

e. Section D leaves me very cold indeed. There are so many other words of importance as to challenge many, if not all, of what we are now showing in this Section. Some examples are: "Does a job without strong support." This should be redundant if the rest of the rating sheet is done properly. Again: "Facilitates smooth operation of his office." Do we mean up, down, or at the same level? Again: "Writes effectively." To me this is not of importance at all in so many different kinds of jobs. Whenever this is important, it ought automatically to show in evaluation of performance. Again: "Security conscious." Within this Agency, this to me is something like asking "Is this employee's hair combed every morning"!! Further, some of the words which I believe one should weigh most carefully in connection with a listing of personal characteristics are - and maybe here I am thinking substantially of a supervisor - drive, cooperation, judgment, vision, delegation, planning, objectivity, receptivity, development of his people, impartiality, etc. (The above does not purport to be complete treatment, of course.)

Also, methinks the term "Personal Characteristics" asks for inherent characteristics, and not acquired competencies, as is "Writes effectively".

f. Section E has manner of job performance, with stress of strengths and weaknesses in current position and suggestions for employee improvement and his career development potential. I think the last should be appropriately separated, maybe at the bottom of this same area.

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g. I fail to see why we should have the employee certify that he has seen the report. Either we believe the supervisor or we don't, and if we don't we'd better go out of business.

h. If we want to begin making this Fitness Report instrument serve as a rightfully important one in any form of merit consideration, then we should consider the control mechanism offered by a Rating Review Panel. Regardless of this merit consideration factor, isn't a Fitness Report worth objective removed review? We can easily find long-time experience on the part of other agencies in Government and in business which utilize such a control mechanism.

I deem such a mechanism perhaps one of the most significant and best devices for attack on the very great human failing which we face today in this Agency in the struggle to get truth and lack of evasion reported by supervisors on such an instrument as a Fitness Report.

3. I recommend that the Director of Personnel take a new, firm and rightfully-his hold on this matter in the following steps:

a. Report to the Career Council that the Task Force product here does not fulfill expectancy in its trial run, and that he is taking the following action:

(1) Disenfranchise the existing Task Force.

(2) Constitute a new one of not more than four selectees to delve more deeply and research more widely (with target date of six months maximum).

(a) This Task Force should be made up of not more than four people, and it is thought that properly on it are these officers:

The Deputy Director of Personnel for Plans and Development,

The Chief, Personnel Evaluation Division (ex-officio),

A competent GS-15 (or better) operating officer, and a

Random senior selectee whose job permits substantial outside research work.

This last assignee would be the "working stiff".

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Chief, Management Staff

N.B.- 1. The trouble with the present Task Force is that it is too large to constitute an effective working group, and it was subjected to some flooding of erudite statistics. Perhaps more importantly, there wasn't anyone who really had the time to work long and hard enough to produce adequately the several important factors for consideration of the Task Force.

2. The Insurance Task Force organization and method of working was a very good lesson indeed.

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