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**Report to the Senior Executive Council,
Department of Defense**

HUMAN RESOURCES TASK GROUP

Report FY02-1

**Σ Task 3: Enhanced Recruiting and Retention
For Enlisted Personnel**

December 18, 2002

HUMAN RESOURCES TASK GROUP REPORT

TASK 3

TASK: What private sector best practices could help the military branches in recruiting and retaining enlisted personnel--selection criteria; screening criteria; minimizing early attrition; and incentives for recruiting and retention?

- DBB HR Leader: Fred Cook
- DoD Liaison: Bill Carr, Principal Director for Military Personnel Policy

PROCESS: Contacted heads of Human Resources of large employers of entry-level personnel and, through them, arranged conference calls with their heads of talent acquisition and Bill Carr:

Avon	Robin Fischer
IBM	John Pass
General Motors	Tom Thiverge
Sears, Roebuck	Sally Hartmann
Target Stores	Mary Amundson
Union Pacific	Bill Behrendt
Waste Management	Bob Dees

Discussed issues and asked them to describe their recruitment process and identify any screening devices that might be useful to DoD enlisted recruitment.

RESULTS: We focused on the recruitment, testing and selection processes used by large employers of entry-level personnel--retail clerks, logistics, distribution and shipping workers, assembly-line employees, truck drivers, call center workers, train service personnel and track laborers. All seemed quite satisfied with their processes and results, having seen improvements in their hiring success and reduced attrition through use of aptitude and motivational testing.

Defense Business Practice Implementation Board

A variety of techniques are used to increase the applicant flow, thereby allowing the company to be more rigorous and selective about whom it hires. Most companies require applications to be filled out on line, and then apply a variety of screening and testing techniques to cull the applicants before interviews and site visits are offered.

An interesting finding was that some companies actually make it harder and more time consuming to get hired than really necessary. This creates a challenge for the applicant who has to express interest and commitment to get hired. They make it a rigorous process so it is an achievement to get hired.

Virtually all companies outsource their aptitude, motivational, and behavioral testing to specialized firms that customize their tests for the company's requirements. Names of firms and contacts were willingly provided for DoD follow-up.

Several stressed the importance of giving applicants who survive early testing a realistic portrayal of what the job will be like. Early attrition occurs if the new employee discovers the job is not what he or she expected. Therefore, companies do not "sell" the position. DoD, on the other hand, notes that it may be efficient to suffer somewhat greater attrition than to enrich applicant flows with expensive marketing (allowing achievement of recruiting numbers despite the addition of industry-type motivational screening). This is an area ripe for review of cost-effectiveness tradeoffs.

The most potentially valuable takeaways were: (1) web-based applications and initial screenings; (2) realistic appraisals of life in the Service; and most importantly, (3) contracting with independent firms to develop motivational and behavioral testing customized to the needs of the military branches to screen out quitters and screen in those who have the traits that characterize successful Service men and women.

Fred Cook
for DBB

Bill Carr
for DoD