



## REPORT OF THE BBG GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

**Members:** Governor Dennis Mulhaupt, Committee Chair  
Governor Victor Ashe, Committee Member  
Governor Michael Lynton, Committee Member  
Governor Susan McCue, Committee Member

**Meeting Date:** Friday, March 9, 2012

**Venue:** BBG Headquarters, Washington D.C.

This meeting of the Governance Committee took place on March 9, 2012 at BBG Headquarters. Governor Dennis Mulhaupt chaired the proceedings. Governor Victor Ashe and Governor Susan McCue were also in attendance. Governor Lynton was not in attendance.

The agenda of the meeting is set forth in Attachment 1 to this report.

- **Introductory Remarks**

Chairman Mulhaupt welcomed all attendees and thanked Governor Victor Ashe for his leadership in addressing the agency's use of human capital. He explained that the meeting was a listening session and that the Committee was committed to an open, transparent, respectful process so the Board could help create the best and most successful working environment possible. The Chair clarified that the Board is responsible for supervision of the federal agency and has delegated almost all management functions to agency management, including matters of employee and contractor relations.

Governor Susan McCue also thanked Governor Ashe for his leadership. She noted that the Board is interested in doing a deeper dive and finding out what can be done differently with management and employees to improve the morale of employees and contractors.

Governor Victor Ashe thanked the Committee and participants. He asked that the union and contractor representatives focus their discussion on the top three problems they would like to see solved. He asked the representatives for their candid opinions on what policies can improve the agency's the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey results.

**Use of Human Capital within BBG-Funded USIB: Employee Morale and Other Issues Raised in the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey**

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- **Statement by IBB Director**

The International Broadcasting Bureau (IBB) Director, Dick Lobo, acknowledged that he was aware of the morale problems in the agency even before beginning his tenure. He expressed

dissatisfaction with the current state of employee morale, but explained that the IBB front office has worked hard and made significant progress in the last few years.

The IBB Director provided several statistics to illustrate the agency's improvement since the low point in 2008, noting that the agency had improved significantly (defined as a 5 point change by OPM) on all four major indices: leadership and knowledge management, talent management, results-oriented performance culture, and job satisfaction. He highlighted what he considers the most encouraging result – that the agency exceeded government-wide results in positive responses to the statement: “I believe the results of this survey will be used to make my agency a better place to work.”

The IBB Director explained that this improvement was the result of several steps the agency has taken to respond to the results of previous surveys, including: working with employee unions; hiring an ombudsman and employee assistance counselor; doubling the training budget; increasing the awards budget five fold over a few years; expanding internal communication efforts; providing all managers with extensive leadership and communication training; and partnering with the labor unions on special projects for performance management, employee wellness, and civility in the workplace.

The IBB Director recognized that despite the improvements and agency efforts, the agency is still faced with challenges because of budget uncertainties and dealing with rapid changes in broadcasting priorities, reallocation of resources, changes in media, and advancements in technology. Currently the IBB has formed a joint labor-management task force on morale and required that each office with more than ten employee responses on the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey complete a six-month action plan to respond to their particular survey results.

The IBB Director concluded his statement by expressing his gratitude for the opportunity to participate in the listening session and reiterating his commitment to working constructively with the Unions and addressing employee concerns.

- **Statements from Agency's three (3) Unions**

A list of the Union Representatives is included in Attachment 2.

Tim Shambles, President of American Federal of Government Employees (AFGE), Local 1812, began his statement explaining that reductions-in-force (RIFs) and the fear of RIFs are a primary cause of low morale in the agency. Mr. Shambles expressed a desire for increased employee counseling services and a better effort to find new positions for employees.

The Committee noted that there has not been a RIF since 2009.

Mr. Shambles also expressed the frustration among employees that senior management and the Board do not recognize the different missions of VOA and RFE/RL, RFA, and MBN. He also

noted that employees feel budget implications are not tied to the quality of their work or ability to attract large audiences. He discussed the perceived disproportionality of proposed cuts across the BBG entities in the FY 2013 budget request, noting that VOA was proposed to take a majority of the cuts.

Mr. Shambles described the agency's management style as "top down" and "dictatorial", providing the example of employees being moved from one office space to another. Mr. Shambles stated that employees have not wanted to change spaces but that management explained increased proximity and improved communication as the reason for the move.

Mr. Shambles, the Committee, and IBB staff representatives discussed the procedure for filing a grievance. There was disagreement among Mr. Shambles and IBB staff on the process.

Mr. Shambles provided the following recommendations for improving employee morale: increased employee involvement in decision-making and fewer bureaucratic steps for reporters. Mr. Shamble concluded noting that the issues with contractors also contribute to low employee morale.

A statement submitted by Mr. Shambles is included in Attachment 3.

Andre DeNesnera, BBG representative for American Foreign Service Association (AFSA), began his statement explaining that employee morale is at the lowest point he has seen in his 31 years with the agency. He expressed that employees feel a sense of resentment because of the large budget cuts from VOA proposed in the FY 2013 President's budget, noting that VOA has "75% of the audience but took 60% of the cuts." He noted a perceived difference among employees of the Board's words and its actions, highlighting the BBG's goal of being a leading international news agency while planning to reduce the News Division staff.

Mr. DeNesnera also noted a lack of trust in the Board and senior management among employees. He suggested that some trust could be restored by managers walking around the services and speaking directly with employees.

Greg Burns, President of American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), Local 1418, provided insight about the agency's structure being the cause of many problems. With regard to the planned restructuring, Mr. Burns stated that AFSCME believes consolidation is necessary, that the Board should be advisory, and that the IBB Director should be the head of agency.

Mr. Burns communicated a frustration among employees because they lack a sense of purpose – whether the agency is a news organization, national security organization, or combination of both. He noted the perception among employees that senior management and the Board do not understand the varying missions of VOA to tell America's story and RFE/RL, RFA, and MBN to

act as surrogate broadcasters. Employees desire a clearer sense of IBB's purpose and mission for VOA.

Mr. Burns stated that shortwave is a vital platform for the agency and communicated the frustration among employees broadcasting in shortwave as the agency moves more and more resources to television and internet. He criticized the recent research contract with Gallup, explaining that the funds could have been used to spare reductions.

Bill Barber, Vice-President of AFSCME Local 1418, echoed Mr. Burns' statement that management visibility is important and managers should meet with services and employees to address issues of concern.

Mr. Burns and Mr. Barber submitted an article for the Committee's consideration, included in Attachment 4.

### **Use of Human Capital within BBG-Funded USIB: Contractor Issues**

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- **Statements from Contractors**

A list of the contractor representatives is included in Attachment 5.

Paul Ndiho, a producer with VOA's English Division, thanked the Governance Committee for holding the listening session and the IBB Director for providing contractor brown bags. Consistent with Governor Ashe's request, Mr. Ndiho prioritized three issues to discuss: (1) late payments, (2) fair compensation, and (3) a lack of sick and vacation time.

Mr. Ndiho proposed that management inform contractors of their right to negotiate contracts in an effort to receive fair pay and ensure that contracts are revised annually. He also proposed that contractors receive 2-3 days of paid time off annually.

Mike Gloss, a graphic designer for VOA's Urdu and Bangla services, began his statement by noting that the brown bags for contractors have been a very good start to improving the situation for contractors in the agency.

Mr. Gloss discussed the way in which the agency chooses to spend the operations budget, noting that the agency has invested in two new studios but cannot afford the people to run them to their full potential. He also discussed the problem with contractor rates not increasing over several years.

Jeff Blagg, a video editor with VOA, focused his statement on the lack of communication between contractors and the Office of Contracts. Mr. Blagg highlighted the fact that several terms in contracts are not defined (*e.g.* "assignment"). He also communicated a feeling among contractors that they cannot ask questions about their contracts, for fear of having the contract

terminated. Mr. Blagg suggested annual one-on-one meetings between contractors and an Office of Contracts representative to discuss the terms of each contract and negotiate in good faith.

Rusudan Tsereteli, a multimedia journalist working in the Georgian Service, expressed that her contractor colleagues feel demoralized and confused about their status, especially in light of upcoming budget cuts. Ms. Tsereteli echoed Mr. Blagg's comment that contractors worry about asking the Office of Contracts about their contract out of a concern that the contract will be terminated.

- **Closing Remarks**

Chairman Mulhaupt reiterated that the Governance Committee and plenary Board take the issue of human capital seriously and are committed to improving the situation.

Governor Ashe suggested that many of the problems can be dealt with sooner rather than later and that the Committee should choose a few issues and direct IBB staff to report at the next Governance Committee meeting.

Director Lobo expressed appreciation for the open Committee meeting with input from the unions and contractors. He noted that the problem will take time to solve, but that the agency has started taking steps to improve the use of human capital.

Governor McCue concurred with the expression of support and commitment, mentioning that more and open communication will continue to build trust between the agency's senior leadership and employees and contractors.

Chairman Mulhaupt concluded the Governance Committee.

**MEETING OF THE BBG GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

**March 9, 2012**

**9:00-11:30**

**BBG Conference Room**

**Members** Governor Dennis Mulhaupt, Committee Chair  
Governor Victor Ashe, Committee Member  
Governor Michael Lynton, Committee Member  
Governor Susan McCue, Committee Member

**AGENDA**

*Agenda Topic 1* **Use of Human Capital within BBG-Funded United States  
International Broadcasting: Employee Morale and Other Issues Raised  
in the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey**

- Introductory Remarks from Chairman Mulhaupt
- Statement by IBB Director with Support from IBB Staff
- Statements from Agency's three (3) Unions Followed by Question and Answer Period

*Agenda Topic 2* **Use of Human Capital within BBG-Funded United States  
International Broadcasting: Contractor Issues**

- Introductory Remarks from Chairman Mulhaupt
- Statement by IBB Director with Support from IBB Staff
- Statements from Contractors Followed by Question and Answer Period

## UNION REPRESENTATIVES

(as of 2-27-2012)

Of 1,713 BBG Federal employees (excluding foreign nationals overseas), approximately 1,031, or about 60 percent, are represented by a Union.

### **American Federal of Government Employees (AFGE), Local 1812**

- AFGE is the largest of the agency's labor organizations, covering 913 employees with approximately 387 dues paying members. AFGE is the union with the largest effect on the day-to-day lives of staff and management
- **Timothy (Tim) Shamble**, President (EOD 6-30-91 Production Specialist Radio English Division)

### **American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), Local 1418**

- AFSCME represents 94 Radio Broadcast Technicians with 79 dues paying members
- **Gregory (Greg) Burns**, President (EOD 6-26-83 Radio Broadcast Technician, VOA)
- **Bill Barber**, Vice President

### **American Foreign Service Association (AFSA)**

- AFSA covers approximately 24 Foreign Service positions, with 10 paying dues
- **Andre DeNesnera**, BBG Representative (EDO 12-22-83, Correspondent VOA News)

PROBLEMS WITH MORALE

Statement from Timothy Sharble,

President AFGF Local 1812

March 9, 2012

In any discussion about morale at this Agency there is no way to avoid the topic of reductions-in-force. It's the 800-pound gorilla in the room. It overshadows any other issue affecting morale in this Agency. For over a decade, when the budget for the next fiscal year is sent to Congress, employees hunker down to see which Services will be ended or reduced. This has been the case year after year. RIFs are not acts of nature. They are choices deliberately made by individuals in management who decide how the resources will be allocated. Somewhere along the line, A deliberate choice was made to run this organization in this manner and it has had a devastating effect on morale.

The OPM Employee Viewpoint surveys have revealed that we believe what we do is important. However, the message we receive from those running this Agency is the exact opposite. A good example of this occurred last month when the latest budget plan was released. One of the Services targeted for reduction is the Tibetan Service which will cease its radio broadcasting in favor of a 50% increase in TV when research shows that the popularity of TV can only reliably be measured in India and Nepal among Tibetan refugees who have migrated there. To whom will VOA be broadcasting? Recently NPR reported on the Chinese government's crackdown in Tibet. The story revealed that Tibetan monks went to dark secluded spaces inside locked monasteries to listen to the Voice of America as heavily-armed Chinese soldiers patrolled outside. Those monks obviously believe that what the VOA broadcasters and journalists do is important enough to risk their lives. If Tibetans must seek a secret space to listen to radios, what makes VOA think it can reach an audience on TV screens inside that persecuted country?

The Agency refuses to acknowledge and embrace its strength. For some reason the BBG has been slowly phasing out its radio broadcasts. The most recent data released by the BBG indicates that its largest audience is still those who access our radio broadcasts despite over a decade of eliminating frequencies, transmitters, broadcasts, and broadcasters. The fact is that there are roughly 2.5 billion shortwave receivers world wide. Even the IBB is quoted in a recent article as saying that at any given time of the day or night, one BILLION shortwave receivers are turned on. In some places, car radios come equipped with shortwave bands. For millions of people around the world, shortwave radio is the only means they have for communication with the outside world. There needs to be a frank and open discussion regarding the Agency's strategic plan with a willingness to at least discuss the possibilities of modifying it.

If there is to be any improvement in morale at this Agency these latest reductions must be reversed. The halls are seething with discontent, frustration, anger and bewilderment. When announcing these cuts, at the very least the Agency could have increased its career and psychological counseling to help employees faced with the loss of their livelihood and the uncertainties of employment. No one knows where the ax will fall, how the RIF will be administered and what positions the Agency intends to eliminate. Had the unions had the chance to have input into the pre-decisional process at the Labor/Management Forum, we would have registered our strong objections there. Again, the debates are out in the public domain, in the press and in the Congress, exposing the rift between management and the employees as to the mission of the Agency.

Employees have been subjected to buy-out notices that target "employees without the skills desired by the agency." Over the years, VOA employees have willingly learned new skills – Television, Internet, social media, you name it. Yet they have not been recognized for this. They have not received any grade increases for taking on new increased duties, workloads and skills. Employees have been left in the dark about what skills they should be acquiring and management has not taken the initiative in notifying the employees of what these are.

VOA employees have had their work denigrated over and over. What we do for VOA has been identified as being the same as that of the surrogate broadcasters. There is a difference in missions which have become blurred. The mission of the VOA is clearly delineated in the VOA Charter. Congress did not create two different entities to do the very same thing. However, that difference is not acknowledged by the BBG professional staff who claim there is an overlap among the VOA broadcasts and the surrogate broadcasts, and more often than not when a determination is made as to which will be eliminated it is the VOA Services that suffer, this despite the fact that VOA is still the most recognized and trusted "brand" of United States International Broadcasting.

The dominant management style at this Agency is a top-down dictatorial style. The agency seems to go out of its way to hire managers without people skills who berate and belittle employees. We have waited for each incarnation of the BBG to change the way management operates but each Board has failed to make any significant changes. ✓

We are weary of having new managers, who can truly make a difference tell us: "We don't want to undermine anyone's authority by going against recommendations of the professional staff." Since no one will do so, we continue to see the same results on the employee viewpoint surveys. The BBG was rated at the bottom or near the bottom for the following categories: "I have a high level of respect for my organization's senior leaders", "My organization's leaders maintain high standards of honesty and integrity", "I have trust and confidence in my supervisor", "Leaders generate high levels of motivation and commitment in

the workforce”, and “My agency is successful at accomplishing its mission”. These results are not just from the rank and file but include managers as well. Something is clearly wrong.

It is the prevailing feeling and one that the union has seen first-hand that some in senior leadership positions do not respect the law. I have a wall full of examples in my office that attest to this fact as well as several recent arbitration decisions decided in favor of the union. Union and management negotiators spent years negotiating provisions of a new Contract. Agreements were initiated by both sides only to have the management team walk away from these agreements and refuse to recognize them. One such provision was a conduct review panel in which employees accused of wrong-doing would be judged by their peers which would have gone a long way in improving employees’ belief that they are being treated fairly. There is supposed to be a fair system to address employee grievances. A three tier system has been negotiated but agency management has corrupted the process so that it is in reality a two tier process. The same management officials who respond to the first level complaints are also involved in responding to the second level complaints. Employees have little chance of a fair hearing until they go to arbitration in front of a neutral third party. That costly process could, would and should be avoided.

The truth is that the democratic ideals we are asked to promote in our broadcasts are not practiced here in this building. The word “democracy” is a word that was sneered at by one upper level management official in a meeting with union representatives. It’s very apparent that due process and free speech are not welcome.

Many management actions seem to be intended simply to unsettle and frustrate employees. For over a decade, employees have been moved and their work spaces changed like the pieces on a chessboard. These moves are not generated because employees requested them but were made because someone in management wanted to shake things up. A lot of taxpayer money has been spent on these various renovations. Recently English Service employees, who were completely content with where they were located in this building, were forced to move to a work space they felt would be detrimental to doing their work. This recent move was justified by management as being “to promote more interaction by moving these employees closer to their coworkers” as if proximity promotes more and better communication. That may also be the management reasoning used to block telecommuting for employees even though both Congress and the President have urged all federal agencies to promote more telecommuting.

Employees in the Central News Room have had bureaucratic changes made to the way they do their jobs. The reporters now spend more time identifying what they plan to do and reporting on what it is they have done ... than they do in actually producing what it is they are supposed to produce. Front line employees – the content producers – have also been badgered into working more than eight hours a day and forty hours a week without any additional compensation.

Reporters and journalists who have been working straight-eight work schedules and prefer working straight-eight work schedules have been forced to work eight hour and forty five minute schedules instead. The change was not initiated by the employees but by the Human Resources office.

The number of contract employees at the Agency has steadily increased. As employees leave whether by retirement, resignations or a RIF, they are not replaced by staff employees. Contractors are hired instead. There are many examples of how these people are abused. Almost all of the contractors work side-by-side with staff employees. They use the same equipment we use. They are directed in their work by our supervisors and not a contracting officer. But they earn no overtime, no annual or sick leave; they don't get holidays or a retirement plan. Many are paid less. The Agency claims these individuals are independent contractors but it is obvious to everyone that is not the case. And they are not going to give you an honest answer when asked "what are your complaints and how can we make things better." Contract employees are on a slippery slope if they complain knowing that if they do, their services could be ended at any time and with no justification and no recourse.

If the Board truly wants to change the disintegrating morale in this Agency, it will have to give more than lip service to turning things around. It's not an easy task. Someone will have to examine the whole culture here and resolve, firmly and openly, to work toward an enlightened workplace in which everyone's good work is recognized and valued, where discipline is meant to be remedial and corrective rather than punitive, where people come together to share ideas and yes, debate the issues. Then, the unions and management would be in a position to forge accommodations that serve the best interests of both the Agency and individual employees.

**Local 1418/AFSCME**

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees  
Council 26, Capital Area Council of Federal Employees  
202 338 7043

March 9, 2012

To: The BBG Governance Committee

From: Gregory D. Burns – President

William J. Barber – Vice - President

Subject: Agency Morale – Pending The 2013 Budget Proposal

The following documents represent solutions in the decline of Agency Morale at the BBG/IBB/VQA.

In our statements, we will provide the Committee with background on the current Morale problems running rampant throughout the entire BBG/IBB. It is important to note that there is currently a joint Union/ Labor Management IBB/VQA Morale Taskforce working to resolve this dire issue. There is no question in regards to everyone agreeing that LEADERSHIP from the Top - Down is where to start.

Thank you for this opportunity to address the vital Morale Problems at the BBG/IBB/VQA.

Yours Truly,

Greg. Burns



Bill Barber



Representing the Radio Broadcast Technicians of The Voice of America  
AFL-CIO



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From federal pay freezes to tightening budgets and a shrinking workforce, federal employees and managers have had to deal with their fair share of changes the last few years. But what kind of toll has it taken on the workforce? Managers and employees alike tell Federal News Radio their morale has been affected drastically - and not in a good way. In our special report, "[Managing Morale](#)," we find out from feds just how bad the problem is; we speak with federal managers and leadership experts on what can be done to fix morale issues; and we hear straight from Congress what exactly lawmakers expect from the federal workforce during these difficult times.

## How to get the morale mojo back in your federal office

Friday - 2/17/2012, 1:46am ET

### Listen

Michael Kane, CHCO at the Energy Department, offers his advice for motivating your workforce.

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Tim Urtan, professor of psychology at Santa Clara University, offers his perspective on motivating employees.

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By Julia Ziegler  
Web Manager  
Federal News Radio

This week, Federal News Radio has been exploring the causes of low morale in the federal workforce. Managers and employees, alike, told us their levels of motivation have been affected greatly by the current two-year pay freeze, "fed haching" by members of Congress and the public, and ineffective managers.

In an exclusive [Fedcr1NewsRadio.com survey](#), over one-third of employees responding said *nothing* their managers are currently doing is building morale at their agencies.

"They are indifferent, demeaning, arrogant, ignorant (of their own profession) and complacent," wrote one survey respondent.

When asked how well managers at their agencies motivate employees on a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being terrible and 10 being excellent, 56 percent of federal employees gave their managers a score of 1-3, while only 10 percent gave managers a score between 8-10.

That might be because managers say they are unmotivated themselves. In Federal News Radio's survey, 65 percent of federal managers indicated their morale level somewhere between 1-5, while only 12 percent listed their morale from 8-10.

So, with managers and employees both feeling unmotivated, how can the situation improve at agencies? In order to fix morale, it's helpful to know where it comes from in the first place.

*Quick Tips for Motivating Your Workforce:*

- Set expectations and goals.
- Set the example. Managers must be motivated too.
- Find ways to show your appreciation. Something small can go a long way.
- Make work meaningful.
- Be fair with pay, benefits, and opportunities for employees.
- Make room for growth, ideas, and creativity.
- Communicate and listen to employees.
- Be open and honest.

"We know through research that motivation is intrinsic. It is not imposed, it comes from within," said John Baldoni, president of Baldoni Consulting, a coaching and leadership development firm. "It's an adoption of behaviors. We motivate ourselves because we want to achieve something."

But, managers have a big effect on employee morale too, according to Tim Urdan, a professor of psychology at Santa Clara University.

"If you talk to people about why they've left jobs in the past, it often boils down to a bad relationship with their direct manager...I think managers can have a lot of effect on motivation."

Urdan said managers can start to change the atmosphere in their offices by making the work meaningful; making room for employee growth, ideas and creativity; and trying to make things fair when it comes to pay, benefits and the opportunities employees are given.

Robin Wink, owner of Radman Wink Associates, a training company for federal employees, said it's also important for managers to set expectations and goals, set the example, and find ways to show appreciation for employees on a daily basis. She said staff meetings are a great place to do this.

"You're actually putting your unit's goals and missions on display by what you're thanking or appreciating. It's as much about

everyone else hearing those are the kinds of things we should keep doing, as it is, additionally, for the person who gets the praise in person."

What might come as a surprise to some, Urdan said, is that little things, like a "thank you," can sometimes be more effective than a monetary bonus.

"There's pretty good evidence out there that making money the primary motivator generally doesn't work. I mean, it works if you've got a really boring job that doesn't require a lot of critical thinking or problem solving...but if you have a job that involves some sort of critical thinking or problem solving aspect to it, putting all of the incentives into money can actually have an undermining effect. It can make people more conservative in their thinking and it can make them less creative in their problem solving."





Michael Kane, Energy Dept

As for dealing with their own motivational problems, Michael Kane, the chief human capital officer at the Energy Department and the 2011 CIOCO of the Year, said managers should look to the mission and the work being done at the agency to help rejuvenate their spirits.

"One of the things that works for me, personally, is I get out of my office and I go walk around the building. And I'll walk into an area where I know there's program activity going on - whether it's good program activity or bad program activity. I'll say, "What are you guys working on here? How are you working?" And I will engage them in a discussion. And, what I find is, when I get down in those programs around people who are connected to that mission, that improves my morale because I start looking at the things they're doing and that reminds me why I'm here and what awesome abilities there are in the federal government, what awesome things they're doing on behalf of people, but more importantly what my responsibility is. It clarifies back for me what I'm responsible for and what I need to deliver."

#### What if it doesn't work?

Despite managers' best efforts, Baldoni said there will always be some employees that can't be motivated.

"Frankly, there will be some people, the outliers in your system, that are just there to throw stones and don't want to participate and only want to gum up the works. You need to find a way to, if you can't get rid of them, marginalize them so they can't infect the rest of the team."



John Baldoni, Baldoni Consulting

Wink said it's also important for managers to confront unmotivated employees.

"We've become a society that isn't always interested in conversations that involve a level of conflict. Having to say to someone, 'look, you don't appear to be motivated' or 'the attitude you displayed in our staff meeting last week was really negative and that's dragging the group down,' we're not always comfortable with that conversation and I think we have to have it probably more than we realize." She said dealing with poor performers is also important so that it doesn't bring the entire team down.

"In some measure, folks are just not comfortable and prepared to communicate as effectively with their front-line workforce as they should be," said Tom Fox, vice president for leadership and innovation at the Partnership for Public Service. "There are folks that are doing an exceptional job and others who are struggling. Now is the time to come out of the shell and really make sure that you are communicating with folks."

Kane said communicating with employees is one of the most important things managers can do to keep a motivated workforce.

"One of the things we do here is, we do a lot of communication about what's working well and what's not working well...It's about celebrating mistakes. It's about saying, 'We discovered something we're not doing well and we're on it, and let me tell you what a great thing we're doing to correct this.' That translates to employees. It says, 'You have faith in me, you have value in me. You recognize the fact that I am trying to make this a better process, a better world.'"

While there may not be a magic bullet for fixing morale problems in the workplace, experts agree there are many things managers can do on a daily basis to get their offices' back on the right track.

"You could look at the indicators in terms of negativity around the federal workforce and declining morale, and throw up your hands and feel somewhat helpless or hopeless," said Fox. "I think, more than anything for federal leaders, now is the time to redouble those efforts and

make a commitment to focusing on the fundamentals to make sure that you're doing all you can, despite that adversity, to keep spirits high."

***MORE FROM THE MANAGING MORALE SERIES:***

[Motivating the workforce - it takes two to tango \(column\)](#)

[How the military gets motivation right](#)

[Federal morale deeply impacted by pay freeze, fed bashing](#)

[Managing morale: lessons from OPM's John Berry](#)

[Pay and Benefits Bill Tracker \(chart\)](#)

[2008-2013 Spending Levels \(chart\)](#)

## CONTRACTOR REPRESENTATIVES

*The IBB Director invited all BBG contractors to volunteer to speak to the Governance Committee. Seventeen contractors volunteered for this opportunity. When given the choice for a lottery or self-selection to choose 5 representatives, the volunteers asked to describe amongst themselves. On March 3, a small group met and chose the contractors below.*

### **Jeff Blagg**

Jeff Blagg has worked at VOA for five (5) years as a video editor. Before moving to DC, he worked in the film industry in Los Angeles for several years. In addition to his work for VOA, Jeff is the owner and lead developer of a software development company focused on making apps for the iPhone and iPad.

### **Mike Gloss**

Mike Gloss serves as a broadcast graphics designer for VOA Urdu and Bangla services. He started with VOA in the Promotion Department in 2007 and moved to Urdu about a year later. In television for almost 20 years, Mike has experience with editing, camera work, and graphic design.

### **Paul Ndiho**

Paul Ndiho works with VOA's English Division producing television programming to Africa. In his 14 years as a journalist, Paul covered an extensive range of African affairs for media outlets in his home country, Uganda, as well as other international media organizations. Because of his reporting, Paul was forced to leave Uganda and seek political asylum in the United States. He has worked at VOA for seven (7) years.

### **Rusudan Tsereteli**

Rusudan Tsereteli started working with the VOA Georgian service in 2011. She is a multimedia journalist, working on radio and television features and blogging. Rusudan has 15 years professional experience in journalism with media outlets in Georgia, Pakistan, Jordan, Germany, and the Czech Republic. In addition to her extensive background in investigative reporting, Rusudan has developed a documentary on the war in Abkhazia.