



Government Best Practices

Performance Measures

Summary

According to PMI's [2016 Pulse of the Profession®](#), **organizations across all industries waste \$122 million for every \$1 billion invested due to poor project performance** — a 12 percent increase over last year.

The federal government has long been concerned about program and project performance. During the past few months, the U.S. House of Representatives approved S.1550, the [Program Management Improvement and Accountability Act of 2015 \(PMIAA\)](#).

President Obama recently signed it into law after the Senate accepted the minor changes from the House.

The PMIAA legislation works to **enhance accountability and best practices in project and program management throughout the federal government by:**

1. Creating a formal job series and career path for program managers in the federal government
2. Developing a standards-based program management policy across the federal government
3. Recognizing the essential role of executive sponsorship and engagement by designating a senior executive in federal agencies to be responsible for program management policy and strategy
4. Sharing knowledge of successful approaches to program management through an inter-agency council on program management

Background & Methodology

Outreach Process Partners, LLC helps government agencies apply technologies and data analytics to enhance communications and improve program performance.

In partnership with PMI, OPP conducted interviews with experienced staff at six federal agencies to better understand how agencies develop strategies to achieve their mission and measure performance.

As promised, we are not releasing names or any specific program information that may identify individuals.

Thank you to this year's participants. We invite other federal/DoD staff to sign up to participate in future federal program management best practice studies. Please contact us at pm@opp-llc.org or 888-OPP-0101.

Agencies Represented

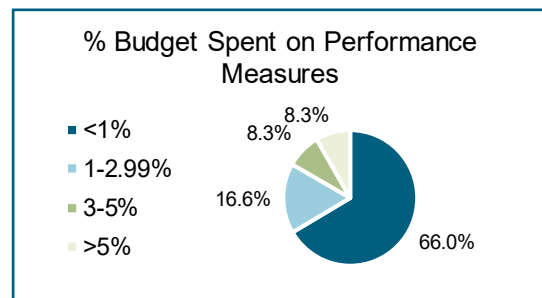


Figure 1 Percent of Budget Spent on Performance Measures

Discussion

The 2010 Government Performance Results Modernization Act (GPRAMA) already requires cross-agency priority (CAP) goals — four-year, outcome-oriented, goals covering risky and complex management and mission issues. Under GPRAMA federal managers “report higher performance information use” as a result of having to coordinate, clarify and review goals with other agencies quarterly.

Based on the OPP/PMI study findings, the collection and use of performance data is occurring only 62.5% of the time. For the remaining 37.5% of program level federal employees, it is either not happening or is not being communicated to them. Our findings are consistent with GovLoop’s survey of more than 400 of its community members where 39% reported either not using data analytics or unsure.

Performance.gov was set up to make CAP and Agency goals transparent. A May 20, 2016 GAO report noted “most of the selected CAP goal teams have not established quarterly targets.” The report recommends that OMB share the actions taken to develop performance measures and quarterly targets on Performance.gov.

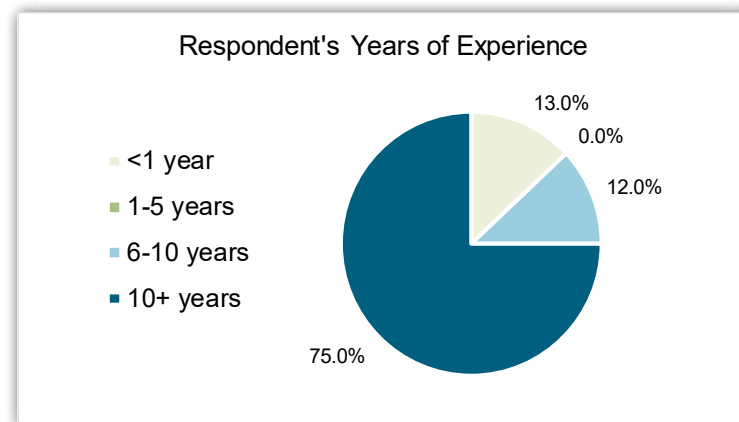


Figure 2 Respondent's Years of Experience

“Measurable goals are currently only outlined in individual Performance Plans.”
- Federal Program Manager

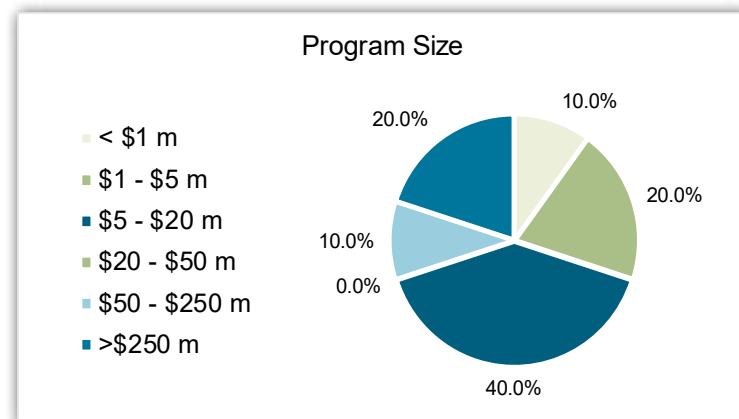


Figure 3 Program Size

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND GOAL SETTING PROCESS

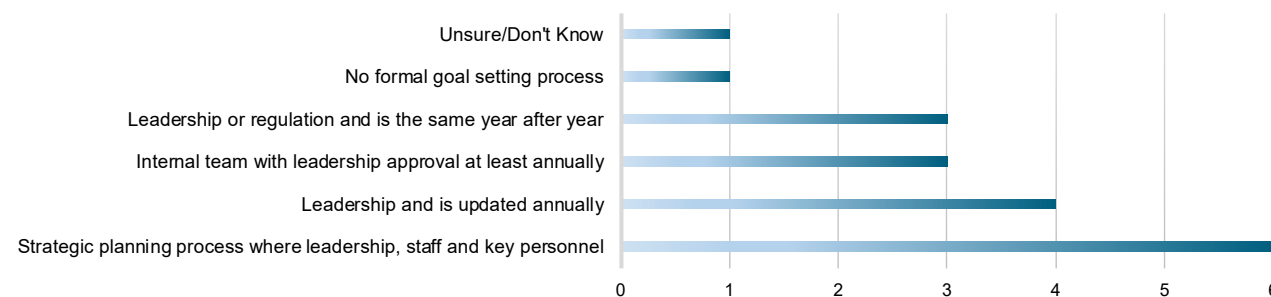
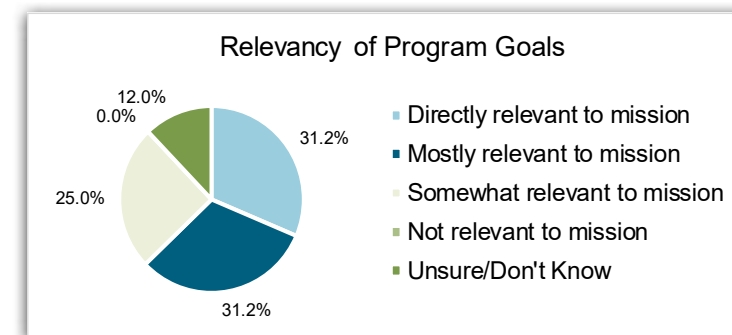


Figure 4 Strategic Planning and Goal Setting

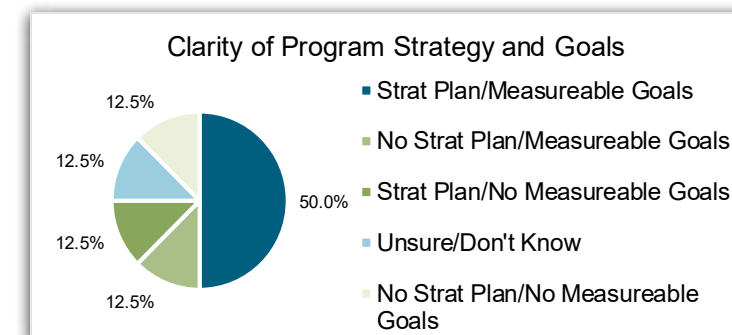
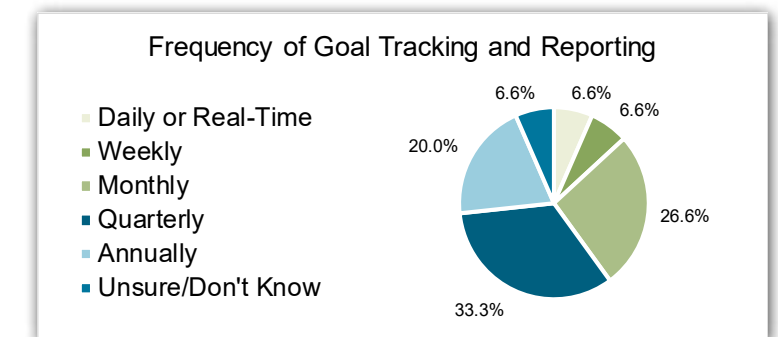


Only 12.5% said all goals are measured. While 50% said most goals are measurable but some are more on-going or are not measurable. Those who said their goals were not measured or they did not know accounted for 37% of participants.

< Figure 5 Relevancy of Program Goals

44% have a live performance tracking dashboard or will have one in the next six months, 26% noted that a dashboard is being considered under development, 40% said that a dashboard is not being considered at this time.

> Figure 6 Frequency of Goal Tracking



“Contracts are priced low which fails to attract top talent and fails to keep newly developed talent.”
- Federal Program Manager

< Figure 7 Clarity of Program Strategy

Half of the programs surveyed operate without a formal strategic plan. This finding hints at a possible disconnect between GPRAMA-required agency performance plans (APPs) -- which are focus on “major management challenges” and the program level work within the agency. A June 15, 2016 GAO report found that 14 of 24 agencies did not describe their major management challenge and that 22 of 24 agencies did not report complete performance information.

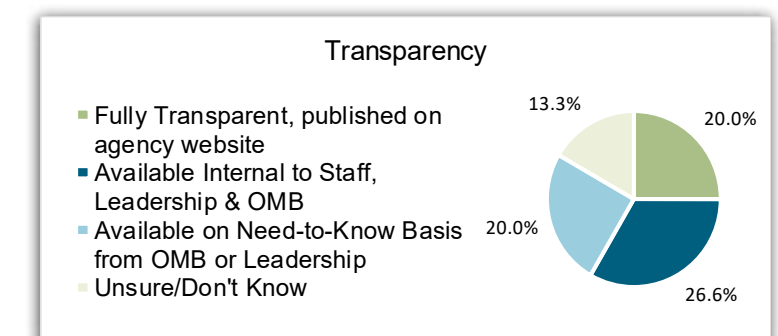


Figure 8 -- Only 13% of performance measures are readily available to the public online

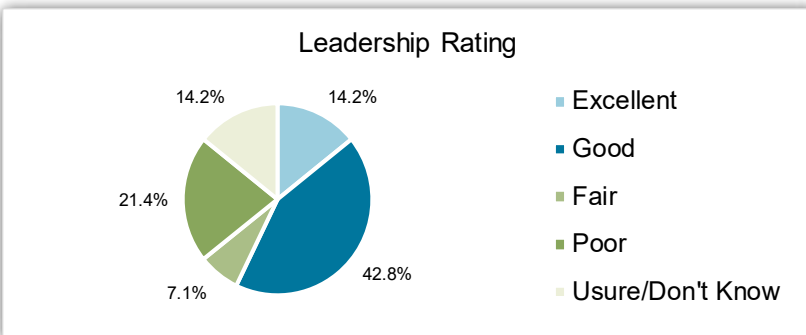
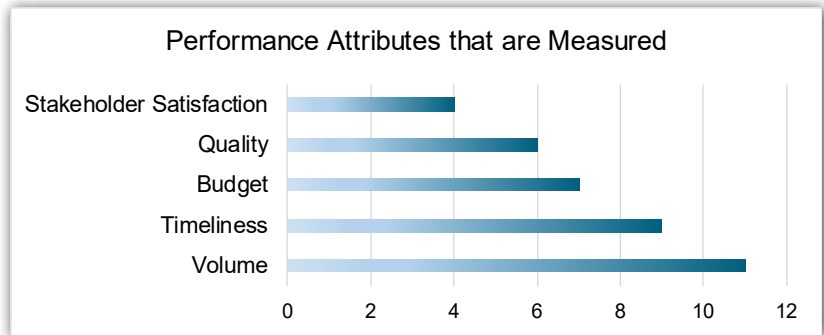
Two-thirds of respondents in the OPP/PMI study stated that less than one percent of program budget is spent on performance monitoring, measuring and reporting. The relatively small amount of program resources allocated may help explain GAO’s findings that these activities are not occurring as fully as needed. The new administration will have to decide if planning, goal setting, monitoring and measuring performance warrants a greater investment at both the agency and program level.

In 2011, President Obama signed Executive Order 13571 requiring agencies to streamline and improve customer service. Improving customer service is also a CAP goal. In our “check all that apply” question on attributes that are measured, stakeholder satisfaction is the least cited, coming after volume of work, budget, quality and timeliness. This highlights another area for improvement.

GovExec’s “How to Get Off to a Strong Start: A Guide for the Next President” emphasizes the need for President-elect Donald Trump to rely on “people,” “structure” and “tools” – including “driving alignment around clear goals (and) written performance plans.” Our findings presented concern about recruiting, retaining, and providing promotional opportunities for government employees. In addition to those concerns, 25% of respondents rated their leadership at or below fair. These findings provide a warning to President-elect Donald Trump, as well as an opportunity for improvement.

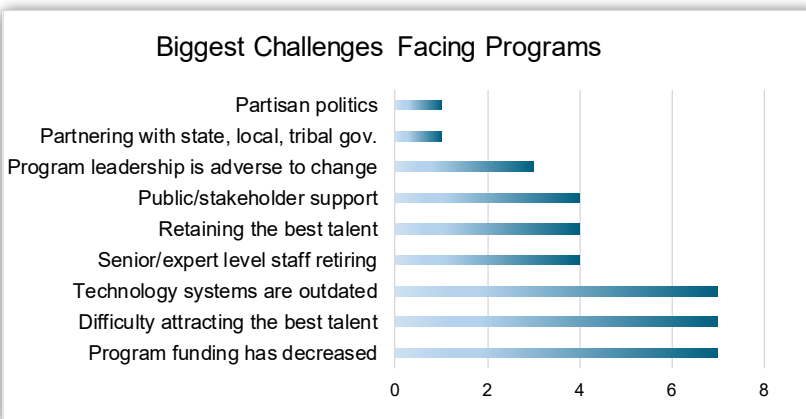
The volume of work was the most-cited type of measure, followed by timeliness, adherence to budget, quality, and stakeholder satisfaction.

> Figure 9 Performance Attributes Measured

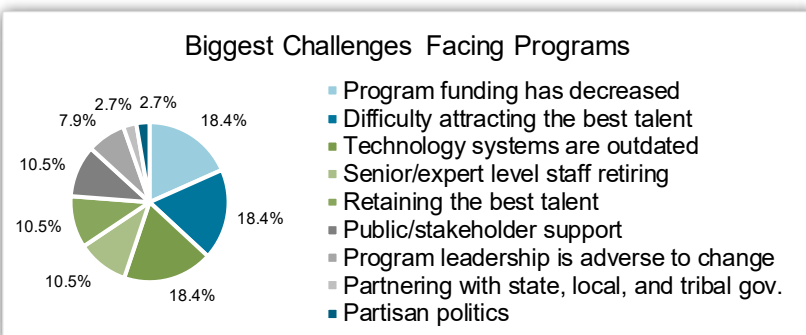


In this study, 57% rated leadership as “Excellent” or “Good” - 28.5% rated leadership as “Fair” or “Poor” - the remaining 14.2% were not sure or didn’t know.

< Figure 10 Leadership Rating.
Below - Figure 11 Performance Attributes



The adage: “what gets measured gets done” is the foundation of “A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK® Guide)—Fifth Edition.” We applaud the planning efforts of the White House, Congress, OMB, GAO and all federal agencies to identify and tackle their biggest challenges collaboratively and transparently. We hope the insights from these interviews serves to continue the discussion and support continuous improvement.



Funding, outdated technology, and difficulty attracting the best talent were the most-cited challenges facing survey participants.

< Figure 12 Biggest Challenges Facing Programs