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Promoting Performance in the Federal Workforce by Integrating Human Capital Management within Strategic Budgeting

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal agencies are facing the monumental challenge of effectively fulfilling their missions with flat or declining resources. This problem will only be exacerbated in light of current budget constraints and demands. Since human capital costs represent a substantial portion of the federal government discretionary budget, agencies will increasingly find it difficult to sustain an effectively managed workforce. Human capital management (HCM) challenges facing federal agencies include: lack of funds (to cover payroll and necessary workforce investments), coming demographic shifts, and technology-induced skill/capacity needs. Fiscal and political realities are creating a window for 'disruption' to business-as-usual in agency HCM practices: that is, agencies have an opportunity to innovate and invest in modern, strategic workforce management practices that will improve effectiveness.

Systems for managing 'fiscal' and 'people' resources are not uniformly well-integrated within federal agencies. There is no uniform fiscal resource management system across agencies[1], and there are certainly no common practices for integrating fiscal and people resource management throughout the cycle of planning through evaluation. While there are perfectly explicable historical reasons for this, existing patchwork practices do not support modern HCM -nor will they allow agencies to accomplish necessary budget cuts while preserving effectiveness. Implementing a strategic resource framework that simultaneously draws upon modern workforce planning knowledge and sound fiscal management—while drawing upon data available—will allow agencies to remain effective—within reduced budget envelopes.

This paper introduces a strategic framework that federal agencies can tailor to their own specific organizational needs to accomplish this. Applying an integrated Resource and People Performance (iRAPP) framework will enable agencies to maximize HCM within current and future fiscal constraints. A robust iRAPP, regardless of organizational and process peculiarities, covers the resource cycle (planning through accountability). The paper suggests how fiscal and people perspectives feed into the resource management cycle—and ideally reinforce each other. There is no one way to accomplish this, but there are certain principles of robust iRAPP. The challenge facing agency leaders currently and in the future is that of reducing operating expenses while maintaining the same or higher level of performance. We suggest implementing iRAPP as the shortest route to an effective solution.

[1] Agencies of course do not operate in a vacuum—and the negative impact of Congress' failure to pass budgets on time in 34 of the last 37 years cannot be denied. However, the fact that the system is not perfect does not absolve agencies from taking steps to make the most efficient use possible of resources by using modern practices—including evidence-based decision-making—to manage them well.

I. Public sector agencies face a significant disruption.

A. The pressures

Ideally, governments always make efficient use of resources. In an age of economic challenges and looming budget constraints, however, it is absolutely essential that public agencies ensure they make the most effective use of resources to meet our nation's needs. This requires not just managing on-going programs in a cost-effective way, but asking hard questions about what agencies do, and how they do it.

Pressures to decrease expenditures—and improve effectiveness of expenditures that are made—by federal agencies will only continue to grow in the face of prevailing economic realities and political demands. A recent OMB Memorandum (M-12-13, May18, 2012) reflects this, instructing agencies that their:

> *2014 budget submission to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) should reflect the President's commitment to cut waste, set priorities among programs, and make targeted investments in critical priorities. Unless your agency has received different guidance from OMB, your overall agency request for 2014 should be 5 percent below the net discretionary total provided for your agency for 2014 in the 2013 Budget.*

Much of the reduction in the budget will play out through people—whether through fewer FTEs, limitations to training/development, delays to modernizing human capital management (HCM) practices and systems—as human capital costs represent the single largest obligation for many agencies—and the primary asset through which missions are accomplished.

Human capital management practices in the federal government have been on GAO's 'high risk' list for more than 10 years.[2] That there is pressing need to reduce costs—and improve HCM practices—in the federal government are both well established realities. Better integration of robust human capital management practices—from workforce analysis and planning through recruitment, development, performance management, and succession planning—into performance-focused resource management systems is imperative. We contend this will prove

[2] US Congressional Research Service, The Federal Workforce: Characteristics and Trends (Curtis W. Copeland), April 19, 2011 (http://www.auditforum.org/speaker%20presentations/miaf/miaf%2009%202011/FEDERAL_WORKFORCE_CHARACTERISTICS_AND_TRENDS_4_19_2011.pdf). Also, U.S. Government Accountability Office, High Risk Series: An Update, GAO-11-278, February 2011 (http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d11278.pdf).

the most effective means of reducing agency budgets—whether by 5 percent or more—while actually increasing agency effectiveness.

B. What this means for HCM in federal agencies

There is no simple one-stop source for tallying the number of federal employees and associated costs.[3] There are sources for numbers of direct employees. By one measure, as of January, 2009, the US federal government (all three branches, but excluding fee-based entities such as the US Postal Service) had 2,748,978 people on the payroll—2,070,521 excluding military personnel.[4] Direct payroll costs can be associated with these numbers. At first glance spending on the three major entitlements (Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security, which together spent almost $1.6 trillion in 2011) appears to dwarf personnel expenditures (of roughly US$200 billion in 2011[5]).

An accurate accounting of federal HCM spending would need to include, at a minimum, recruitment and training/development for all federal employees—*and* contractors' personnel expenditures. However, no consolidated figures on such expenditures exist in the public space. While reliable numbers are not on hand, it's fair to say that personnel costs represent a substantial obligation of the US federal government. Although people represent most agencies' biggest asset—it is an asset that has not necessarily been uniformly well-maintained within a robust strategic framework.

At this point, only anecdotal information is available about how fiscal challenges are playing out in agency HCM practices and expenditures. Based on available evidence it appears clear, however, that at least in some cases stresses on agency resources are resulting in *ad hoc* reactions rather than adjustments driven by strategic workforce plans. For example, the recent revelation of NOAA's budgetary maneuver[6] in which the agency reprogrammed technology investment funds to cover recurrent costs of staffing regional offices illustrates pressures. While NOAA's response is notable because they acted without congressional approval, and got called on this, the underlying pressure is certainly being played out across other agencies and programs.

The need to reallocate to meet current payroll is not the only friction point between HCM and fiscal pressures facing agencies. Budgetary stringency bears longer-range human capital asset maintenance implications as well.

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3 The discussion can get arcane quickly. It is possible to count actual employees, or 'full time equivalents.' It is possible to count only federal employees—or federal employees and contractors. It is possible to report requested budget for personnel (i.e., president's budget)—or funds as allocated by congress.

4 OPM, http://www.opm.gov/feddata/html/2009/January/table9.asp--2009 is the last year for which statistics are available.

5 CBO, http://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/cbofiles/attachments/01-30-FedPay.pdf.

6 WA Post, 30 May. Reprogramming is not the problem–reprogramming without getting congressional approval is the problem. It would not be surprising if NOAA is not the only agency in this boat.

- The number of retirement-eligible public sector employees is growing. However, it appears that agencies may not have a sound understanding of when waves of retirement will actually start, as the predictions and data are not lining up.[7] Whenever the trend eventually does spike upward, without sufficient leading investment in training and development—especially performance-oriented leader development—agencies will not be well-positioned to deal with the ramifications.
- The need to meet technologically-driven requirements (e.g., IT) is creating potential problems for public sector employers who do not have appropriately-skilled pools already on board—and cannot seem to recruit them. Availability of viable recruiting systems—including robust agency-specific competency frameworks and lateral on-boarding programs—requires investment. However, lead-time is required to see returns from these efforts so they can be a hard sell in times of austerity.

Devoting current resources to maintenance of human capital assets is the only way for agencies to be positioned to perform effectively in the future. Not only is this common sense, there's lots of evidence out there (anecdotal and research-based) about costs of not maintaining human capital assets—especially in hard economic times.

Agency leaders know that the fruit they're being deluged by is lemons—and they know they must engender sufficient resiliency in their agencies to make lemonade. Across-the-board cuts, marginal changes in some programs, managing staffing through attrition—these are neither sufficient nor robust responses to the nature and scale of the challenge. Public sector agencies will need to position themselves to deliver on their mandate with fewer resources, while bringing their human capital practices up to 21st century standards. Public sector agencies have both the obligation—and the crisis-induced freedom[8]—to figure out what it means to operate effectively in a modern, budget-constrained environment.

The challenge facing agency leaders over at least the next decade is that of reducing operating expenses while maintaining the same or higher level of performance. Taking a status quo perspective leads one to see doom. Change and disruption to 'business as usual' appears inevitable for most federal agencies—and this will not be uniformly easy or pain-free.

A positive way to view the confluence of prevailing economic, political, budgetary, and human capital trends is as a disruption: i.e., a 'game changing' event on which organizations can capitalize to take new approaches.[9]According to Clayton Christensen—author of the insight—taking the 'disruption' perspective leads one to see strategic opportunity. Leaders who are able to take advantage of disruptions must be able to apply new, and sometimes counter-intuitive, tactics.

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7 While this is likely attributable to economic conditions, one would expect an employer with robust workforce models to be able to adjust predictions—and planning—in accord with such shifting factors.

8 If not co-opted by Congress, as was the case with the USPS.

9 MacFarquhar, L. 'When giants fail: What business has learned from Clayton Christensen', New Yorker, May 14, 2012, p. 84.

Those overseeing federal resources must make some difficult choices—not only in allocation and use of discretionary budget dollars, but also, at a minimum, on how dollars are used to administer security and entitlement programs. Some of these will have to be political decisions. Such high-level choices aside, there is substantial scope for moving towards more efficient resource allocation within agencies by aligning good-fit employees with well-defined jobs linked to clear performance expectations—that result in achieving clearly-articulated agency missions.

C. SEIZING THE ADVANTAGE: IRAPP

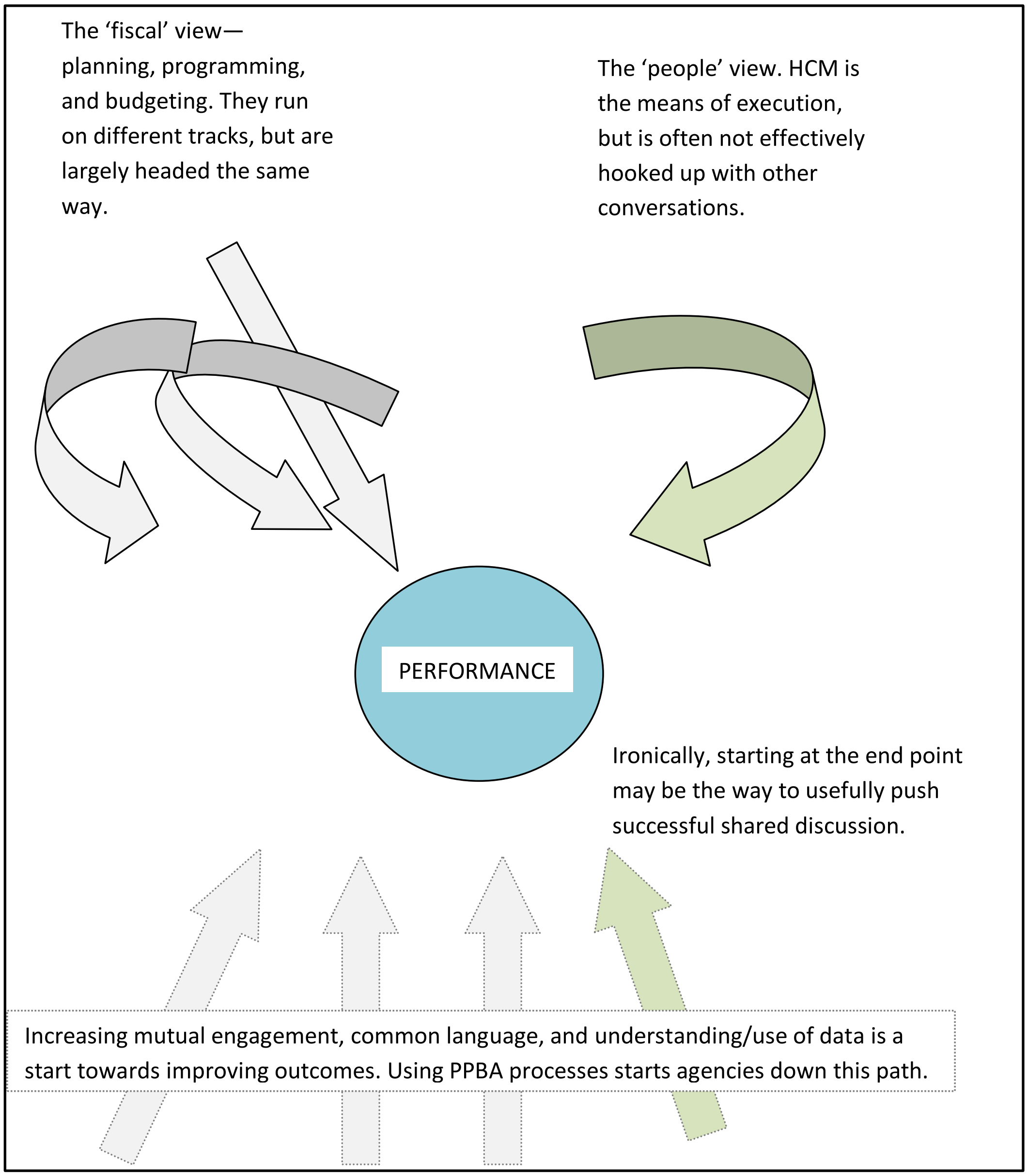

Figure 1: Aligning 'financial' and 'people' resource views

This paper proposes a high-level framework—that agencies can tailor to their own particular organizational needs—for moving towards productive integration of financial and human capital communities. It takes a 'disruption' tack in that the focus is on *investing in modern, strategic human capital management practices*, as opposed to cost-reduction. Our bottom line is that the former is essential in order to accomplish the latter—and to ensure organizational effectiveness.

The framework we propose is encapsulated in the acronym iRAPP—Integrating Resource and People Performance. As illustrated in Figure 1, iRAPP is not a radical suggestion, but rather a logical culmination of trends that have been evolving for some time. However, before discussing this culmination (i.e., iRAPP)—given that some new behaviors, and bridging of silos, may be needed—it is worth *briefly* reviewing key aspects of 'dollar resources' (i.e., fiscal) and 'people' (i.e., human capital) management practices as they have evolved in the federal government.

II. Legacy practices on both the resource and people sides pose hurdles.

Systems for managing dollars and people have historically proceeded in a relatively disconnected fashion in most federal agencies. While there are established processes for the federal budget at the highest level (i.e., the President's budget, congressional budgeting processes), there is no uniform method or system that all agencies apply for distributing and managing resources internally;[10] nor is there a standard system for human capital management.

Effective management of human capital assets within a strategic resource framework is the only way agencies can achieve goals while ensuring effective use of public resources. Several factors create a favorable environment—or provoking disruption—for progress towards this goal. First, fiscal pressures are revealing a lack of robust strategic plans—and linked performance monitoring—in many agencies. Second, documentation of gains from improved HCM practices is accruing; and evidence of need for improved practice is incontrovertible. Third, vast data storehouses and associated tools gradually coming online offer significant opportunity. Taken together, these yield insight into a way forward towards iRAPP—as well as likely challenges to be encountered.

A. On the dollar side

Practices for planning and managing dollar resources shifted and evolved substantially within and across most federal agencies throughout the 20th century. Practices transitioned from control (line item) budgeting, to management (efficiency or output focused budgeting), to planning (program and performance budgeting—or PPBS), to focusing on outcomes[11] (i.e., performance-informed budgeting).Practice has evolved in response to improved theory, political demands, and technological capacity. Regardless of the particular approach, sound fiscal management: starts with robust strategic planning; specifies resources required to meet objectives; implements activities in accord with plans; and monitors/evaluates performance.

There have been efforts to apply standard practice across the executive branch. The Department of Defense (DoD) proved a relative bastion of stability in budgetary practice. DoD introduced a 'Planning, Programming and Budgeting System' (PPBS) in 1962, and President Johnson tried to push a roll-out of this system across federal agencies—but the effort was abandoned by 1969. Several factors likely contributed, but failure of the highly structured PPBE system outside of the

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10 Agencies of course do not operate in a vacuum—and the negative impact of Congress' failure to pass budgets on time in 34 of the last 37 years cannot be denied. However, the fact that the system is not perfect does not absolve agencies from taking steps to make the most efficient use possible of resources by using modern practices—including evidence-based decision-making—to manage them well.

11 Schick, Allen, "A Death in The Bureaucracy: The Demise of Federal PPB," Public Administration Review 33, Number 2 (March/April 1973), pp. 146-156. See also, Hilton, R., Joyce, P., G. (2011). Performance Information and Budgeting in Historical and Comparative Perspective. Handbook of Public Administration, pp. 402-435.

DoD may in part be attributable to differences in organizational culture.[12] DoD's culture stands out due to the: degree of shared indoctrination and training; discipline; and highly structured, mission-oriented leadership. All the way up through the ranks, decision-makers are taught to think about 'commander's intent.' Evaluating past performance through 'after action' and/or 'red team' reviews are standard operating procedure. Planning and gaming for future missions—and associated force/materiel requirements—is routine. These mindsets and habits allowed DoD to grow, and largely maintain, a resource-intensive, rigid planning, programming, budgeting system.

DoD encountered problems with its first iteration of PPBS (well documented in the literature). It transitioned to a revised system—i.e., the PPBE (Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Execution) system—in 2003. It remains a labor-intensive, highly structured cycle comprised of four phases.

- In the planning phase, requirements are determined through various economic assessments and analyses of current and long term decision repercussions. Various documents such as a National Military Strategy report are created during the planning phase to provide direction on what the goals and objectives are.
- The programming phase requires analysts to match resources to various programs depending on the priorities. Analysts consider alternatives and tradeoffs while keeping the requirements set by the planners.
- Budgeting requires justifying to Congress and the Office of the Secretary of Defense the financial needs of the department in question—and that if the organization receives the requested resources, they will spend these resources in agreement with the law. The budgeting segment of PPBE creates detailed fiscal estimates for the plans and programs that have been established in the first two phases of PPBE.
- Execution commences with apportionment, as the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) provides expenditure authority to DoD. During the execution phase, the approved and resourced programs are evaluated. These evaluations provide insight into the efficacy of the work that has previously been done in the first three stages of the process.

Steps of the PPBE process overlap, and require harmonization among components involved in the process. The system reflects 'good practice' in that it links explicit, rigorous strategic planning with programming actual requirements, through to execution and evaluation.

Adhering to a regimented, labor intensive, detailed process such as DoD's, PPBE has proven to be a poor fit for civilian federal agencies. Nevertheless, there is a need for agencies to adhere to the basics of having a clear strategic plan, rolling this out into resource requirements, executing according to plan (within apportionment), and monitoring for performance/accountability. Agencies have not been consistently tracked towards such practices. The OMB has not faced

[12] Equally, it is certainly also partially attributable to the special role of Defense in the economy—and politicians' relations with their constituents in the military.

agencies with consistent expectations, as processes differ with Presidential administrations (and OMB works for the President). Thus, Johnson had PPBS (planning, programming, budgeting system), Nixon had MBO (management by objective), Carter had ZBB (zero-based budgeting), Clinton had the NPR (national performance review), and Bush had PMA/PART (president's management agenda and program assessment rating tool). The practice of each administration hanging its hat on a new way to budget—without routinely stressing the importance of strategic planning—has not necessarily done the agencies, or the public, any favors.

B. On the people side

Key human capital management challenges facing the public sector are well-documented. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM), created in its modern form in 1979, oversees compliance with employment laws and regulations, serves as a central processor of employment status (e.g., USA jobs, retirements), conducts surveys of federal agency staff, issues guidance on HCM practices, and provides advisory services. Agencies, however, each have their unique HCM systems and practices: and they remain patchwork.

- On the hiring front, there is a need to ensure that sound workforce analytics underlie recruitment activities—especially in the face of looming 'baby boomer' retirement bulge; and that potential candidates are able to understand job announcements, giving managers timely access to pools of adequately qualified–and diversified—candidates.
- On the front of maintaining and enhancing human capital assets, there is compelling need for strategic investment in training and development—driven by needs assessments, program design, and rigorous program evaluation.
- On the performance management front there is need to ensure: that employees remain engaged—and just remain, in light of widespread anti-fed sentiment; that managers have the skills necessary to develop employees and manage performance; and that executives actually hold managers accountable for managing performance.

These are not optional HCM activities. They are preconditions for agencies to be positioned to accomplish their mission *in a cost-effective way*. Capacity to move on each of these fronts requires resources. Successful delivery on each is directly affected by the quality of organizational information management and analytics.

Substantially more is known about managing most organizations' primary resource—i.e., people—than was known even 10 years ago. Progress in applying analytics and technology to manage the stock and flow of human capital (or talent) has been significant. Human capital functions cannot only manage routine processing needs, but can contribute to devising leading edge strategies to effectively meet organizations' needs.

III. THINKING iRAPP PRESENTS A CLEAR PATH FORWARD.

A. WHAT DOES iRAPP MEAN?

There is room to migrate and tailor some of the knowledge and practices currently widespread in the private sector into public sector, in order to maintain human capital resources and enhance effectiveness. This does not necessarily require wholesale, enterprise-wide changes. It can be accomplished in incremental, thoughtful steps that build on—while augmenting—capacities and strengths in place. What this means in specific terms—i.e., process, structure, investments—will vary by organization. There is a clear framework, however, that any organization can use to move in this direction.

Effective public sector agencies do only what is needed to achieve mission, in the most effective way possible, transparently making trade-offs required to operate within resource constraints. In order for agencies to ensure effectiveness in an era of declining resources, it is essential that leaders keep a strategic eye on integrating resource and people performance—i.e., apply an iRAPP framework. The 'i' of 'iRAPP' has a double meaning.

- First, it refers to linking what have traditionally been relatively disconnected systems of "dollar resource" and "people resource" planning and management. While 'financial resource planning and management' and 'human capital (or talent) management' have arisen as two different streams historically—on both professional and academic grounds—the fact is that they have interdependent needs and objectives.
- Second, it implies 'information-technology supported.' Virtually every agency has made substantial investments in IT systems—those systems now need to be utilized to support evidence-driven decision-making. In some cases, it may simply require leaders to use data easily accessible. In others, efforts to build or improve data management interfaces may be required.[13]

Particularly in the public sector, it makes no sense to talk about 'resource planning and management' if planning for and managing human capital is not explicitly integral to that process. From the perspective of effectiveness, dollars and people can be thought of as two sides of the same coin. They are not the same thing, but they have to unfold in interdependent feedback loops; evidence and decisions from one side inform and influence the other. Ensuring full and appropriate feedback loops between systems and processes for planning and managing resources, people, and performance—regardless of the particular organizational structure and acronyms chosen—is essential from a systems perspective. This is illustrated in Figure 2.

[13] There is demonstrably some distance to go on this front (see Govt Exec piece referenced 23 May, only 46% say analytics are used).

B. What does iRAPPS require?

iRAPP is not "a system"—it is a framework or set of organizing principles. Consequently, iRAPPS organizational structures will vary—as will acronyms and terminology used. Legacy structure coupled with complexity and extent of agency functions will likely explain most of the variation.[14] This does not matter: what matters is that for each and every agency, operation occurs within an iRAPP framework. While there is no one path to iRAPP, there are clear principles for getting there.

1. Principles

In simplest terms, there are three principles of iRAPP. The over-arching one is:

> ***Establish and practice organizational expectations and habits of transparent decision-making.***

More micro-level principles include integrating:

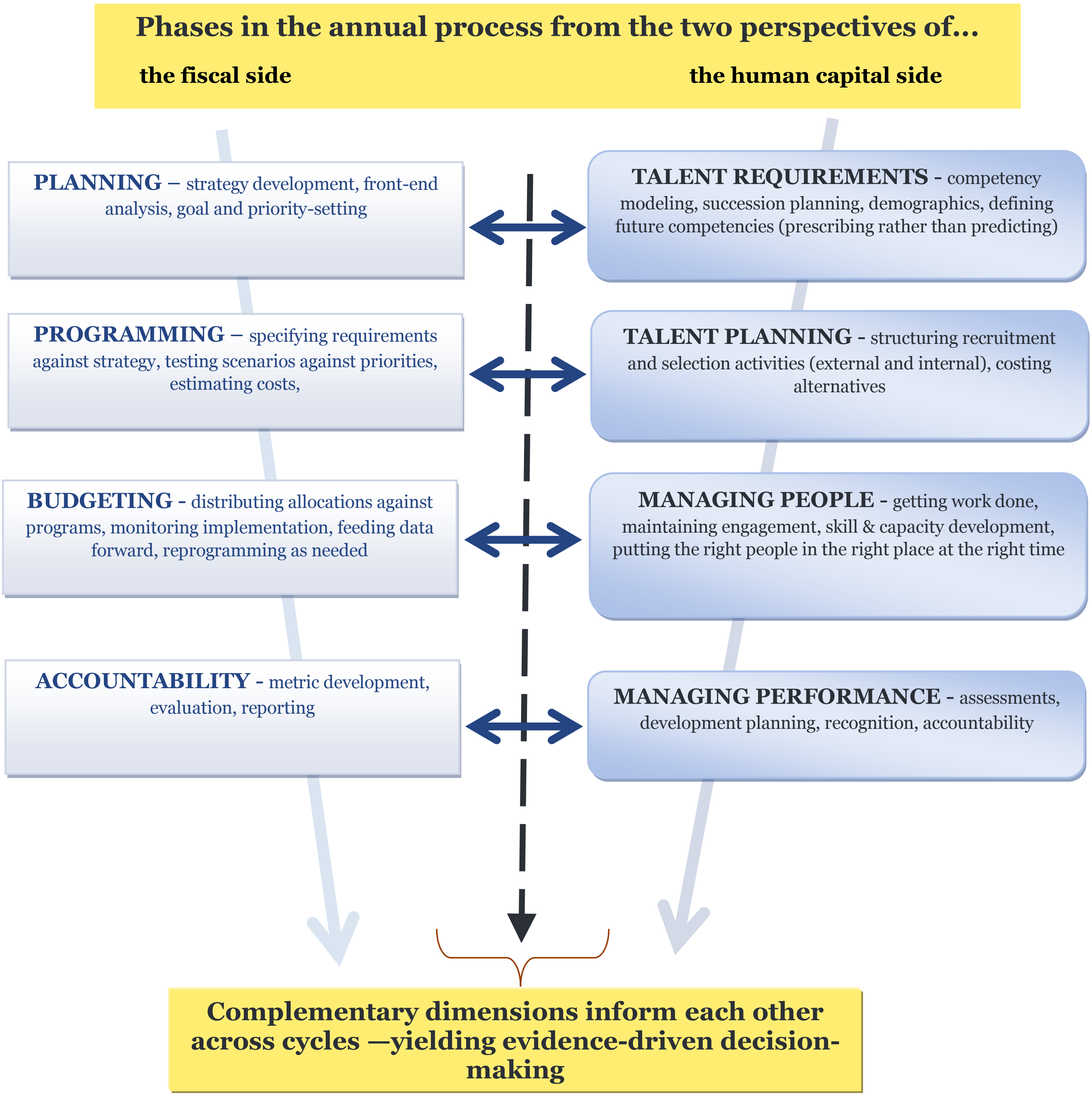
1) Financial and human capital dimensions of resource and performance management; and

2) data-informed analysis (qualitative and/or quantitative).

We are referring to decision-making at the high level of executives making hard trade-offs, not only at the tactical level of defining action.

[14] While at some level it might enhance efficiency if OMB pushed agencies more forcefully towards common (and consistent) language this is not significant at the level of internal agency operations.

Figure 2: Integrated Resource and People Performance Systems (iRAPP): Interaction of 'fiscal' and 'people' management dimensions



No matter what an agency's particular starting point, payoff in terms of effectiveness can be achieved by applying iRAPP. Results include:

- ✓ *an overarching clearly articulated strategic plan*, arrived at through evidence-driven decision-making[15]—i.e., evidence from dimensions of both work and human capital requirements;
- ✓ *resources programmed against requirements prioritized according to a strategic plan*, that reflect not only work requirements consistent with the current state of knowledge about delivery modes, but all relevant costs of effective human capital management as well—i.e., including indirect costs of selection, retention, and development, and not just direct costs of salary and benefits;
- ✓ *distribution and real-time management of fiscal year resources (dollars and people) consistent with planned and programmed priorities*—i.e., implementation of absolute trade-offs necessitated by requirements, not just incremental adjustments according to base budgets or people in place; and
- ✓ *accountability throughout the process*, accomplished via routine use of systems and data in place—i.e., routine analysis, evaluation, and monitoring of resource use and performance (financial and people) across all levels of the organization.

2. PROCESS

In order to get to a robust iRAPP, some agencies may simply need to proceed down a path they've already taken. Others may need to seize the current disruption to 'business as usual' as an opportunity to do things differently—e.g., by introducing either an explicit planning and/or programming function. Implications on the HCM dimension will vary substantially across agencies, but workforce planning, recruitment, training/development, and performance accountability practices are likely to be easy wins for many. Most federal agencies have some distance to go on the accountability front, in terms of using data, managing performance of people, and integrating organizational and people performance.

These are not simple challenges, but the payoffs are likely to be significant as agencies position themselves to make hard choices that minimize opportunity for expenditures on redundant, excessively costly, or not-required activities (and/or people). iRAPP essentially represents a 'best of each' compilation of experience with planning, programming, budgeting systems (PPBS), performance-informed budgeting, modern human capital management—all aligned and informed by data from IT investments.

Achieving iRAPP does not require wholesale transition to one particular organizational architecture and/or IT system. Organizations can follow a variety of paths in driving towards iRAPP. Only parameters of the desired end-point are fixed. This is an important advantage of taking an iRAPP approach—as opposed to a fractured or "siloed" approach.

15 A supra-dimension obviously drives this function in the public sector—i.e., statutory obligations.

A myriad of lessons from budget reform and change management caution against championing any one system—e.g., PPBE that the DoD uses—and expecting that same exact system to effectively fit within another agency or organization. For example, the Total Quality Management system successfully worked for some companies and not for others. Companies that attempted to apply a cookie cutter version of the system to their unique circumstances struggled in implementing the TQM: a classic illustration of ineffective change management. Conversely, companies that found the TQM system to be effective tailored it to their respective organizational cultures.[16]Similarly, detailed HCM needs will vary by agency: some may require investment in updated competency systems—others may not; some may need to institute modern needs assessment practices in the area of training and development—others may not; and some may need substantial investment in results-oriented leader development programs—others may not.

Implementing a robust iRAPP framework, regardless of organizational and process peculiarities, allows agencies to answer definitive questions of effectiveness—and substantiate those answers with data. Table 2 illustrates the types of questions that iRAPP addresses as fiscal and HCM processes are used to inform each other across cycles. The list is illustrative, not comprehensive.

16 (http://asqcincinnati.org/Library/qm/UnderstandingTheObstacles.pdf pg 54)

IV. Conclusion

Current realities offer a window of opportunity for agencies to assess, upgrade, and integrate (as needed) strategic resource and HCM practices. We suggest that needed savings can be achieved, if efforts relentlessly focus on the objective of enhancing strategic management and performance accountability—while using available data to inform decision-making.

Table 2: Questions iRAPP answer across the resource cycle

FISCAL DIMENSION	PEOPLE DIMENSION	PERFORMANCE
At the planning stage (i.e., strategy development)		
• What are agency goals—i.e., to what ends will resources be used? • Have we utilized relevant, available data as inputs to analytics? • How do we prioritize across the range of programs/activities?	• Do we have the right mix/number of people? If not, what are options for adjusting? • What skills will our people need in the future? • What do we know about likely future turnover patterns?	• What our outcome metrics—and proxies as needed? • What do we know from past performance that can inform future plans? • What's our accuracy record on human capital predictions?
At the programming stage		
• How do we organize work to deliver on goals? • What are implications for future resource distribution?	• What do we need to do in order to ensure we recruit the right talent in a timely manner? • If adjustments are needed, how will we do this—instead of holding priorities captive (as victims of attrition or hiring freezes)?	• What are performance metrics for each program (i.e., output/outcome metrics)? • Do we have appropriate metrics for people performance—and are we moving towards linking this with organizational performance? • Do we have the information management capacity and expertise to track these?

At the budget stage		
• Are the dollars available sufficient to the resources programmed—if not, how do we adjust? • Are we executing according to plan—if not, why not?	• Are we maintaining staff engagement? • Are we supporting leaders to manage staff performance? • If we have very limited spending options, what do we need to do in order to develop staff on the job?	• Are we monitoring our metrics? • Are our information management practices as mature as they need to be?
At the accountability stage		
• What went right; what went off the rails? • What learning do we feed into subsequent cycles—i.e., what can we stop doing, do differently?	• How is human capital performing—at each level? Is there a pattern? • What learning do we feed into subsequent cycles—i.e., what can we stop doing, do differently?	• What do the data reveal about performance? Are we on target? • How do we feed adjustments forward?

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