

Optimizing Talent Management Strategies for MCISR-E

Team 3

Josh Black

Jeff Cavano

Patrick Hollyfield

Rich Swan

11/15/2011

This study examines the optimal Talent Management Strategy for hiring, developing, and retaining a workforce capable of implementing MCISR-E in four functions: Analysis, Information Technology, Resource Management, and Leadership.

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The MCISR-E Roadmap dictates that the civilian and uniformed workforce must be developed with the right mix of technical, tactical, and leadership expertise for the Enterprise to meet future challenges and establishes three main transition plansⁱ for building MCISR-E. MCISR-E states that the core skills of the civilian workforce must be improved to meet long term requirements. An ideal talent management system would provide a civilian workforce capable of responding to current and future needs of globally deployable expeditionary forces, while simultaneously meeting the needs of the Enterprise and Intelligence Community. “This workforce must be well educated, highly trained, and able to work cooperatively to solve complex problems.” (V.R. Stewart, 2010, pp. Appendix 1 to Annex B, p13) Currently, there is no long term MCISR-E talent management strategy in use for the civilian workforce. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the talent management strategies capable of meeting the demands of the MCISR-E Roadmap to hire, develop and train the civilian workforce.

For the purposes of this paper, we make several critical assumptions:

- The Career Development Plan under development addresses individual professionalization of the workforce, but does not comprise a talent management strategy.
- MCISR-E will remain a long term enduring strategy and Marine Corps Intelligence paradigm.
- While Active Duty military personnel contributions are critical to the success of MCISR-E, their training and management is beyond the scope of this discussion.
- The critical civilian MCISR-E core functions are analysis, information technology, resource management and leadership.

- The future fiscal environment will be characterized by zero growth or declining resources, requiring careful stewardship.

Various talent management strategies will be evaluated from the standpoint of how they affect hiring, developing and retaining a professionalized, agile, responsive MCISR-E workforce.

Talent Management Strategies Defined

Talent Management is defined as “the process through which employers anticipate and meet their needs for human capital. “ (Cappelli, 2008, p. 1). The MCISR-E requirement to professionalize the intelligence workforce implies a long term commitment to workforce development that must be reconciled with the need for immediate, responsive, and adaptable talents. For the purposes of this paper, Succession planning is defined as mapping the careers of individuals to long term forecasts of anticipated future needs. Talent on Demand (Outside hiring) is defined as hiring outside the organization to fill vacancies, usually a specific and unique skill, including contractors. For advantages and disadvantages of each talent management strategy, see Figure 1.

FIGURE 1 Advantages and Disadvantages

Talent Management Strategy	Advantages	Disadvantages
Succession Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear workforce expectations • Hire to defined career paths • Morale of workforce • Continuity of Operations • Workforce has long-term commitment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High cost of hiring • High development of training costs • Requires accurate forecast and long-term commitment • Possibility of excess talent (deep bench) • Less flexible
Talent on Demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower ‘hire to produce’ time • Lower training costs • Responsive to immediate needs • Less excess (no deep bench) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expensive short term • Blocks advancement • Hurts morale • Acclimation period for organizational culture • Possible disruption of on-going programs

Contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faster responsiveness to fill niche positions • Lower training costs • No development costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract constraints (duties outside scope of contract) • Expensive • Cannot perform some government functions (escort, sign for or represent the government)
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After examining the tenets of MCISR-E, it became clear that each talent management strategy had advantages and we decided to examine these, function by function, to see which talent management strategy would provide clear advantage. In the following sections of this paper, we will examine hiring, developing, and retaining the skilled personnel required for the four MCISR-E functions: Analysis, Information Technology (IT), Resource Management (RM), and Leadership, to identify the best talent management strategy for each functional area.

Analysis

The goal of defense intelligence analysis is to develop analytic capabilities to anticipate future flash points, disruptive technologies and second order effects to provide timely, accurate, relevant, intelligence support to enable effective decision making and provide commanders with the critical analysis they need. Intelligence analysis is the process of taking known information about situations and entities of strategic, operational, or tactical importance, characterizing the known, and, with appropriate statements of probability, forecasting future actions. MCISR-E requires that MCIA hire, develop and retain analytical competencies of the Enterprise, which include scenario development and forecasting, regional and cultural expertise, weapons and foreign materiel acquisition and exploitation, imagery exploitation, acquisition support, and emerging and disruptive technologies analysis. Under Marine

Corps doctrine, intelligence analysis is considered the foundation on which the operational effort is built and the premise on which all training, doctrine, and equipment are developed (ODNI).

A Marine Corps intelligence “analyst is required to work with massive amounts of information, uncertainties, unknowns, and is then expected to identify patterns and predict possible trends to formulate hypotheses based on objective, well researched judgments.” (Outwardinsights, 2011) One of the challenging questions that leadership faces is whether to hire a subject matter expert or a cognitive thinker. In a recent study conducted by the National Research Council,

technical expertise is an important trait in an intelligence analyst, but it essentially can be taught. The way a person thinks—how he or she gathers information, analyzes it and spots trends and patterns in the information—are better indicators of success in the intelligence field. As a suggestion, there are a few additional skills to look for beyond education and work experience; the ability to communicate clearly and concisely; the ability to handle incomplete or contradictory information; the ability to consider alternative outcomes. (Outwardinsights, 2011)

Additionally, critical thinking and logical argumentation are required of intelligence analysts writing to the ODNI Analytic Integrity Standards (Intelligence Community Directive 203). During the hiring process, managers must evaluate general and functional competencies, outlined in the Marine Corp Career Development Plan, to determine which analytical skills are required and which skills the organization is capable of developing. Division leadership should develop pre-screening questions that demonstrate a candidate’s cognitive abilities, the ability to forecast future trends and emerging threats. Candidates should be required to provide a writing sample that demonstrates their writing skills. With these tools in the interview process, the selection board will be able to fully evaluate critical thinking and communication skills.

In March 2011, the ODNI requested a study through the National Research Council to determine analytical competencies required to improve its analyses. The study recommends hiring and training practices that focus on stable individual qualities, such as cognitive ability, complemented by training and feedback to develop job-specific skills. The report strongly recommends that intelligence analysts’ training include basic familiarity with the full range of analytical methods with strong scientific foundations, in areas such as probability theory, operations research, and analytical history (The National Academies, 2011). Intelligence Community (IC) certification programs, which train and certify

essential analytic critical thinking, predictive analysis and forecasting skills, could be used as an analytic capabilities talent pool the Enterprise could tap into to satisfy critical shortages across the Enterprise.

Once hired, succession planning model requires a great deal of investment by the organization to provide training opportunities for analysts to grow within the organization and follow a predesigned, progressive career path. The Defense Civilian Intelligence Personnel System (DCIPS) occupational structure designates four professional work categories for analysts: Entry/Developmental (GG7-10), Full Performance (GG11-13), Senior (GG13-14), and Expert (GG15). (DCIPS, 2011) Succession planning allows managers to achieve a balance of analytical performance levels within their divisions. For example, an interview with a senior leader within MCIA suggested that the ideal mix of analytical performance levels in a branch would be 1/3 entry level, 1/3 full performance, and 1/3 senior level. (Sayko, 2011) An uninterrupted analytic career path to senior performance GG-14 and expert (GG-15) levels does not currently exist in MCIA. To reap the full benefits of succession planning, MCIA should establish a senior performance level analytic career path, assigning additional responsibilities and duties, e.g. leading multi-disciplined analysis teams like the Amphibious Working Group, leading senior level projects, representing MCIA in interagency working group forums, completing external rotational assignments, Joint Duty Assignments (JDA), completing Intelligence Community (IC) Certification, or other qualifications which establishes their bona fides as an IC subject matter expert (SME). By providing an uninterrupted analytic path to GG-15, MCIA would create a "career lattice" that would allow personnel to take lateral assignments without fearing that they had chosen career-blocking assignments or hurt their promotion potential. It also provides more attractive opportunities for senior and expert analysts to serve at MCIA in IC rotations.

While promoting from within the organization reinforces employee commitment and enhances retention rates, if critical senior level positions were vacant and the prospect of promoting a full performance analyst to the senior level is unjustified, then hiring from outside the organization to fill

those gaps would be the best option. Additionally, hiring talent from outside of the organization affords leadership with a broader portfolio of talent to choose from.

Another challenge with hiring intelligence professionals is whether to hire permanent full time government civilians or contractor support personnel. Government civilian analysts work on inherently government work, provide continuity to the workforce, and become part of the culture of the organization, as well as maintain the corporate knowledge of existing programs and the evolution of the organization. Civilian analysts are a critical asset to long-term analysis programs because their positions are permanent and they provide long-dwell times for in-depth analytical requirements.

Government contractor analysts are typically hired for short term requirements as gap fillers for manpower shortages or vacancies in highly specialized, niche analytical areas. Contractor support is susceptible to budgetary constraints and there are limitations on authority when interacting with outside government organizations and personnel. Support contractors bring the advantage of fully functional analytical capabilities with little-to-no professional development burden on the government. Hiring contractors is essentially talent on demand.

Developing government analysts is an enduring and expensive process requiring technical and professional training, mentoring and coaching, monitoring and evaluating performance, and ensuring the analysts are provided the tools and environment necessary to grow as professionals. The dividends realized by properly developing the civilian analytical workforce pay off when the analysts reach their full professional potential. One way to retain analysts and promote professional growth is internal rotational assignments that expose the analyst to other work conducted in other divisions within the MCIA and the enterprise. This provides analysts practical experience in how their work contributes to the entire enterprise and how it is connected. The ultimate goal of developing and professionalizing the analytical workforce is to achieve analytic expertise with an internal commitment to the organization

and its mission. Former chairman and CEO of Coca-Cola Company, Neville Isdell, stated in an interview about developing his successful workforce “Successful employees are those who make a job bigger than its description” (Global Atlanta, 2011).

In conclusion, the best talent management strategy for analytic talent under MCISR-E is to use succession planning with a comprehensive analytical development program, augmented by talent on demand to fill short term critical requirements. New hires should be required to provide a writing sample to demonstrate existing cognitive and communication skills. Senior analytic positions should be established at MCIA to allow an uninterrupted path to GG-14 and GG-15 to attract qualified IC analysts to rotational assignments at MCIA.

Information Technology

MCISR-E calls for standardized information technology systems and the development of a common computing environment. MCISR-E concept envisions “...fixed site, garrison and expeditionary nodes that will collaborate to provide mission-oriented, integrated, interoperable capabilities and services from the lowest tactical level to the national level.” (V.R. Stewart, 2010, p. 4) To stay ahead of the critical technological curve that MCISR-E requires, the IT function requires an adaptability and flexibility to support current and future abilities.

At present, MCIA will not provide a help desk for the entire enterprise. MCIA will likely consult with MCISR-E components, requiring a permanent staff with longevity and the ability to deploy. When staffing the MCIA support desk, it is best to have employees that are familiar with the organization, the mission and personnel within the organization. Because of the fast-moving environment in the IT world, high training costs are offset by the advantages gained in retaining quality, acculturated, dedicated employees. Incentive programs, rewards, and high morale provided by great leadership are important factors in retaining highly-qualified personnel. Over time, civilians develop strong relationships and

build strong cohesive teams that support each other which have positive effects on the work environment. This positive culture enhances retention.

Education and training are a priority for retaining long term highly motivated employees loyal to the organization. Currently, there is no long-range training management system at MCI. The Career Development Plans (CDP) outlines the training and experience required for an employee to reach the highest pay grade in each specialty. Assuming their goal is a GS-14, training must be identified and discussed with the employee to establish and clarify how each level can be reached. The Individual Development Plan (IDP) will identify not only what classes are needed but also desired by the employee to make the most of their career within the organization. Steps need to be taken throughout the year by both supervisors and employees to follow up and discuss the progress of the IDP. Division Head supervisors should be responsible for developing an annual training plan that takes into consideration the IDPs and work with the MCI training personnel to forecast and deliver training required by CDP. Branch supervisors should be held responsible for making quarterly checks to ensure employees complete training to avoid wasted funds and missed opportunities to enhance technical expertise.

Due to budgetary constraints and the high front-end costs of IT expertise, talent on demand strategy should be leveraged to start new projects, fill unexpected personnel shortages, provide specific skills, and complete time-consuming, mechanical drudge work. Contractors that successfully display required skills sets, attitudes and aptitudes may be hired to fill vacancies on the permanent staff. An advantage to converting contractors to civilian staff is that initial development costs are reduced and the quality of personnel required by the mission and stability positively affects the recruitment of talent.

In conclusion, succession planning is recommended to build and maintain a permanent, cohesive civilian IT work force that provides continuity of operations, familiarity with complex operating systems and networks, and cultural knowledge of organizational-specific policies and procedures.

Branch heads must work with employees to follow through on IDPs quarterly that support career development that effectively develops and retains civilian IT employees. Division Heads should work closely with the MCI training officer to schedule essential training to keep the workforce's qualifications and certifications current.

Resource Management

In order to be successful, any organization must manage its resources to ensure that they are being efficiently and effectively executed. While resources may refer to a variety of categories, for the purposes of this paper, we are focusing on financial resources and the 22 civilians (I Dept: 9, MCI: 10, MCSC: 3) who conduct the Resource Management function in direct support of MCISR-E.

Resource management (RM) is critical to the proper functioning of any activity in the US Government and the success of the Implementation Plans in the MCISR-E Roadmap depends upon responsible stewardship of resources. A member of the civilian MCISR-E workforce must possess unique skill-sets in order to conduct responsible RM: a foundational knowledge of the DoD Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution (PPBE) process; a working knowledge of Military Intelligence/National Intelligence Programs (MIP/NIP); a basic knowledge of the DoD Acquisition System; an awareness of the various Department of the Navy (DON) organizations and associated responsibilities in the development of the Marine Corps portion of the Program Objective Memorandum (POM) (HQMC, DIR P&R); an understanding of the Expeditionary Force Development requirements development process; a knowledge of the various MCISR-E organizations and capabilities; the ability to succinctly communicate using both verbal and written methods; the ability to process and analyze data-sets to recommend options; and the ability to independently coordinate with a multitude of organizations in a rapidly changing environment (Elkins, 2003). While many of these skill-sets revolve around basic communication, coordination, and analytical abilities, a foundational knowledge of the

unique DoD, Marine Corps, and IC processes is absolutely required in order for a member of the civilian MCISR-E workforce to execute responsible RM duties. Furthermore, this essential foundational knowledge is typically acquired through previous RM training or experience in the DoD.

Succession Planning is recommended for recruiting and hiring civilians to fill MCISR-E Resource Management positions (Melton, 2011). DoD and IC Resource Management processes are not expected to change over the long-term. These enduring processes enable predictable RM personnel requirements and map well to the advantages of Succession Planning techniques, see Figure 1. Forecasting RM talent needs is relatively lower risk and matching civilian billets to satisfy future Resource Management requirements more straightforward. Hiring managers should target civilians with RM training and/or experience in the DoD. While an optimal candidate for a civilian MCISR-E Resource Management position would be recruited from within the DON, it is possible that several acceptable candidates could be recruited from the other Military Services, or Defense contracting organizations. While these candidates will not already be fully trained on the unique DON Resource Management processes, organizations, and systems, they will have a thorough understanding of the overall DoD PPBE process and have a shorter hire-to-produce time.

The recruiting and hiring of civilians who already have Resource Management experience in the DoD reduces front-end training costs and requires minimal on-the-job training. It is estimated that a civilian who worked as a Resource Management professional for Army or Air Force Intelligence will only need 3-6 months of on-the-job training to develop a working knowledge of unique DON and Marine Corps processes (RM personnel, 2011). Another advantage to hiring government civilians, vice contractors, is that skill-sets can be trained at DoD and IC training programs that are not available to contractors, e.g. Defense Acquisition University or Defense Intelligence Agency. Furthermore, the predictability of the DoD and IC Resource Management processes allows MCISR-E managers to plan for extended out-of-office training and arrange for office coverage during these periods.

Rotational assignments would also contribute to expanded civilian MCISR-E Resource Management professional expertise. The first type of rotational assignment will focus internally on MCISR-E and would enable a civilian Resource Management professional to work for 6-months in a resource management position in MCIA, MARCORSYSCOM, or HQMC Intel Dept. This would give them a better understanding of the workings of the other elements of MCISR-E and enable them to better synchronize Resource Management efforts across the whole Enterprise. The second type of rotational assignment will focus outward, toward the DoD. An external rotation would enable a MCISR-E Resource Management professional to work for 1-year at the Resource Management office of Military Service Intelligence components or at the Combat Support Agencies. Both rotational assignments would greatly benefit an individual's RM expertise, and enhance their job satisfaction and retention. Furthermore, MCISR-E would greatly benefit from new connections and networking opportunities developed during these rotational assignments within the DoD.

In conclusion, succession planning is recommended to build and maintain a permanent, cohesive civilian RM work force. New hires should be recruited from existing DoD RM offices to reduce 'hire-to-produce' times. Two types of rotational assignments will enhance development and expertise of RM professionals and increase morale and retention.

Leadership

Leadership is infused in everything an organization does, but does not lend itself well to definition (David V. Day, 2001, p. 1). At MCIA, for example, nearly 20% currently filled billetsⁱⁱ are supervisory positions. (Resources, 2011, p. 2) With this many supervisory positions, a succession planning model for leadership with an uninterrupted path to the GG-15 and SES levels is possible. MCISR-E requires leaders with the ability to collaborate beyond organizational boundaries, coordinate, and leverage intelligence assets of the Enterprise, and engage with Coalition partners. Leadership

performs myriad tasks in MCISR-E, including hiring, developing, managing and rewarding personnel, strategic planning, resource allocation, and prioritizing production, among other generalized, yet demanding functions. But in a hierarchical organization with an uncertain future missions and declining resources, succession planning forecasts are likely to be inaccurate. Succession planning should be augmented by hiring civilians from outside agencies to fill critical shortages, since contractors have constraints on activities.

Succession planning contributes to a culture of loyalty. Upcoming leadership vacancies should be advertised early and often on the Command's portal and an internal job board set up to provide MCIA and Enterprise candidates first consideration for leadership vacancies. MCIA should hire outside talent to fill leadership positions only when a culture change is desired, suitable internal candidates are lacking, or no one in the organization wants the additional leadership duties and responsibilities. The benefits of hiring outside MCIA are that experienced outsiders provide fresh perspective, have wider array of expertise, and require limited training to become productive. The disadvantages of hiring outside of MCIA is that there is a risk that the new hire will not readily assimilate to the Marine Corps culture, and the potential to create morale issues if there is a perception that promotions are being blocked.

To enhance the chances of hiring high potential entry-level leadership in the succession planning model, MCIA should continue its current practice of hiring veterans, but should also expand its presence at university recruiting fairs, and aggressively recruit interns (Schultz, 2011). Internships are a relatively inexpensive mechanism for identifying leadership potential and allow MCIA to evaluate performance before selecting and grooming a new employee for leadership within the organization. Interns should be given a series of diverse work experiences that give them a great deal of freedom, expose them to Interagency networks, require them to participate and pressure them to contribute to a variety of tasks to give MCIA a chance to observe their leadership potential. MCIA should target universities and

colleges with predictive analysis or intelligence analysis programs, e.g. BYU, Georgetown, and Syracuse (Sayko, 2011).

Developing leadership talent is an expensive and risky undertaking when there is no guaranteed “return on investment.” Not only does an organization invest in training costs and lose productivity during the leadership training, but the risk of an employee being recruited by other organizations increases when significant leadership skills are attained. Replacement costs for employees vary widely, depending on the type and size of the benefits package. For example, costs of replacing an employee with \$100,000 salary could be as high as \$32,500 per employee for the organization.ⁱⁱⁱ Unexpected departures can also create significant gaps in succession planning forecasts.

Effective support of the USMC expeditionary intelligence mission requires personnel committed to the Marine Corps ethos, aware of military culture, and equipped with communication skills that enable effective collaboration with both military and civilian employees. Due to limitations of the federal personnel system, MCIA leadership has expressed frustration with the lack of the federal personnel system’s flexibility and responsiveness to effectively match employee talents to rapidly-changing Enterprise needs (Henry, 2011).

Civilian branch heads promoted from an analyst position should exhibit well-developed critical thinking skills and receive intense branch head training in interpersonal skills, mentoring, collaboration, and negotiation. Strategic thinking, planning, information technology, and resource management skills are often developed while in the branch head position. Civilian leadership development, while enhanced by On-boarding, New Join, and Ka-Bar leadership development courses, is critical at key civilian career junctions, i.e. between full-performance, senior, and expert positions. The Career Development Plan (under development) and Individual Development Plans should identify personnel with leadership intentions early enough to craft strategies for developing necessary leadership skills^{iv}.

Division heads should take responsibility for coordinating training requirements of branches and coordinate resources with other divisions and the MCIAs training officer. In addition to participating in IC Certification programs, and to fully address the development of leadership competencies required for senior and expert level qualification (Defense, 2011), MCIAs should consider adopting or participating in the DON Talent Management System (DTMS). DTMS requires supervisors to provide assessments of an employee's status: "ready for increased challenge', 'ready for career broadening', 'build tenure/experience', or 'contribute in place'." (Navy, 2011)

Retaining talent at MCIAs would be enhanced by the "career lattice" that would allow personnel to take lateral assignments without fearing that they had chosen career-blocking assignments or hurt their promotion potential. An Intelligence Community (IC) certification program that qualifies personnel to serve in other IC positions would also serve to provide developmental assignments to MCIAs leaders and analysts at senior and expert levels. Rotational and Joint Duty Assignments (JDA) are expensive to the organization, since that employee's production is lost to the organization during the assignment, but rotational assignments to MICs and JDAs would provide leaders an opportunity to develop critical competencies required for senior and expert positions, greater perspective, and appreciation for other agencies' missions.

In conclusion, succession planning alone is not optimal for an organization with an uncertain structure, declining budget, unique mission, and steep cultural learning curve. Succession planning should be combined with the limited use of an IC talent pool to fill leadership positions in MCIAs and the Enterprise. Succession planning is cost effective when internal development programs remain robust and relevant to ensure the Enterprise has a backbone of leadership to meet its needs. Filling leadership positions with outside talent using an IC talent pool will shorten the 'time to produce' ratio, and provide an alternative when succession planning forecasts are inaccurate, key leaders depart unexpectedly, or viable internal candidates unavailable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Talent management strategy for MCISR-E should be approached function by function to ensure critical jobs are filled by the right people. The IT and RM functional areas benefit most from succession planning approach, while the analysis and leadership functions benefit from a mix of succession planning and talent on demand strategies. While analytic and leadership requirements may vary due to mission and organizational changes, IT and RM personnel requirements are relatively easy to forecast. The environment of declining resources and high uncertainty of the demands of MCISR-E should be reviewed and modified on an annual basis to adjust talent needs to changing requirements. Workforce development through CDPs and more closely coordinated IDPs is important to all functions and more effective training management is required to maximize benefits of limited training funds. Training and travel are critical to the development of analytical and leadership expertise and aids retention of talent in all functions. Training budget cuts threaten talent development, morale, and retention in all four functional areas. A clear path to senior GG-14 and expert GG-15 analytic positions should be created to attract and retain the best available talent. Rotational assignments should be incorporated in the CDPs for all four functions. The formation of an Intelligence Community (IC) certification system would give the Enterprise the opportunity to fill short-term needs for critical leadership and analytic positions with qualified personnel from the IC talent pool. MCIA should investigate and evaluate the DON Talent Management System as a possible way ahead for managing succession planning in all functional areas.

ENDNOTES

ⁱ The three main transition plans are: Organization, Equipment, and Personnel & Training.

ⁱⁱ 41 of 207 MCIA positions are designated as “supervisory”.

ⁱⁱⁱ Calculation based on the following formula used by Deloitte: Select a department or job function that has a lot of turnover. Use an actual number or, lacking exact statistics, estimate the number of people who left the job or department during the past 12 months. Write that number below on Line 4.

The average cost of turnover is 25 percent of an employee's annual salary (Line 1) plus the cost of the benefits (Line 2) you provide. Typical benefits amount to about 30 percent of wages.* The total cost per employee (Line 3) is the total of Line 1 and Line 2. .

1. Annual wage: 100,000 x .25 = 25,000

2. Annual benefits: 100,000 (wage) x .30 = 30,000 x .25 = 7,500

3. Total turnover cost per employee (add lines 1 & 2): 32,500

4. Total # of employees who left: 1

5. Total cost of turnover (multiply lines 3 & 4): 32,500

^{iv} DoD civilian leader development competencies include “leading change, leading people, results driven, business acumen, and building coalitions.” Enterprise-wide intelligence competencies also include Joint Perspective and National security. (DON website)

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