

LEADING
INNOVATION
IN GOVERNMENT



PARTNERSHIP FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

HayGroup®

Expedited the immigration process to quickly unite more than 1,100 Haitian orphans with their adoptive families in the United States following the devastating earthquake in January 2010. Led internationally acclaimed atmospheric research that set us on a path to restoring the ozone layer and demonstrated the long-term harm to the environment caused by global warming. Fostered a new breed of environmentally-friendly construction and packaging materials that promote reuse, cut down on waste and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Improved the delivery of Social Security benefits to citizens living in impoverished and remote locations through an innovative two-way video service. Enabled military, law enforcement agencies and partner nations to collect and share vital threat information to more quickly locate, target and interdict adversaries at sea, on land and in the air. Provided vital resources to fight against commercial sexual exploitation of children, which has resulted in the conviction of more than 500 pimps and predators, and the rescue of more than 1,000 child victims. Developed a state-of-the-art medical evacuation kit to provide life-saving treatment and emergency transportation to soldiers severely wounded by roadside bombs. Led the design and construction of the world's largest net-zero energy office building, demonstrating that buildings can be created to decrease energy consumption at no additional cost. Established a national suicide prevention hotline for veterans, which has resulted in life-saving interventions for thousands of people. Over the course of a 52-year career, made cutting-edge discoveries that have led to effective treatments for previously fatal forms of T-cell leukemia, Hodgkin's lymphoma and multiple sclerosis. Created successful partnerships with more than 850 state and local leaders and the business to help reduce long-term homelessness. Built a network of volunteers to revitalize communities in Appalachian coal country and the Western Hardrock

EXAMPLES OF INNOVATION IN GOVERNMENT

mining region and to repair decades of environmental degradation. Promoted information sharing across the intelligence community through the development and implementation of a Wikipedia-like clearinghouse of intelligence expertise. Coordinated Clean Air Act enforcement actions against major utility companies, resulting in successful settlements that led to the reduction of harmful air pollutants by nearly two million tons each year. Led USAID's economic development programs in Pakistan, helping to provide assistance with horticulture, livestock and female entrepreneurship. Created the Campylobacter vaccine to prevent the world's top cause of food-borne intestinal illness. Designed and launched the President's Malaria Initiative, which has provided potentially life-saving medication and services to millions of vulnerable people in developing nations. Played a key role in implementing the landmark Montreal Protocol, helping restore the ozone layer by phasing out 95 percent of the world's ozone-depleting substances. Introduced cutting edge 3-D technology to improve medical care and rehabilitation, restoring quality of life for soldiers who have suffered traumatic battle injuries. Developed and led an initiative that reduced life-threatening, hospital-acquired infections by 60 percent, a system replicated at all VA hospitals and other hospitals across America and other parts of the world. Created a tsunami detection system that has dramatically increased warning times and decreased the risk of catastrophic loss of life. Led the U.S.-Afghan Women's Council, a major public/private partnership to enhance the economic, social and political status of Afghan women. Led efforts to expand the development and use of renewable energy sources, ranging from hydrogen fuel cell technology to photovoltaic solar power. Made discoveries that led to the development of a vaccine for the virus that causes a majority of cervical cancers worldwide. Discovered three hormones made by the heart that significantly benefit the treatment of congestive heart failure, kidney failure and cancer. Created an income verification program that eliminated more than \$2 billion in fraudulent payments by HUD's rental assistance programs. Led the world's largest assistive technology program, providing accommodations and services for federal employees with disabilities to help them to function and thrive in the workplace. Led an initiative to put radiological and nuclear detectors at seaports, airports and border crossings across the globe, providing vital defenses against nuclear terrorism. During the 2006 Lebanese-Israeli armed conflict, helped get fuel reserves into Lebanon that allowed major power plants to keep running and essential services to continue without disruption. Created a program that has dramatically expanded the capacity of local law enforcement to utilize forensic DNA evidence as a crime-fighting tool, helping to solve thousands of cold cases. Completed the first successful cleanup of a former nuclear weapons facility 60 years ahead of schedule and \$30 billion under budget. Led domestic and international efforts to prepare for a flu pandemic. Launched a brand new subfield of atomic, molecular and optical physics, and became the first federal employee to win the Nobel Prize for Physics for work done as part of his official duties. Served as chief of the legal office at the U.S. Embassy in Iraq and provided critical support for Iraq's democratically elected government. Used technology to help locate and rescue thousands of Hurricane Katrina victims and personally

INNOVATION

\,i-nə-'vā-shən\

n. The process of improving, adapting or developing a product, system or service to deliver better results and create value for people.

INNOVATION LEADERSHIP

\,i-nə-'vā-shən 'lē-dər-'ship\

n. The practice of cultivating an environment where improvement, adaptation and invention are encouraged, fostered and rewarded.

INTRODUCTION

The nation's economic woes have forced organizations—both private and public—to do more with fewer resources. But how can you make cuts without impacting the product or services you deliver to the American people? You can't—unless you also find innovative ways of doing business.

For government, innovation poses unique challenges, largely because federal agencies are designed to perform reliably, not to adapt to changing circumstances. Even master innovators like Steve Jobs of Apple and Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook would be tested in the complex environment government presents.

In our first report of this series—Innovation in Government—we identified four unique barriers to federal innovation: the absence of a process to introduce and grow new ideas; gaps in communication and ever-shifting priorities; lack of funding to experiment; and a system that rewards the status quo. We then outlined the process, principals and infrastructure needed to support innovation in government.

However, in our work with federal employees across government, we regularly observe a set of federal leaders who foster innovation in spite of the barriers. In this report, the Partnership for Public Service and Hay Group set out to understand what these leaders have in common that allow them to build climates of innovation and deliver results when others have stalled.

Our analysis revealed that these leaders—who differ in background, discipline and challenges—refuse to be stopped by the obstacles put in their path. They also share a varied combination of nine attributes—values, motivations and associated behaviors—that allow them to cultivate innovation in government.

We discovered committed civil servants—patriotic stewards who understand how to overcome hurdles, shape and articulate a vision, and create a path and environment for accomplishing it. These individuals are confident, high-achievers in their own right who have succeeded by leveraging relationships, collaborating with others and working through their carefully composed teams.

Through dynamic leadership—the most important ingredient for innovation—we found individuals creating environments where their teams have the flexibility, responsibility and clarity necessary to achieve desired results. Perhaps most important, these leaders see among their highest calling the teaching and mentoring of other dedicated civil servants whose passion will be devoted to improving government and helping the American people for years to come.

Even though they may not come by them naturally, most federal leaders can develop these attributes through time and hard work. To this end, we believe federal agencies should:

- Help current and emerging leaders develop the attributes that foster innovation;
- Select the next generation of career senior executives by evaluating them against these attributes;
- Fill managerial positions with candidates who demonstrate these attributes at the highest levels; and
- Use these attributes to shape the management styles and behaviors of current executives to more effectively drive performance and service to the American people.

In his January 2011 State of the Union address, President Obama called for rebuilding “people’s faith in the institution of government” and creating a “competent” 21st century government that lives within its means, fosters innovation and helps improve America’s economic global competitiveness.

Achieving these goals will mean identifying and developing a new generation of government leaders—resilient, creative and results-oriented individuals who can drive change both through small but meaningful shifts in government processes and policies, and through mega-sized transformations.

Attributes of innovation leaders

The leaders best equipped to steer our nation embody a set of attributes:

- They are resilient. They aren't seriously impeded by structural, procedural, cultural or political barriers. And when they do encounter resistance, they don't give up.
- They are visionary, self-aware and constantly broadening their perspective.
- They understand and know how to navigate through and around their organization's structure, culture and politics. They also understand and respect the roles, boundaries and agendas of other governmental organizations.
- They purposefully leverage networks and relationships, and use complex influencing skills to collaborate across organizational boundaries.
- They build strong, diverse teams through their leadership, creating a sense of purpose, fostering a climate that facilitates innovation and developing others as an essential part of their job.

Are these attributes different from those exhibited by outstanding leaders in the private sector? On the surface, not really. We found that innovation leaders—regardless of sector—demonstrate many of the same behaviors. The difference rests with the unique environment and structures in which federal innovation leaders must leverage these values and behaviors.

Federal innovation leaders stand out from their private-sector counterparts because of their ability to drive innovation despite complex processes, competing agendas, deep hierarchies and static cultures that can stifle even the most insignificant collaboration and risk-taking—let alone real innovation.

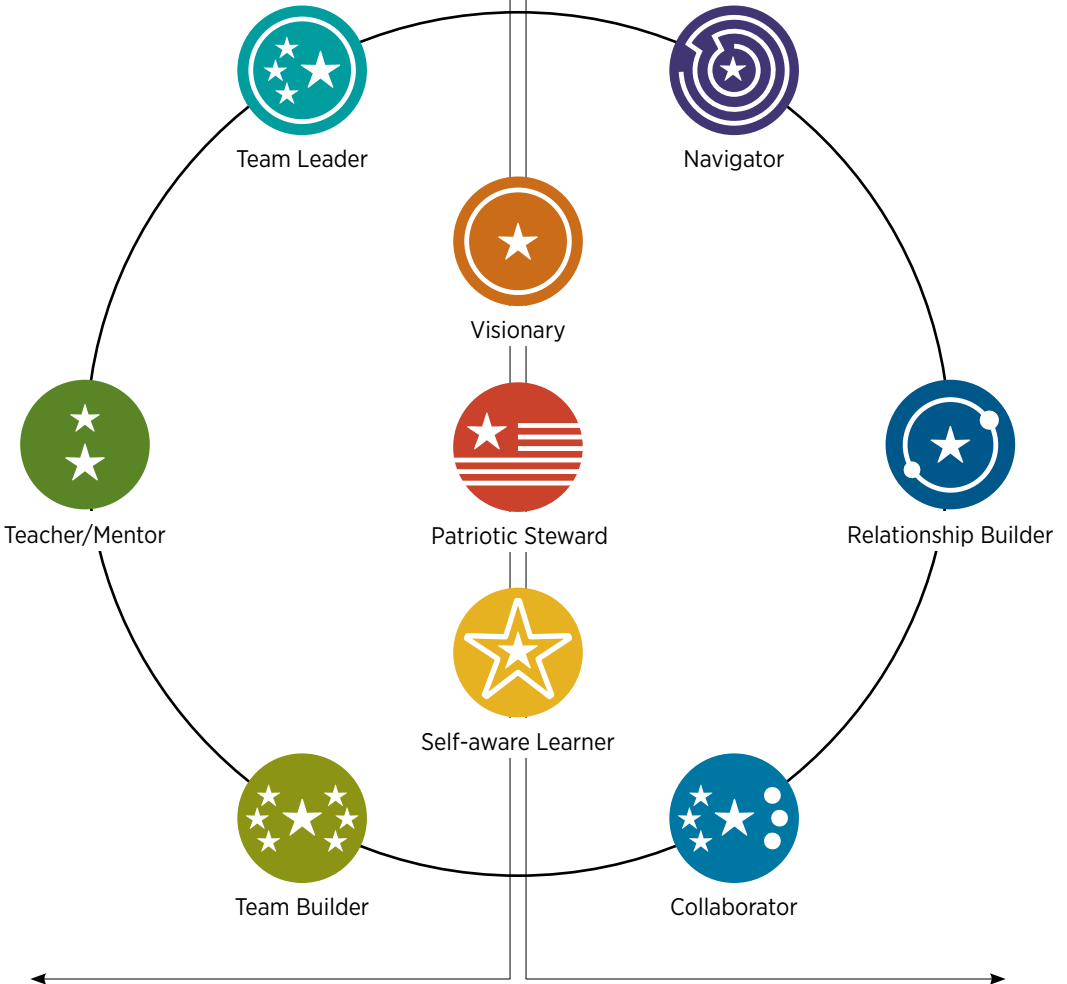
While respecting the system in which they operate, federal innovation leaders aren't afraid to go against the grain of typical federal practice. They maintain a laser-like focus on doing what they believe is right for their country and manage to accomplish results for the American people even when the odds are against them.

This passionate focus and commitment to the greater good is also seen in nonprofit organizations. But not surprisingly, it is less common in the for-profit sector, which emphasizes financial performance.

The public-sector leaders we interviewed continue managing their people well and push innovative performance even in unsupportive federal environments because they are committed to the best interests of the nation.

LEADING PEOPLE AND TEAMS

LEADING ACROSS BOUNDARIES



A framework for innovation leadership

We have created a framework containing nine attributes for innovation leaders in the federal government. Three of these, Visionary, Patriotic Steward and Self-aware Learner, form the core of the framework. Three others focus on leading teams and individuals, while the final three focus on leading across organizational boundaries.

Our research shows that these nine attributes shape the approach or *styles* of innovation leaders, which in turn create environments or *climates* that foster innovation in the workplace.

For simplicity, we have labeled each attribute with a short behavioral descriptor, such as Navigator or Visionary. To understand the true meaning of these attributes, however, you must go beyond the labels and look at the behaviors and actions that each entails. The following pages provide a brief definition of each attribute with four corresponding levels or stages of behavior that range from the simple to the sophisticated.

No leader can expect to consistently demonstrate all nine attributes or needs to possess them at the most sophisticated levels. The key to fostering greater innovation in government is leadership development—determining an individual’s current attributes and building on those to broaden a his or her abilities and approach. The attributes we describe can be learned over time if an individual has the desire and commitment, and if provided with the necessary coaching and feedback.

Research has shown that developing even a single new attribute, or taking a current one up to another level, can have a significant impact on an individual’s leadership abilities and the climate he or she creates. Better leadership creates the potential for increased innovation in government, ultimately improving the performance of federal agencies.



Patriotic Steward

Possesses a moral compass informed by commitment to country that motivates and shapes one's work; sees oneself as a steward of taxpayers' money.

“Our objective is to make sure that we can give our troops the best medical equipment to support them and to treat the wounded. The challenge is for us to stay ahead and anticipate the next type of injury, the next type of battle that we will have to fight. For our medics to stay safe and be able to treat the wounded, we have to think outside of the box. Those soldiers out there were getting hurt or dying. That’s what kept me going.”

— Teri Glass
U.S. Army Medical Materiel
Development Activity

Developed a state-of-the-art medical evacuation kit to provide life-saving treatment and emergency transportation to soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan severely wounded by roadside bombs.

FIRST LEVEL

Is committed to patriotic mission

Displays a strong commitment to patriotic mission and purpose; understands what one is doing and why.

SECOND LEVEL

Does what is right

Follows a clear set of priorities, understanding how day-to-day tasks link to a larger purpose, such as protecting soldiers, people and country.

THIRD LEVEL

Goes the extra mile

Seeks to promote fairness, justice and ethical behavior in the face of obstacles and adversity; exhibits persistence and resilience.

FOURTH LEVEL

Takes significant risk

Willing to jeopardize career and possibly personal safety because of a clear sense of how actions will contribute to the public good and national well-being.



Self-aware Learner

Possesses self-awareness that drives confidence in one's ability to get things done and is constantly learning and growing; seeks feedback and learning opportunities.

“I remember an older technician at the Navy shipyard saying to me, ‘You need to know the whole ship.’ Throughout my career, I’ve been driven by that approach of trying to understand it all.”

— Kevin Carr
Formerly of the National Institute of Standards and Technology

Led a multi-sector initiative that provided U.S. manufacturing companies with training, tools and connections to accelerate, innovate and develop new opportunities in domestic and export markets.

FIRST LEVEL

Makes accurate self-assessments

Understands personal strengths and limitations; has an accurate sense of self.

SECOND LEVEL

Continuously strives to improve through outreach and self-assessment

Actively pursues self-improvement not just for oneself, but toward the service of fulfilling the mission.

THIRD LEVEL

Broadens one's perspective

Proactively and continually develops self by learning and developing new relationships and broader insights.


FOURTH LEVEL

Pushes personal limits

Takes on challenges and risks to push the limits of personal abilities; seeks out challenges as opportunities for growth.




Navigator 

Patriotic Steward 

Visionary 

Team Leader 

Relationship Builder 

Collaborator 

Jeffrey Baker

Jeffrey Baker successfully refocused the mission and operations of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, helping fuel American innovation in the field of alternative energy. Jeff's big picture mindset and public-private sector know-how led to the design and construction of the world's largest net-zero energy office building, a structure that creates as much or more energy in-house as it uses and that was built for the same cost as a traditional building.

As director of the Energy Department's Office of Laboratory Operations in Golden, Colorado, Jeff set out to change the rules of the game—to redefine the role of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory that he oversees and create an entity that unites government policy, the private-sector marketplace and technology development in seamless collaboration.

In order to make this vision a reality, Jeff built careful alliances with the lab's multiple users and program leaders. He worked closely with these stakeholders to develop a radically new set of goals and incorporated those goals into requirements for the private contractor that operates the laboratory for the government.

The new focus allowed Jeff, his team and the laboratory to choose from a number of creative proposals involving cutting-edge research, and to collaborate with private-sector companies to turn these new technologies into commercially viable products. Some of these efforts have included wind farm development, expanded use of solar technology and the use of natural window light to illuminate and heat indoor spaces.

Jeff is confident that, even in the absence of a comprehensive national renewable energy policy, his team can raise the national dialogue on energy issues—an effect that has already led to substantive progress in energy practices across the country.



Visionary

Recognizes the opportunity to make things better and formulates a new or different path forward; at every step, gathers information, input and insights from others.

“One of the privileges of working in the federal government is the opportunity to affect the national dialogue. When I was given the latitude to prepare the strategy for the re-competition of the contract to run the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, it was one of those rare times that we were able to redirect contractor actions to reflect a larger goal—in this case, our vision of a laboratory that brought together technology, policy and market.”

← Jeffrey Baker
U.S. Department of Energy

FIRST LEVEL

Understands current state in order to clarify vision

Frames tasks within a larger context; draws connections to other stakeholders and the American public.

SECOND LEVEL

Refines the vision

Envisions how the current situation could be improved for the common good.

THIRD LEVEL

Evaluates the vision

Conducts an analysis of the resources required to achieve a goal and the potential impact of its successful completion.

FOURTH LEVEL

Envisions and defines the path forward

Strategically charts out a plan for achieving an overarching goal; identifies resources, anticipates obstacles, engages others and exhibits enthusiasm in the face of challenges.



Navigator

Understands, navigates and uses knowledge of the system to overcome roadblocks and accomplish objectives.

“Unless somebody tells me I can’t do something, I do it. I get around the rules—not to subvert anything, but to cut through it so that we can do what needs to get done. I don’t use the rules ever as an excuse. A lot of people say, ‘We have to do this, this, and this.’ I say, ‘What do we want to accomplish? Tell me about the rules later.’ If it’s absolutely impossible, then it is. But almost always it’s not impossible.”

— Cynthia Bascetta
Government Accountability Office

Provided authoritative advice and analysis to Congress and the general public to improve the quality of health care in America.

FIRST LEVEL

Understands the system

Understands the rules; accomplishes simple to moderately complex goals within current standard operating systems.

SECOND LEVEL

Works around the system

Takes initiative within existing system, and knows when it is appropriate to disregard standard operating procedures.

THIRD LEVEL

Overcomes limitations of the system

Pushes the limits when necessary to work around systemic barriers.

FOURTH LEVEL

Redefines or changes the system

Changes or reforms unofficial practices or interpretations of the rules to allow greater latitude and to achieve innovative results; changes are likely to last.



Relationship Builder

Persuades others to support and/or contribute to an idea or initiative; may involve overcoming objections by using personal credibility and prior positive relationships.

“Through this whole process we were trying to establish personal relationships. If you’re a straight shooter, people generally can figure that out pretty quickly. If they believe you and if you can get that chemistry going, it’s a great thing. And then, all of a sudden, you’re not fighting each other. You’re looking for something that you can all embrace.”

— Earl Stockdale
U.S. Department of the Army

Led the plan to restore the Florida Everglades, a multibillion dollar project through which the Army Corps of Engineers, working with the State of Florida and other federal agencies, would protect this cherished ecosystem.

FIRST LEVEL

Builds a foundation of trust

Builds rapport and trust by getting to know the person and the relevant issues; demonstrates own credibility and trustworthiness.

SECOND LEVEL

Tailors the response to address stakeholder needs

Invests in understanding stakeholder concerns and formulates an approach that specifically addresses them.

THIRD LEVEL

Uses customized indirect influence

Engages third parties and outside information; where prudent, leverages related, but not obvious, connections.

FOURTH LEVEL

Develops complex influencing strategies

Synthesizes deep observations, multiple interests and cultural variants; builds alliances and coalitions to move innovation forward.



Relationship Builder



Collaborator



Team Builder



Team Leader



Navigator



Patriotic Steward



Visionary



Nicole Nelson-Jean

As a young official at the Department of Energy, Nicole Nelson-Jean brokered a U.S.-Russia agreement that enhanced the security of vulnerable Russian nuclear materials and weapons. Her work also led to the creation of a service and training center in Russia to ensure continued protection of the nuclear materials.

In her role as lead negotiator, Nicole approached talks between the U.S. and Russia as a win-win situation, one in which an agreement would be mutually beneficial to both nations. She studied the multi-agency objectives on the U.S. side and took a human interest in her foreign partners, getting to know them personally and actively listening to their views and concerns. At Nicole's urging, U.S. and Russian officials met face-to-face for the first time in two years. Working closely with a translator, Nicole was able to clarify misunderstandings and ensure proper communication within the linguistically-divided group.

Paying close attention to cultural sensitivities and engaging decision-makers from both nations, Nicole turned a discussion that was lost in translation into a peaceful accord to protect nuclear materials from misuse.

Agreement in hand, Nicole was just as strategic in leading the construction of the training and service facility. After carefully selecting a diverse team of experts drawn from national laboratories, agency contacts and the field, she worked closely with Russian contractors and the military to plan for the facility's logistical operations and to streamline its business model. All the while, Nicole kept her eye on the ultimate goal of ushering in a higher level of sustainable, international, nuclear security.



Collaborator

Values and develops connections with stakeholders across or outside of the organization to better achieve an objective, leveraging the specialties of each for the greater good.

“The Russian admiral, their navy, several of their lawyers and their state department equivalent came to the United States to sit down with individuals from our State Department, Department of Defense and Department of Energy. None of them had sat down in a room together for two years. I found it amazing that we thought we could negotiate a document of this magnitude without actually talking to each other. They had to actually sit down face-to-face to discuss what the issues might be in order to pound out an agreement.”

← Nicole Nelson-Jean
U.S. Department of Energy

FIRST LEVEL

Values collaboration and relationships

Trusts, respects and holds a positive attitude towards colleagues and stakeholders.

SECOND LEVEL

Models collaborative behavior

Willingly and openly shares information and responds generously to requests.

THIRD LEVEL

Partners internally

Works within team and related inter-agency groups to accomplish objectives.

FOURTH LEVEL

Partners externally

Works integrally with people across government and across sectors to align missions and accomplish a shared strategic goal.



Team Leader

Fosters innovation by creating conditions that enable the team to openly contribute to and achieve objectives.

“If you listen to the people who are working with the problem, often times they also have the solution. They just don’t have the confidence in their solution. Sometimes they don’t believe that somebody’s going to hear them. They just kind of keep it to themselves. So a mistake oftentimes made by managers and leaders is to bring solutions from outside without engaging the people who are really involved.”

— Rajiv Jain

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Developed and led an initiative to reduce life-threatening, hospital-acquired infections by 60 percent—a process that has been replicated at all 153 hospitals run by the Department of Veterans Affairs and at other hospitals across America and parts of the world.

FIRST LEVEL

Communicates team purpose

Provides meaningful direction for the team; aligns tasks and goals to the broader mission.

SECOND LEVEL

Solicits team needs and ideas

Continuously evaluates the available skills, personalities and resources relative to what is required to achieve the mission.

THIRD LEVEL

Proactively supports the team

Fills any skill or resource gaps so that the team is able to perform optimally and achieve its goals.

FOURTH LEVEL

Fosters an innovative team environment

Uses multiple leadership styles and techniques to facilitate collaboration and improve team performance; keeps performance objectives aligned with mission objectives.



Teacher/Mentor

Creates and invests in growth opportunities for others, encourages them to stretch beyond their current experience and provides long-term developmental support.

“I have a personal philosophy that the scientists are even more important than the science. If I can teach them to be better team players, if I can teach them to be better teachers or mentors, if I can teach them how to write a proposal, or how to manage other peoples’ expectations of their own performance, then those people are going to be more successful. And, the little bit that I’ve been able to do towards their development is going to be heavily leveraged towards the progress of science and engineering in the future.”

— Fran Ligler
U.S. Naval Research Laboratory

Invented sensor systems that diagnose infectious diseases in developing countries and that, monitor the air for bio-threat agents and support clean-up efforts at Superfund sites.

FIRST LEVEL

Gives advice and guidance

Provides constructive feedback and guidance to others on how to successfully accomplish immediate tasks.

SECOND LEVEL

Encourages others to grow and develop

Focuses on the personal and professional growth of others by encouraging people to stretch beyond their typical level of performance.

THIRD LEVEL

Creates opportunities and challenges

Builds a learning environment where the team can explore and test ideas; challenges and pushes others to stretch beyond their current capabilities.

FOURTH LEVEL

Builds deep and long-lasting mentoring relationships

Fosters openness and trust; advocates and sponsors individuals and teams over a long-term period of time.



Visionary



Team Leader



Patriotic Steward



Self-aware Learner



Relationship Builder



Teacher/Mentor



Team Builder



Alfred League

Al League is the ultimate team player and team leader. Just a week and a half after he received an urgent request for help from the armed services in Iraq and Afghanistan, he was able to deliver the first of many installments of an innovative software package that provided satellite views of the battlefield to help military personnel make informed decisions and save lives.

Neither Al nor his staff at the National Imagery and Mapping Agency knew exactly how to produce such computer software when the request came in, but this was of minimal concern. Although outside of his group's normal purview, Al was eager to take on the project. He felt both a duty to contribute to the larger mission of protecting people and country and, based on his knowledge of current technology and past projects, he had confidence that he could help.

Gathering everyone around the lunch table, Al presented his team with the task and background. The team was assembled from across the organization and had a wide-range of experience. Sandwiches in hand, their ideas started to fly.

Connections were quickly made to private-sector companies that had technology with the potential to be part of a solution. When promising software was discovered, Al flew out to meet the owners and personally ask for their partnership. Al and his team quickly adopted the technology for military use, and over time made continual refinements. The technology that Al so quickly deployed offers the military crisp, real-time photographs of the battlefield taken from satellites and provides essential intelligence information that can be viewed on laptop computers by military personnel in the field. This technology has been adapted for widespread civilian use, allowing individuals to easily use their home computers to look at satellite photos of buildings, neighborhoods and communities.



Team Builder

Intentionally composes teams with the optimal skills, abilities and experiences to achieve desired outcomes.

“The first thing I had to do was to sit down with everyone and get to know their motivations—their desires, their family situations. Then I needed to start thinking about the gaps we had and how I could fill certain engineering skills that I was going to need. Then, within a resource constrained environment, you begin to work on informal deals. For example, I offer to have someone go for a developmental assignment somewhere else in exchange for a skill set that I need into my office. Over a period of weeks, that’s exactly what I did.”

← Alfred League
National Imagery and Mapping Agency

FIRST LEVEL

Works with existing team

Makes the best use of existing team and available resources.

SECOND LEVEL

Secures additional team resources

Identifies gaps within the existing team and secures additional temporary resources to fill critical gaps.

THIRD LEVEL

Strengthens team capability

Uses strategic guiding principles to build a team with diverse skills and personalities that is able to accomplish immediate or mid-term objectives.

FOURTH LEVEL

Considers long-term organizational talent needs

Considers and responds to the longer term objectives and needs of an organization or field while building a team.

Identifying and developing innovation leaders will help achieve mission

We studied federal managers who successfully and repeatedly led innovation in government. These leaders navigated complex systems, conscientiously built and empowered teams and presented clear visions—all at sophisticated levels—to achieve remarkable results. They fostered change while encouraging the personal growth of colleagues who will carry on the mission and spread skills of effective leadership.

There are myriad stories of successful innovation leaders in the federal government, and our goal is to increase the number of these leaders and their impact. To that end, here are four ways agencies can use our research results:

Self-assess and improve

Leaders can use attribute descriptions to evaluate their own management styles and behaviors, and to improve their success at creating a team climate that produces results. Identifying where one falls in the innovation leadership framework will allow leaders to understand what they are doing well and how they can improve.

Develop innovation leaders

Agencies can help train employees to develop attributes that foster innovation. Agencies can use the graduated levels in each attribute category to assess current practices, set goals and allocate development resources. A focus on achieving the highest attribute levels will have the greatest impact on performance.

Promote innovation leaders

When selecting a new generation of leaders, especially for the Senior Executive Service, officials can evaluate candidates' competencies against the innovation leadership attributes. Effectively communicating these attributes and their role in the promotion process to employees will help enforce their significance and spread their practice. Explicitly recognizing these attributes through promotions will demonstrate organizations' commitment to creating innovation-friendly environments.

Hire innovation leaders

When filling leadership positions, agencies can look for candidates who demonstrate innovation leadership attributes at high levels. The leaders we studied developed these attributes long before they assumed the roles for which they were recognized. By hiring for attributes—in addition to specific skills, education and experience—agencies can identify and bring on board promising leaders with the potential to inspire teams to successfully address the challenges ahead.

Our research shows that, while good processes and systems support innovation, they cannot create it. That is the role of leaders. For meaningful innovation to occur, leaders must create an environment that allows people to collaborate and stretch, and that gives them the ability to run with new ideas and implement change. Innovation in government does not happen overnight, but it is possible through hard work, dedication and creativity.

RESEARCH METHODS

The *Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medals (Sammies)*, presented annually by the Partnership for Public Service, pay tribute to America's dedicated federal workforce and highlight individuals who make extraordinary contributions to our country.

After surveying 54 *Sammies* honorees and analyzing 40 sets of responses, we identified 12 leaders who created innovative work climates where employees achieved outstanding results. Eligible *Sammies* honorees held supervisory roles in government and/or had been retired from such a role for less than four years.

Each participant's survey data was analyzed using the following set of criteria: 1) uses multiple, positive leadership styles; 2) creates an organizational climate high in flexibility, clarity and responsibility; and 3) scores high on innovation outcomes achieved by the work unit.

The 12 *Sammies* honorees meeting these criteria were interviewed to identify the behaviors and values of leaders who foster innovation in government. These Behavioral Event Interviews (BEI), recorded and transcribed for accuracy, unveiled leaders' thoughts and actions in extensive detail.

The nine attributes presented in this report appeared consistently across the 12 interviewees, which is compelling given the rigor of our selection process and the depth we achieved with each participant.

ABOUT HAY'S VALIDATED TOOLS

For more than 50 years, Hay Group has conducted surveys and gathered data on thousands of leaders worldwide. Our work on federal leadership and innovation was checked against this immense database. Two of the three survey instruments used in this research are from Hay's validated set of tools.

Hay Group's Inventory of Leadership Styles (ILS)

The ILS helps explain leadership from the point of view of those being led. It provides specific insights on the behavior of individual managers and how it impacts their team's performance. Effective leaders create climates which drive execution and encourage innovation. They engage people in the organization's strategic objectives, winning their commitment and willingness to go above and beyond. Such leaders use a collection of distinct leadership styles—each in the right measure, with the right people, at just the right time. They adapt to situations and roles as they change. It's a demanding process, but it's how effective leaders deliver results.

Hay Group's Organizational Climate Survey (OCS)

The OCS gives an accurate picture of employees' perceptions of how their working climate affects their ability to do their jobs. Leaders make the biggest difference on this important indicator, so helping them to understand the climate they experience and the climate they create is a key step on the road to better overall performance.

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The Partnership for Public Service is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that works to revitalize our federal government by inspiring a new generation to serve and by transforming the way government works.

Hay Group is a global management consulting firm that works with leaders to transform strategy into reality—making change happen and helping people and organizations realize their potential.

We thank the *Service to America Medals* honorees whose expertise and accomplishments provided the foundation for this work. We also thank the Rockefeller Foundation for its continued support of our innovation initiatives.

Inside covers: The examples of innovation in government feature the accomplishments of past *Sammies* honorees (servicetoamericamedals.org).

conducted rescue missions that saved hundreds of lives. Led the U.S. recovery and reconstruction efforts after the Asian tsunami and South Asia earthquake. Led the successful prosecution team in an international environmental case, resulting in the removal of more than 600 fifty-five gallon drums of hazardous waste that had been illegally stored in the U.S. Developed and refined the U.S. military's personnel recovery efforts that have successfully rescued thousands of soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan. Conducted pioneering research that led to technology with far-reaching application and impact, including NASA spacecraft, earthquake-proof buildings, bridges, submarines and medicine. Led the development of the Mars Exploration Rover project. Conceptualized and drafted USAID's Foreign Aid in the National Interest report and played a critical role in the agency's work in Egypt, the former Soviet Union, Bosnia and many other countries. Developed the Office of Anti-Terrorism, which was created soon after 9/11 to help better secure the nation's ports and borders against terroristic threats and attacks. Led the development of the popular eFile system that facilitated expedited processing of tax refunds for American citizens and reduced processing costs for government by as much as 90 percent. Developed two of the country's most effective emergency preparedness organizations in the public health field, including a national pharmaceutical stockpile of medicines and vaccines. Organized 15 local elections in southern Iraq and developed a voting system that the U.N. used as the basis for the January 2005 national elections. Secured the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's second largest sexual discrimination settlement ever in landmark case against Morgan Stanley. Transformed military logistics by implementing the use of Radio Frequency Identification technology. Created an electronic medical database that facilitated improved information sharing that could help further cancer research. Led investigation that resulted in the conviction of more than a dozen leaders of the "November 17" Group—a notorious and elusive European terrorist group. Guided U.S. Embassy in Kenya through the 1998 terrorist bombing and was a leading voice in the U.S. government urging a response to the ethnic genocide in Rwanda. Led U.S. delegation to the Arctic Circle for negotiations with Russian officials to better secure Russia's nuclear materials and weapons, resulting in the creation of a service and training center for nuclear material and weapons security in Murmansk, Russia. Developed and implemented the federal Do Not Call Registry, which has reduced the number of telemarketing calls for millions of Americans. Oversaw the federal government's recovery efforts in New York after 9/11 and supervised other Federal Emergency Management Agency rebuilding work in the wake of multiple natural disasters. Led U.S. efforts to help Iraq rebuild their electrical infrastructure and acted as the administrative head for multiple Iraqi ministries. Led Army Corps of Engineers' recovery efforts at Ground Zero. Shut down a massive conspiracy in which rented babies and women couriers were used to smuggle cocaine in baby formula cans. Created a new form of matter that could potentially unlock the key to superconductivity—a phenomenon with the potential to improve energy efficiency dramatically across a broad range of applications. Oversaw the growth of Transportation Security Administration into an organization responsible for aviation security with more than 60,000 people—the largest mobilization of a new agency since World War II. Developed a space motion sickness treatment for NASA, new methods of military aircraft ejection for the U.S. Air Force, and an innovative patient safety program that is now in place in all veteran's hospitals and internationally. Played key role in resolving a tense diplomatic crisis involving North Korean refugees seeking asylum in China by providing linguistic expertise and valuable support to the negotiations. Developed the innovative multimedia "Money Smart Program," which allowed hundreds of thousands of disadvantaged Americans to benefit from personal banking services and learn how to better manage their money. Played leading role in the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's worldwide efforts to eradicate polio, managing millions of dollars in grants and distributing millions of doses of vaccines. Led the task force at a Federal Aviation Administration counterterrorism lab in southern New Jersey that developed innovative products to detect concealed weapons before they can be brought onto commercial aircraft. Contributed to the swift, safe and secure permanent closure of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in Ukraine and helped to coordinate the construction of a new concrete shelter over the destroyed reactor, helping to ensure that terrorists and rogue states cannot access nuclear materials. Working with the Army Corps of Engineers, a number of other federal agencies and the State of Florida, developed and implemented the world's largest environmental restoration project to preserve and protect the cherished Florida Everglades. Saved taxpayers \$1.5 billion in unnecessary construction projects after refusing orders to improperly falsify data, leading to a larger examination of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers planning process and decision-making. Led the development of policies to improve relations with India, a key U.S. ally, and helped to advance the formulation of America's post-Cold War national security policy. Brought to justice two of the men responsible for the infamous 1963 bombing of an African-American church in Birmingham, Alabama, nearly 40 years after they had committed the crime.



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