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E-Government Cross-Agency and Intergovernmental Initiatives Research Project: Web Survey Results

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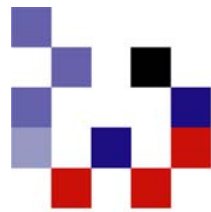


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NCDG

National Center for Digital Government

“E-Government Cross-Agency and Intergovernmental Initiatives
Research Project: Web Survey Results”

- *Draft* -

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Introduction

One of the central challenges of E-Government is organizational and institutional change. Professor Jane E. Fountain, the founder and Director of the National Center for Digital Government at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, and her research team are currently continuing a practical research program on the development of cross-agency collaboration and integration using information technologies. The project is designed to describe and explain critical success factors in successful E-Government cross-agency collaborative projects. The study should contribute significant management, economic and policy benefits as a result of better understanding how to structure conditions for success in cross-agency initiatives that rely on the Internet and related technologies.

As part of this wider study on structuring conditions for cross-agency initiatives, a survey was conducted with those working on the E-Government initiatives that constitute part of the Presidential Management Agenda. In May and June of 2003, the program teams of the Presidential Management Agenda E-Government initiatives were polled on their responses to the questions listed below. Poll responses were anonymous. A total of 129 program team members from 24 of the 25 E-Government initiatives responded to the poll.

Information was sought along several major themes. These included information on demographics of those working on the programs, as well as perceptions of the program team members on: individual program goals, metrics and perceptions of success; cross agency work and career perception; as well as Congress and oversight bodies such as OMB.

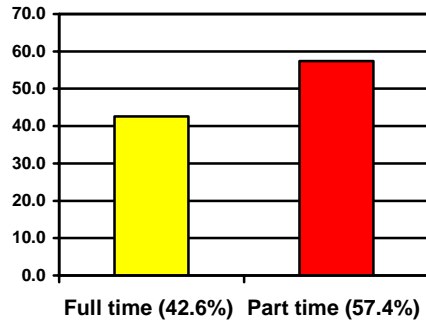
Demographics

Responses to the poll indicate that a large percentage of people working on the initiatives do so full time, and most seem to be amongst the most experienced of the federal government workforce.

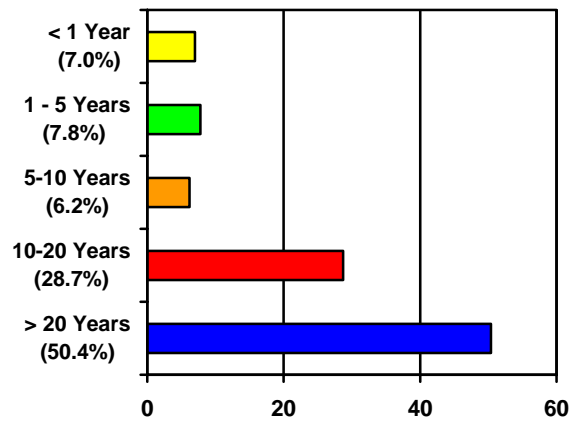
Almost 43% of those working on the E-Government initiatives are working on their projects full time, and almost 80% of those who responded to the poll have worked for the federal government for more than 10 years. Just over 50% report more than 20 years service. All those working on the programs report backgrounds largely in the areas of policy, programs and information technology.¹

¹ Note that numbers in parentheses following the questions in graphs indicate the number of respondents to a particular question. As stated above, the total number of respondents to the survey was 129.

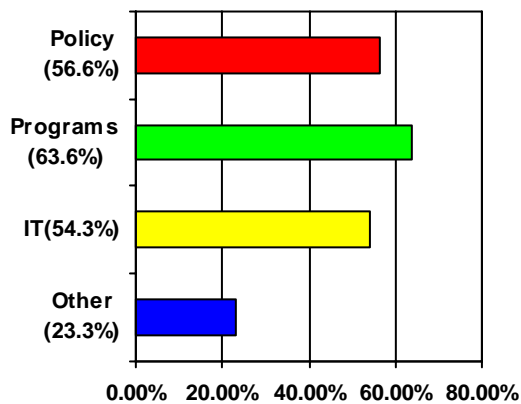
Are You Assigned To This Project Full Time? (129)



How Long Have You Been Working For The Federal Government? (129)



Is Your Background In: (129)



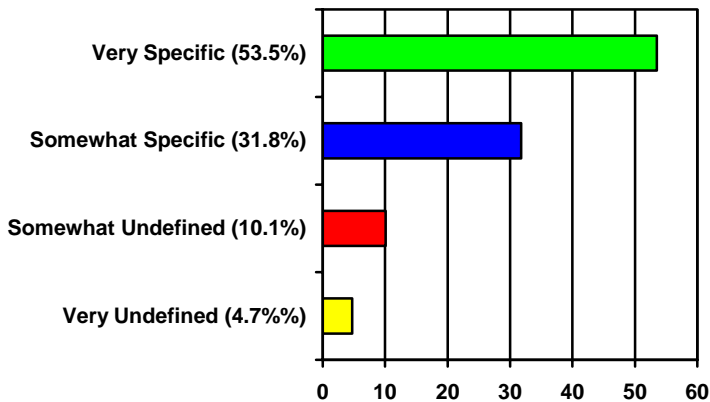
Individual program goals, metrics and perceptions of success

In terms of the programs themselves, these programs are perceived by those working on them as having quite specific goals (only around 15% said their program goals were somewhat or very undefined). Almost 56% reported that performance metrics were in place. Over 80% agreed that the program goals were feasible.

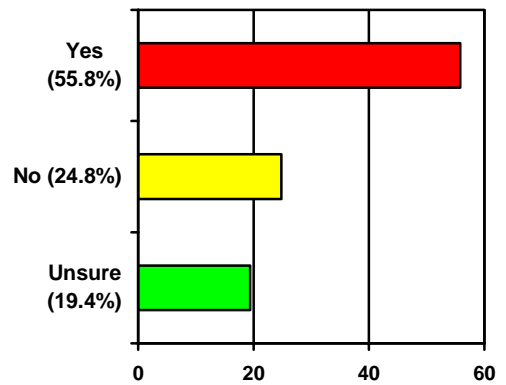
Clearly survey respondents felt that their individual programs were highly important. On a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being the highest in importance, the mean was 8.2. Yet perceptions of the actual success to date of their individual programs were mixed. Again on a scale with 10 being the highest level of success, the average perception of their individual program’s success was 6.3, but with a much higher standard deviation.

Perceptions were divided also on the question of adequate human resources and funding available to the programs. Less than half agreed that their projects were funded adequately, while opinion was split almost 50/50 on the adequacy of the human resources allocated to the projects.

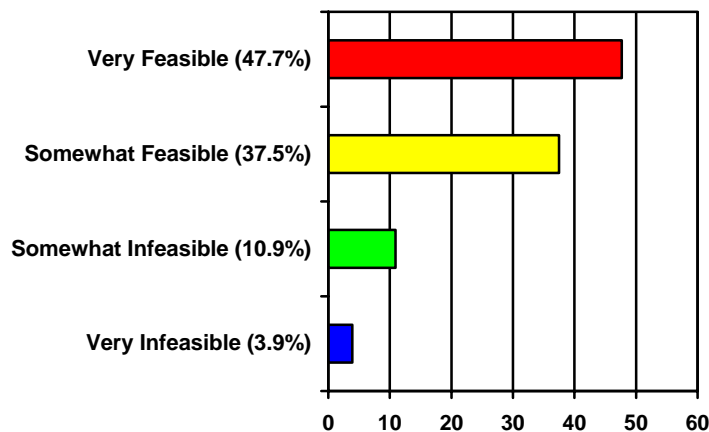
In Your Opinion, How Specific Are The Goals Of The Project? (129)



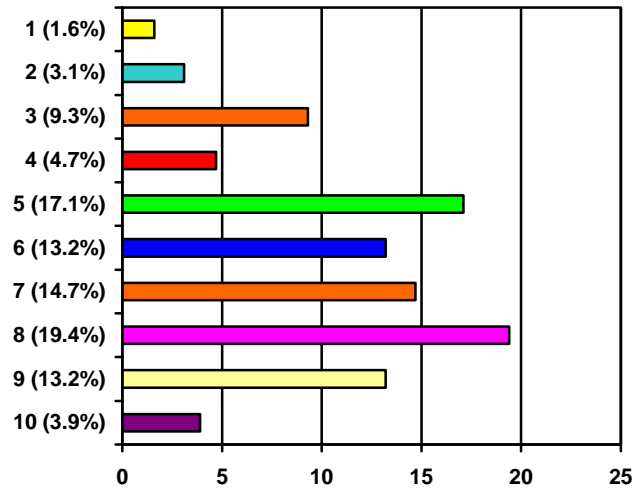
Have Performance Metrics For The Project Been Determined And Implemented? (129)



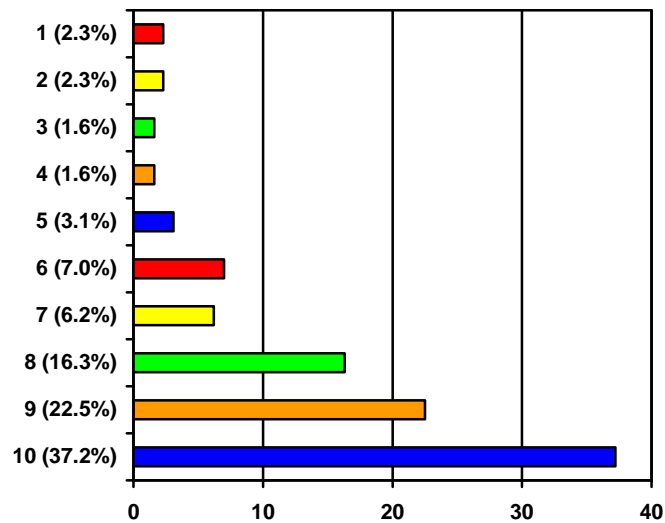
In Your Opinion, How Feasible Are The Goals Of The Project? (128)



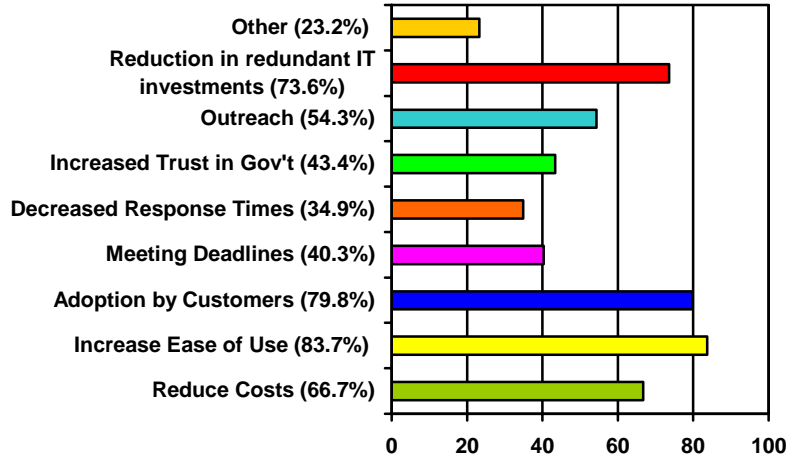
On A Scale of 1-10 (10 = Highest), What Is Your Impression Of The Overall SUCCESS Of Your Project To Date? (129)
Mean: 6.3%



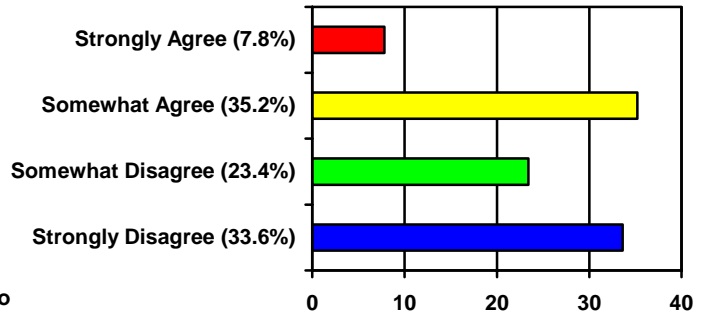
On a Scale of 1-10 (10 = Highest), What is Your Impression Of The Overall IMPORTANCE Of Your Project To Date? (129)
Mean: 8.2%



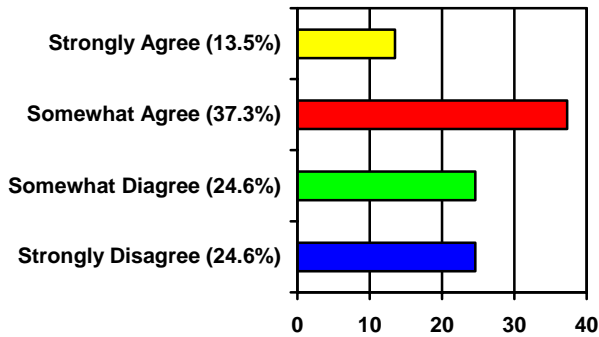
Which Of the Following Are Measures Of Success For Your Program? (129)



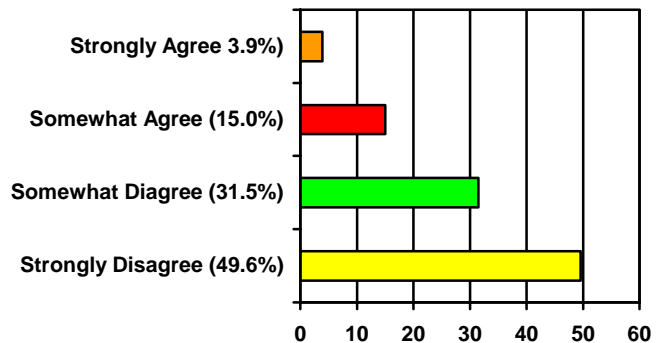
My Program Has Adequate Funding to Complete This Program Successfully (129)



My Program Has The Human Resources Required To Complete The Program Successfully (126)



Standardization And Integration Across Agencies May Actually Result In Poorer Government Performance (127)

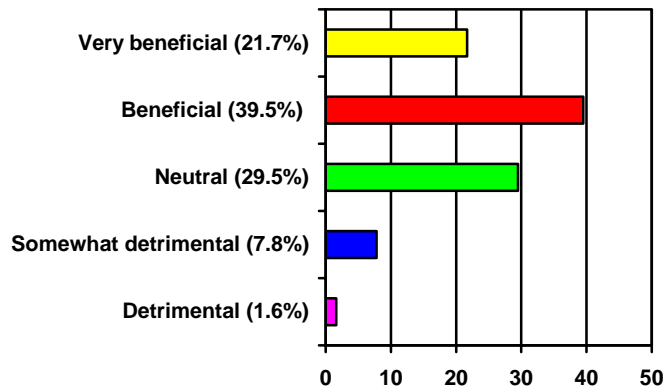


Cross Agency Work and Career Perception

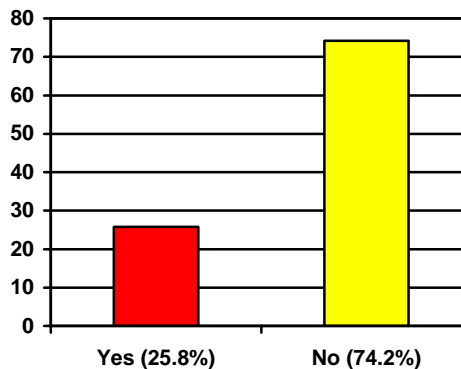
Overall, working on cross agency initiatives was perceived by program team members to be more difficult than other projects they had worked on in the past, over 40% ‘strongly agreed’ that the cross agency initiative was more difficult, but survey respondents also appeared to find working on the programs rewarding. Many believed that working in a cross agency fashion would become more common in the future.

Clearly, survey respondents overall felt that working on their E-Government initiative would have a beneficial effect on their career in the federal government. Less than 10% reported that they perceived that it would have a negative effect. Of those on detail to their particular project, over 80% said that his or her supervisor at their home agency was ‘very’ or ‘somewhat’ aware of their work on the project.

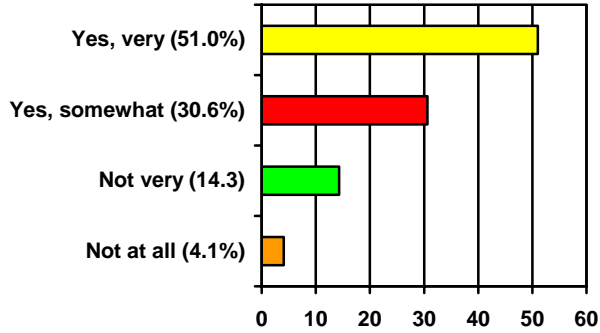
What Impact Do You Believe Working On This Project Will Have On Your Career In Government? (129)



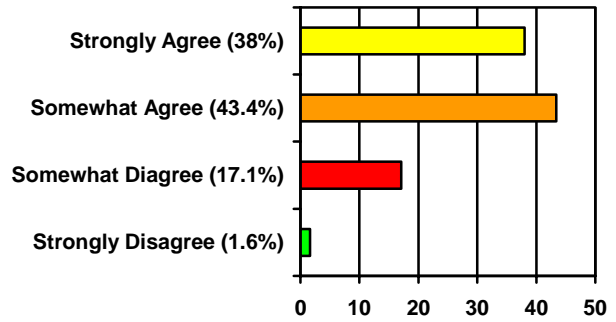
Are You On Detail To This Project? (128)



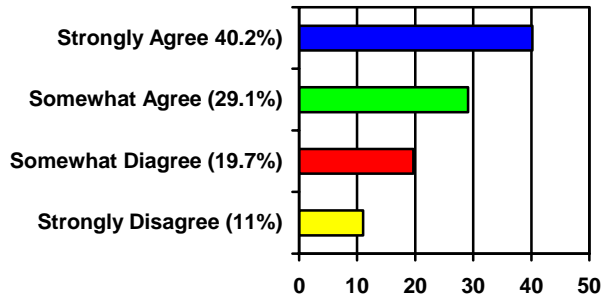
If On Detail, Is Your Supervisor At Your Home Agency Aware And Appreciative Of Your Work On This Project? (49)



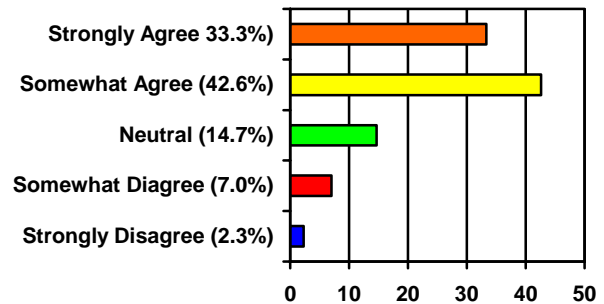
My Work On This Project is Recognized And Valued (129)



Working Across Agencies Is More Difficult Than Work I Have Done On Projects Within My Agency (127)



I Think The Culture Of Government Is Changing In Favor Of More Cross-Agency Initiatives In The Next Five Years (129)

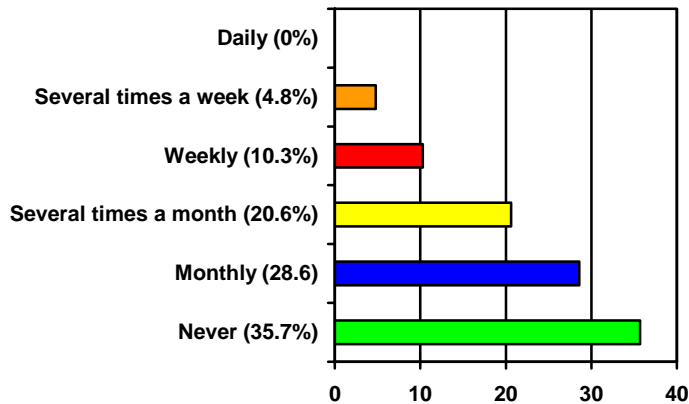


Congress and Oversight

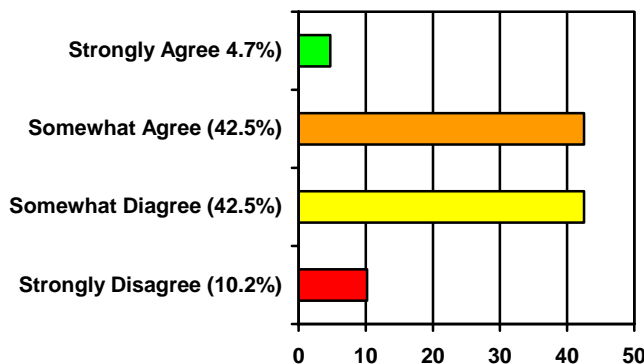
From an oversight and legislative perspective, survey respondents appeared to meet with oversight bodies such as OMB infrequently, as might be expected. Only 4.8% met more than once a week, while almost 30% reported meeting monthly, and over 35% never.

Perception of congressional and legislative support for the E-Government initiatives were mixed, with almost 50% agreeing and a slightly greater number than 50% disagreeing that Congress supported and understood the rationale for the E-Government initiatives. Again, slightly fewer than 50% ‘somewhat or strongly’ (although many more ‘somewhat’ agreed) agreed that current legislation supported cross agency initiatives.

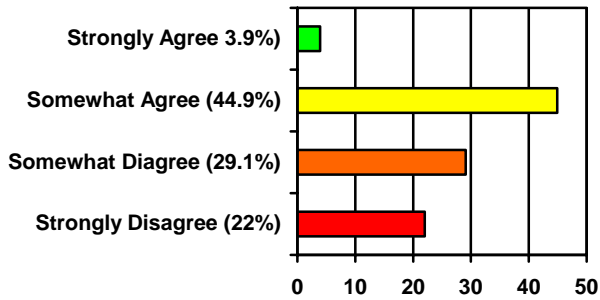
How Often Do You Meet With Oversight Bodies Such As OMB? (126)



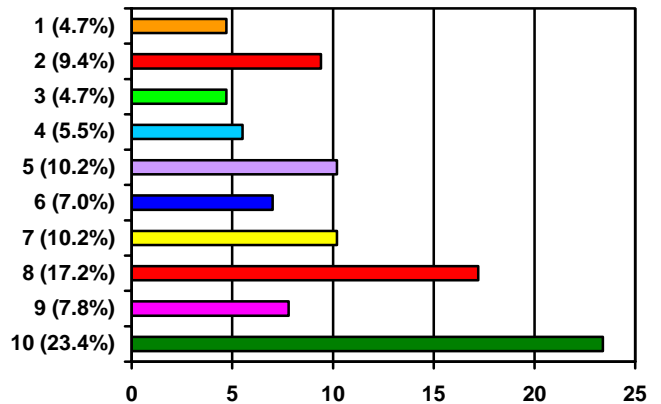
Congress Supports Cross-Agency E-Government Initiatives And Understands The Rationale For Them (127)



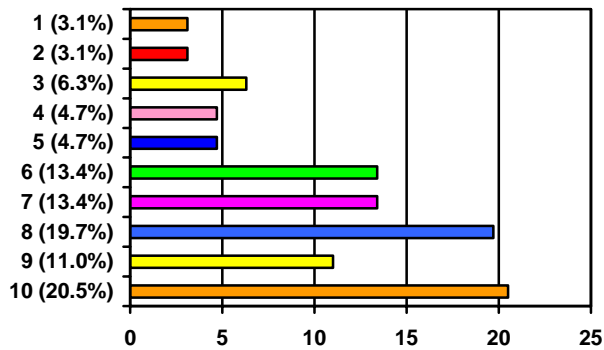
Current Legislation Adequately Supports Cross-Agency Initiatives (127)



On A Scale Of 1-10 (10 = Highest), How Seriously Does Your Home Agency Support Your E-Government Project Specifically? (128)
 Mean: 6.7%



On A Scale of 1-10 (10 = Highest), How Seriously Does Your Home Agency View E-Government In General? (127)
 Mean: 7.1%



About the National Center for Digital Government

The National Center for Digital Government is the focus at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University for information technology, institutions, and governance. The Center's mission is to build global research capacity to advance practice, and to strengthen the network of researchers and practitioners engaged in building and using technology and government. The goal of the Center is to apply and extend the social sciences for research at the intersection of governance, institutions and information technologies.

Funding for the Center is provided by a grant from the National Science Foundation. Professor Jane E. Fountain, Associate Professor of Public Policy at the Kennedy School of Government is the principal investigator and is the Director of the Center. Professor Fountain is the author of *Building the Virtual State*, an award-winning book on government, information technologies and organizational change.