How You Can Improve NOAA’s Performance

(Without Spending a Dime)

An Informational Briefing for the NOAA Leadership Seminar

Ed Mahoney and Daphne LaDue,
NOAA’s Warning Decision Training Branch

Marc Young,
NOAA/WFMO Chief Learning Officer
Build a Learning Organization

- Ensure our workforce has the knowledge & skills to accomplish NOAA’s mission.
- Provide easy-to-use tools for creating NOAA training courses and distributing them to our geographically dispersed workforce.
- Preserve and share NOAA’s organizational knowledge base.
CLC Governance Structure

Bureau Representation on Governance Board
OS/CIO, OS/OFM, NOAA, Census, PTO, one TOC member at large representing small bureaus

Training Officers Council
Fred Lang (OS), Chair
Marc Young (NOAA), Co-Chair

Commerce Learning Center Governance Board
Marc Young (NOAA), Interim Chair

Principal Human Resources Managers
Training
- Diane Evans (ITA)
- Adam Santo (OS/OPM&IT)

Team Leads

Security
- Tom Kreider
- Amy Woodling (OS/OPM&IT)

Change Management
- Judith Westbrook (NOAA)

Content Management
- Lisa Lawler (Census)
  Team Lead

Learning Center Administration
- Lorraine Shackelford (OS/OPM&IT)
  Team Leads
- Christina Klenk (OTKM)

Reporting
- Joan Allen (PTO)
  Team Lead

SF - 182 Implementation
- Natahnya Campbell (NOAA)
  Team Lead

People Data Feed
- Natahnya Campbell (NOAA)
  Team Lead
- Don Rinderknecht (NWS)
  Team Lead

Financial Interface
- Franki Dean (Census)
  Team Lead
- Myrian Myer (OFM)
  Team Lead
  (with Darin Mills OPM)

May 2008
Message From the Under Secretary

December 9, 2005

Last week's SES Training & Development Conference yielded valuable insights from NOAA leadership, collaborative thinking on a range of NOAA priorities, and excellent teamwork and coordination from NOAA's Program Coordination Office staff. The "One NOAA" theme was brought home in just about all of our discussions, and I welcome this chance to share conference highlights with all of you. In remarks opening and closing the conference, I emphasized that NOAA is an extraordinary organization with an incredible mission. Your talent spans a wide berth and is recognized on community, national and international levels. I am proud to run NOAA and to be associated with such dedicated talent.

Since NOAA also is an organization that can be challenging to manage, I count on SES leadership and everyone on the NOAA team to help break down the stovepipes and recognize the value of matrix thinking and functioning. The cliché that one clear, focused collective voice is more effective than many
Shaping NOAA’s Future

During the conference, we questioned where NOAA is headed as an organization, and how we might strengthen that path. Rather than building more structure and process, I suggested we examine how to use the sound ones already in place. Challenge areas cited include: building hazard-resilient communities; NOAA’s value to business; capitalizing on policy opportunities; building external relationships; and NOAA’s workforce needs, including planning, recruiting, retention, training, and education. Should NOAA, for instance, do more to retain employees? Do we have the right tools to retain high performing employees? What more can we do to nurture a continuous learning environment?

We looked at a future where collaborative efforts receive greater recognition, where integration is linked to performance plans, and awards and promotions are based on shared efforts. We envisioned a future where job announcements are multi-disciplinary, and there is a single point of access to NOAA products and services. Staff and visitors will be welcomed to NOAA’s considerable online presence via one portal.

Communications received considerable attention. Everything we say, do and write that is apparent to at least one other person can be defined as communications. There were several take-home messages from this discussion: Be clear about what you want to communicate; state it accurately, concisely and in a timely way; target your audiences; know what your audiences care about; and bridge NOAA communications with the interests of these audiences, reflecting "One NOAA" in the process. Your communications might be stellar, but if they don’t connect to the needs and interests of your audiences, they are bound to fall flat.

I concluded by saying it is an honor and a thrill to run NOAA, and I am delighted to share this message with all of you. Thank you!

A good reading list for managers and aspiring managers is at: http://www.pco.noaa.gov/jw/books.html

Presentations from the conference are at: http://www.pco.noaa.gov/SESIII/

Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr.
Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy (Ret.)
Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and NOAA Administrator
Why NOAA Needs to Improve Written Communications

- Clear communications is vital to NOAA successfully accomplishing its mission, vision & goals – Now & the Future

- The Public Sector demands clear, concise, understandable communications

- The Way NOAA Communicates Internally & Externally Reflects the Professionalism of our Agency

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Urgent - weather message
National Weather Service
New Orleans La
1011 am cdt Sun Aug 28 2005

...devastating damage expected...
Hurricane Katrina...most powerful hurricane with unprecedented strength... Rivaling the intensity of Hurricane Camille of 1969.

Most of the area will be uninhabitable for weeks... perhaps longer. At least one half of well constructed homes will have roof and wall failure. All gabled roofs will fail... leaving those homes severely damaged or destroyed.
The majority of industrial buildings will become non functional. Partial to complete wall and roof failure is expected. All wood framed low rising apartment buildings will be destroyed. Concrete block low rise apartments will sustain major damage... including some wall and roof failure.

High rise office and apartment buildings will sway dangerously... a few to the point of total collapse. All windows will blow out.
Airborne debris will be widespread... and may include heavy items such as household appliances and even light vehicles. Sport utility vehicles and light trucks will be moved. The blown debris will create additional destruction. Persons... pets... and livestock exposed to the winds will face certain death if struck.

Power outages will last for weeks... as most power poles will be down and transformers destroyed. Water shortages will make human suffering incredible by modern standards.
Current CLC Written Communication Statistics
Current CLC Written Communication Statistics
The Top 6 Things & Actions That Determine if Training Is Successfully Transferred into Performance

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<td>Appropriate and Applicable Content</td>
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<td>Necessary Background and Skills</td>
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<td>Clearly Defined Expectations</td>
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<td>Provide Needed Resources and Time</td>
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<td>Lead by Example</td>
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<td>Acknowledging Accomplishments</td>
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Key: I-Instructor S-Student M-Manager
MEMORANDUM TO: All NWS Directors
FROM: David L. Johnson
SUBJECT: Advanced Warning Operations Course

Attainment of the highest levels of warning skill by our field staff is the cornerstone of our ability to protect lives and property. Our Government Performance Results Act (GPRA) goals reflect this high priority, as seven of our 14 goals are warning related. NWS conducts quality training programs to support the highest levels of professionalism among its staff so that they, in turn, can best serve the public. The Office of Climate, Water, and Weather Service’s new Advanced Warning Operations Course (AWOC) is a particularly important offering at this time with respect to the NWS Warning Program.

I consider mastery of the skills that are central to AWOC as critical for all forecasters with warning responsibility. This training is the first large-scale warning preparedness training available to all field staff in many years. Accordingly, I am asking you to ensure all Meteorologists/Hydrologists-In-Charge incorporate AWOC into their Office Training Plans for the coming year.

Thanks in advance for your assistance in making your staff aware of my priority in association with this course.
Management Support
Severe Weather Training Results

Students Completing AWOC Tracks
All NWS Regions

Report Generated: 4 Oct 2005

- Core Track
- Severe Track

1525 Students Completed 10 AWOC ICs

2,004

1,571
Why A Manager’s Guide?

- They Know their Employees
- They are the Ones Who can get things Done
- They can transfer training into Performance
A Call to Action

Everything we say, do and write that is apparent to at least one other person can be defined as communications.

- Be clear about what you want to communicate
- State it accurately, concisely, and in a timely way
- Target your audiences
- Know what your audiences care about
- Bridge NOAA communications with the interests of these audiences

And reflect **One NOAA** in the process.

Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr.
Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy (Ret.)
Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and NOAA Administrator
Let's Start Up a Course

SkillSoft
e-Learning for the Knowledge Economy

The Writing Process
Grammar: For many people, the very word recalls the most difficult or most boring classes they can remember from childhood. Yet for others, mastering the complexities of English grammar is an enjoyable challenge.
Variation: Text Boxes & Graphics

Most native speakers of English have sufficient command of the rules of grammar to speak so that their listeners can understand. But when some people start to write, they either lose track of the grammatical rules or fail to note the differences between casual rules for speech and more formal rules for business writing.

If a listener becomes confused, a speaker can usually restate, explain, or correct the confusing statements. But once a written document is in the hands of a reader, it is too late for the writer to make corrections. The words on the page must be correct by the time they reach the reader.
Assume further that the assignment is an objective two-page report, due in three weeks. You have no other major projects to complete in those three weeks. Other members of your department are knowledgeable about the environmental efforts, but you've been in charge of these efforts. You know exactly what they are and what they've cost; you have graphs that show how much they've reduced toxic emissions; and you've studied the effects on public health. Should you collaborate with others or should you write the report yourself? Select your answer from the choices below.

- [ ] You should write this report yourself.
- [ ] You should collaborate with others in your department for this report.

Done
Think again about the decision on writing about your company's environmental efforts. What features of the task did you consider when determining whether you should undertake this task individually or with a group?

Would you make the same decision if some of the features of the task were different? For example, would you make the same decision if the task had the following features:

- The report was expected to be forty pages long.
- The report was due in a week.
- The report required cost information that you didn't have.
- The task was to recommend future departmental efforts rather than to report objectively on current efforts.
To make the previous decisions, you probably considered certain features of the task.

Below are the features that are usually used to determine whether a given writing task should be done by an individual or a group. Click on each feature for more information about it.

- **the size of the task**
- the deadline
- the knowledge needed to write the document
- any need for the document to present a consensus.

The size of a writing task may include not only the final number of pages but also the amount of research required. A short report that requires extensive research may be a large writing task.
Interactivity: Click on Images

Laura, a project manager who has collaborated successfully on many documents, describes some of the features that she considers when deciding whether to write a group document or an individual document.

Click the images below for Laura's examples of the relevant features. Click again to make the text box disappear.

"I consider the size of the whole task, from research to document length. A ten-page report for which I have all the data available may actually be a smaller writing task than a three-page memo that requires 40 hours of research into very complicated financial files."
Your supervisor in the information technology department, Phil, has assigned you to develop a proposal to upgrade the operating systems on hundreds of networked personal computers in your company. Although such an upgrade is an expensive and time-consuming project, Phil believes that the benefits of a more modern operating system will outweigh the costs. To persuade upper management, he has to submit a proposal outlining a plan for upgrading. Because the need is pressing, Phil wants you to complete the proposal within two weeks.
Deciding to Write a Group Document

I'm inclined to write the proposal myself. I hate to spend time attending meetings with people in a writing group.

I dislike meetings, but I know I have to complete an annual report in the next two weeks so I don't think I'll have time to do the proposal too.

I've got the annual report to write, so I'm considering writing the proposal with a group, which could easily meet the deadline. If it would take me 20 hours to write the proposal, then 4 people could complete it in 5 hours.

"Have you decided whether to write this proposal yourself?"
“Remember that group members will need time to plan, coordinate the writing, and resolve differences. They won't be quite as quick as you seem to expect.”
Why a Manager's Guide?

• We already have resources - available to all - to meet our needs
  – But we are not using it!

• Challenge: the courses are generic
  – They cannot include ways to apply the info
How Adults Learn Best

- New information is relevant
- Learning needs are clear
- Learning is in context of how it will be applied
- Feedback is prompt
The Guide Includes 4 Steps

Your goal is to efficiently target learning

...and make sure change happens!
Step 1: Decide Which Duty Positions to Address

• Eventually, include all

• Start with one or two
  – less daunting
  – get quick feedback on how to do this well
Step 2: Determine Needs & Create Plans for Change

Perceived learning need vs. Actual learning need

Use pretests to eliminate the gap!
87% is a passing score
But I have a significant weakness
Step 2
Decide How to Proceed

Focus on weakness or Room for gain in most sections
Step 3: Use Job Sheet to Plan & Document Change

• Section for note-taking

• Envision up to 3 specific things you'd like to change

Example 1:
I want to remember to use semicolons when writing lists that have commas within at least one of the items.

Example 2:
I want to apply the Fog Index to my web page to make sure it's understandable at an 8th grade level.
Step 4: Follow-up and Document Changes

- Set a date to follow-up
- Document changes
- Plan the next step
  - *Unlearning bad habits takes effort!*
Improve Performance

- Using the CLC takes:
  - A little thought
  - But can be very focused
- Learning in context helps application
- Envisioning change important!
- Follow up and document change

You can improve NOAA's performance without spending a dime!
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chief Learning Officers</td>
<td>Determine the overall training &amp; development needs of the Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System Administrators</td>
<td>Manage the CLC; Track and report NOAA training activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Coordinators</td>
<td>Enter new course listings and completions in the CLC for supervisors and co-workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Administrators &amp; Instructors</td>
<td>Develop and deliver training courses and curricula, including communications &amp; grades</td>
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## NOAA’s Chief Learning Officers

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<tr>
<th>Line/Corporate Office</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>e-Mail Address</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOAA /WFMO</td>
<td>Marc Young</td>
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<td>OAR</td>
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