

U. S. CUSTOMS SERVICE
PD SIMPLIFICATION

IDENTIFYING THE ISSUES
and
DEVELOPING SOLUTIONS
1995 to Present

POSITION DESCRIPTION REDUCTION PROJECT



(1996)

- 5400 PDs FOR 19,500 EMPLOYEES
- AC'S GOAL: 1 PD PER TITLE/SERIES/GRADE

OBJECTIVES:



- Automate PDs & decentralize personnel processing
- Automate & speed-up staffing process
- Assist decision-making without weakening legal requirement of fairness & equity
- Improve posture in 3rd party hearings by clear differences between grades
- Improve HRM customer service to field

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF A PD?



- Helps supervisors manage employees
- Outlines employee's responsibilities
- To set pay & ensure = pay for = work
- Helps identify staffing needs
- Helps identify training needs & eligibility
- Helps measure performance
- Used to determine bargaining unit status
- Helps justify awards & disciplinary actions
- Helps resolve grievances
- A legal requirement (5 USC Chap 51)

WHO USES PDs?



- Managers
- Supervisors
- Employees
- Admin support
- Payroll
- Budget
- Training
- Medical/Safety
- EEOO
- Internal Affairs
- HRM Classification
- HRM Staffing
- HRM Empl Relations
- HRM Labor Relations
- HRM Benefits
- HRM Processing

HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT PD? (1995)



- Secretary, **GS-5** 37pd's
GS-6 47pd's
GS-7 81pd's
- Customs Inspector, **GS-5** 59pd's
GS-7 60pd's
GS-9 51pd's
- Customs Aid, **GS-5** 88pd's
- K9 Officer, **GS-9** 8pd's
- Criminal Invstgtr, **GS-12** 17pd's
GS-13 18pd's
- Import Specl, **GS-11** 7pd's
GS-12 21pd's

WHAT YOU SAW IN USCS' SYSTEM (1995)



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WHAT YOU SHOULD SEE



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HOW TO SIMPLIFY PDs?



- Can it be shorter?
- Make it readable
- Make it accurate
- Make it simple
- List only major duties
- Avoid minor duties
- Levels of work assigned should match pd
- Don't be overly specific
- Are there "magic words"?
- Is there a benchmark pd?
- Can you use fill-in-the-blanks?
- Checklist pd's?

MORE THOUGHTS ON HOW TO SIMPLIFY PDs



- Can you describe just FPL, not lower grades?
- Use FES format?
- Primary standard?
- Avoid excessively legalistic terminology
- Build key concepts/grade criteria in pd
- Develop local-use only amendments/memos
- Automated pd's?
- Simplify OF-8 coding or use automation system instead of pd
- PD should support staffing efforts
- Reorient supv away from always having "unique" situation
- Broadbanding?

STILL MORE ON THE PD PROCESS



- Use Pen & Ink change procedures
- Develop agency grading guides
- Make it PATCO-compatible
- Tie-in to performance standards
- Use boilerplate terminology
- Develop templates
- Develop all-inclusive generic pd's
- PODAA
- Make it compatible with other HRM IT initiatives (Resumix, PeopleSoft, et al)
- **KISSS !**

HOW TO SIMPLIFY IT?



- **K**EEP
- **I**T
- **S**HORT,
- **S**IMPLE,
&
- **S**TANDARDIZED

STANDARDIZED ELECTRONIC PD FORMAT (EPD)



- Intro NTE 7 lines, for vacy announcement
- NTE 4 - 6 major duties (sub-paras ok), more important first
- Generic
- PODAA
- FES format w/ levels & points
- Factor 1: 3 - 6 KSAs
- Use active voice
- Avoid jargon or overly - specific references to forms, projects, organizations, etc.
- IT-compatible
- NTE 4 - 5 pages

SUPERVISORY EPD FORMAT



- Intro NTE 7 lines, for vacancy announcement
- Generic
- NTE 4 - 6 major duties (sub-paras ok), more important first
- PODAA
- FES format w/ levels & points
- Use active voice
- Avoid jargon or overly - specific references to forms, projects, organizations, etc.
- KSAs at end
- NTE 4 - 5 pages
- IT-compatible

EPD EVALUATION STATEMENT FORMAT



- Required for precedent-setting or border-line decisions, or where appeal expected
- Include:
 - ◆ Background info on establishment of position
 - ◆ All references used & dates
 - ◆ Series & title determination
 - ◆ Describe how exceeds lower grade but doesn't meet higher
 - ◆ Cite law/CFR for BUS & FLSA

WHAT DID USCS DO NEXT?



- Set up a task force of 6 classifiers and assistants for three months
- Drafted EPDs based upon existing pd's and class standards
- Coordinated the drafts with SMEs, staffing specialists, IT people and union
- Published EPDs, implementing memo and explanatory information for supvr & empl
March 1996

RESULTS?



- 1996 Replaced 2,656 old pd's with 176 EPDs, a 93.4% reduction (mostly for Ofc of Field Opns' 12,000 employees)
- 1996 Provided training on classification & use of EPD to staffing specialists & assistants
- 1997 Able to maintain level of services when HRM reduced by 50 spaces (- 20%)

SPDs/EPDs UPDATED

- 1997 EPD loaded to USCS-wide electronic bulletin board
- 1998 Set up a system allowing many SF-52 actions using EPD to bypass Classification
- 1998 EPD loaded to USCS InfoBase, an HRM CD-ROM distributed to USCS admin offices monthly
- 1998 Developed 1st simplified grading template for mgr & supv use

UPDATING CONTINUES



- 1999, started turning most populated existing pd's into Standardized Position Descriptions (SPD) & combining them with EPDs in a listing provided to mgr, supvr, admin & HRM personnel
- 1999 Listing of SPD/EPD added to InfoBase
- 2000 USCS IntraNet established, with SPD listing

THE CONTINUING INITIATIVES



- 2000 Phase 1 of a contract awarded to produce 115 new EPD
- 2000 Position maintenance review responsibility integrated into USCS self-inspection program
- 2001 544 SPD/EPD now in use; EPD library available on USCS IntraNet; over 54% of USCS workforce covered by SPD

9 GRADING TEMPLATES ISSUED TO DATE



- Budget support positions in CMCs
- EEO Spec/Mgr positions outside of USCS EEOO
- HR supt & liaison positions in field
- IT positions in field
- GS-1802-5/6/7
- Field L & ER Spec positions
- Field logistics & procurement support positions for OFO
- Technical Enforcement support positions for OI
- Intell Resch/Opns Spec for OI

CUSTOMS POLICY - 2000



- **Standard Position Descriptions will be used throughout the Customs Service to the maximum extent possible**
 - ◆ PM&C will provide a current list of SPDs to OHRM staff
 - ◆ The SPD list also will be in Infobase and, eventually, on the Intranet
- **When an SPD exists, an individual PD will not be created without approval from AC or Deputy AC, HRM**
- **Adoption of risk management concept**

IMPLEMENTING THE POLICY



- **The widespread use of SPDs allows many actions to bypass PM&C review. The bypass operates when:**
 - ◆ **Supervisor certifies assigned work is accurately described in an SPD**
 - ◆ **The SPD covers the series/grade of position and is approved for use in the organization**
 - ◆ **The action is not an exception to BYPASS (discussed below)**
- **Use the staffing checklist**

PROCEDURES



- 1 **If the action** meets any exception and **shouldn't be BYPASSed, be sure it is approved by a classifier, **FIRST** !**
- 2 If NO classification review is needed, and BYPASS is appropriate, use your checklist:
 - **The PARTS action must have an SPD PD#**
 - **PD# must be from most recent SPD list**
 - **The SPD must be appropriate for the requesting organization**
 - **Make sure of Supervisory Certification**

PROCEDURES (cont'd)

3 Return action to requesting office for **supervisory certification** before taking **any** action

4 If supervisor declines to certify, refer action to PM&C

5 If PD# is wrong, but close to a correct SPD, verify with requesting office before taking action

- ◆ Return action to requesting office if MR# is incorrect
- ◆ Forward action to PM&C if PD# is correct but does not match an SPD

PROCEDURES (cont'd)

- 6 Ensure a complete copy of the appropriate PD is available **before** taking **any** action. You can:
- ◆ Check InfoBase or PD Library when PD# begins with an “S”
 - ◆ Check with PM&C if PD is not available electronically, e.g., PD# begins with an “A” or numeric sequence
 - ◆ Forward PARTS request to PM&C if unable to locate copy of SPD

BYPASS WORK FLOW



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BYPASS CHECKLIST



- ◆ IDENTIFIES
POSITION
- ◆ 6 QUESTIONS
- ◆ REQUIRES INITIALS
& SIGNATURE
- ◆ REVIEWER &
APPROVER SIGN
- ◆ INSPECTABLE PART
OF DEU/MPP
CASE FILE

SUPERVISORY CERTIFICATION

I CERTIFY THIS IS AN ACCURATE STATEMENT OF MAJOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THIS POSITION AND ITS ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS, THE POSITION IS NECESSARY TO CARRY OUT GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONS FOR WHICH I AM RESPONSIBLE, AND THERE IS SUFFICIENT MONEY IN MY BUDGET TO PAY FOR THIS ACTION. I UNDERSTAND THIS INFORMATION IS USED FOR STATUTORY PURPOSES RELATING TO APPOINTMENT AND PAYMENT OF PUBLIC FUNDS, AND FALSE OR MISLEADING STATEMENTS VIOLATE STATUTES OR REGULATIONS.

(SIGNATURE IF FAXED OR HARD-COPY)

(DATE)

(PRINT NAME & TITLE)

FUTURE GOALS



- 2002 Phase 2 of contract for 162 more EPD; focus on remaining series/titles w/ 20+ empls
- Replace USCSBBS and InfoBase with user-friendly IntraNet access for all USCS personnel; including EPD library
- Create EPD for all positions with 10 or more employees; update existing EPD for reorgs, new work, new class stds

FUTURE GOALS (cont'd)



- Mass change eligible employees to EPDs
- Achieve 90%+ of USCS workforce on EPDs