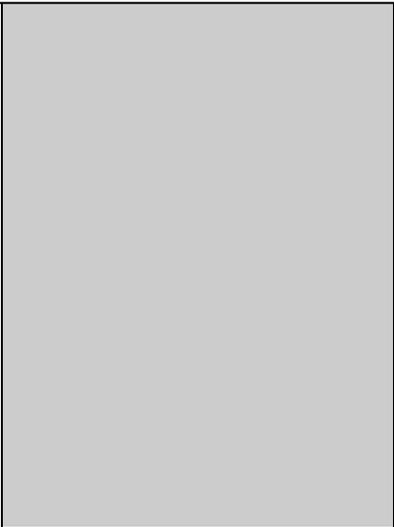


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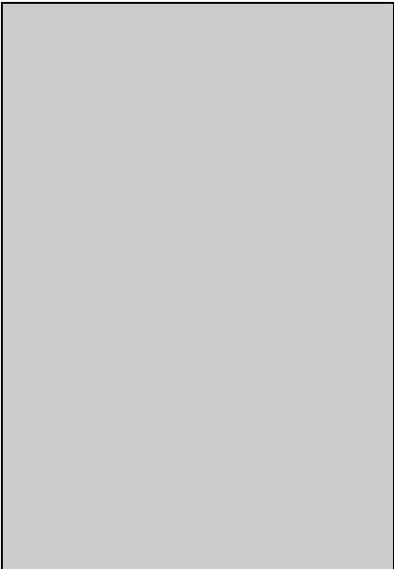


Upward Mobility

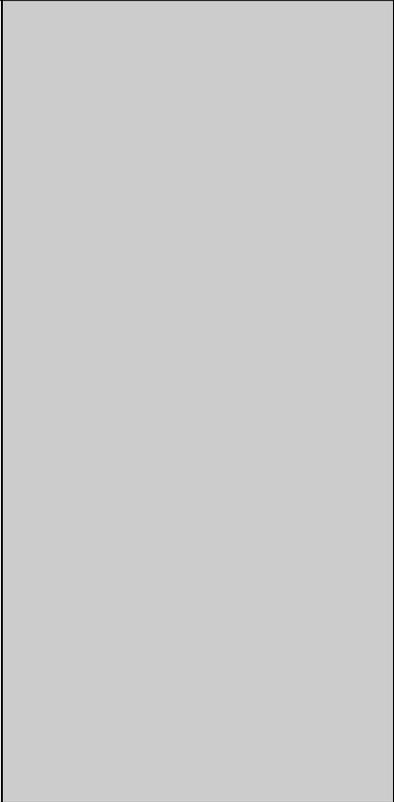
A number of my employees raised the issue of upward mobility at an All Hands meeting last week. I remember that “upward mobility” used to have a technical meaning that referred to a process by which lower graded employees were selected and trained for other positions.

You are correct. Although what your employees were likely raising was their concern about promotional opportunities and career advancement, the term “upward mobility” in the Department of the Navy (DON) does refer to a special opportunity that exists to target career enhancing opportunities for people in positions which are generally considered to be “dead-ended.”

The Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 (as amended) called upon Federal agencies to develop and implement specific programs that would provide greater career opportunities to employees at the GS-09 and equivalent level and below. “Upward Mobility” is part of the affirmative employment commitment of the DON.



Position Coverage



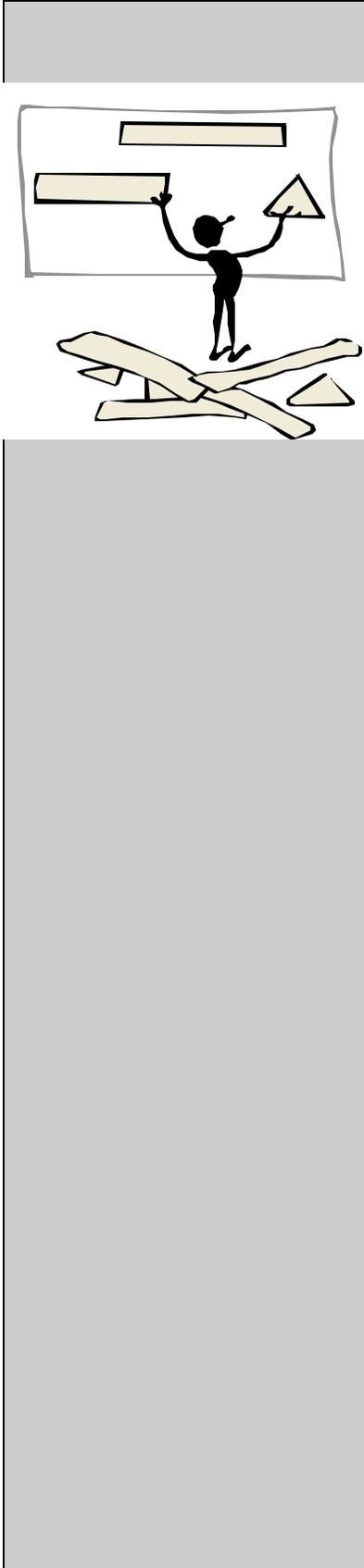
How to Select a Position



To help the DON in opening up career opportunities to lower graded personnel whose careers tended to have reached a “dead-end” and who **lack experience or education to qualify them for advancement**, the DON entered into a special training agreement with the Office of Personnel Management. The discussion below addresses how the flexibilities contained in that agreement may be used.

Positions covered: Non-supervisory positions grade GS-4 through GS-9 and their wage grade equivalents. **[NOTE:** To make this discussion easier to read, we will restrict our discussion to GS positions, although what we say applies equally well to Wage Grade and positions under other pay systems.] The target positions under the upward mobility program itself may NOT exceed the GS-9 or equivalent level, but they may have career ladders built in the position, e.g., the upward mobility target position is a Management Analyst, GS-9 with a career ladder to the GS-11 level without additional competition.

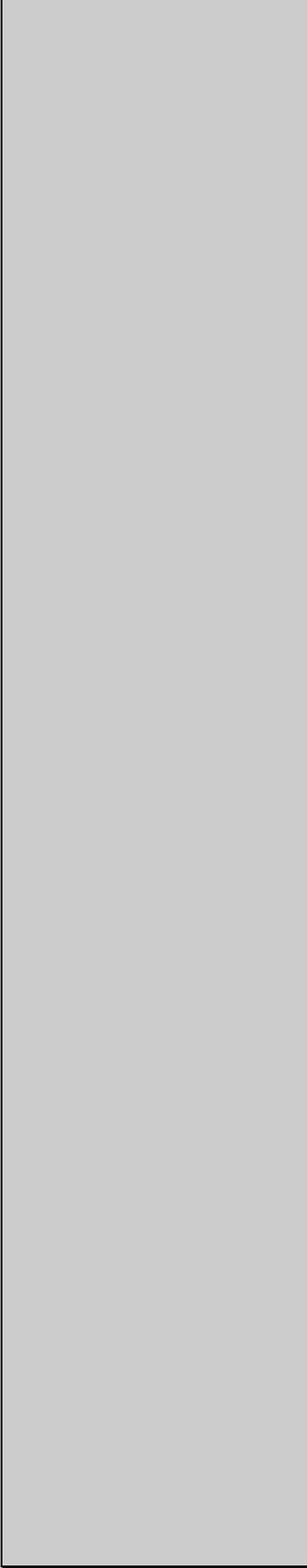
Because the purpose of the upward mobility program is to open career advancement opportunities for lower-level personnel, the types of positions which are most appropriate are generally those in



the grades GS-6 through GS-9 and their equivalents. At some activities where there are large numbers of employees at the GS-3 or GS-4 levels, then positions at the GS-5 level may be appropriate.

In searching for appropriate positions consider the following:

- Where do you have the highest concentration of people whose career opportunities appear to be limited by either education or experience?
- Are there people in the office who have the time and the necessary skills to supervise the training, since most of the training will be on-the-job?
- Are those who will compete for the position likely to complete the formal training or education requirement for the position? If the target position has educational requirements built into the qualifications, **then the person selected for the program MUST MEET ALL THE EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE TARGET POSITION BY THE END OF THE TRAINING PERIOD**, e.g., if the target position is an Operating Accountant GS-510-9, then by the end of the training period the person selected must have attained 24 credit hours in



Accounting courses or the other qualifications set forth by the Office of Personnel Management.

There are two types of positions that are important in establishing an upward mobility position:

Target Position: This is the position in grades GS-4 through GS-9 to which the person selected will be placed at the end of the training period.

Trainee Position: This is the position established solely for the purpose of placing a person while undertaking the training assignments under the upward mobility agreement.

Example 1: The full performance level for most of your secretaries and other support personnel are at the GS-5 and GS-6 levels. A Management Analyst GS-343-11 has announced that he plans to retire at the end of the month. The office in which this vacancy will occur has seven other Management Analysts who are available to help train a new employee. You decide the use this soon-to-be vacated position to open up a career opportunity to someone under upward mobility.

Who is Eligible to Compete

Given the concentration of the people who will want to compete for the position is at the GS-5 and GS-6 levels, the target position should be established at the GS-343-7 level with a career ladder without the need for further competition to the GS-343-11. The trainee position will be determined once competition has been held and a person has been selected.

To compete for an Upward Mobility position, candidates must:

- **Hold a career or career conditional appointment in grades GS-1 through GS-9 or equivalent Wage or demo positions; or**
- **Hold a Veterans Readjustment, Veteran Employment Opportunity Act appointment; or**
- **Hold an appointment for severely handicapped employees under Schedule A, Section 213.3102; and**
- **Currently be at a grade level at least equivalent to the trainee position, but not above the grade 9 level – an employee may NOT be promoted into the trainee position.**

NOTE: If you have employees who have appointments under special authorities, please check whether they are eligible for competition under Upward Mobility before the job is advertised.

Evaluation and Selection Of Candidates



Although Upward Mobility candidates are selected under activity merit promotion procedures, there are some differences.

- Candidates are evaluated on the basis of **potential to perform in the position** rather than on actual qualifications for the target position. For this reason, ranking factors, such as the following may be used:
 - ❑ Ability to read and follow instructions;
 - ❑ Ability to meet and deal;
 - ❑ Ability to gather information;
 - ❑ Ability to write;
 - ❑ Ability to perform mathematical computations.

- Candidates must have sufficient experience and/or education to meet OPM formal qualification requirements for the target position **within a 24 month training period**. As mentioned above, these include minimum educational requirements.

- A panel of 3 to 5 people should be used in the assessment process. Also interviews of ALL candidates are highly recommended to insure that each candidate is provided ample opportunity to display his or her potential to succeed in the position.

Example 1 continued: The target position will be a GS-343-07, so the candidates who will be considered will be GS-5s through GS-9s. [Yes, a person may want to take a voluntary change to lower grade to enter such a position because of future promotions.]

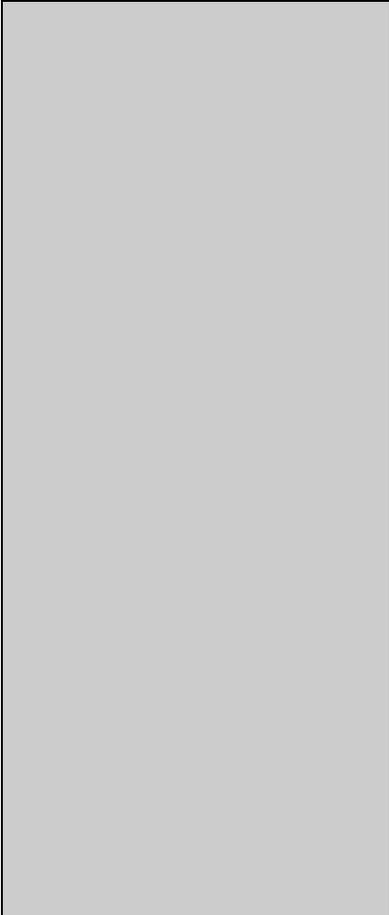
Candidates for the position would probably be ranked using the following factors:

- Ability to read and follow instructions;**
- Ability to gather and display information;**
- Ability to write;**
- Ability to work as a member of a group;**

An assessment panel should be used consisting primarily of 3-4 GS-9/12s who are familiar with the work that a management analyst performs. A person sensitive to EEO issues should also serve on the assessment panel. The assessment panel should interview ALL eligible candidates.

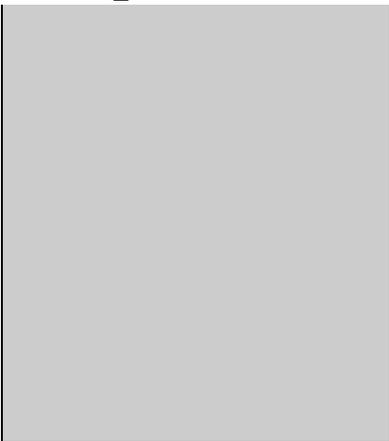
After the Selection

Depending on who is selected the trainee position would be established as a GS-344-05 through GS-344-07. The selectee would be placed in the position through reassignment, detail or change to lower grade (with pay retention).



Within 30 days the supervisor must develop and Individual Development Plan (IDP) for the trainee. **This IDP will serve as the position description for the training position.** The IDP must insure that at least 50% of the training period consists of on-the-job training in the functional area of the target position or in a closely related area. How long the employee will be remain in the training position depends on his or her experience and/or education.

Selectees are credited with two months of required experience for each month of training successfully completed. ALL Upward Mobility trainees must spend AT LEAST six months in the trainee position regardless of their past experience or education.



Along with their annual performance rating, Upward Mobility trainees must receive a supervisory evaluation within 60 days after they are assigned into the trainee position and quarterly thereafter, until the successful completion of the IDP. Supervisors must also prepare a final summary of the trainee's achievement and performance after the trainee completes the training program.

Example 1 concluded: June is selected as your Upward Mobility

trainee. She has been a GS-6 Secretary for the past five years. She has completed one year of general education courses at the local community college. June will be placed in a GS-344-6 trainee position and placed on a 6-month IDP which will provide her with the one year of specialized experience that she needs to qualify as a GS-343-07. When she successfully completes the training program, she would be promoted to the target position. She should receive an evaluation probably every sixty days during the six-month period of training. An example of an IDP is attached to this discussion.

Documentation

The following remark should be included on the PPI requesting the establishment of the position and selection under the Upward Mobility program:

DON Special Training Agreement of 25 August 1980, as renewed. Employee is qualified for this trainee position only under approved training agreement; not eligible for other positions in this series until completion of prescribed training.

Accompanying documentation should include copies of the target and full performance level positions (along with signed OF-8s), a copy of the crediting plan and a memo designating panel members.

Some Cases to Consider

Case 1: Jamie Klass has a vacancy for a Budget Analyst, GS-11. He has two budget assistants and a secretary, all of whom have college degrees as well as several other technical and support personnel at the GS-6 and GS-7 levels. Should he fill the position through Upward Mobility?

Comment: Probably not. If Jamie believes that he will select one of the three employees with a college degree, then a regular merit promotion recruitment would be more appropriate. Upward Mobility positions build up expectations among those who lack experience and/or education. If the position went to someone with a degree, there will probably be resentment among the work force. Is it illegal? NO. Is it advisable? NO.

Case 2: The Information Management Directorate has just been assigned some additional functions. There is a need to recruit an additional seven computer specialists. Are these positions suitable for Upward Mobility?

Comment: Not all of them, but possibly one or two. Remember that you will need people available to train those selected on-the-job. It is better to attempt to fill the positions from a variety of



**Questions and
Answers**

sources – merit promotion recruited at multiple grade levels, Veterans appointments, and Upward Mobility.

Question 1: I am confused. Is the person qualified for the position when he or she is selected for an Upward Mobility position or not?

Answer: They could be, but the vast majority are not. The Upward Mobility program is designed to help those with limited opportunities for advancement, especially those who lack experience and/or education. The special remark placed on the PPI request and on the SF-50 insures that there is no confusion. See the Documentation section above.

Question 2: Is there any flexibility in the amount of time that the trainee must be covered by the IDP?

Answer: The minimum period of time is six months – no exceptions. Maximum time can be up to two years with an extension of six month allowable under certain rare circumstances, e.g., hospitalization. How much qualifying experience is needed and the speed at which the trainee can learn the new field determine the period of time from six months to two years. The training period is documented on the individual development plan.

Questions and
Answers (con't)

Question 3: *Are you saying if my minimum time would be 6 months, management can set a longer period before I get promoted?*

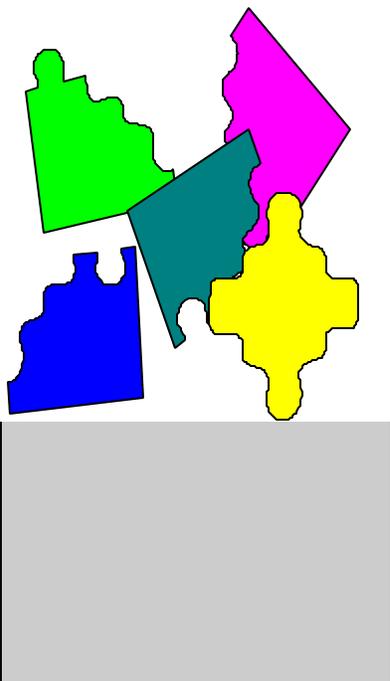
Answer: Yes. The purpose of Upward Mobility is to open up career opportunities, not just to get people promoted. The time period established under the IDP is established by your supervisor and should be of sufficient length to insure that you possess all the required knowledge and skills needed to perform successfully in the target position as well as in your new career field.

Question 4: *Are you saying that I can or cannot fill an Accountant position using Upward Mobility?*

Answer: Yes, you can as long as the target position is GS-09 or below. However, whoever is selected MUST meet the experience AND educational requirements of the series by the end of the 24 month training period - no exceptions.

Question 5: *What happens if the trainee fails to complete the required training successfully?*

Answer: Normally, the employee would be reassigned to another position for which he or she qualifies. If the person entered the training position through a



voluntary change to lower grade, then the person MAY be repromoted up to his or her former grade as an exception to merit staffing procedures. The decision to repromote is management decision; the employee is not entitled to the repromotion.

Question 6: *How does the Priority Placement Program (PPP) impact on my filling a job through upward mobility?*

Answer: Normally, the PPP is applied against the full performance level of a vacancy. For positions covered by formal training plans, such as upward mobility, the PPP is queried at the entry grade searching for candidates who occupy positions under a formal training program. Although the possibility exists that a PPP candidate would be available, past practice has shown that it is highly unlikely that there would be a match.

Question 7: *I would like to fill a position under Upward Mobility, but I am sure that I will need help. Who should I ask?*

Answer: Your servicing specialist at your Human Resources office should be able help you.

Reference

CPI 410 Appendix F

April 18, 2000

**Individual Development Plan
Under DON Upward Mobility Agreement**

Trainee's Name: Merry Spring

Position From Which Selected: Mail and File Clerk, GS-305-05

Trainee Position: Management Assistant, GS-344-05

Target Position: Management Analyst, GS-343-07

Period of Training: Eighteen Months (1 April 00 - 30 September 01)

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities Required in Target Position:

- 1. Knowledge of management analysis techniques and procedures;**
- 2. Knowledge of organizational design techniques;**
- 3. Basic understanding of the federal classification systems and the principles upon which they are based;**
- 4. Ability to identify problems and recommend and present solutions;**
- 5. Ability to use organizational design software;**
- 6. Ability to write reports; and**
- 7. Ability to present ideas orally.**

Work Assignments:

- 1. Participate in organization studies, drafting alternatives and explaining recommendations;**
- 2. Participate in position management reviews;**
- 3. Assist in writing/editing of the organizational manual;**
- 4. Assist in conducting management studies.**

Formal Training:

Required

Management Analysis: Overview 5-8 June 2000 (USDA)

Management Analysis: Designing and Conducting a Study 18-21 September 2000 (USDA)

Basic Position Classification (TBD)

Fundamentals of Writing (TBD)

Organizational Study and Design (TBD)

Desirable

The following after-hours college subject areas are strongly encouraged and will be supported through tuition assistance. Other courses may be substituted with the permission of your supervisor. Books and related fees are the responsibility of the trainee:

**Expository Writing
Basic Mathematics
Human Behavior in Organizations
Introduction to Management**

Evaluation and Assessment:

Initial evaluation is due no later than 31 May 2000. Thereafter, evaluations will be done quarterly. A final summary evaluation of the trainee's achievement and performance during the training period will be prepared by 15 September 2001. The final summary evaluation will be the basis for placement into the target position. Evaluations will address the type of assignments made, the trainee's performance on the assignments and the progress made on gaining the knowledge, skills and abilities listed above.

Trainee's Signature (Date)

Supervisor's Signature (Date)

Staffing Specialist (Date)

**Employee Development Specialist
(Date)**