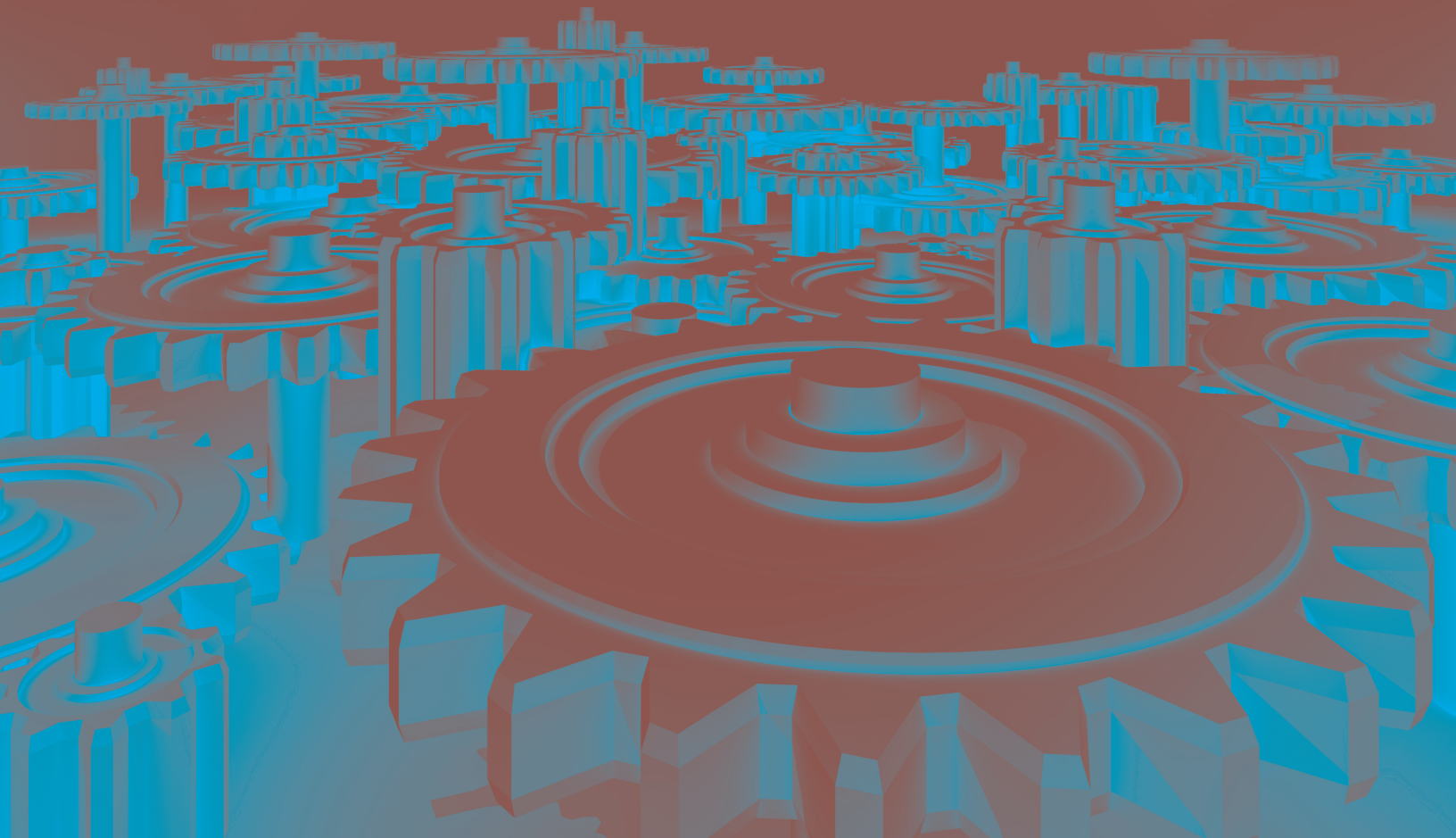


# TRANSFORMING FEDERAL TELEWORK PROGRAMS – **SUCCESS BEGINS WITH MANAGEMENT ACCEPTANCE**



**Telework increases  
employee morale**

and reduces stress by  
allowing employees to  
better manage their work  
and family obligations.



# INTRODUCTION

Telework increases employee morale and reduces stress by allowing employees to better manage their work and family obligations. Telework also cultivates a more resilient workforce that can better meet agency mission objectives, which positively affects employee productivity and overall organizational performance.

## AGENCY TO WATCH DEFENSE INFORMATION SYSTEMS AGENCY (DISA)

DISA's efforts to secure management acceptance of the telework program were deemed successful as survey results revealed that 90 percent of managers embraced telework and felt that productivity either remained the same or increased. DISA accomplished this by:

- EMPHASIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF SETTING MEASURABLE PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS AND COMMUNICATING THEM TO EMPLOYEES
- PROVIDING EXTENSIVE PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND MANAGEMENT BRIEFINGS AND TRAINING TO SENIOR-LEVEL MANAGERS, MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS
- SECURING SUPPORT FROM TOP MANAGEMENT
- USING TELECONFERENCING SOFTWARE AND INSTANT MESSAGING TO STAY CONNECTED WITH TELEWORKING AND NON-TELEWORKING EMPLOYEES

As of September 2013,  
a Telework.gov study found  
that **only 14 percent of  
all federal employees  
teleworked** in fiscal 2012.



# MANAGEMENT RESISTANCE IS A TOP BARRIER TO AGENCY TELEWORK PROGRAMS

**In December 2010, the President signed the Telework Enhancement Act, which requires federal agencies to establish and implement a policy authorizing employees to telework. As of September 2013, a Telework.gov study found that only 14 percent of all federal employees teleworked in fiscal 2012. One of the top barriers to telework implementation is management resistance. According to The Business of Federal Technology, managers are reluctant to endorse and participate in telework programs because they:**

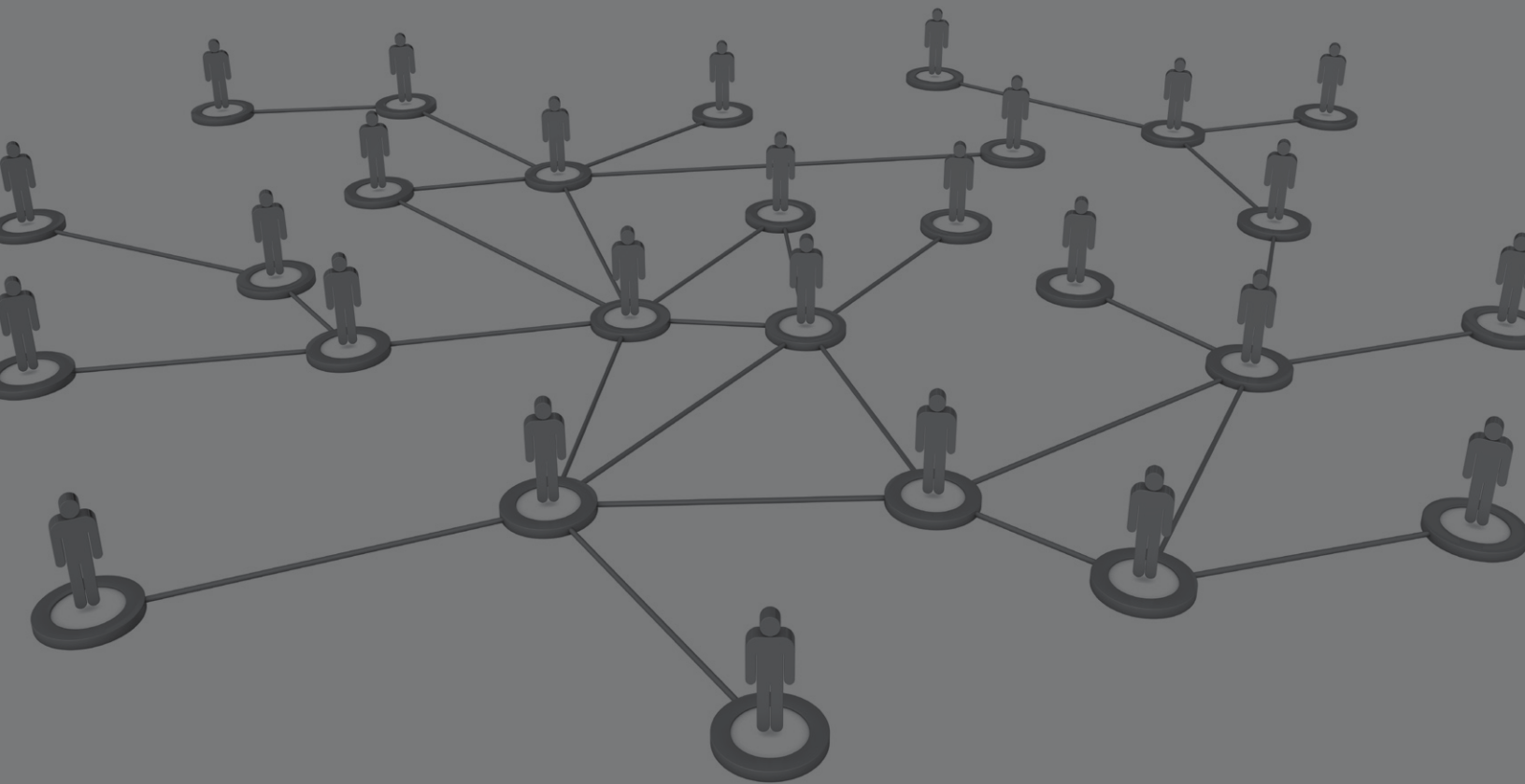
- Are unsure if employees' home offices are suitable for telework
- Do not trust "problem" employees to be productive
- Fear they will be disconnected from their employees
- Feel they will lose control if they cannot see what their employees are doing

While the concerns raised by managers are valid, they can be addressed through proper planning, performance management and communications. Management's acceptance of telework is critical to the success of an agency's telework program as managers have a direct influence over their employees' ability to be effective

while teleworking. To successfully manage teleworkers, managers need to:

- Adjust their methods and frequency of communications
- Establish guidelines and work processes to minimize the impact to teleworking and non-teleworking employees
- Focus on results and outcomes instead of processes and visual observations
- Maintain a collaborative and team-oriented environment

HR professionals can help  
managers **build successful  
teleworking environments.**



# HR PROFESSIONALS PLAY A CRITICAL ROLE IN THE SUCCESS OF TELEWORK PROGRAMS

**Telework is an essential piece of the federal government's HR strategy to improve the work/life balance of its employees and enhance employee job satisfaction and productivity. Additionally, telework serves as a recruiting incentive to attract quality talent.**

HR professionals can work with their managers and supervisors to alleviate some of the negative perceptions and resistance to telework. HR professionals can offer performance management training programs, techniques and guidelines that focus on leading in a virtual environment while highlighting the goals, benefits and value of telework programs.

HR professionals can help managers build successful teleworking environments by:

- Ensuring teleworkers are provided with the necessary tools and training
- Operating a fair, credible and results-based performance management system
- Providing managers with performance management and telework training
- Providing sufficient guidance on the telework policy and program
- Supporting their communications efforts

# MANAGERS CAN SUCCESSFULLY MANAGE EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN A TELEWORK ENVIRONMENT

Some employees fear that teleworking could negatively affect their careers and may cause a feeling of isolation from the agency. Managers and supervisors can create work conditions that promote employee success and mitigate challenges before they become problems. Through effective work planning, communications and performance management efforts, teleworkers can work remotely and still feel that their careers are not negatively affected, continue to be kept aware of current events and developments within the agency, and have the sense that they are working as part of a larger team effort.

Managers and supervisors can employ the following four performance management techniques to ensure their employees have clear expectations, are held accountable for results and understand how their work performance will be measured in a telework environment:

## 1. SET CLEAR, RESULTS-BASED PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS.

Managers and supervisors must set expectations with their employees. Performance expectations should be:

- Aligned with organizational goals
- Focused on outcomes and results
- Specific

- Measureable/observable
- Timed
- The same for teleworking and non-teleworking employees

## 2. WORK WITH EMPLOYEES TO DETERMINE THE BEST WAYS TO MONITOR THEIR WORK PROGRESS.

Work with employees to determine the best ways to monitor their work progress. In a telework environment, managers and supervisors will no longer have the convenience of walking around and using visual observations to gain input on work progress; therefore, they need to establish a system that allows them to get an accurate picture of the status of work being performed. Monitoring techniques could include:

- Weekly status checks or reports
- Regularly scheduled teleconferences
- Regular meetings on non-telework days

## 3. OPEN LINES OF COMMUNICATION TO INCREASE MANAGER ACCESSIBILITY.

An important element of monitoring performance is effective and frequent communications. When teleworking, employees no longer have easy, in-person



access to their managers or supervisors. It is of utmost importance that managers and supervisors remain available to assist when support is needed and that teleworkers know exactly how they can be reached. Managers and supervisors should also frequently communicate with their teleworkers and provide feedback on their work, so that teleworkers understand how they are performing and any areas where they could improve. Communications tools may include:

- Email
- Telephone (cellular or office)
- Teleconferencing
- Instant messaging and group chat
- Video conferencing (e.g., Skype)

#### **4. EVALUATE AND RATE PERFORMANCE BASED ON EMPLOYEE RESULTS.**

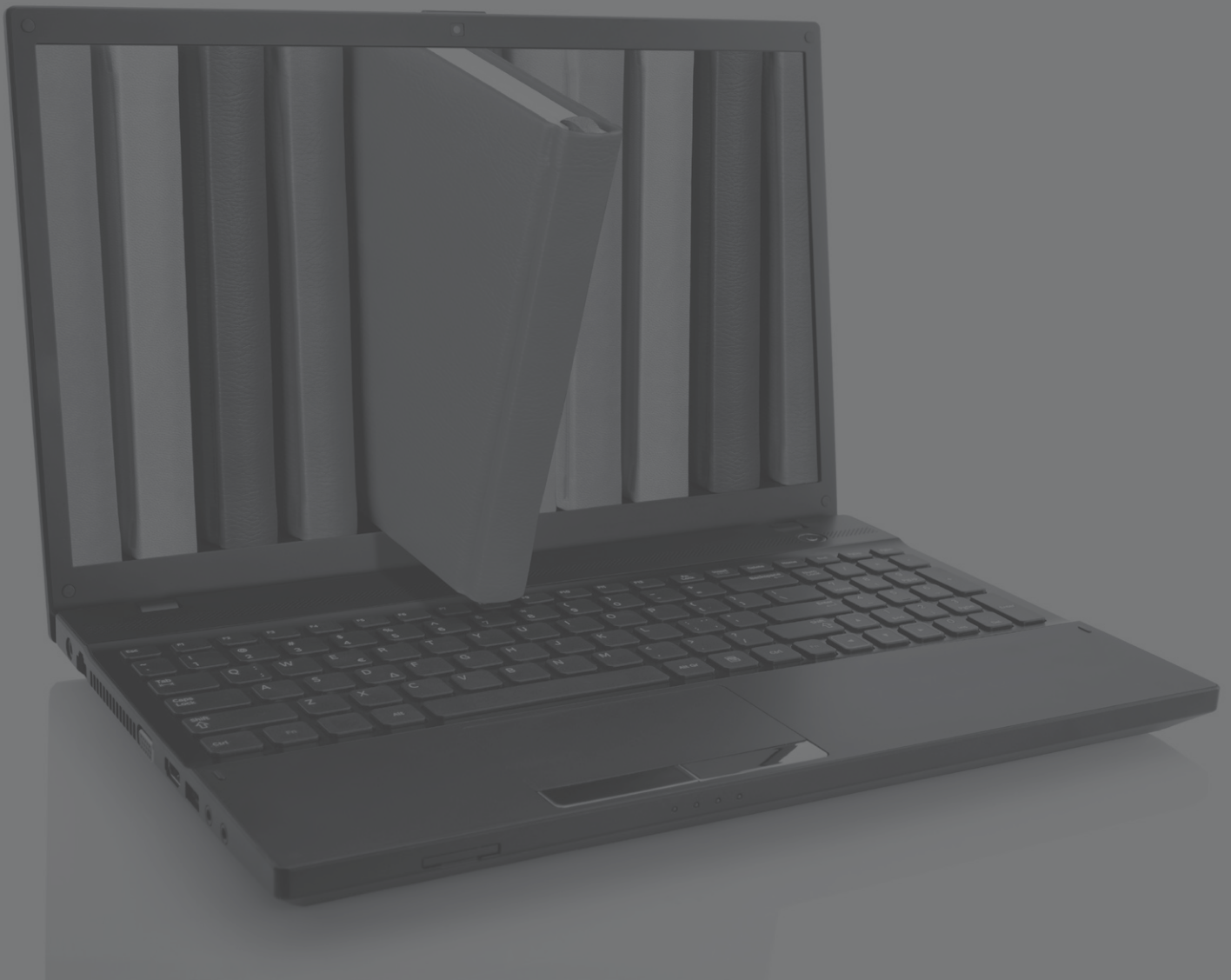
Managers and supervisors must be able to evaluate and rate employee performance based on results achieved relative to established performance standards and expectations. In a telework and results-based work environment, visual observations of employees and length of time spent on any given project become less valuable and should no longer be a basis for employee performance ratings.

## **AGENCY TO WATCH GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION (GSA)**

GSA's telework program enabled the agency to reduce its workspace, saving the federal government more than \$24.4 million. GSA was able to successfully facilitate management acceptance by practicing open communications and transparency and encouraging managers to:

- ➔ **GIVE REGULAR, TIMELY PERFORMANCE FEEDBACK AND EVALUATIONS**
- ➔ **INCREASE THE FOCUS ON WORK OUTPUT INSTEAD OF TIME AND ATTENDANCE**
- ➔ **INVEST IN COLLABORATIVE, DIALOGUE COMPRISED TRAINING WHERE MANAGERS ARE ALLOWED TO SHARE IDEAS AND PROVIDE FEEDBACK**
- ➔ **MONITOR PERFORMANCE ACROSS BUSINESS LINES**
- ➔ **VIEW TELEWORK AS A MANAGEMENT PRACTICE AND NOT AN INDIVIDUAL INITIATIVE**

**Resources are available**  
to help managers and  
supervisors develop  
management and leadership  
skills in a virtual environment.



# ONLINE SUPPORT TOOLS AND RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE TO ASSIST MANAGERS

The Telework Enhancement Act requires agencies to provide their managers and supervisors with interactive training, guidance and tools that help them understand how to manage teleworker job performance to ensure that telework does not negatively affect productivity. Many resources are available to help managers and supervisors develop management and leadership skills in a virtual environment. Online resources include:

## **TELEWORK.GOV**

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) created and continues to operate Telework.gov, a resource for federal agencies, managers, supervisors and employees on all aspects of telework. Telework.gov has a host of information, interactive training, tips, techniques and frequently asked questions.

**[www.telework.gov](http://www.telework.gov)**

## **GSA.GOV**

GSA has a well-established telework program and offers training, tip sheets and toolkits for managers and teleworkers.

**[www.gsa.gov/portal/category/102107](http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/102107)**

## **MOBILE WORK EXCHANGE**

Mobile Work Exchange is a public-private partnership organization that emphasizes the value of teleworking. The Mobile Work Exchange website offers resources such as a telework eligibility determination and return on investment calculators, federal resource center, and telework research and case studies.

**[www.mobileworkexchange.com](http://www.mobileworkexchange.com)**

**Telework programs are effective** management tools that have produced positive outcomes for agencies.



# TELEWORK BENEFITS AGENCIES AND EMPLOYEES

Telework programs are effective management tools that have produced positive outcomes for agencies. According to a 2013 OPM report, agencies with established telework programs have:

- A more empowered workforce
- Clearer work expectations for employees
- Greater job satisfaction and work/life balance
- Increased productivity
- Reduced management costs (leave, facilities)
- The ability to continue operations during emergency situations

Through performance management training and communications, HR professionals can help managers effectively plan, manage and monitor performance in a telework environment. When managers feel they can effectively manage employee performance, they are less likely resist telework arrangements, resulting in a telework program that is organized, enhances productivity and improves employee job satisfaction.

## AGENCY TO WATCH

### UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE (USPTO)

USPTO's telework program enabled the agency to expand its workforce without requiring additional facilities or workspace. The USPTO operates an effective telework program with a good deal of support from its senior level managers. The USPTO was able to accomplish this by:

- ➔ BUILDING VIRTUAL TEAMS THAT INCLUDE TELEWORKERS AND NON-TELEWORKERS TO FOSTER COLLABORATION IN A VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT
- ➔ ENCOURAGING STRONG COMMUNICATION WITH TELEWORKERS
- ➔ ENSURING THAT PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS ARE BASED ON OUTPUT AND ARE CLEAR, MEANINGFUL AND TIMED
- ➔ PROVIDING CLEAR DOCUMENTATION FOR THE TELEWORK PROGRAM, INCLUDING TELEWORK AGREEMENTS, GUIDELINES AND MANAGER GUIDES

**DAI Solutions knows the business of performance management** and is well poised to support any federal agency.



# WE CAN HELP

**DAI Solutions, a dynamic, woman-owned small business headquartered in Alexandria, Va., is on the leading edge of human capital management. We are committed to providing our federal clients with a suite performance management and workforce solutions that incorporate our client's organizational goals, budget, business processes, policies and culture.**

At DAI Solutions, **THE POWER TO TRANSFORM** is much more than a slogan; it is a key component of our business model. DAI Solutions knows the business of performance management and is well poised to support any federal agency with:

- Developing and executing a change management and communications strategy with products to support telework and performance management programs to secure buy-in from stakeholder groups
- Designing and implementing a results-based performance management system
- Designing role-based, instructor-led and Web-based training products that provide instruction on performance management process activities and responsibilities
- Offering consulting support to managers to establish outcomes-oriented performance goals, methods of monitoring performance and ways to measure success

- Writing policies, procedures and fact sheets to support performance management in a virtual environment
- Evaluating program effectiveness and developing interventions to improve performance management programs over time

DAI Solutions human capital experts can help you select the right performance management and workforce solutions for your organization.

Contact Paula Antonovich at [pantonovich@dai-solutions.com](mailto:pantonovich@dai-solutions.com) or call 703.838.0093 extension 202.

Learn more about us at [dai-solutions.com](https://dai-solutions.com).

## SOME OF OUR CLIENTS

Department of Commerce

Department of Defense

Department of Homeland Security

Department of Labor

Department of Veterans Affairs

## WE CAN HELP

**TO LEARN MORE, PLEASE:**

CONTACT PAULA ANTONOVICH  
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER  
PANTONOVICH@DAI-SOLUTIONS.COM  
703.362.7745

**VISIT [DAI-SOLUTIONS.COM](http://DAI-SOLUTIONS.COM)**

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