

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT *in* 7 PUBLIC SERVICE

Paradoxes, Processes, and Problems

Edition



Evan M. Berman | James S. Bowman
Jonathan P. West | Montgomery R. Van Wart



For Dira
—EMB

For Loretta
—JSB

For Colleen
—JPW

For Paul
—MVW

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Human Resource Management in Public Service

Paradoxes, Processes, and Problems

Seventh Edition

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PREFACE

Human Resource Management in Public Service: Paradoxes, Processes, and Problems introduces managers and aspiring managers to this personally relevant and professionally exciting field. Not only do all people encounter human capital concerns, but also these issues frequently are found in headline news reports. Execrable or exemplary, such cases make this an unusually interesting area to study. Whether the topic is genetic testing in the recruitment and selection function, partisan patronage in position management, pay reform initiatives in compensation, personnel competencies in training and development, novel approaches to the appraisal process, or strikes in labor–management relations, there is no shortage of controversy.

Added to this are the difficulties of managing under tight budgets with increasing costs and declining revenues, which brings attention to hiring freezes, contracting out, layoffs, frustrations of too few staff to do too much, and politicization of the civil service. Many of these problem areas weaken the capacity of government to serve the common good. That capacity is exacerbated by the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has affected how, when, and where employees work, including how they are trained and evaluated. The contagion, in fact, offers opportunities for workplace restructuring in a post-pestilence world.

This seventh edition retains the essential qualities and purposes of earlier editions while incorporating numerous revisions, updates, and refinements. Specifically, because employees and managers alike regularly confront human resource puzzles, the book probes these questions from both employee and managerial viewpoints. It discusses these problems, explains how they arise, and suggests what can be done about them. It continues to offer paradoxical perspectives about the inherent challenges, as well as the unique political and legal context, of public sector management.

Furthermore, this edition offers the following:

- Recent cases, including the coronavirus outbreak, that can be used in on-campus sessions as well as virtual meetings
- Enhanced class, team, and individual exercises throughout the text, beginning at the end of the Introduction and finishing with ways to explore the future in the Conclusion
- New or enriched sections on
 - critical thinking, student course mission statements, “wicked problems,” patronage, social equity and racial discord, organizational diversity, job fit, remote work, talent management, employee engagement and

motivation, leadership development training, work-life balance, gender-based inequities, behavioral biases in appraisal, telecommuting, workplace violence, unionization trends and strikes, as well as

- governmental failures, reform initiatives, America's ultimate paradox, and the constitutional role of civil servants—plus additional skill-building exercises, group assignments, and discussion questions.

In short, our team—combining over 150 years of professional and academic experience (we are much too young to be that old!)—has crafted a volume that:

- assumes that readers are or will be generalist line managers;
- presents a comprehensive range of topics and issues;
- illustrates these discussions with a blend of examples from local, state, federal, and international jurisdictions; and
- encourages students not merely to peruse the material but also to apply it.

As longtime members of the American Society for Public Administration who have published widely in the field (see “About the Authors”), we believe that an agency, commission, department, or government enterprise is shaped by its people and how they are managed. That belief motivated us to write the type of text described below.

The Introduction, after articulating the importance of human resource management, sets out the book's provocative theme that baffling paradoxes pervade the field; it then shows how those paradoxes can be explored and addressed. The chapters that follow feature Learning Objectives, coverage of essential knowledge and skills, pertinent editorial exhibits, lists of Key Terms, telling Endnotes, and Management Exercises. Our intent is to make the material user-friendly and accessible by highlighting dilemmas, challenging readers to resolve them, and enticing them to go beyond the text to discover and confront other conundrums. The idea is not to stuff but rather to stretch minds.

Part I, “Context and Challenges,” showcases two topic areas. Chapter 1, on the heritage of public service, takes an unusual approach: It examines the normative and ethical underpinnings of the field by discussing reform movements from past generations to the present day. Knowledge of what has gone before is helpful for understanding contemporary issues and for avoiding repetition of past mistakes—which themselves were often reincarnations of earlier errors. Paradoxes abound. For example, there have been both a thickening of top government and a hollowing of big government (with an increase in political appointees and a decrease in career public servants). Since much of human resource management is framed by law, Chapter 2 introduces legal obligations that agencies and their employees must recognize—not merely to conform with the law, but also to grasp its spirit. Thus, what is legal may not be ethical, and vice versa: Law represents minimally acceptable behavior, but ethics inspires exemplary action.

With these foundations established, we turn our attention to the core management functions in Part II, “Processes and Skills.” Rife with ironies, these chapters are

sequenced to reflect the stages of employment, from start to finish. Thus, would-be employees encounter recruitment and selection first, followed by being placed into the organization, motivated, compensated, trained, and evaluated. In the process, they face issues with certain uncertainty, such as:

- the quasi-science of selecting employees;
- the often-unappreciated importance of position management;
- the enigma of human motivation;
- the difficulty of knowing how much someone should be paid;
- the important yet tenuous nature of “employee-friendly” policies—policies that can be quite unfriendly;
- the challenges involved in creating training and development policies; and
- the contradictions of personnel evaluation

The critical approach found in these chapters—stalking, contesting, and seeking resolution to paradoxes—is a distinctive feature of this work.

The final two chapters explore labor–management relations as the capstone of human resource management. That is, both the foundations of the field and its functions have been—and will be—affected by the relationship between public employers and their employees. The key conundrum is the largely unrecognized fact that the framework undergirding this relationship actually undermines it. The volume closes with conclusions and provocations about emergent technologies, human competencies, the American response to the novel coronavirus, civil service reform, and the drama of individual and institutional excellence.

Changes in the years ahead will increase not only in speed and intensity but also in unpredictability in a time when reasoned debate, the rule of law, and democracy itself have been devalued and debased. Pupils, pollsters, pundits, personnel, and prognosticators are sure to be dazzled by paradoxes that prance and posture through the workplace. A glossary and indexes will assist inquisitive readers in exploring the material and discovering new resources. As they do so, we hope that they will contact us with suggestions for further improvements in the book.

Welcome to human resource management in a text that is, paradoxically, both conventional and unconventional in its coverage of issues affecting the future of all readers in their careers.

—*Evan M. Berman*

—*James S. Bowman*

—*Jonathan P. West*

—*Montgomery R. Van Wart*
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INTRODUCTION

There are two questions virtually everyone asks: “Why is managing people so hard?” and “Why do people dislike management so much?” The answers to both questions involve paradoxes—seemingly incompatible ideas and practices that have to be made to work well together in organizations. Working well means, on one hand, that they are efficient and effective at achieving their intended purposes and, on the other, that these institutions are the kinds of places where people would like to be. This book, written for current and future public managers, highlights paradoxes in human resource management (HRM) and invites you to join the search to improve work life in organizations. While HRM may start with identifying workplace problems—the subject of scathing criticism over the past century and the *Dilbert* cartoons of today—the purpose is ultimately to find ways to make life better for employees and to enhance the performance of public institutions as a whole.

In so doing, this text seeks to both build in (Latin: *instruere*) and draw out (*educare*). That is, most people benefit from an integrated, structured knowledge base more than they do from disconnected facts and ideas. Yet, learning is not simply instruction—it is also an unpredictable process of exploring and questioning, a process that stimulates the best in the human mind. Accordingly, you should truly *own* this publication by annotating these pages with your ideas, disputes, satisfactions, discomforts, experiences, comparisons, applications, inventions, and paradoxes. Then, interact with other readers in a live or virtual classroom to stretch your thinking about the management of work. The way to get the most out of the book is to get into it! Ask more of yourself than anyone can ever ask of you; that way, you will always be ready for anything. Nothing is as exhausting as underachieving. Become knowledgeable, for without knowledge progress is doomed; be prepared to contribute, because giving ensures growth.

MANAGING PEOPLE

What, then, is HRM? If an organization can be defined as a group of people working toward a goal, and management can be defined as the process of accomplishing these goals through other people, then the subject of this volume is the development of policies for productive use of human resources in an organization. Stated differently, all decisions affecting the relationship between the individual and the organization can be seen as dimensions of personnel management. Psychological and productivity goals are pivotal to this relationship. That is, the work performed must be meaningful to employees

as well as to the institution. Not surprisingly, these two goals are interactive, reciprocal, and—sometimes—contradictory.

HRM, in short, is a titanic force that shapes the conditions in which people find themselves. Its daily practice is an area that administrators are responsible for and can have a genuine impact on. HRM *matters*. Indeed, an administrator's most important job is to help the organization use its greatest asset—people—productively. From deciding how individuals will be recruited to how they are then compensated, trained, and evaluated, HR administration has a significant, even definitive, effect on the careers of all employees and employers. Legislative officials and chief executives may have authority to design new programs and approve budgets, but it is managers who hire, place, pay, develop, and appraise subordinates. They spend more time on managing people than on anything else. Nothing is of more consequence; nothing is more difficult.

And it is not going to get easier. In an Age of Accelerations, “when a Kosovar hacker in Malaysia can break into the files of an American retailer and sell them to an Al Qaeda operative who can go on Twitter and threaten US servicemen whose identities were hacked, . . . we are experiencing change that is much faster, deeper, cheaper, and wider than ever before” (Friedman, 2016, p. 340). Simultaneous, exponential accelerations of the market (globalization), Mother Nature (the environment), and Moore's Law (microchip power doubles every two years) impact one another: Moore's Law drives market globalism, and globalism drives Mother Nature's pandemics and climate changes, transforming modern life. The velocity of these upheavals demands the rethinking of assumptions, as half of all jobs may be replaced by robots in 20 years and the nature of careers assumes new forms. The 24/7, four-generation workforce is increasingly hyper-connected (with wearables such as Google Glass, for example), and best practices and evidence-based decision making are overtaken by instinct and impulse (Bowman & West, 2019; Nichols, 2018).

Not only have personnel specialists in many jurisdictions been downsized, but also organizations are experimenting with entirely new approaches to workforce management, including far-reaching civil service reforms. Managers are being required to do more with less, despite the fact that HR issues are becoming—as this text demonstrates—more numerous and increasingly complicated. Clearly, a supervisor who regards personnel concerns as a nuisance to be endured will be overwhelmed by additional responsibilities and the need to deal with them. In the end, as Hamilton believed, government is judged by the quality of its administration. As one wise official stated, “Put human resource management first because it is the most important.”

The coronavirus has been a cruel reminder that employees' well-being is the foundation of everything else (Exhibit 0.1) as the outbreak compelled administrators to rethink how the workforce is managed. The unimpeachable fact is that a leader who does not take care of his or her people will have no one to lead. Fail to honor people, and they will fail to honor you. The tragedy is that few people are trained to manage employees. Not surprisingly, human capital has been on the U.S. Government Accountability Office's (2019) high-risk list since 2001, signifying that these issues endanger the very missions of federal agencies. This urgent workforce crisis has been the subject of

many studies (to be discussed in subsequent chapters) calling for modernization, if not replacement, of the federal personnel system (e.g., NAPA, 2017, 2018; National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service, 2020; U.S. OPM, 2020), work that is germane to other levels of government as well.

Exhibit 0.1 Masking Health Care Employees and the General Public: Symbolic of America's 2020 Coronavirus Response

Personnel is policy.

—Management adage

As the COVID-19 pandemic loomed, the national stockpile of N95 masks—essential to protect health care workers—contained less than 1% of 3.5 billion face coverings needed. As a result, when the pathogen erupted, many employees reused N95 respirators designed for single use; others made do with less effective facial safeguards. These personnel accounted for 11% of all coronavirus cases; thousands died (*The Guardian & Kaiser Health News*, 2020), almost certainly a gross underestimate, making these jobs the most dangerous in the country. Others went on strike over unsafe work environments, public protests, and unsustainable daily pressures; still others either resigned, were fired, committed suicide, or retired, leading to staff shortages.

Rick Bright, former director of the federal Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority, testified in 2020 that frontline health care staff were put in peril not because of a lack of insight into the mask shortage but because of an “unconscionable” refusal to fix it. He was removed from office after refusing to promote hydroxychloroquine, which the FDA later cautioned against using, for COVID-19.

Globalization heightened the risk to the supply of masks, as production had shifted to overseas factories. Offshoring left the United States dependent on an international supply chain that seized up when producing countries hoarded personal protection equipment for domestic use. Bright stated, “We were forced to

procure the supplies from other countries without the right quality standards,” as imported N95 devices were often only 30% effective.

In a symptom of broader disarray, Health and Human Services (HHS) top executives could not accurately gauge the need. In Senate testimony on February 25, 2020, HHS secretary Alex Azar cited an administration estimate of needing “possibly as many as 300 million masks for health care workers” (*Health and Human Services Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Request*, 2020). Days later, that number had grown more than tenfold. HHS assistant secretary Robert Kadlec told senators that America “would need 3.5 billion N95 respirators.” It was not until nearly 2 months after senior officials like Bright first raised the issue that HHS signed deals for 600 million masks over the next 18 months, far short of the need. The president, without evidence, blamed the shortage on hospital staff’s pilfering the facial protective gear; he also blamed doctors for over-counting deaths from COVID-19, claiming they did so because they get more money for COVID-19 cases.

Bright attributed the administration’s failure to invest in masks to indifference, but National Nurses United called it “willful negligence. . . . We can’t even say they failed, because that would imply they tried.” If the epigraph at the outset of the chapter is correct (“personnel is policy”), then who is in the room when decisions are made really matters.

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Logistical concerns about protecting public health employees were reflected in the use of facial coverings among the general populace. Initially, officials discouraged widespread masking, partly because it was assumed that only sick people could infect others and because of the need to conserve personal protective equipment for frontline medical staff. In addition, conducting quality research during a pandemic is difficult, as experts did not fully understand the novel coronavirus or know what to anticipate. Uncertainty is characteristic of scientific research, as preliminary results may be suggestive, not conclusive: Hypotheses are tested based on what is believed at the time; some are not supported, so better hypotheses are tried as data accumulates (Wegman, 2020). This protocol, known as Bayesian analysis, rationally updates past beliefs and uncertainties based on observable evidence.

The World Health Organization examined 172 studies and concluded that mask-wearing is a proven way to reduce virus transmission (Taylor, 2020; also see Tufekci, 2020; Lerner et al., 2020 on why randomized clinical trials are impossible and unnecessary when confronting an outbreak). The medical community was virtually unanimous in asserting that if people donned masks, washed their hands, practiced social distancing, avoided large crowds, and got tested, it was possible to manage both the disease and economic recovery. In fact, the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention stated that if everyone wore a mask, the virus would be contained in 4 to 6 weeks (Bleifuss, 2020).

Although not without controversy, masking is commonplace in other nations as a matter of “health citizenship”—the responsible act of personal protection and civic hygiene, a basic duty of citizenship. As one decision maker stated, “I wear a mask to protect you. You wear a mask to protect me.” Mask mandates, for instance, are not violations of the First Amendment, because a face covering does not prohibit speech, and,

more broadly, constitutional provisions are not absolute: The exercise of rights must not endanger others, and legal rights are subject to governmental authority to protect public welfare. So long as facial protection rules are reasonable and impartially enforced, they are likely to survive legal challenge. This remains true for infected people who are asymptomatic silent spreaders of the virus (Mandavilli, 2020).

Yet respiratory etiquette, instead of acting as a show of solidarity with others, inflamed antigovernment sentiment—prompting defiance, misinformation, pseudoscience, and conspiracy theories to the point that the president believed that to wear a mask was to show disapproval of him. Not only were health care workers exposed to the disease, but they were also victims of threats, resulting in deployment of bodyguards. Politicized as an infringement on individual rights—as well as an attempt to scare people, question masculinity, slow economic restoration, and affect reelection prospects—it quickly became evident that protection against the apolitical virus was not immune to political manipulation.

In a “politics-first, science-second” approach, the emphasis was on how to persuade citizens that the viral spread was under control instead of actually attempting strategies to control it. COVID-19 was not a political controversy or public relations problem. It was a public health emergency that required people to respond by using best practices so that hospitals would not be overwhelmed. As one commentator pointed out, “refusing to wear a mask is like driving drunk” (Kristof, 2020).

Writing in *Science* magazine, Prather et al. (2020) concluded, “For society to resume, measures . . . must be implemented, including universal masking . . . as masks provide a critical barrier, reducing the number of infectious viruses in exhaled breath” (pp. 1422, 1424). As a reflection of the public’s respect for science, 71%

of Americans, including a majority of Republicans, said they supported mandatory face coverings (Nguyen, 2020). Mouth-to-nose “lockdowns” are more sustainable than stay-at-home lockdowns—although more aggressive measures may be needed to deal effectively with grave diseases like COVID-19. Yes, mask wearing is imperfect and inconvenient, and pandemic fatigue is real, but the invisible and deadly virus does not get frustrated or tired. Reckless shows of individual invincibility and obliviousness are not helpful. Unless nearly all people wear simple, cheap, and effective face covers, the grim reality is that selfish disrespect of others results in more infections, hospitalizations, and deaths. Indeed, it is evident that earlier policy interventions would have avoided tens of thousands of coronavirus fatalities.

There is no doubt that the viral scourge was a **wicked problem**, one that was extraordinarily difficult, with no clear definition or solution. Yet in addition to inadequate efforts to slow the contagion, we saw high officials promoting its spread by mocking guidelines to get it under control. Thus, America experienced the worst health and employment outcomes in the developed world. It is imperative that we stop repeating the same mistakes, self-correct, and build a stronger nation to face the

next crisis. According to the Centers for Disease Control (see above), if everyone wears a mask, a viral outbreak might be contained in 4 to 6 weeks.

Global warming is likely to usher in a new pandemic era, and having people behave responsibly toward climate change is apt to be much harder than getting them to fulfill their moral obligations regarding COVID-19. In a time when partisan enmity has disrupted civic culture, appealing to a basic sense of decency and expecting everyone to do the right thing is not sufficient.

While it may be too early to develop lessons from the recent contagion, one starting point is to investigate what happened, why it happened, and how to prevent it from happening again (a useful place to start is the well-documented study by Fallows, 2020; more broadly, consider Galloway, 2021; Horton, 2020; Schwartz, 2020). As part of any such effort, the logistical task is to organize the manufacturing sector to prepare for the next crisis by creating a virtual warehouse of electronic designs for emergency equipment, mapping supply chains and anticipating shortages, and developing a network of manufacturing experts to share best practices (Brown & Rassey, 2020).

Sources: The first third of the narrative is adapted from Dickenson (2020); also consult the references cited thereafter, found at the end of this Introduction.

Directions/Questions

1. According to the exhibit epigraph “Personnel is policy,” who is in the room when decisions are made is critical. Discuss.
2. Masking is used here as a symbol to help understand the American response to the spread of the pathogen. Identify some other symbols that might provide additional insights.
3. Scientists know that masks limit coronavirus contagion, but it is not possible for randomized clinical trials to prove it. Consider Zeynep Tufekci’s (2020) op-ed, summarize her claims, and defend your conclusion.
4. As you read this book, have any official investigations into the pandemic been published? What lessons were drawn from these inquiries? Is the world ready for the next contagion?

THE PARADOX PUZZLE

As the world evolves and becomes more complex, management of organizations becomes more difficult. Unfortunately, the wisest course of action is often the least popular. Indeed, many public policy issues are “wicked problems”—those that are complex, unpredictable, open-ended, and intractable—with no clear definition and solution, as they are beyond the capacity of a single organization or individual (Head & Alford, 2015). When COVID-19 took hold in 2020, people looked on in disbelief, as the disease produced profound societal shifts accompanied by new governance risks and gambles.

Rapid and spastic change spawns confusing, contradictory, absurd—and true—paradoxes. Existing in a twilight zone between the rational and irrational, a **paradox** (from the Greek *para*, or beyond, and *doxa*, or belief) is an anomalous juxtaposition of incongruous, incredible, and sometimes burlesque contentions: Patent absurdities and tantalizing riddles from everyday life—“unbiased opinions,” “questionable answers,” “old news,” “awfully good,” “riot control,” “pretty ugly,” “fresh frozen,” “ice water”—contradict oversimplifications and over-rationalizations in conventional thinking. In so doing, they produce humility, vitality, and surprise; the beginning of wisdom is the realization of ignorance. As a proverb says, “If there are two courses of action, you should always pick the third.”

These gnarly predicaments jolt the brain, alternatively puzzling and inspiring people to wring further understanding from understanding by making the unknown known (Heracleous & Robson, 2020; Rescher, 2001). The Liar’s Paradox—“I am lying”—provokes an odd sequence: If the assertion is true, then it is false; if it is false, it then seems true. Persistent contradictions between interwoven opposites, ostensibly distinct and oppositional, actually inform one another. In the well-known visual representation of yin and yang, the fit between the black and white slivers confirms the synergistic relationship, as distinct parts create a unified whole. “The true test of a first-rate mind,” the novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald said, “is the ability to hold two contradictory ideas at the same time and still function.” This capacity, known as paradox mindset, creates a deeper comprehension of the principles behind the paradoxes, furnishes valuable insights, and provides unexpected solutions to thinking about people and institutions. Indeed, the recognition of ambiguities, equivocations, and unstated assumptions inherent in paradoxes has led to significant advances in science, philosophy, mathematics, and other fields. Some of the best-led organizations, for instance, are those that achieve a balance between seemingly contradictory opposites.

Signature Paradoxes

Full of paradoxes, the management of human capital embodies clashes between apparent truths that sow confusion and tax the ability of administrators. These truthful contradictions lurk and mock both study and practice. Everyone agrees in principle that people are essential, for example, but in organizations people are often taken for granted. One exquisite conundrum, as obvious as it is ignored, is the **paradox of democracy**. Citizens have many civil rights in the conduct of public affairs (e.g., the freedoms of speech, elections, and assembly), but employees experience precious few such rights in organizations

(e.g., subordinates seldom choose their superiors). One part of American culture stresses individualism, diversity, equality, participation, and a suspicious attitude toward power, but another emphasizes conformity, uniformity, inequality, and submission to authority. In fact, the unity of opposites revealed by paradoxes is embedded in the human condition—birth and death, inhale and exhale, right brain and left brain, night and day, happiness and misery, good and evil, as each defines the other. Societies always have contradictory impulses propelling them, the tension between authority and autonomy, the trade-offs between autocracy and freedoms.

People may value freedom very highly, but in the end, they work in organizations that significantly reduce it. As Rousseau observed, “Man is free, but everywhere he is in chains.” Political democracy lies uneasily alongside economic authoritarianism. While “we the people” mandates sovereignty over political and economic life, political power has been democratized to serve the many, but economic power nonetheless serves the few (Kelly, 2001)—which includes relentless pressures to turn concerned citizens into mindless consumers. “We stress the advantages of the free enterprise system,” Robert E. Wood, former chief executive of Sears, observed, “but in our individual organizations, we have created more or less a totalitarian system” in which authority is sweeping, arbitrary, and unaccountable.

Democratic institutions are typically thought of as having to do with government, but there are democratic businesses such as employee-owned electric co-ops, credit unions, mutual insurance companies, and cooperative brands from Land O’Lakes to the Associated Press (Curl, 2009; Hightower, 2019; Schneider, 2017; Semuels, 2015). Because capitalism and democracy are mutually exclusive concepts, the manner in which this contradiction is resolved greatly affects quality of life. Does the economy exist for the benefit of society, or vice versa? Does America belong to citizens or to corporations? In a democratic society, should there be an arbitrary distinction such that people have a voice in political decisions but not in economic decisions? In fact, worker cooperatives bring democracy to organizations; established nationwide, employees and people could vote for whatever mix of alternative enterprises they preferred (Wolff, 2018). The viral contagion put workforce health front and center for organizations, as physical, mental, and financial security have become paramount. Consider these words from Ronald Reagan: “The fundamental rule for an economy that works for everyone is a democracy that works, period.”

A related fundamental riddle is the **paradox of needs**—individuals and organizations need one another, but human happiness and organizational rationality are as likely to conflict as they are to coincide. Many institutions today remain predicated on the machine model of yesteryear; indeed, the vast majority of them were created in the Machine Age of the industrial era. A top-down, command-and-control approach, revealed by the hierarchical organization chart, seeks to impose static predictability, demand efficiency, and expect self-sacrifice—the hallmarks of bureaucratization. But human beings, by definition, are premised not on a mechanical model but on an organic one. They are everything machines are not: dynamic, growing, spontaneous problem solvers. Thus, not only do people surrender their democratic liberties, but they also give them up to work in organizations quite unlike themselves. Human flourishing is no mean task in such conditions.

The cardinal HRM problem is this: Do organizational processes and procedures help or hinder the resolution of these two grand, bittersweet paradoxes in democratic and work life? To put it bluntly, what difference does it make if people function efficiently in a schizophrenic civic culture and in dysfunctional work organizations? These issues cannot be left unaddressed by institutions whose stated purpose is to champion public, not private, interests—ultimately, government by, for, and of the people. HRM in democracy is simply too important to be left to those who would see it as a technical problem. Because most of the nation's wealth is in the form of human capital, the talents of employees offer more value to the overall well-being of the country than anything else. Staffed by men and women, the public service makes it possible on a day-to-day basis for democracy to succeed (Goodsell, 2015). Public administration has always been about governance, not merely management. Unmasking the false clarity found in taken-for-granted operational assumptions can bring about a broader view of citizens' role in society and organizations.

"There is," then, "nothing like a paradox to take the scum off your mind" (Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., as quoted in Vaill, 1991, p. 83). Starting with a clean slate (Exhibit 0.2) is a vital position from which to reconcile points of view that often seem, and sometimes are, irreconcilable. In fact, dealing with contradictions defines much of a manager's job. Nonetheless, contemplating ironic, ambivalent, inconsistent, poisonous paradoxes is something few employees and managers relish; attempting to make sense out of what seems wholly illogical is generally avoided.

Yet it is precisely because paradoxes reveal the tensions in operating assumptions that exciting opportunities for investigation, discovery, insight, and innovation exist in organizational management. Using paradoxes as a way to think about HR administration is hardly a panacea, however. What it will provide is an occasion for reflection on and questioning of perplexing organizational routines. While there may be no solutions qua

Exhibit 0.2 "Close Enough for Government Work": A Linguistic Hijacking

There is much to be said for forcing people to rethink the basic assumptions of how they run their operations by starting with a clean slate, because we all "know" certain things that may not be true. For example, some are all too willing to chuckle after some imperfection is found and say, "Close enough for government work."

That phrase originated with government contractors who were making uniforms for the military 150 years ago. Because government standards

for uniforms were so high at that time, saying that something was close enough meant that it was genuinely first-rate quality. If not good enough, it was rejected. How far we've come, from a boast demanding the best to a jaded insult that implies the bare minimum of suitability. It's all too easy to let the can't-do types in the office beat down our optimism and desire for change. Starting with a clean slate challenges assumptions about how work is done and how it might be changed.

Sources: Adapted from Linden (1994, p. 155); Kelman (2018).

solutions, the right queries can provoke interesting, different, and—sometimes—quite suitable responses. If nothing else, a deeper understanding of dilemmas will be achieved, which is, of course, the first step toward their resolution.

The Paradox Dynamic

Ways to embrace paradoxes include inquiring into the bases of clashing perspectives, identifying and appreciating the best of different viewpoints, superseding either-or logic with *both-and* reasoning, and striving to create new viewpoints that incorporate a balance of divergent opinions. Predicaments, then, require integrative thinking, “the ability to face constructively the tension of opposing ideas and, instead of choosing one at the expense of the other, generate a creative resolution of the tension in the form of a new idea that contains elements of the opposing ideas but is superior to each,” in the words of scholar Thomas C. Chamberlin, as quoted by Martin (2007, pp. 15, 23). “Phenomena . . . appear to become capable of being viewed analytically and synthetically at once.”

To illustrate, classical computing at its most basic uses a code consisting of alternating zeroes or ones, like turning a switch on or off. A cutting-edge quantum computer offers a third choice: zero *and* one. Powered by artificial intelligence, this allows it to perform multiple algorithmic tasks simultaneously, meaning tasks that might take a standard computer years to execute can be done in fractions of a second. Paradoxical cognition, then, offers a framework for maintaining a balanced, sustainable perspective on conflicting objectives and conflicting options to holistically solve difficult dilemmas (Schroeder-Saulnier, 2014). Unfortunately, the default option in many organizations is the intuitive use of the “either-or” false dichotomy in decision making, because focusing on interdependent opposites is a learned process; an appreciation for paradox ends the practice of viewing conflicting needs separately and choosing one over the other. The challenge is to leverage and manage paradoxes by rising above such “either-or” linear thinking to reach “and-both” organic thinking to create synergistic solutions.

In other words, systematic, **dialectic** reasoning juxtaposes contradictory opposing ideas (theses and antitheses) and seeks to resolve them by creating new syntheses (e.g., table salt consists of two poisons, sodium and chlorine, but their synergistic combination is much better than the sum of its parts). There can be unity in diversity. Jazz, for instance, “beautifully expresses the dialectic between hope and despair,” the tension between individual freedom, and the greater good (Hertsgaard, 2002, p. 59).

A dialectic, then, is a method of reasoning that compares opposing viewpoints in order to seek a reconciliation that integrates the best of both. Interdependent contradictions posit a natural conflict between opposing factors (thesis and antithesis), a progressive dynamic whereby the conflict enables resolution (synthesis). This produces a new thesis, spawning its antithesis and fostering a new synthesis in an ongoing quest for greater truth, a key principle in scientific research (Schad et al., 2016). Leaving your comfort zone to engage in this mode of thinking should be as

Exhibit 0.3 Leonardo's Parachute

"There is no use in trying," said Alice; "one can't believe impossible things." "I dare say you haven't had much practice," said the Queen. "When I was your age, I always did it for half an hour a day. Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast."

—Lewis Carroll, Through the Looking-Glass

The example of Leonardo da Vinci—an accomplished painter, inventor, sculptor, engineer, architect, botanist, and physicist—has inspired people for hundreds of years to tap into their creativity (Gelb, 1998; Isaacson, 2017). For instance, by studying the science of art, Leonardo created a masterpiece, the *Mona Lisa*, that reveals how many different truths can be held, and enjoyed, simultaneously. Conversely, by studying the art of science, he invented a perfectly designed parachute—centuries before the airplane. To wit, as long as you are going to think anyway, you may as well think big!

In doing so, resist your first impulse, as jumping to conclusions stifles creativity. "I don't know" is often one of the wisest things that can be said as a prelude to contemplation. A mind is like Leonardo's parachute (it can function only when it is open), and paradoxes will never be adequately addressed without the creativity of a nimble mind. Ask yourself, for example, "What would I attempt to do if I knew I could not fail?" "If the obvious ways to deal with a problem did not exist, then what would I do?" Answers may not be immediate, specific actions, but rather may evolve from a different perspective, a changed basis for choices, or an alternative way of thinking. As John Lennon said, "Reality leaves a lot to the imagination."

The act of discovery, in short, consists not of finding new lands but of seeing with new eyes. (For instance, what color are apples? White, of course, once you get inside.) To nurture this capacity to think outside the box, do at least one of the following every day:

- Take a 5-minute imagination break.
- Look into a kaleidoscope.
- Pretend to be the secretary of a major government agency.
- Make odd friends.
- Develop a new hobby.
- Read things that you do not normally read.
- Defer judgments and let your ideas incubate.
- Talk to someone from a different walk of life about a challenging problem.
- Use healthy snacks (chocolate, some claim, is not a vegetable) as imaginary brain pills.
- Form a team, and use the "25 in 10" brainstorming approach: Aim for 25 ideas to solve a problem in 10 minutes.

In other words, look where others are not looking to see what they are not seeing (Burrus, 2013). Be the person who "sees a glass not as half full or half empty, but as twice the size that it needs to be and considers designing a vessel with different dimensions" (Rothfeder, 2014).

It is no surprise that Japanese workers are encouraged to learn flower arranging, practice the highly ritualized tea ceremony, and play team sports to appreciate the value of beauty, precision, and cooperation in producing goods and services.

challenging as it is rewarding; change is inevitable, growth is optional. “You cannot solve the problem,” Einstein once said, “with the same kind of thinking that created the problem.” In short, a key question facing managers is less “What should I do?” and more “How should I think?”

Developing a capacity to manage—and even thrive on—paradoxes is important, because they will only multiply in the years ahead, with the expansion of the information superhighway, the virtual workplace, and a demographically diverse workforce. Make no mistake about it: Any changes in how people are managed are unlikely to be effective without recognition of the paradoxes born in the 21st century (Friedman, 2016; Heller, 2003). To confront pandemics, for instance, requires the mobilization of governmental resources and the demobilization of most of the population. Know, too, the paradox that embodies all such paradoxes: As contradictions proliferate, the expectations to resolve them become increasingly intense.

PATHWAYS THROUGH PARADOXES: CARPE DIEM

Reading is a commitment to the future, an odyssey characterized by the unexpected. To facilitate the journey, this text includes critical questions for you and your organization, be it a governmental agency, a nonprofit organization, or an educational institution. It reveals logical inconsistencies and conflicting assumptions about managing people; in so doing, it offers intriguing opportunities to position problems in quite different ways. The charge is to recognize and use this fact—that is, to manage conflicts for mutual benefit. *Human Resource Management in Public Service: Paradoxes, Processes, and Problems* is a reality check on management and the workplace, intended to enrich the organization’s human resources.

Louis Pasteur once said, “Chance favors the prepared mind.” Since the trends discussed in this volume will change you whether or not you read it, you are now presented with an authentic opportunity to “seize the day” and think creatively about managing people. To do this, use the text as a springboard and amplify the example of Leonardo da Vinci (Exhibit 0.3) by developing your own techniques of discovery. The analysis here will spark but seldom settle discussions about how to do HRM. Revealing useful insights does not necessarily lead to easy answers. Reader learning, instead, will develop as much, we hope more, from personal reflection as from pedagogical suggestion.

Indeed, we aspire to transform your thinking but fall far short of telling you what to think. This book is peppered with precipitous, pernicious, picky, pugnacious, perfidious paradoxes designed to propel you toward reflection on and resolution of work/life puzzles. In this “paradox palooza,” recognize that complete escape from paradoxes is unlikely, because pathways through paradoxes may generate new problems. But paradoxes create unique opportunities and, together with the tools and strategies presented here, a chance to achieve democratic freedom in organizations and a matching of individual and institutional needs. “The best way out,” wrote the poet Robert Frost, “is always through.”

And now for the adventure!

KEY TERMS

Dialectic 9

Metacognition 12

Paradox 6

Paradox of democracy 6

Paradox of needs 7

Wicked problems 5

EXERCISES

Class Discussion

1. Examine the ways that work—the focus of HRM—has been impacted by the COVID-19 crisis.
2. Consider these paradoxes: “The way to get back to work during a pandemic is to stay home” and “Donning masks is a key way to manage the coronavirus, but some people vigorously reject it.” To what extent do the two signature paradoxes discussed in this Introduction help explain the crosscurrents above?
3. It is claimed that the physical sciences deal with problems and solutions that are verifiable, definable, and technical (but not necessarily easy in character). Indeed, Sir Isaac Newton said, “I can predict the movements of planets, but not the madness of men.” Wicked problems, in contrast, are hard to define, are not stable, and involve changing human behavior; in addition, their solutions not only have unforeseen consequences, but also frequently fail. Contemplate and speculate.
4. The coronavirus pandemic, with its economic, political, and societal disruptions, may be a prelude to the lives and livelihoods during the transformations that world warming can produce. Discuss.
5. Perhaps an ultimate paradox is this: “Nobody wants to die, but everyone wants to go to Heaven.” How might this conundrum be addressed in workforce management?

Team Activity

6. **Metacognition**, or thinking about thinking, consciously evaluates the quality of thought. A reflection on what to believe, its meaning and significance, involves reasoned consideration of ideas, methods, and conclusions—something a student in this degree program ought to be able to do. What you think, stated differently, is inconsequential compared to how you think.

For instance, during the pandemic, political polarization converted a safe health practice into a politically divisive issue. There was an overwhelming body of scientific evidence that masks were efficacious. Yet the issue became so politicized that the findings in selected studies were cherry-picked and used uncritically as evidence that nose-and-mouth coverings were worthless; the real question, instead, should have been how effective they were.

More broadly, much of political controversy today is no longer about specific issues of public policy; instead, it is about how people hold competing interpretations of reality, which can undermine trust in democratic institutions, make problem-solving intractable, and threaten self-governance.

In addition to using paradoxes as a critical thinking method, consider other metacognition tools that nurture the inquisitive, informed, and open-minded student, such as category error, Ockham’s razor, reframing, inferential fallacy, and the “wrong-problem problem.” Teams should define these terms, select at least one of these methods, and/or identify another such tool, and provide an example to the entire class.

Individual Assignments

7. After reviewing the chapter's definition and importance of HRM, create a succinct, easily remembered, personal definition that you can use as a learning device later in the course in thinking about this subject area.
8. Develop a *very* brief, easily remembered, personally meaningful course mission statement. It will be your "Admission Ticket" to the next class.

Avoid Dilbert's admonition that such a statement is "a long, awkward sentence that demonstrates the inability to think clearly." If the statement or slogan is more than a short sentence, then it may be difficult to remember—especially if it is vague. If it cannot be recalled, then it is not effective. You may be asked to repeat your statement from memory. Keep a copy—in your notebook, as a bookmark in the text, and/or in your cell phone—for your continuous use this term.

According to the Greek proverb, "Before you can score, you must have a goal." The statement is important, because its underlying principles can be a great motivator. One possible source for your statement, then, could be why you signed up for this class. Knowing what you

want is the first step in getting it—in the long run, we hit only what we aim at. So, there must be a sense of purpose before there is going to be any seriousness in learning. Paradoxically, begin with the end in mind. As one wise pundit observed, "Sooner or later, those who win are those who think they can."

My mission in this course is (if more than a simple sentence, you may not remember it):

How will I be able to remember my statement?

What needs to happen so that I can achieve my mission?

How can I align my mission with course goals?

Remember, there is honor in doing your best.

9. You likely noticed the epigraph at the outset of this Introduction, quotations in the text and exhibits, and aphorisms in the exercises. Well-chosen words can be inspiring, give meaning to past deeds, and offer future experiences purpose by providing hope and determination.

Consider, therefore, this saying: "Ask more of yourself than anyone can ever ask of you, and you will be prepared for whatever is coming." Pick a proverb from this Introduction—or make up one of your own—and ask your classmates what they think of it.

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THE PUBLIC SERVICE HERITAGE

People, Process, and Purpose

After studying this chapter, you should be able to:

- Understand the changing structure, environment, key principles, and operating characteristics of public human resource management;
- Distinguish the various tides of reform that are part of the public service heritage;
- Identify the paradoxes and contradictions in public service history;
- Recognize how legacies from the past affect human resource management in the present;
- Assess the contributions of recent reforms to effective management;
- Show how values influence managers in addressing human resource issues; and
- Describe ethical judgments required in human resource management and use guiding questions to make such decisions.

Concern about good government has deep roots in the United States. It has long been recognized that for government to be effective, good people must be hired, trained, and rewarded. There is also a well-established tradition that a properly designed system for managing people is critical to good government. Indeed, two schools of thought have emerged over time: One argues that breakdown in government performance is an *incompetent people* problem, and the other argues that it is an *evil system* problem (Ehrenhalt, 1998). Others have pointed to an *ethics* problem that demands attention if confidence in government is to be restored (Bowman & West, 2021; Menzel, 2017; Newell, 2015). As the epigraph suggests, good intentions and the ethical actions that ideally result from them are critical to the creation of a high-performance workplace.

These three things in combination—good people, good systems, and good intentions—are the focus of this chapter. Good people are needed to manage government’s most important resource—its employees. A few work in the human resource department, but the vast majority are line and staff managers. Their abilities are critical to the performance and achievement of public purpose. The system in which these people operate is also crucial to the achievement of results. Managing human resources has taken many forms over time and involves such activities as recruitment, classification, compensation, training, and evaluation. The third component, intentions, encompasses the tasks that the people propose to accomplish and the values guiding the effort. Employees’ and managers’ intentions, informed by individual and organizational values and ethics, guide their actions for good or ill. Admirable intentions are key to government performance, especially given today’s emphasis on citizen service.

This chapter begins by providing a glimpse into a human resource manager's day. Although this textbook focuses on human resource management (HRM) for all managers, it is important to have some insight into the specialists' world of HRM. Then, the discussion moves to the first of the three themes of the chapter: good people. We identify some of the broad contemporary challenges of getting and managing the right people, which provides a brief context for the rest of the book. Next are several sections on the second theme: good systems. What are some basic definitions of HRM and related terms? What are the different ways in which HR support systems are organized? How have such systems changed over time, and what is the philosophical reasoning behind the major waves of changes? Lastly, the third theme is addressed: good intentions. This is covered in two sections. One discusses how all public managers in their HR capacity must understand and balance four principles. The final section follows up the discussion of the principles by looking specifically at the importance of ethics and its application, moral management, as the mainstay of public service. Throughout, there is no shortage of paradoxes.¹ Knowledge of the public sector heritage provides a foundation for more specialized chapters to follow.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF MARIA HERNANDEZ

It is the autumn of 2020. Maria Hernandez is the HR director of a large southeastern city. She heads a department organized into five divisions—Examinations, Development and Training, Classification, Employee Relations, and Compensation and Benefits. Like most large-city HR directors, she faces a thorny set of issues that create challenges, threats, and opportunities for her and for city government.

The disruption of the COVID-19 crisis has added immensely to Maria's already complicated work life. Even before the crisis, she had to cope with a rapidly changing workforce, an increasingly cumbersome legal and regulatory environment, declining budgets, heightened citizen complaints, pressures for higher productivity, outsourcing, restive unions, and pending layoffs. It was necessary for her to navigate a dynamic environment characterized by the frequent turnover of political leadership, the increasing impact of technology, and the visible and public way in which government decisions are made. Now, with COVID-19 and its aftermath, her already busy schedule requires juggling as she deals with uncertainties caused by the novel virus.

Fortunately, Maria can draw on her academic training and considerable work experience to fulfill her responsibilities. She earned her MPA degree with a concentration in personnel management more than 20 years ago. She has been working for the city since that time, progressing up the ranks to HR director, a position she has held for the past 10 years.

After rising at 6 a.m., Maria is dressed and having morning coffee when she hears the local TV news report an increase in the area's unemployment rate. This development will continue to increase the number of people seeking work with the city, and pending municipal layoffs, furloughs, hiring freezes, and pay cuts will add to the unemployment

problem and employee unrest. These upcoming job actions are linked to the city's decision to contract with the private sector for services in two areas: transportation and tree trimming and planting. Many heads of city departments have contacted her about the best way to deal with the people issues associated with privatization. Several department heads are especially concerned about avoiding litigation that might arise from layoffs and furloughs.

Maria also reads in the newspaper that the mayor is taking a hard line in negotiations with the city's sanitation workers' union by insisting on increases in employees' contributions for health and pension benefits and limits on overtime. The union, in turn, is reluctant to endorse the city manager's proposal for productivity improvements and further privatization efforts, especially given the reductions in force, which accelerated after COVID-19. Unrest among the city's sanitation workers could spill over and affect other unionized employees who are still at the bargaining table hammering out next year's agreement. Maria is reviewing a report later today from the city's negotiating team to get an update and to consider strategic plans in hopes of averting a strike. The department heads expect that she will help resolve this problem.

In addition, the newspaper contains a local story detailing some of the facts involved in a lawsuit filed against a city supervisor who has been charged with sexually harassing one of his employees. This is not the first time this particular person has run into difficulties of this type; Maria is concerned about the potential fallout from this case. Her office has been conducting mandated online sexual harassment training for a number of years. Although this helps reduce the city's legal exposure (i.e., strict liability), she must still be on top of potentially litigious situations. Her department has been given the responsibility to investigate all sexual harassment complaints, even when they do not involve managers (i.e., vicarious liability); she has made it her policy to be informed of any significant complaints.

At 7:30 a.m., Maria begins work at home, where she shelters in place for most of the day. With appropriate face covering, she already dropped off her children at her parent's home, since schools are closed because of the virus. She then came home to return phone calls to fellow city workers. The phone conversations reveal concern among dual-career couples with youngsters at home about the need for on-site child care as well as more flexible working conditions. This is an issue Maria has tried to address before COVID-19, by proposing to the city manager a set of employee-friendly initiatives. Action on this item has been slow and piecemeal, especially following the virus outbreak, but many employees and a newly elected city councilperson have been pushing for it. Some administrators have also told Maria that adoption of the initiatives would make the city more competitive in its recruitment and retention efforts.

Maria reviews her day's schedule (see Exhibit 1.1). Many of the topics under consideration can potentially move the city forward and help its employees and managers be more productive, but some had to be put on hold given the emergency confronting the city. Although her day is tightly structured around a series of meetings, Maria tries to set aside a block of time each day to consider the long-range initiatives she is advocating, including a new plan to implement performance measurement in key departments, incentive pay for selected workers, online access to HR policies and procedures, succession planning in light of pending retirements, and a cafeteria-style benefits plan. She also

Exhibit 1.1 Maria Hernandez's Monday Schedule

8:00:	Zoom staff meeting with HR professionals	12:00:	Conference call with legal counsel (to review status of pending lawsuits and sexual harassment charge, as well as revisions to drug-testing policy in light of medical marijuana legalization)
9:00:	Review a draft incentive program offering early retirement options	1:45:	Review report from the labor negotiating team—update on bargaining issues and impasses
10:00:	Online meeting with department heads—stressing the importance of the employee assistance program (e.g., mental/physical health and financial counseling and stress management), sanitizing workstations, personal protective equipment (PPE) and social distancing policies, and implementing a new performance measurement program	2:30:	Televised media briefing—joining the mayor as she discusses how the city is responding to the COVID-19 crisis
11:30:	Online meeting with assistant city manager, budget officer, and department representatives (to discuss implications of the hiring freeze and ways to further curb personnel costs)	4:00:	Zoom meeting with university contractors (to review design of training program regarding computer network and pension reform)
		5:30:	Prepare briefing notes for online meeting with administrative assistants (to review plans for consolidating staff support functions across departments)

hopes to start a preretirement training program for all employees aged 55 or older, to broaden the description of job classes, and to work with a consultant on pension reform.

Nevertheless, HR issues are very unpredictable right now, and Maria knows that she will be interrupted many times by managers and employees seeking her opinion on ways to deal with these. When she leaves the office at 6:30 p.m., she picks up her children at her parent's home. After dinner, she reviews two reports on subjects that will occupy her attention at work early the next morning.

Maria's day shows the broad range of issues that HR directors today might encounter. The necessity for online coordination, as opposed to face-to-face, requires more staff time and IT support, but it also saves some time spent in overly long meetings. Although disruptions like the COVID-19 crisis are extraordinary, routine functions still must be carried out even in highly stressful and uncertain conditions. Maria is fortunate to have an extremely competent deputy who helps her perform these recurring duties. These include coping firsthand with worker unrest, labor shortages, productivity and performance measurement, and errant employees. They also involve crafting employee-sensitive policies, dealing with the insecurities of those employees vulnerable to layoffs, and feeling the pressures for greater efficiency.

Note how much of Maria's time is spent in virtual meetings with both executives and line managers. Indeed, today it is critical to realize that much of what HR specialists do

is support managers and elected officials as they carry out HR functions. It is generally managers who must hire, promote, discipline, and fire workers. They have to respond to grievances, evaluate performance, recommend pay rates, approve job reclassifications, and motivate their charges. The constitutional rights of employees must be respected, and officials must be careful not to run afoul of legal requirements (e.g., those dealing with affirmative action, sexual harassment, and age, gender, or disability status). COVID-19 shows that changes in the external environment can also greatly disrupt the already packed agenda of HR professionals. Additional challenges faced by HR specialists and managers are discussed next.

SOME CHALLENGES IN GETTING AND MANAGING THE RIGHT PEOPLE

Managers today need to be mindful of important trends in the governmental environment that affect the context in which personnel decisions are made. The following sections highlight just some of the developments that will have impacts on HRM for the foreseeable future.

A Changing Workforce

The workforce is becoming, paradoxically, both grayer and younger. On one hand, as the members of the Baby Boom generation are entering retirement, the average age of many seasoned employees and managers is rising. There is an obvious need for employees who can immediately fill their shoes, but such workforce candidates are often lacking. Demographically, **Generation X** (Gen-X) workers (those born between 1960 and 1980) who will replace them are fewer in number, which has contributed to a “graying” of the workforce in past decades. On the other hand, the very large cohort of **New Millennials** or Gen-Y (those born between 1977 and 1994) and future **Generation Z** (born between 1995 and 2012) workers are the latest job entrants. They are now experiencing or will soon experience increasing job opportunities. These new entrants slowly reduce the average age of the workforce.

Many authors have commented on how the career and working styles of Gen-X and New Millennial workers are different from those of Baby Boomers and the members of other preceding generations: Members of the newer generations are more likely than their predecessors to change careers and sectors often, demonstrate less loyalty to their employers, be comfortable with new technology, be independent, be comfortable working on multiple projects, and seek balance between their work and personal lives (Hannon & Yordi, 2011; Lohmann, 2016; Marston, 2007; Sauser & Sims, 2012; Van Der Wal, 2017; West, 2012; WJSchroer, n.d.). Succession planning and creative recruitment strategies are crucial. Exhibit 1.2 lists some reasons young people choose public service work. Beyond these factors, the workforce is also increasingly composed of women and members of minority groups (Condrey, 2010; Guy & Newman, 2010; Kellough, 2009).

Exhibit 1.2 Reasons Young People Choose Public Service

- To make a difference in a wide variety of leadership positions in the nonprofit and for-profit sectors; different branches of local, state, regional, and federal governments; and the international arena
- To become engaged intellectually in the challenges facing their communities
- To establish career and personal development skills that they can use throughout their lives
- To build a better future for the world and to solve big problems
- To create communication links within and between different communities
- To gain a sense of responsibility for others and the causes they care about

Sources: Education Development Center (2002); Light (2008).

Declining Confidence in Government

With the exception of a brief spike in 2001 after the terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington, D.C., on September 11, opinion polls since the 1960s have shown steady erosion in confidence and trust in government at all levels. In the early 1960s, six out of 10 Americans claimed to trust the federal government most of the time. By 2019, only two in 10 made that claim (Rainie & Perrin, 2019). While the majority of Americans think that federal spending can and should be deeply cut, there is no agreement on what wasteful spending is or where to reduce it and no commitment to shared sacrifice to lower the national debt (Swanson & Blumenthal, 2013). Although trust in state and local government is higher than trust in the federal government, declining confidence is evident at those levels as well. This can erode the morale of the civil service and impede performance. Rebuilding trust is an important challenge facing the public sector at all levels.

Advancing Equity in Times of Unrest

Issues of race, equity, and justice prompt conversations and actions about respect, rights, and systemic change. Public discussion and demonstrations surrounding the deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and others have focused attention on police violence, systemic racism, and abusive treatment of Black people and others of color in the United States and abroad. Responding to such traumatic events with empathy, willingness to engage in difficult candid conversations with employees, and a clear proactive commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies is needed by public, nonprofit, and private organizations and must be backed by sufficient resources (Romansky, 2020).

Declining Budgets, Leading to Increased Use of Alternative Work Arrangements

A combination of tax limitation measures, budget cuts, and political pressures to curb future expenditures has occurred throughout government. Government policy makers, mindful of the impending exodus of Baby Boomers and attempting to keep costs down, are paying increased attention to alternative work arrangements.

One variant, noted by Mastracci and Thompson (2009) and Barr (2005), involves use of the core-ring staffing model, with the core comprising full-time workers in permanent jobs and the ring comprising employees in contingent or alternative arrangements (e.g., contractors, temporary workers, and part-time staff). Light (2017) estimated that, in 2015, for each federal civilian employee there were about 2.6 times as many nonfederal workers via contracts and grants. Exhibit 1.3 provides examples of such a blended workforce in various governmental settings.

Rightsizing and Downsizing Despite Population Growth

In 2019, there were 2.1 million people in the federal civilian workforce, which was 100,000 fewer than after the end of World War II (CRS, 2019; U.S. OPM, 2014). While the country's population has increased (projected to be 334.5 million by 2020), the relative size of federal civilian employment has not (NAPA, 2017). Moreover, most of the civilian workforce is devoted to defense- and security-related agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security. This reduction has been accomplished through periodic downsizings, which took place in the 1950s and from 1993 to 2007.

The most recent downsizing left line managers with additional, burdensome administrative tasks. The combination of federal downsizing, scandal, and the war on waste led Light (1999, 2008) to warn of a looming “brain drain” and to predict further decreases in government-centered public service with a corresponding increase in multi-sectored service. By contrast, the size of the state and local government workforce has increased, primarily because of population growth. Despite this overall trend, many individual jurisdictions have experienced workforce reductions in specific areas linked to privatization, deregulation, budget or service cuts, and program terminations—trends that are likely to continue well into the future.

Demands for Productivity Gains

Jurisdictions at all levels are under pressure to improve performance without raising costs. The 2019 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey of 1,443,152 workers received 615,395 responses. Nine in 10 employees said they are constantly looking for ways to do their job better, but only 39% said that in their work unit, differences in performance are recognized in a meaningful way. Further, less than half (44%) of employees believed that awards programs offered them incentive to do their best, and about the same proportion (42%) said steps are taken to deal with a poor performer who cannot or will not improve (U.S. OPM, 2019). These and other trends have prompted reform proposals

Exhibit 1.3 Blended Workforces in U.S. Government Settings

The Naval Research Lab

The Naval Research Lab has established contractual arrangements that provide for flexibility in the workforce for various special research projects. In this system, the hiring and firing of employees and layoff procedures are left to the contractor; they take place outside the federal personnel system, allowing for quick downsizing if necessary. Other advantages to the system include the ability to evaluate contract workers and hire the best-performing ones for long-term employment. The Naval Research Lab has also taken advantage of part-time work arrangements to create a family-friendly work environment, which has reduced the turnover rate in the workforce. In addition, the lab has created student positions with the goal of transitioning students into permanent employment.

The Transportation Security Administration

After the 9/11 attacks—with the need to respond quickly to the requirements of the Aviation and Transportation Security Act of 2001—the Transportation Security Administration pursued flexible policies in hiring and maintaining its workforce. It has taken advantage of

indirect-hire arrangements with contractors that have allowed the agency to use workers for specific purposes when required. The Transportation Security Administration has also made part-time work a priority, with 16% of its workforce serving in this role. Part-time work allows the agency to schedule staff when they are most needed, particularly during peak flight times in the morning and afternoon, and allows officials to screen for exceptional workers to become permanent full-time employees in the future.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration

NASA has focused extensively on creating flexible arrangements for personnel who seek to use them. The Glenn Research Center at Lewis Field, in Cleveland, for example, has allowed full-time employees to change to part-time status for health, family, education, or other reasons. It has used term appointments to hire workers for defined periods of time, most particularly for work on special research projects. NASA has also used student employment programs that allow for transition into long-term employment, with 80% of students remaining with NASA after completing the program.

Sources: Barr (2005); Thompson & Mastracci (2005).

and reengineering initiatives aimed at establishing new approaches to the delivery of goods and services, as discussed later in this and subsequent chapters.

Emerging Virtual Workplaces and Virtual Government

With the advent of new information technologies, innovative organizations are replacing some traditional 9-to-5 workplaces with fixed central-office locations with more flexible arrangements (telecommuting, flex-place). This development alters relationships between employers and employees and raises questions about how HR professionals give support to the variety of work arrangements in virtual workplaces (Choi, 2018; Dahlstrom, 2013; Kwon & Jeon, 2017; Wadsworth & Facer, 2016; West & Berman, 2001).

In addition, virtual workplaces alter the relationship between citizens and government. Numerous federal initiatives begun in the mid-1990s enable citizen transactions to be conducted electronically. Indeed, the 1998 Government Paperwork Elimination Act states that federal agencies must allow people the option of submitting information or transacting electronically. These are just a few ways that new information technology can influence the public workplace (discussed further in Chapter 8).

Decentralization and Increased Managerial Flexibility

Typically, administrators at the operational level now have greater flexibility and discretion in the acquisition, development, motivation, and maintenance of human resources. Recent civil service reforms at all levels of government have loosened restrictions and increased managerial discretion over matters of pay, hiring, discipline, and termination. At the federal level, this has been evident in changes attempted at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Department of Defense (DOD); at the state and local levels, it is reflected in New Public Management reforms and the move in some jurisdictions toward at-will employment (Bowman & West, 2007; Klingner, 2009; Radin, 2012).

The trends we have just described influence the ways officials carry out their functions. Each trend has important implications for HRM, and the relevance of each is considered in detail in this book.

SOME BASIC DEFINITIONS

The traditional term **personnel administration** is now used only narrowly, in reference to internal processes—staffing, position management, pay systems, benefits management, training, appraisal and discipline, contract management, and so on—and the efficient application of the rules and procedures of the civil service system. This term connotes a technical approach to these numerous functions that are vital to any organization, often with a relatively sharp divide between the responsibilities of HR specialists and operational managers, which is rare today.

The contemporary term **human resource management**, or HRM, embraces a broader focus and has relevance for HR specialists, line managers, and executives. It encompasses all decisions affecting the relationship between the individual and the organization, with an eye to optimizing effectiveness from the view of both. In addition to technical operations, it includes actively seeking to recruit and select the best employees (talent management), adjusting positions to meet evolving needs (job design), blending strategies of pay for optimal compensation policies, providing cost-effective benefits packages that provide maximum value for employees (family-friendly benefits), building on technical training to include employee development, helping employees improve their own performance, proactively managing employee–employer relations, and tracking organizational accountability and ensuring that health and safety issues are included (Abramson & Gardner, 2002).

When HRM is most global and long-term in its perspective and includes such issues as workforce planning and overall organizational design, it is often called **strategic human resource management (SHRM)**. SHRM “may be regarded as an approach

to the management of human resources that provides a strategic framework to support long-term business goals and outcomes. The approach is concerned with longer-term people issues and macro-concerns about structure, quality, culture, values, commitment and matching resources to future need” (CIPD, 2013; for more on SHRM, see Lim et al., 2017; Jacobson & Sowa, 2015). For simplicity, in this text we use the single term *human resource management (HRM)* to refer to the relevant technical, managerial, and strategic issues. Exhibit 1.4 compares the traditional system and assumptions with the newer, competing system and assumptions.

Exhibit 1.4 Shifting From a Traditional Public Sector System to a System for the 21st Century	
Traditional Public Sector System	Public Service for the 21st Century
Single system in theory; in reality, multiple systems not developed strategically	Recognition of multiple systems, strategic approach to system development, definition and inclusion of core values
Definition of <i>merit</i> that had the outcome of protecting people and equated fairness with sameness	Definition of <i>merit</i> that has the outcome of encouraging better performance and allows differentiation between levels of talent
Emphasis on process and rules	Emphasis on performance and results
Hiring/promotion of talent based on technical expertise	Hiring, nurturing, and promotion of talent to the right places
Treatment of personnel as a cost	Treatment of human resources as an asset and an investment
Job for life/lifelong commitment	Inners and outsiders who share core values
Protection justifies tenure	Employee performance and employer need justify retention
Performance appraisal based on individual activities	Performance appraisal based on demonstrated individual contribution to organizational goals
Labor–management relationship based on conflicting goals, antagonistic relationship, and <i>ex post</i> disputes and arbitration on individual cases	Labor–management partnership based on mutual goals of successful organization and employee satisfaction, <i>ex ante</i> involvement in work design
Central agency that fulfilled the personnel function for agencies	Central agency that enables agencies, especially managers, to fulfill the personnel function for themselves

Source: Adapted from P. W. Ingraham, S. C. Selden, and D. P. Moynihan, “People and Performance: Challenges for the Future Public Service: The Report From the Wye River Conference,” *Public Administration Review*, 60(1), p. 58. © 2000 by John Wiley Sons, Inc. Reprinted by permission of John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

The term **civil service** refers to government employees in permanent public service, excluding legislative, judicial, or uniformed military; positions typically are filled based on competitive examinations, and a professional career public service exists with protection against political influence and patronage. While the overwhelming bulk of most managers' attention on personnel issues is related to civil servants, managers also often need to be familiar with non-civil servants because of contracting out, the use of consultants, and so on.

The next section provides some background on the challenges that all managers face in responding to the need to establish and retain a high-quality workforce.

THE STRUCTURE AND ROLE OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEPARTMENTS

Even though the focus of this book is HRM for nonspecialists, it is helpful to have a little background on the array of institutional structures, functions, and placements of HR departments. These departments are key staff units in all but the smallest jurisdictions, along with departments of budget, finance, facilities, legal affairs, communications, public relations, and so forth. HR offices combine both rule promulgation and rule implementation for some of the most important and visible policies in their organizations. That is, most of the personnel-related actions occurring in an organization follow rules codified under the HR department, frequently requiring its preapproval and often requiring its post-approval sign-off.

When HR departments provide direct services, which they frequently do, they have supportive and educative roles. When most HR services are provided by a single department, HR is considered *centralized*. An example might be a single HR department for a small city in which HR does most interviewing except for the most senior jobs.

When many HR services and responsibilities are shared with managers, as is common today, a *devolved model of HR* is in place. There might be a single HR department for an entire city, for instance, but it is the managers who carry out most recruitment, selection, and promotion functions, albeit with guidelines and monitoring by the HR department.

Larger organizations or governmental systems frequently have *decentralized* modes of HR in which a central HRM agency sets policies, and freestanding agencies (or large divisions) have specialized HR departments or units. To illustrate, the federal government moved to a decentralized model in 1978, with functional responsibilities going to different line agencies. Another example would be a large state agency that has a small HR unit in every division. Under such circumstances, HR may be both decentralized and devolved.

On occasion, agencies will have multiple *specialized HR units* responding to the differing needs of employee groups, such as faculty and staff who are handled separately by a department in academic affairs (for hiring and promotion) and the traditional HR department (for all functions except faculty hiring and promotion).

Still another possibility is an *outsourced HR model*, which sometimes occurs with service functions such as payroll, training and development, employee assistance programs,

and classification studies, to name some of the more prominent areas. These five alternatives are illustrated in Exhibit 1.5.

The various functions discussed in this book may or may not be part of an HR department per se. For example, some jurisdictions still have separate civil service commissions for hiring purposes, labor relations may be conducted exclusively out of the executive office, training and development may be its own department, payroll may be a part of the finance department, and a variety of organizational policy areas (such as telework programs) may operate under a separate office or authority. See Exhibit 1.6 for an array of places where the functions may be shared or housed. No matter the exact structure and particular set of roles, however, HR functions are the backbone of any organization. Nowhere is this truer than in the public sector, in which personnel often account for 80% of the budget and in which legal and fiduciary obligations to the law and public are extraordinary.

Today, HR services are provided in a variety of ways. Some functions are performed in the same way they were in the 1960s, relying on traditional subfunctions of employment, compensation, and training; others might be organized differently, with a cross-functional HR professional assigned to provide ongoing services to a team or group in a matrix organization. Recently a shared-services model—whereby HR specialists offer services to the organization on an as-required basis, with charges going to the functional area receiving service—has increased in prominence. Here, the HR department functions as an in-house consulting service. As noted, some or all HR functions are currently being outsourced, either to shared service centers within government or to outside contractors, where it is deemed that others might perform these functions more effectively and economically.

The most common placement of HR departments is right under the chief executive officer (CEO), with the HR director serving in the executive’s cabinet. In large organizations, it is not uncommon for HR to be combined with other staff units under an

Exhibit 1.5 Placement of Human Resource Specialists in Medium-Sized and Large Organizations: Five Common Models				
Centralized HR Department	Devolved HR Model	Decentralized HR Model	Specialized HR Departments	Outsourced HR
All HR experts are in a centralized unit, and HR handles most HR functions, including the hiring of line employees.	A central HR unit does most policy work, but most functional responsibilities are accomplished by line managers and operational units.	The centralized HR department is smaller and more policy-oriented; it oversees smaller HR units in different areas of the system.	There is a core HR department, but it is accompanied by specialist HR units for hiring and promotions, such as a unit of academic personnel in universities for faculty.	There is a small centralized HR unit, but many functions are privatized, such as payroll and training.

Exhibit 1.6 Sharing of Common Human Resource Management Functions

Common Functions in HR Departments	Function Generally Shared With	Function Sometimes Shared With	Function Sometimes a Separate Unit Under
Employment law	The organization's counsel (lawyer)	Executive oversight officers	
Recruiting	Line managers		Civil service commission
Selection of employees	Line managers		Civil service commission
Position management	Line managers		
Creation of a positive work environment	Line managers		
Compensation	Line managers, separate payroll office		
Benefits		Line managers	
Training and development	Line managers	Units providing in-depth technical training	Sometimes freestanding departments in large organizations
Appraisal	Line managers		
Labor relations	Executive team (bargaining), line managers (grievances)		Frequently a freestanding unit under the CEO when there are numerous bargaining units

executive director of some sort (e.g., an assistant city manager or deputy mayor). In the smallest agencies, the CEO or an executive officer often doubles as the HR director. The strategic and executive leadership roles of HR departments vary extensively. In some cases, the department plays a relatively dominant role because of the need for workforce planning, avoidance of litigation, contentious labor relations, and management consultation. Yet, in some organizations, HR's strategic policy and planning roles have been absorbed by chief executive offices, budget offices, or legal departments, leaving a more service and consultative role for HR along with frontline enforcement functions.

HISTORICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

Tides of Reform

A useful framework for considering the history of government reform efforts was provided by Paul Light in his 1997 book *The Tides of Reform*. Light identified four reform

philosophies, each of which has its own goals, implementation efforts, and outcomes: scientific management, the war on waste, the watchful eye, and liberation management. Although Light's analysis focuses on these four **tides of reform** as they influence the overall performance of government, we use his framework here to highlight the implications of these four philosophies for HRM, with both federal and local examples.

Scientific Management

The first tide is **scientific management**. Here the focus is on hierarchy, microdivision of labor, specialization, and well-defined chains of command. This philosophy, usually associated with Frederick Taylor, is particularly manifest in the bureaucratic organizational form, with its emphasis on structure, rules, and the search for “the one best way.” Technical experts in this environment apply the *scientific* principles of administration (e.g., unity of command and **POSDCORB**—planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, and budgeting).

The scientific management approach is evident in the recommendations made by two presidential commissions: the Brownlow Committee (1936–1937), which advocated changing the administrative management and government structure to improve efficiency; and the first Hoover Commission (1947–1949), which suggested reorganizing agencies around an integrated purpose and eliminating overlapping services. Herbert Hoover is the patron saint of scientific management, and the National Academy of Public Administration's Standing Panel on Executive Organization is a patron organization. Two important reorganizations that occurred in the federal executive branch—one in 1939, the Reorganization Act (establishing the Executive Office of the President), and the other in 2002, the creation of the DHS—are both examples of legislative action. Additional examples include legislation rationalizing centralized control and planning, such as the consolidation of financial controls in federal agencies in 1990 and the requirements for increased use of performance management and strategic planning under the Government Performance and Results Modernization Act of 2010.

Scientific management has implications for human resources. It emphasizes conformity and predictability of employees' contributions to the organization (machine model), and it sees human relationships as subject to management's control. Current emphasis on productivity measurement, financial incentives, and efficiency reflects the continuing influence of scientific management. The scientific management of unity of HR command was strengthened by the Chief Human Capital Officers Act of 2002. Much of the foundational structure of government, covered in Title 5 of the U.S. Code, rests on principles of hierarchy, chain of command, consistency, and standardization.

Although, at one time, scientific management principles overwhelmingly dominated government philosophy, some hallmarks of scientific management, such as job design (characterized by standard procedures, narrow span of control, and specific job descriptions instituted to improve efficiency), may actually impede achievement of quality performance in today's organizations, where customization, innovation, autonomous work teams, and empowerment are required. Similarly, various HR actions mirroring scientific management differ from avant-garde practices. For example, training is changing from a nearly exclusive emphasis on functional, technical, job-related competencies

to a broader range of skills, cross-functional training, and diagnostic, problem-solving capabilities. Performance measurement and evaluation have been shifting from individual goals and supervisory review to team goals and multiple reviewers (citizen, peer, supervisory). In addition to individually based merit increases, some organizations now include team- or group-based rewards—both financial and nonfinancial.

The War on Waste

The second reform tide is the **war on waste**, which emphasizes economy. Auditors, investigators, and inspectors generally are used to pursue this goal. Congressional hearings on welfare fraud are a defining moment in this tide, and the Inspector General Act of 1978 is defining legislation. The 1992 Federal Housing Enterprises Financial Safety and Soundness Act, with its provisions to fight internal corruption, is an expression of the war on waste. The patron saints of the war on waste are W. R. Grace, who headed President Reagan's task force (1982–1984) to determine how government could be operated for less; Jack Anderson, the crusading journalist who put a spotlight on government boondoggles; and former U.S. senator William Proxmire, who originated the Golden Fleece Award to bring attention to “wasteful, ridiculous or ironic use of the taxpayers' money.”

The implications of the war on waste for HRM are plentiful. Frequently audits, scandals, critical reports, and whistleblowing point out gaps in rules and lax implementation of rules; such revelations often bring needed attention and/or corrective actions. Recent cases of the war on waste include the abolition of the ineffective Minerals Management Service, the federal unit that had been rebuked even before the 2010 *Deepwater Horizon* oil rig disaster in the Gulf of Mexico, which it oversaw; and the scandal in Bell, California, in which numerous city officials were found to be in collusion to defraud taxpayers by means of outlandish salaries, resulting in litigation and new transparency laws.

Of course, preoccupation with waste also leads to increases in internal controls, oversight and regulations, managerial directives, tight supervision, and concerns about accountability. Thus, it can result in a proliferation of detailed rules, processes, procedures, and multiple reviews that are characteristic of government bureaucracy and that influence personnel management. Critics who detect waste and attribute it to maladministration of public resources or unneeded spending may focus on the deficiencies of employees. Fearful workers seek cover from criticism when they do things strictly by the book. Managers concerned with controlling waste try to minimize idle time, avoid bottlenecks, install time clocks, audit travel vouchers and phone records, inventory office supplies, and monitor attendance and punctuality. Use of temporary rather than permanent staff and service privatization may be ways to contain costs while maintaining performance standards. Clearly, contemporary HR practices are linked to the heritage of the war on waste, leading to both heightened rigor and no small amount of administrative red tape.

The Watchful Eye

The third tide of reform, the **watchful eye**, emphasizes fairness through openness, transparency, and access. Whistleblowers, the news media, interest groups, and the public need access to information to ensure that the public's rights and the common interest,

as well as individual rights, are protected. Congress and the courts become the institutional champions seeking to ensure fairness.

The need for the watchful eye and government that is more open became apparent after the abuses exposed in the Watergate scandal (with the Woodward and Bernstein *Washington Post* investigation) and the U.S. involvement in Vietnam (with the publication of the Pentagon Papers). Although highly controversial, the 2013 leak of thousands of classified documents by Edward Snowden, a former systems administrator for the Central Intelligence Agency and contractor for the National Security Agency, followed this tradition. Another example is the scandal that arose in 2014 concerning the Veterans Administration's falsified waiting list; in this case, employees had been receiving bonuses for meeting the goal of providing medical appointments to veterans within 2 weeks, while thousands of veterans were actually waiting for months (Molina, 2018; Oppel, 2014).

The 1946 Administrative Procedure Act and the **Ethics Reform Act of 1989** are examples of defining legislation. The former is important because it established procedural standards regarding how government agencies must pass rules with public notice, input, and statements of factual basis for decisions. Specific provisions of the latter are efforts to curb lobbying influence and promote ethics in government. John Gardner and Common Cause and Ralph Nader and Public Citizen provide examples of patron saints and organizations linked to the watchful eye.

The implications of this philosophy for HRM can be identified as well in the 20th-century legislation related to how hiring, promotion, labor relations, and a host of other activities are conducted. Concern about the fairness of hiring processes leads to requirements for public announcements of jobs as well as for the job-related competence of new recruits (e.g., Chapter 33 of U.S. Title 5). Reforms (e.g., U.S. Title 42) have made the use of hiring criteria based on sex, race, age, and disability status illegal. Due-process requirements exist to minimize arbitrary decisions to terminate employees.

Creating an organizational culture of openness, careful record keeping, and compliance with full-disclosure and sunshine requirements are all consistent with the watchful eye philosophy. Adoptions of minimum standards of conduct or codes of ethics, along with ethics training, are other examples. Union stewards are likely to cast their watchful eyes on negotiated contracts and to blow the whistle when violations occur (such whistleblowing is protected under U.S. Title 29). The Me Too movement (or #MeToo), with public revelations of sexual harassment and assault, is another example of this reform tide. Managers should seek congruence between the standards espoused by the organization and the behavior of workers.

Calls for integrity at all levels of government reflect the contemporary influence of the watchful eye mentality. Of course, increased reporting and consultation do absorb resources and are a drag on businesslike efficiency and executive decisiveness. Perceived excesses of the war on waste and the watchful eye may lead to calls for a reform tide that *liberates* management, as discussed next.

Liberation Management

The final tide of reform is **liberation management**. Its goal is higher performance in government. "Evaluations," "outcomes," and "results" are buzzwords associated with this