WHITEPAPER

The Future of Government Training and Development Programs

How new technologies have the power to transform inefficient training programs and create massive cost savings in the $18 billion dollars spent on federal government training programs.

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

When it comes to adopting new technology and modernizing outdated processes and procedures, public sector companies and government agencies have been notoriously resistant and slow to embrace change.

From local municipalities to sprawling federal agencies, old operational models—many of which have been in place for decades—create a perpetual cycle of inefficiencies and waste that act as structural barriers to meaningful growth and innovation.

The modern workforce and the business processes that power it have evolved at breakneck speed over the last few decades, but traditional government training and management programs have not kept pace with the private sector, despite considerable investments in training and development across the federal government's many agencies and departments.

In fact, data from the Office of Management and Budget shows that the federal government spent over $18 billion in 2019 alone on 47 training and development programs across 15 agencies.

However as with any investment, training programs and initiatives are only as successful as the results they ultimately deliver. Harnessing the full potential of the government's massive and diverse workforce and resources requires the kind of agility and precision that smart technology can deliver.

This paper illustrates why traditional government training programs lack accountability and stifle productivity and innovation. We'll explain the dynamic of the 21st century workplace and how upgrading technology can help recruit, engage and retain a younger, digitally native, emerging workforce. The paper also highlights the issue of government training program fund allocation and the financial benefits of adopting modern software.

Why Progress Can't Afford to Wait

The [Office of Personnel Management (OPM)](#) estimates that the federal government's civilian workforce (excluding military personnel) consists of over two million people across a range of agencies and employment classifications. From seasonal and temporary employees like census takers to career civil servants and everyone in between, an appropriately skilled, engaged, and efficient workforce is essential to a functional government. Recruiting, training, and retaining talented people up to the task requires implementing systems and tools that can be scaled and repeated across the government's many agencies and job categories.

Over the last few decades, the digital information age has ushered in a wave of fast moving systemic change and disruption not seen since the dawn of the second Industrial Revolution at the turn of the 20th century. But outdated technology and processes are not the only problem. As the last wave of the Baby Boomer generation reaches retirement age, government agencies and public sector employers are facing an exodus of human capital and the knowledge and experience they carry individually and as a collective across organizations.

According to estimates, Baby Boomers (the generation born between 1946 and 1964) are retiring at a rate of approximately 10,000 per day. Dubbed as the "silver tsunami," government agencies have been particularly concerned with the issues of succession planning and knowledge transfer. When you factor in generational shifts, developments in technology, and changes to how the modern workforce actually functions today, the old top down training and management model is particularly ill suited to accommodate and scale the modern workforce.

The Problem with the Vertical Knowledge Transfer Model

If the late twentieth century had to be drilled down and encapsulated into one idea and operational model, it would probably be the "top-down" or "trickle down" model for organizational structures and operations.

From trickle-down economics to top-down management hierarchies, information and knowledge transfer has traditionally flowed in one direction, from highly entrenched and tightly controlled systems at the top that leave little room for innovation, modernization, and growth.

Everything from recruitment to hiring, training, and ongoing employee development processes have been segmented according to longstanding traditions and standards that may no longer be relevant. This is the vertical knowledge and information transfer model in a nutshell.

In addition to making it difficult to implement upgrades in technology and business processes, it essentially places the organization's "brain" and operating system in the hands of a moveable workforce that will eventually take their knowledge with them when they retire or change jobs.

Government agencies, where decades old systems and processes may not even be fully digitized and easily transferable between employees and across departments and organizations, are especially vulnerable to this problem.

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The 21st Century Workplace and Economy is Horizontal

In his 2005 book of the same name, New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman declared that the 21st century world (and economic landscape) is flat. While Friedman looks at the 21st century through the lens of globalization, the concept can also be applied to the modern workforce.

From open plan workspaces where the CEO and executive management sits and works side by side with employees from across the organization and its experience levels, to open source programs and technology that give everyone equal access and input, modern organizations are set up to allow information to flow across a lateral trajectory. This helps to reduce the risk of information silos and rigid hierarchical structures that tend to become ossified and resistant to change.

How Outdated Training Models Stifle Productivity and Innovation

One of the biggest problems currently facing government and public sector training programs is lack of accountability or any quantifiable way to measure results and gauge whether the programs are actually succeeding and delivering on their promises to both participants and the taxpayers, who are ultimately funding the programs.

Despite the $18 billion investment in training programs in 2019, an audit into the Job Corps training program, which has a budget of over $1 billion and enrolls at least 50,000 students

$18B

2019 FEDERAL GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT IN EMPLOYEE TRAINING PROGRAMS

every year, found a stunning lack of accountability or reliable metrics by which to measure the program's effectiveness and results.

According to the findings by the Office of the Inspector General at the U.S. Labor Department, Job Corps program administrators could not account for 95% of their budget expenditures.

> **One of the biggest problems currently facing government and public sector training programs is lack of accountability or any quantifiable way to measure results"**

As one of the oldest and largest federal training programs in the country, the Job Corps program can be seen as a bellwether for the entire industry, where audits are actually quite rare. Once an agency receives Congressional approval for budget allocation, there are few (if any) systems in place or incentives to verify how the money is

being spent, and whether the programs are actually achieving their intended purposes.

This creates a disservice for both the programs themselves, and the people and employers they are meant to serve. It also jeopardizes the ability to secure funding in the future, especially at a time when the subject of public spending is particularly fraught.

In addition to lack of transparency and accountability, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) also found redundancies and overlaps in the Job Corps and other federal training programs. Ultimately, there is really no way to tell whether the programs are actually working, which leads to waste of both monetary resources and human capital.

However despite the challenges, government agencies and public sector companies are perfectly positioned to automate existing processes and streamline training and knowledge operations in order to create a culture of accountability and efficiency.

WHAT WE KNOW

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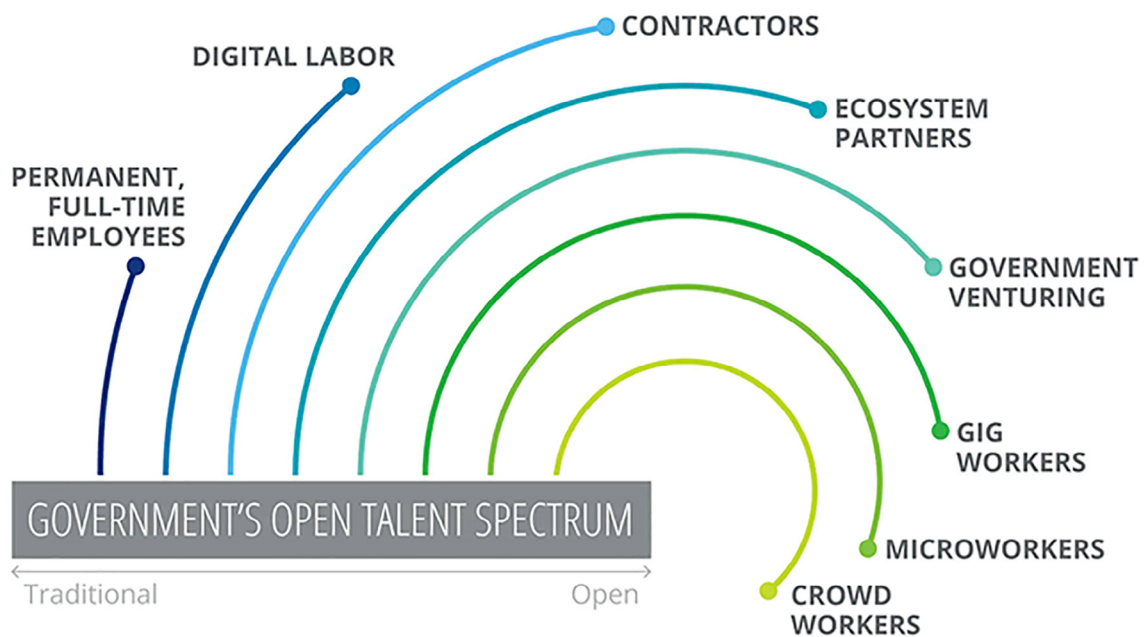
Federal Government Employment and Training Programs

15

Government Agencies Utilizing Training Programs

18

Billion Dollar Goverment Investment in Employee Training Programs

95

Percentage of $18B Budget Unaccounted For

GOVERNMENT'S OPEN TALENT SPECTRUM

PERMANENT, FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES

DIGITAL LABOR

CONTRACTORS

ECOSYSTEM PARTNERS

GOVERNMENT VENTURING

GIG WORKERS

MICROWORKERS

CROWD WORKERS

Traditional

Open

Source: Deloitte analysis
The Future of Work in Government

Making the Leap to a Modern Training Model

Modern organizations are nimble and adaptable in the face of lightning speed change. However when it comes to more traditional, legacy institutions like the government, finding the right tool to help with the transition into modernity without completely disrupting operations has typically been the biggest barrier to entry.

Unlike a private sector company which has a little more freedom to adjust and temporarily scale back in order to make updates and adjustments to its technology and processes, the business of the federal government has to move forward without interruption.

Trainual—a leading global training software company—built the infrastructure that allows complex organizations like the Department of Labor and other government agencies to take the training programs and documentation that already exists, and create simple, repeatable systems for knowledge transfer across organizations without disrupting operations.
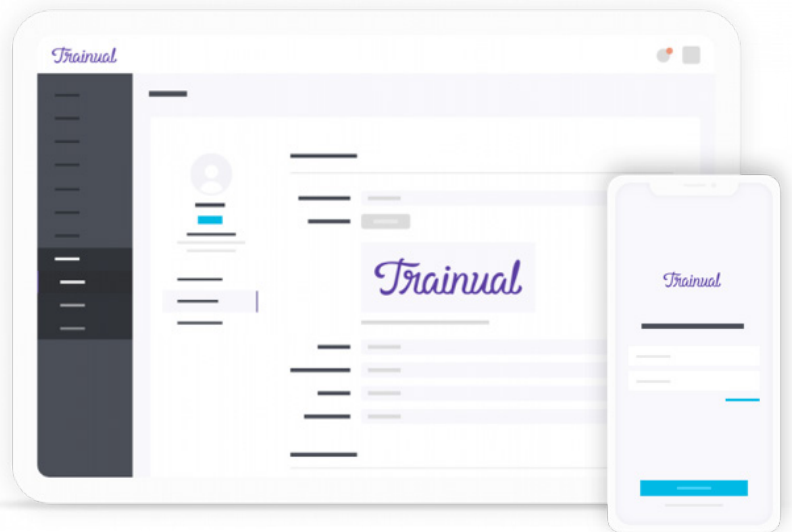
Clear process documentation creates consistency, and helps organizations to survive evolving workforce dynamics and personnel changes. Software can be implemented and deployed across agencies and departments, used

to identify and eliminate program redundancies and overlap, and improve overall efficiency without straining existing resources. Creating repeatable systems makes training programs more uniform and easy to track and audit. This is a cost effective solution to an ongoing and open ended problem because once the system is in place, it practically runs itself and is much easier to scale with a rapidly expanding workforce.

Change is much easier for slow moving organizations to embrace when they're not faced with the task of re-inventing the wheel and completely overhauling the system in order to improve it.

Solving the Government's Accountability Problem

One of the biggest challenges facing government training programs is tracking how and where program resources are being spent, and whether program participants are actually getting value and learning the skills they need to fill the growing skills gap in both the public and private sector. Trainual's software allows program administrators to create custom designed tests to track progress and measure how program participants are actually performing or falling short of the program's goals.

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"Clear process documentation creates consistency, and helps organizations to survive evolving workforce dynamics and personnel changes."

Effective Knowledge Transfer

Trainual was designed to help business operators and working professionals easily translate the knowledge in their heads into well documented, repeatable processes and systems that can be accessed by anyone, long after company founders, managers, or program administrators retire or move on to a different organization. This is especially relevant in the face of the looming Baby Boomer retirement wave. Documenting and centralizing your organization's processes ensures that they stay with the company when your employees eventually move on.

Collaboration Made Simple

In addition to the lack of transparency and accountability, the compartmentalized and hierarchical structure of governmental organizations can make interdepartmental and inter-agency collaboration and innovation especially difficult. Trainual's desktop app, Chrome browser extension, and Android and iOS mobile apps make it incredibly simple and convenient to share and access information and operating procedures across departments. Keeping track of multiple training programs and the fractured and unorganized processes and systems that currently govern them is much easier with a centralized dashboard to track everything in one place.

Recruit and Retain a Digitally Native Workforce

As the current workforce ages and eventually retires, recruiting and adequately training the next generation of workers is more important than ever. Even in the underserved communities that have traditionally relied on government training programs like Job Corps to gain marketable skills and find a foothold in the job market, the younger generation is comprised of digital natives that also place a premium on personal engagement and fulfillment in the workplace. In order to attract bright young candidates, government training programs will have to speak their language and adapt to the new realities of the current and up and coming workforce's information consumption habits. Trainual's in-app features make it possible to diversify training materials to incorporate video, audio, images, and other rich media to make training more fun and engaging for program participants.

Continuity with Software Integration

Trainual software integrates seamlessly with thousands of popular workplace productivity apps already used by Government offices and agencies so that workflow and processes continue to perform uninterrupted.

The Public Sector Advantage

When it comes to innovation and creating cutting edge solutions and products, the private sector currently enjoys much of the spotlight. But historically, many of the innovations and initiatives that have fueled the most progress and growth have come from the government and public sector.

From President Kennedy's original moonshot to the public education system that has produced many of our society's brightest stars, the public sector is uniquely positioned to create bold solutions for some of the biggest problems and issues currently facing the country and the global community today.

Trainual helps complex organizations like the Federal Government simplify and automate their training programs and documentation processes in order to increase efficiency, eliminate waste, and harness their resources to improve performance and accountability.

To learn more about Trainual, visit trainual.com.