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MEMO TO: Lillian Van Santen, MDTs  
FROM: BEMW, INC.  
DATE: January 6, 1983  
SUBJECT: THIRD QUARTERLY REPORT: ONGOING CONSULTATION AND LIAISON  
WITH NRC REGIONAL CAREER COUNSELING PROGRAMS

CONTRACT #ADM-82-358

FOIA-85-182  
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QUARTERLY REPORT  
ONGOING CONSULTATION AND LIAISON  
WITH NRC REGIONAL CAREER COUNSELING PROGRAMS  
NRC CONTRACT #ADM-82-358  
JANUARY 6, 1983

BEMW, INC.  
CAREER/LIFE PLANNING OPTIONS  
4948 St. Elmo Avenue  
Bethesda, MD 20814

### THIRD QUARTERLY REPORT

#### NRC REGIONAL CAREER COUNSELING PROGRAM

#### INTRODUCTION

Evaluations and counselors' reports alike attest to the value of the Regional Career Counseling Program and the enthusiastic response with which it has been received by NRC employees. NRC clients continue to utilize the experience to enhance decision-making skills, further develop career planning capabilities, clarify some areas of personal and professional confusion and to build self-confidence. Motivation has been consistently high as evidenced by follow-through with scheduled appointments and completion of individual assignments as mutually agreed upon between counselor and client. The career counselors find their work rewarding citing this high level of motivation as well as a willingness on the part of the individual clients to assume responsibility for their own career/life decisions.

#### PROGRESS TO DATE

According to the reports received from the five regional career counselors, the bulk of the career counseling has been completed well ahead of the projected contract schedule. Number of clients seen to date and counseling hours completed during the third quarter are given below:

	<u># Clients Seen to Date</u>	<u>Counseling Hours During 3rd Quarter</u>
Region I	25	31
Region II	25	31
Region III	28 <i>make the money plan</i>	57
Region IV	30	39 (98 total)
Region V	28	(84 total)

#### GENERAL FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY REGION

##### Region I

During this period of counseling, Ms. Sain has had more employees who are professional engineers than clerical or administrative personnel. The counselor found that concerns related to excess travel and lack of advancement opportunity remained. However, those anxieties

related to the re-organization of NRC have lessened and most had adopted a "wait and see" attitude. Cutbacks in staffing have resulted in increased workloads per employee. This has contributed to marked increase in stress and tension for a number of professional employees.

✓ The very nature of NRC work already demands high standards of excellence both in thoroughness and accuracy. As a result of working with employees who are experiencing this heightened pressure, Ms. Sain again makes a strong recommendation that consideration be given to the introduction of Stress Management Training for employees in Region I. At the very least some simple relaxation training exercises could help teach employees how to prevent an excess of tension build-up. The counselor believes this would contribute to decreased loss of employee time due to stress-related sickness. CB?

### Region II

✓ Clients in this region are continuing to express some concern about the status of funding for NRC and the agency's re-organization. As detailed in the previous quarterly report, the majority of clients participating in the career counseling program are in clerical and administrative positions. There exists an ongoing concern about structured career paths within the organization. Without "bridge" positions, there appears to be no way to move out of the clerical field upwards without further extensive technical training.

✓ Mr. Nawyn again makes the strong recommendation that the agency consider the establishment of technical assistant "bridge" positions which would provide upward mobility for lower level employees. At the same time, if properly restructured, these positions involving researching information and completing inspection reports would free professional level employees' time making the organization's operation more cost effective.

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### Region III

Ms. Linhart submitted some brief comments in lieu of a report which will be forthcoming in two weeks and will be forwarded to NRC at that time.

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- She feels a need for a conference of regional counselors to provide direct communication and feedback to NRC.
  - She praises the support received from the personnel director at NRC and indicates there are 30 employees waiting for C-C in 1983.

#### Region IV

Ms. Jurgens found the higher level GS group (GS 13's & 14's) she worked with this quarter encouragingly less concerned about organizational changes within NRC than the clients whom she counseled this summer. Presumably communication has been good and employees are feeling more secure about the direction of the organization. Instead, the professional level employees were more concerned about meeting their career and personal developmental needs.

✓ For the lower level GS group (GS 4's and a GS 6), the most striking concern was the work load pressure. Time management concerns were relevant to both groups. With the higher level group the focus was on the need to find time for themselves in other areas of their lives, and these individuals found it difficult to change their patterns without feeling guilty. This higher level group also voiced concerns that their present work was not as rewarding as it had been in the past and that they did not have as much opportunity to use their technical skills to the degree they would like. (Many felt a lack of recognition from management for jobs done particularly well.) ✓ Some felt their supervisors showed little interest in their career development.

✓ The counselor addressed these concerns by encouraging individuals to take responsibility for their own career development and to reward themselves for excellence of work. *gon!*

Ms. Jurgens made the following specific recommendations:

- ✓ 1. Training in time management and goal setting. *AS*
- ✓ 2. Pre-Supervisory Training - this would provide employees with an opportunity to realistically assess their interest in becoming supervisors. *being done! see we talking to our Counselor*
- ✓ 3. Stress Management - pressure continues to be high on most employees. Stress management training would provide an opportunity to learn the best ways to handle pressure and keep functioning well. *CB*
- ✓ 4. Training of supervisors in career development of employees. Concerns in Region IV indicate this is needed now.
5. Increased clerical and administrative staff. Continuous overtime frequently leads to illness, attrition and poor morale. *TV as a building*
- ✓ 6. Development of Bridge Positions.
- ✓ 7. Continuance of Employee Career Counseling Program.



## Region V

Ms. Russ reports that the program in Region V continues to be beneficial to both the agency and individuals and a much appreciated opportunity. Many counselees from earlier quarters continue to keep Ms. Russ informed of their progress toward career goals identified or clarified in the career counseling. Those on the "waiting list" were pleased to note they would have an opportunity beginning in March 1983.

Ms. Russ believes that communication has improved and that administrative/management attention has been given to support staff concerns regarding training opportunities and assignments commensurate with their interests, skills and ambitions.

Although there are occasional expressions of discouragement and frustration about administrative indecisiveness, lack of commendations or action on reward recommendations, unclear lines of supervisory responsibility or lack of supervisory accountability, the overall feeling is positive about the way the agency is being administered under a director who "stands behind his staff."

Ms. Russ makes the following recommendations:

1. As Region V staff increases with the dispersal of headquarters staff, very careful planning and communication with existing and incoming staff is warranted to minimize morale problems and confusion.
- ✓ 2. Continued progress in the provision of or approval of training opportunities for administrative support staff.
3. Managers and administrators need to brainstorm ways of acknowledging work particularly well done or special efforts made to meet a tight deadline. Since people "keep going" on expressions of appreciation while they are around rather than after they are gone, those in a position to do so need to be aware of how to reward those extra efforts.

✓ In conclusion, we would strongly urge that the 5 regional career counselors meet at BEMW, Inc. for two days within the next couple of months. The interchange and opportunity to share learning, insights, creative approaches and ideas both with one another, the BEMW counseling staff and the MDTS would be an invaluable experience benefitting the agency, the regional career counselors and the NRC employees.

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