



BINDER, ELSTER, MENDELSON & WHEELER, INC.

Old Georgetown Building, Suite 202
4948 St. Elmo Avenue
Bethesda, Maryland 20014
(301)657-1898, (301)652-4983

February 29, 1984

Lillian Van Santen
MDTS
Maryland National Bank Building
Room 3201
Bethesda, MD

Dear Lillian,

BEMW, Inc. has appreciated the opportunity over the years to work with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission in providing the Career Counseling Program for their employees. We feel that it is an excellent program and has been appreciated by both the employees and MDTS.

Enclosed you will find the year-end report of the Career and Life Planning Program for the 1983-84 year.

BEMW, Inc. hopes to continue working with the NRC by providing a quality counseling program for its employees.

We will be happy to come and discuss this year-end report and the regional report after you have had an opportunity to study them. I will call you next week to set up a mutually convenient time for us to meet.

Sincerely,

Irene Mendelson

cc: Pete Goldman



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CAREER AND LIFE PLANNING COUNSELING PROGRAM

Conducted by BEMW, Inc.

Counseling and Training Associates

February 1, 1983 to January 30, 1984

for the

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Irene N. Mendelson

Project Director for BEMW, Inc.

Counseling and Training Associates

THE PROGRAM

From February 1, 1983 through January 30, 1984, BEMW, Inc., Counseling and Training Associates conducted a career and life planning counseling program for 123 persons: 62 men and 61 women. This program was under contract to the Management Development and Training ^{Branch} Branch of NRC . ✓

The individuals ranged in age from 21 to 61 and from grades 6 through 16. They were seen for a maximum of four fifty-minute individual sessions, a total of 475 hours.

The attitude of the counselees was one of appreciation and commitment. Regardless of sex and grade, few had ever had the opportunity to systematically examine their career goals. They used this chance to analyze their interests and skills and to plot directions for their future. The emphasis on understanding decision-making as a focal point in the career counseling process helped clients to plan steps to achieve career goals. ✓

Throughout this process the participants were reminded that self-reliance was essential --that they would leave the program having learned how to confront future choices and that this knowledge would give them flexibility about those aspects of their jobs and careers that they themselves were able to control. There was considerable emphasis on developing better communication skills between counselees and their co-workers and supervisors as an aid in career development and in life. ✓

THE NATURE OF THE COUNSELED POPULATION

Employees can be grouped into categories based on their primary need for counseling.

1. Those who had a pressing need to plan for the future. These individuals who make up over 50% of the counselees are very goal oriented, highly motivated and frequently self-directed. An additional component, however, has been the individuals who spoke of having gone as far as they could within the agency and having found themselves with neither further challenges nor places to advance. This element has become more acute with the impending regionalization.

2. Those who were anticipating retirement and wanted to begin planning for this eventuality. There has been an increase in the number of people considering early retirement. Many of these people who, in the past, would have stayed longer with the NRC, are now concerned about being faced with moving and other possible disruptive circumstances.

3. Those who were hopeful of changing jobs within the NRC through upward mobility or lateral moves. Some were interested in becoming supervisors as a possibility and were excited by the pre-supervisory course offered by the NRC.

4. Those who believed that they have been victims of age discrimination. There has been an increased number of men who believe they have been rejected for numerous jobs for which they considered themselves to have qualified. Younger people were seen to move into jobs for which they also had applied.

Others were persons in positions of high responsibility who felt they were not being considered for lateral moves because of their age.

5. Those who had few personal resources with which to begin gaining control over their lives. While these indi-

viduals were generally unhappy, their problems ranged from emotional problems to having severely limited intelligence. Many of the individuals who had limited intelligence found the counseling most helpful in validating their understanding of their own limitations and abilities. BEMW, Inc. has increasingly acted as a referral agent, educating NRC employees about community services for psychological, social, marital and financial counseling.

6. Those with no specific overriding concerns. Among the reasons these people requested counseling was curiosity and a general wish to discuss their careers to determine where there were any opportunities available to them. For the most part they simply needed an opportunity to validate the position in which they were staying. Many of these individuals participated in only one session.

SUMMARY AND OBSERVATIONS

The following comments can be made about the Career Counseling Program at Headquarters:

There was general agreement among the BEMW, Inc. , counselors that clients were generally more involved in the counseling process this year and were doing their homework more intensely.

Clients were involved with the counseling on a very personal level. Many have spoken about how much they value their job, but are resigned to the lower status of working in the government due to the downgrading of the civil service by the present administration.

Many talented employees are expressing lack of confidence in the future growth of the nuclear field and fear for their job security at the NRC. They are actively exploring other options. ✓

Clients especially appreciate the opportunity to work on their SF 171 on a one-to-one basis with a counselor. With limited job opportunities in the agency, this is one thing they feel they can do well to improve their job opportunities within the NRC.

Clients appreciate the coaching they have received in order to become more assertive in their job hunt and in presenting themselves in job interviews.

Clients report increased confidence in presenting themselves with their co-workers and with their supervisors.

Many clients have already taken steps in furthering their career plans. Note pages C and D in the following evaluation. Specific plans are listed.

Clients appreciate the opportunity to discuss the stress and anxiety they are feeling from the reorganization within the NRC.

There has been a noted increase in referrals to other psychological, social, and marital counseling services than in previous years, an indication of high stress. ✓

UMB is for supervisor ✓
Clients at all levels were seeking an avenue for growth in their jobs, as well as grade increases. The need to be challenged came up often as an antidote to the dead-ended feelings about their jobs.

Clients complained of lack of recognition by supervisors for tasks and projects well done. There appears to be a lack of both formal and informal commendations. The issue of ownership of projects and papers surfaced often in counseling sessions. Clients are expressing a desire to put their name on their projects to gain positive recognition.

RECOMMEDATIONS

BEMW, INC. recommends the continuation of training in the following areas:

- Training for managers in communicating new NRC directives to staff, a mandate for openness about any future agency plans that are known.
- Training of managers in giving positive feedback to employees and use of informal and formal commendations to increase worker motivation.
- Continuation of pre-supervisory courses. Employees appreciate the opportunity to explore the possibility of movement into management.
- Communication skills in general for employees at all levels. Some have indicated their inability to work at a maximally effective level because they have difficulty in stating their true opinions on important work issues.
- Communication training for foreign born staff members who aspire to management. This would entail English speaking and writing training. Many are seeking training in presentation skills.

BEMW, Inc. recommends the following suggestions to increase worker motivation:

- NRC could boost morale among some of its professional employees by permitting authors' names to go on the cover of written materials.

- Another morale booster would permit employees below grade 14 to attend professional meetings and present papers where appropriate. There were many comments about staff doing the work and the branch chiefs going to meetings and making presentations. This reported need has increased in the past year, demonstrating that work should be credited to the individual as well as the supervisor.

- As levels of stress continue to rise, stress management becomes an area of concern to the organization desiring a high level of output from its employees. Management should explore ways to meet this need, including the need for referral to services such as employee assistance programs.

- The establishment of rotations of service for low level GS 5 employees to broaden their prospective of the agency, promote career development, and reduce burnout.

- The establishment of rotations within departments, like Personnel, to broaden employees prospective of the function of the department, promote career development, and reduce stress and burnout.

APPENDICES

- I. Statistics
- II. Summary of Evaluations
- III. Actual Evaluations

APPENDIX I

TABLE ONE

Grade Level of Participants

Grade	Males 62	Females 61	Total 123
4		1	
5		4	
6	4	16	
7	1	9	
8	4	4	
9	1		
10			
11	5	3	
12	2	6	
13	10	9	
14	20	2	
15	11	1	
16	1		
No stats	3	6	
	<u>62</u>	<u>61</u>	

TABLE THREE

Number of Years of Government Service

No information	9
Less than one year	2
1 - 4 years	26
5 - 9 years	38
10 - 14 years	31
15 - 19 years	10
over 20 years	7
	<u>123</u>

TABLE TWO

Level of Education of Participants

	Male	Female
No statistics listed	3	6
Some High School		
High school graduate		13
Some college	3	13
College degree -BA, BS	17	18
Graduate degree-MA, MS, JD	25	7
Ph. D.	14	4
	<u>62</u>	<u>61</u>

TABLE FOUR

Age Range of Participants

21-30	27
31-40	47
41-50	27
51-60	11
Over 60	2
Unknown	9
	<u>123</u>

APPENDIX II

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES ON EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE INDIVIDUAL CAREER COUNSELING 1983 - 1984 (n=89)

Please rate your growth in the following areas:	<u>Very High</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>Very Low</u>
Increased awareness of your own abilities and limitations as they apply to your career goals	38	43	7		
Clarification of your career goals	26	49	12	1	
Knowledge of options available to you	22	40	22	3	1
Ability to make career-related decisions	22	48	22	1	
Job finding skills	17	40	32	4	
Confidence in making career-related decisions	17	40	32	4	

What other areas do you feel have been enhanced as a result of the career counseling?

28 Communications with supervisors and/or co-workers
76 Clarification of values and priorities
43 Knowledge of job and/or occupational requirements
25 Other (Specify) *

During or since counseling, have you taken specific steps in your own behalf toward realizing greater potential?

85 Yes 3 No

* See page B

Other areas that have been enhanced as a result of the career counseling.

- 7 knowledge of available options
- 4 know myself
- 2 awareness of personal interests
- 2 clarification of the purpose of a resume
- 2 preparation of a resume
- 5 increased self confidence
- 2 assertiveness
- better understanding of my family
- time management
- knowledge of adaptability of skills
- SF 171 writing
- job hunting skills
- achieving goals
- reinforcement of need for communication skills

If you have not, do you plan to?

3 Yes No

What do you plan to do?

If yes, check those appropriate:

- 41 Courses through NRC
40 Courses through an outside educational institution
23 Work toward a degree
47 Specific career investigation
35 Application for other jobs within NRC
31 Initiating communications with supervisors about career-related questions
5 Initiating work with PMA about opportunities within NRC
54 Exploring options outside NRC
38 Other (Specify) **

To what degree did you attain previously stated goals:

Much less than expected	1
Somewhat less than expected	6
Expected	49
Somewhat more than expected	77
Much more than expected	50

Goals attained which were previously unarticulated: ***

Yes: 11

No: -

** See page D

*** See list on page E

What do you plan to do?

5 update and improve my SF 171
5 take courses to enhance my credentials
2 pursue an advanced degree
2 keep up to date on job opportunities within NRC
2 consider owning my own business
2 contact potential employers
expand responsibilities in my present job
job hunt in other government agencies
find a job in NRC with more potential
develop a career plan
write an article for a professional magazine
join a professional organization
pass the bar exam
job hunt in a non-government area
explore jobs in the NRC's regions
network within and outside the NRC
improve my resume
take courses through OPM
learn more about NRC
take a speed reading course
get involved with local scientific societies

Goals previously unarticulated:

- 6 better understanding of myself
- 5 more confidence in myself and future goals
- 2 understanding of my personal likes and dislikes
- better perception of priorities
- time management for myself
- have learned to transfer skills into career options
- have gained more control of present job
- improved SF 171
- updated resume
- clarified goals
- developed new goals
- have established a business
- improved interviewing skills
- accepted a new position in NRC
- peace of mind