

## **Leadership 201 Action Learning Assignment**

### **Strategic Change Success Stories**

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In August 1999, 10 months into his tenure as Director, Chip Groat announced his Strategic Change initiative. Quoting from that announcement:

The success of the USGS depends on the quality and objectivity of our science and its demonstrated relevance to the Nation's needs. For our science programs to be preeminent we must ensure that our organization and management structure – and our use of our time, people, and financial resources – are focused on doing science, not just meeting about it....We are one bureau with one mission and need to act accordingly.

The Director's goals were to:

- Create a stronger sense of bureau identity;
- Build commitment to bureau-wide goals;
- Increase the profile and visibility of the USGS and its science; and
- Eliminate business-practice and operational barriers to scientific collaboration.

The Director established a Strategic Change team and charged them with making recommendations on how to achieve these broad goals. The team presented their report in December 1999. Since then we have been in the process of (or have completed) implementing the recommendations in the following areas: Customer Interactions, Program Planning, Common Business Practices, Administrative Functions and Reporting, Matrix Leadership, Workforce Skills, Communications, and Performance Measures.

Although Strategic Change is not often discussed today in the USGS, the components of it are still with us, and many of the changes, such as the implementation of common business practices, are still on-going. Many members of the ELT instinctively believe that the changes have been successful and that a number of our recent accomplishments can be attributed, at least in part, to the organizational change. However, in a science organization, empirical data (or at least credible anecdotal evidence) tends to make a more compelling case.

At the most recent ELT meeting, the Office of Communications was asked to compile a set of Strategic Change success stories for the Director and other members of the ELT to communicate throughout the organization. We want to remind employees why we embarked on the change process and to assure them that we have made improvements in the organization and are reaping the benefits. We also must help employees recognize that even though the mechanical process of Strategic Change may be completed, the benefits may not be fully realized for several years.

Your assignment (should you choose to accept it) is to review the documents that have been suggested as background, but most importantly to draw on your own and your colleagues' experiences to evaluate the USGS today:

- Are we in a better place today than we were three years ago?
- How can we share the vision of future benefits and focus attention on moving toward achieving them
- What successes can we attribute, directly or indirectly, to Strategic Change?
- How can we foster the culture changes required to enhance the benefit of all these process and systems changes?

Do not be constrained by seeking only the “big scientific breakthrough.” Accept the “small steps” as well as the “giant leaps”. For example, one of our recent congressional briefing series topics was fire science. The program lead for the briefing was from the biological resources discipline and the USGS speaker came from Water’s National Research Program -- a perfect example of the Director’s “One Bureau” vision.

Suggested readings:

- The Director’s Priorities
- The Strategic Change Message (August 10, 1999)
- Rationale for Change (August 1999)
- Strategic Change Team Report (December 17, 1999)
- Message from the Director (January 19, 2000)
- Strategic Change Progress Report (2000)

Please feel free to read these and any other materials you find of interest on the Strategic Change website.

[http://www.usgs.gov:8888/director/strategic\\_changes](http://www.usgs.gov:8888/director/strategic_changes)

# Action Learning Scenario:

## Strategic Change Success Stories

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### *Resources and Additional Information*

1. “One Bureau, One Mission, One Message” Strategic Change of the US Geological Survey
2. Chip Groat Memo #1: “Director’s Priorities”
3. Chip Groat Memo #2: “Strategic Change”
4. Chip Groat Memo #3: “Strategic Change” (One Mission, One Bureau: Organizational Changes to Facilitate Progress)
5. Chip Groat Memo #4: “Strategic Change- Additional Information”
6. Answers to Your Questions About Strategic Change
7. USGS Strategic Change: Rationale for Change
8. Strategic Change Progress Report Calendar Year 2000
9. Memo from Kathy Clement: “Feedback on Strategic Change”
10. Message from the Director #1, January 2000: Strategic Change Decisions
11. Message from the Director #2, January 2000: Strategic Change Decisions
12. USGS Strategic Change Implementation Timeline
13. Strategic Change Team Topics
14. Chip Groat Memo #5: “Charge”
15. Chip Groat Memo #6: “Implementing Strategic Changes”