Working within the matrix at USGS

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Addressing the issue

So, is it really possible to manage change in EMEH or any other program in the current USGS matrix model?

Addressing the issue

- The ultimate success or failure of the matrix structure is predicated on the ability to get work done at the center level, whether coordinated by RD's, program managers, or mission areas

- We are a data-driven agency, but decisions are being made in the absence of data

- Communication and collaboration are essential to effectively manage and use limited resources.

The Question

Can you manage change in EMEH in the current USGS matrix model?

The Problem

Funding source and staffing decisions are not aligned

The Result

Inability to meet needs at different levels

(The Assumption)

We're dealing only with appropriated funding sources flowing from programs to regions

Conclusion 1:
Roles and responsibilities are poorly understood at various organizational levels

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Recommendations:

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Recommendations:

- Roles and responsibilities need to be defined at every level
- Disseminate roles and responsibilities
- Update or create 'user manuals' for Center Directors, Program Coordinators, and ELT members so as to avoid loss of institutional memory or role knowledge in an era of revolving doors and acting assignments (this also enhances efficacy of Continuity of Operations planning)

Conclusion 2:
Ineffective communication among components of the matrix

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Recommendations:

- Consider having AD's and RD's report to the same person (Director or Deputy Director); this maintains basic matrix structure at lower levels while closing communication loop and ensuring that one person at top is getting info from both sides of the shop.

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- Assess communication efficacy across components of the matrix to identify missing links

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- Consider implementing reciprocal details between programs and regions as a mechanism to better align matrix components

Conclusion 3: Staffing/hiring decisions are inconsistent across Centers and Regions, and opaque to the Programs

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Recommendations:

- Develop workforce plans at centers and regions, then share with programs to ensure program priorities are met. Workforce plan should include:
  - Current capacity
  - Gaps of expertise
  - Future needs at Centers, Regions, and Programs

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- Develop workforce plans at centers and regions, then share with programs to ensure program priorities are met. Workforce plan should include:
    - Current capacity
    - Gaps of expertise
    - Future needs at Centers, Regions, and Programs
- Bring in dedicated program analysts at the mission level

Conclusion 4: Program-level organization and funding flow are not transparent or available

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Recommendations:

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- Assess funding flow through the matrix
  - Is the pipeline leaky or does it flow to the intended sources?
  - Is the linkage between funding and staffing transparent?

Conclusion 5: Programmatic vision and goals are often unknown at the level at which the vision will be executed

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Recommendations:

- Institute annual production of concise guidance on short-term programmatic priorities and long-term programmatic vision. Ensure that guidance gets to the PI level.

That's a lot of recommendations…..

Our top 5

- Roles and responsibilities need to be defined at every level
- Assess communication efficacy across components of the matrix to identify missing links
- Develop workforce plans at centers and regions, then share with programs to ensure program priorities are met
- Provide org chart with contacts down to program level
- Institute annual production of concise guidance on short-term programmatic priorities and long-term programmatic vision

Tools Used

- Polarity Map
- Visual Explorer
- Whack Pack
- (Really) Forced Connections
- Thinking Hats
- Brainstorming (Yell-and-Slap-It)
- Brainwriting for I's
- Caffeine

Personal takeaways

Breakthrough Moments

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- During our diverging stage, we had a breakthrough via use of the Brain Writing tool, allowing us to cross the desert and reach the promised land

- When we realized that all of our 'we need more information on this topic' lines could be re-phrased as conclusions and associated recommendations

Special thanks to Kim for leading us through the wilderness