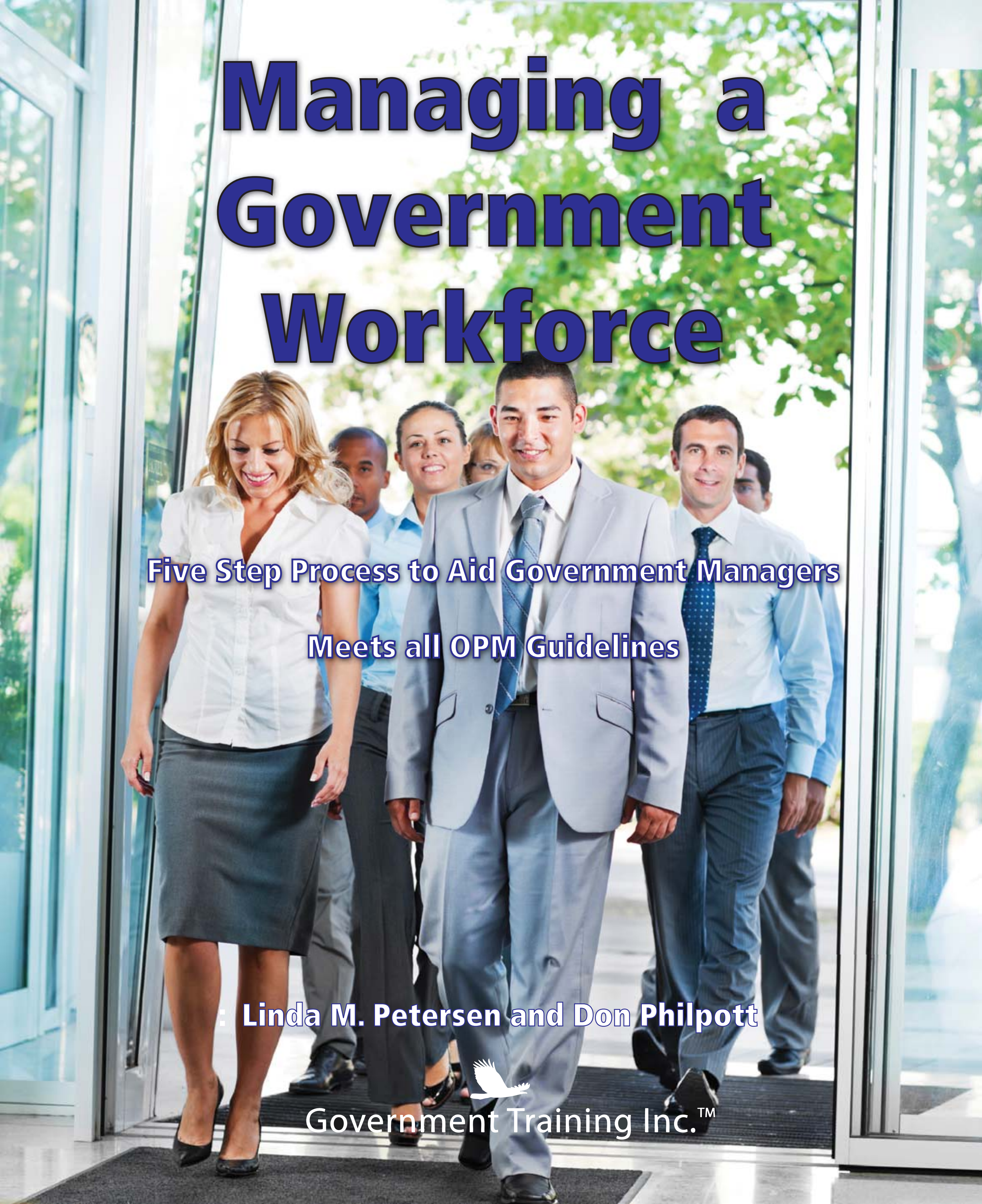

Managing a Government Workforce

Five Step Process to Aid Government Managers

Meets all OPM Guidelines

Linda M. Petersen and Don Philpott

Government Training Inc.™

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Symbols

Throughout this book you will see a number of icons displayed. The icons are there to help you as you work through the Six Step process. Each icon acts as an advisory – for instance alerting you to things that you must always do or should never do. The icons used are:

This is something that you must always do

This is something you should never do

Really useful tips

Points to bear in mind

Have you checked off or answered everything on this list?

About the Author

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Linda Petersen is a recently retired Federal senior executive with over 36 years of human resources experience. She is the Director of LMP Associates, LLC, a consulting company providing a wide range of services in human resources management. Services include guidance and assistance in organizational restructuring; planning, directing, organizing, oversight, management and administration of human resources programs; workforce and succession planning; and recruitment and staffing strategies.

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Introduction

Definition of Reduction in Force

The term Reduction in Force (RIF) is used by government and corporate human resources departments to describe the process of reducing the organization's workforce. For the federal government, RIF is defined as a lack of work, funds or insufficient FTE ceiling that result in employee separation, demotion or furlough for more than 30 days (or more than 22 discontinuous days). The process for determining the methods of reduction is a complicated one and requires much thought and planning. The process also has to comply with the many governing regulatory and legal requirements.

Coverage/Content of Book

This handbook uses an easy-to-follow five-step process that corresponds to the reshaping process, starting with developing, reviewing and analyzing mission requirements and finishing with post-RIF tools, such as the Career Transition Assistance Plan. These major steps fall into two areas of responsibility – management and human resources.

RIF Actions and Reasons

A personnel action must be effected under RIF procedures when both the action to be taken and the reason for the action are covered by the RIF regulations. An action that meets one, but not both, conditions, is not a RIF action and must be taken under other appropriate authority. "Action to be taken" is the release of an employee from a RIF competitive level by:

- Separation;
- Demotion;

- Furlough for more than 30 continuous days or more than 22 discontinuous workdays; or
- Reassignment requiring displacement in first-round RIF competition (i.e., competition to remain in the same competitive level) or in second-round competition (i.e., competition to displace a lower-standing employee in a different competitive level).

"Reason for the action" is:

- Lack of work;
- Shortage of funds;
- Insufficient personnel ceiling;
- Reorganization;
- An individual's exercise of reemployment rights or restoration rights; or
- Reclassification of an employee's position due to erosion of duties when this action will take effect after an agency has formally announced a RIF in the employee's competitive area, and the RIF will take effect within 180 days.

Management's Role and Responsibilities

- Developing, Reviewing and Analyzing Mission Requirements;
- Identifying Critical Management Considerations When Reshaping;
- Minimizing the Need for RIF as a Result of Reshaping;
- Deciding Whether to Implement a RIF; and
- Communicating the Reshaping Effort

Human Resources' (HR) Role and Responsibilities

- Establishing a RIF Team;
- Taking Preliminary Actions;
- Preparing and Using Retention Registers;
- Determining Rights to Other Positions;
- Issuing RIF Notices; and
- Counseling Employees on Procedures and Options

> There are five critical management considerations before beginning RIF implementation:

1. **SCOPE**. The size and type of the cutback affects the tools used and the amount of time with which to work. What is the size of the cutback? Is it budget-driven, program-related, or required in order to meet restructuring goals?

2. **TIMING.** The time available to effect the cutbacks will dictate the strategies. The more time one has, the better, and the less likely the need for drastic measures such as reductions in force. Sometimes waiting will compound the budget or full-time equivalent (FTE) problem, so it is important to line up the strategies and look at the timeframe.
3. **TARGETING.** It is important to identify where the cuts need to be made. Concentrate the tools and strategies on that population.
4. **FLEXIBILITY.** Do not rule out any strategy at the start. Do not over-promise on things that are not deliverable later. Monitor progress carefully and closely, but do not hesitate to change approaches or methods. Ensure that actions are in line with the agency vision.
5. **MULTIPLE STRATEGIES.** There is no one solution. There are many combinations of tools and strategies to carry out restructuring. Reduction in force should not be the first alternative; instead, reduction in force should be the last resort for both the agency and its employees.

A successful reshaping of an organization is designed by the stakeholders it affects. Identify the stakeholders and, if possible, involve them in every step. The numbers of stakeholders and the extent of their involvement will vary by agency. Each stakeholder group can contribute; if left out of the process, the effectiveness of the restructuring may be diminished.