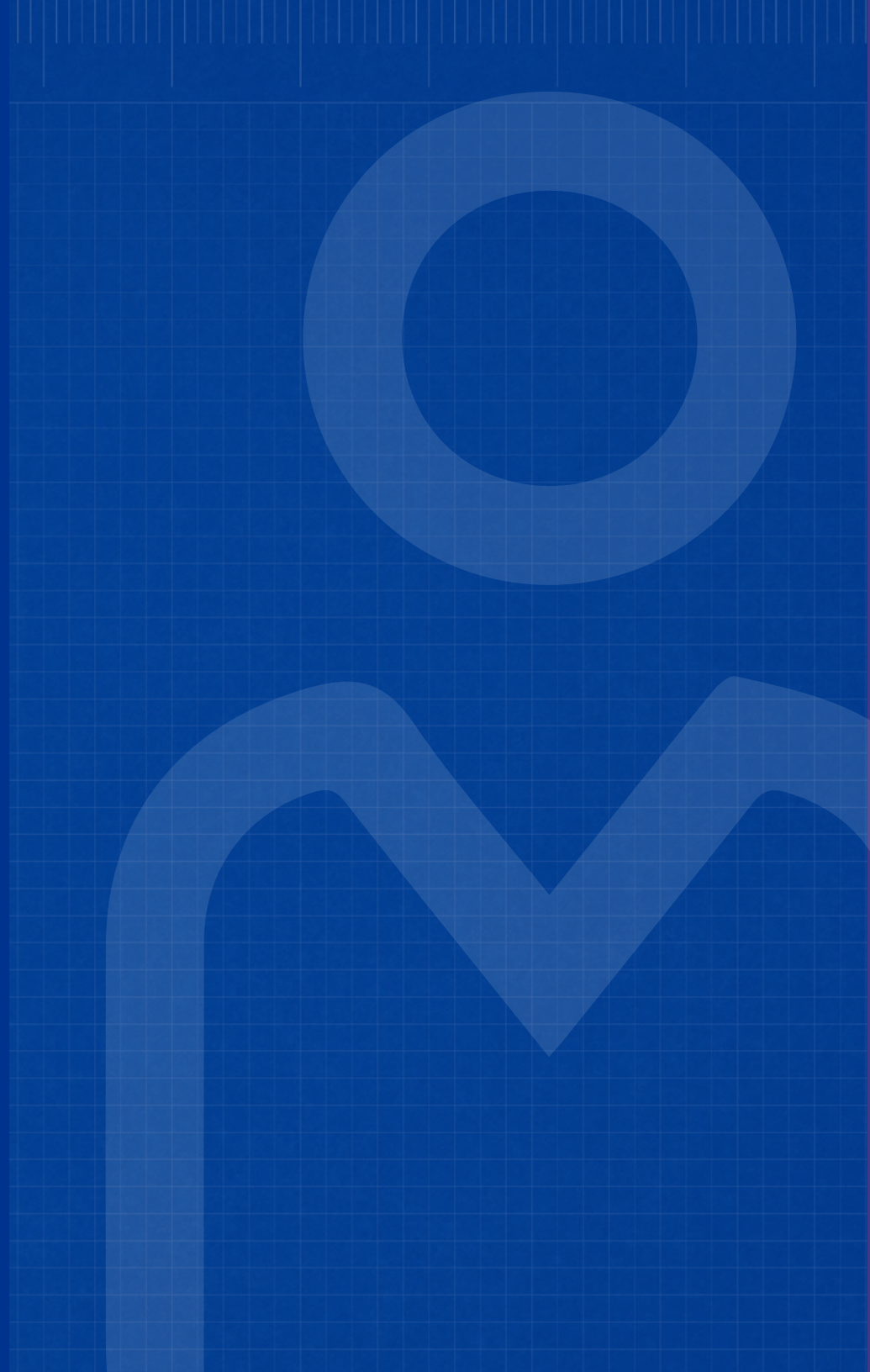




# Building the Workforce of Tomorrow

3 Easy Ways to  
Supercharge  
Modernization





Building a forward-looking government requires modernization, yet the public sector frequently uses antiquated HR practices and continues to lag in technology adoption. In the interest of modernizing and reinvigorating the public sector, how can federal and municipal governments make use of recent advances in technology to their advantage?

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Human capital is arguably the most valuable asset to the federal government. Civil servants are the body by which the government provides critical services to the general public; yet, those within the public sector frequently find themselves confined to **antiquated and rigid HR policies**. It seems as if this approach has caught up to federal and local agencies, with **low hiring levels among under-30's** and growing numbers of retirement-eligible employees depicting a forthcoming personnel gap within the workplace. If federal agencies seek to retain their competitive advantage against adversaries, then they must modernize.

This was the topic of discussion during the first installment of the **“Blueprints for a Modern Government”** series, presented by KPMG and hosted by George Jackson, director of events at GovExec. During the discussion, federal leaders from across the government spoke about the challenges they've experienced in modernizing their workforce and the tools that helped them find solutions along the way.

Here are three key takeaways from their discussion.

1. A New Era in Hiring Is Here: Use Digital Tools to Tap Remote Talent Pools
2. Workforce Collaboration Now Requires Intentionality: Use Digital Tools to Your Benefit
3. Predict, Retrain, Retain: Use Data Analytics to Help Upskill Talented Employees to Recognize These Threats





# 1 A New Era in Hiring Is Here: Use Digital Tools to Tap Remote Talent Pools

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One of the easiest ways to modernize an agency is to bring in fresh blood, however, it's no secret that the federal government struggles to hire young, qualified talent.

"It is something that has existed for the last 20 years, I don't think it's anything new. There's been less people who are wanting to go into public service and there's more people that are competing for students who are coming out of college and there's data that shows that people who don't start in public service with government directly, it's difficult to transition mid-career," said Quimby Kaizer, Principal, Advisory, Transformation Delivery at KPMG LLP.

Fortunately, recent advances in technology and the overall acceptance of telework within the federal government can help agencies overcome this challenge as agencies no longer are limited to where they can establish talent pools.

"We're far away from D.C., and it's hard getting that talent pool that you may have here. But with telework and the ability to work virtually, we've been able to extend our net to reach out to talent that we would've never been able to get before," said Glenn Jones, Activity Command Information Officer and Information Technology Division Director for the Department of the Navy's Navy Sea Systems Command Naval Surface Warfare Center Dahlgren Division. "Because of this whole

new telework environment, we're now in the game when it comes to competing for top talent."

Public sector organizations looking to extend their net — similar to how Jones' organization had done — can use digital platforms and practices like USA Jobs and targeted social media advertising to initially expand their reach.

Agencies skeptical about the benefits of targeted social media advertising — or online advertising in general — should know that **a recent study** found that Generation Z demands a tech-first approach from their employers. With this in mind, federal agencies need to shake off the dust, put away the billboard adverts and meet their potential employees on the platform of their choice: their phones.

"We're in a new era when it comes to public service," said Jones.

“There's been less people who are wanting to go into public service and there's more people that are competing for students who are coming out of college.”

**Quimby Kaizer**

Principal, Advisory, Transformation Delivery  
KPMG LLP



# 2 Workforce Collaboration Now Requires Intentionality: Use Digital Tools to Your Benefit

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Before the pandemic, interpersonal activities within federal agencies and private organizations were a given; employees expected to walk into the office and be able to monitor progress, collaborate and build relationships all with relative ease.

“In the past, we thought about people, process and technology — and maybe the people agenda wasn’t as prominent,” Kaizer explained. Prior to the pandemic, federal agencies took a keen interest in focusing on optimizing workflows and integrating technology into operations. However, now, as federal agencies look to modernize and adapt to the changing demands of a disparate workforce, agencies need to make an intentional shift toward people-centric management.

Luckily, federal agencies have many tools at their disposal to help facilitate a shift toward people-centric management.

“We utilize collaboration tools a lot. Two years ago, they didn’t exist for the organization, but as a supervisor, you can actually drop in. You have to be more intentional about it, but you drop in on your employees via chats,” said Jones, who recounted how digital collaboration tools helped facilitate a more human-centered management approach within his organization.

For federal agencies looking to follow in Jones’ footsteps, tools like Slack, Google Drive, Trello and Mural — **all approved for use by the General Services Administration** — are just a few examples of tools that can help establish a people-centric approach without ever having to walk into the office.

“It may not be the warm and fuzzy [feeling] that you get onsite, but you can still have some of that serendipity via collaboration tools,” said Jones.



# 3 Predict, Retrain, Retain: Use Data Analytics to Help Upskill Talented Employees

On average, the **median number of years employees stay at their jobs in the public sector is about 6.5 years** — but this number is rapidly declining. Due to the personal nature of resignations, it is impossible to discern a singular reason as to why employees are leaving the government — and thus it can be hard to prevent. However, agencies can work to remedy this by using data analytics to predict, retrain and retain those at risk of leaving the organization.

“Health and Human Services, has very deliberately identified using analytics and data to support those predictive analytics on who’s going to potentially leave the organization and what are the predictors, what are the factors that may prompt that to happen,” said Kaizer. From there, the HHS uses the gathered data to notify managers and put the information “in the hands of people who have the ability to do something with it.”

In addition to helping agencies retain talented individuals, data analytics can help upper management identify and train or retrain talent, which is of significant concern to individuals like Clifton Peay, Director of Customer-focused Government for the State of Tennessee.

“How are we going about identifying talent? How are we going about providing the right training so that they have those opportunities? There’s the

saying that you can’t be what you can’t see. And I think the way that our workforce is structured there are some challenges [in identifying talent],” said Peay.

Ultimately these **data analytics tools and services** can help agencies cash in on their human capital by allowing them to become more predictive, more productive and more proactive in providing services to their constituents.

“If we just take the time to identify and try to foster those individuals within our environment ... I think from an enterprise-level that will help us continue to be one, the employer of choice, and two, for us to continue to provide these critical services that our citizens rely on and desperately need,” said Peay.

“There’s the saying that you can’t be what you can’t see. And I think the way that our workforce is structured there are some challenges [in identifying talent].”

**Clifton Peay**

Director of Customer-Focused Government  
for the State of Tennessee

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