

**Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA):
Development of Integrated, Automated Workforce Assessment and
Planning Systems for Special Agents**

Intended Results

DEA's Goals:

- Identification of critical work activities and competencies needed for effective performance at all Special Agent job levels, based on rigorous job analytic procedures.
- Evaluation of Special Agent training curricula at all levels to ensure critical competencies are effectively trained and appropriately emphasized in training.
- Redesign of assessment processes used to assess readiness of Special Agents for supervisory and managerial positions, with goals of streamlining, modernizing, automating, and increasing efficiency and cost effectiveness of processes.

Achieved Results

PDRI achieved the following results:

- Special Agent jobs at all levels (entry through management) analyzed using workforce surveys to identify critical competencies and work activities necessary to perform effectively.
- Training curricula evaluated to identify potential gaps in extent to which critical competencies are taught effectively and given proper emphasis in training.
- Automated assessment processes developed that included interactive video-based supervisory/managerial judgment exercises and in-basket work simulations.
- IT systems for administering assessments developed and successfully implemented at DEA facility that included web-based tutorials, platforms for administering assessments, and databases for capturing and storing data.
- Assessments provided a valid, reliable, and standardized basis for assessing competency levels and making promotion decisions.
- Assessment processes focused on critical skills and competencies that were fully aligned with other human capital systems, for example, performance management and training.
- Assessment results provided feedback to candidates that facilitated identification and remediation of performance and competency gaps.
- Assessment processes successfully administered to hundreds of Special Agents each year; PDRI runs the assessment processes, including logistics, management, and training of all administrators and assessors.
- Exercise scoring processes and generation of feedback reports automated to ensure accuracy and decrease the administrator and contractor time required to produce them.
- Redesigned, automated processes significantly reduced the overall costs of the assessment process.
- Assessment processes deemed by expert oversight Committee, including OPM psychologists, to comply with legal and professional standards necessary to withstand legal challenges.
- All products and services delivered on schedule and within budget.

PDRI successfully utilized its standard project management process to perform this work. Specific challenges related to the current project included:

- An aggressive timeline for developing the automated assessments. Due to delays in getting monies approved for the automated systems, PDRI had to deliver the new systems in significantly less time than originally planned. PDRI worked in a focused, creative, and effective manner with DEA and the subcontractors to deliver the systems in the reduced time available.
- The need to convince some high level constituents about the value of the automated systems.
- The need to incorporate feedback early and often. PDRI used rapid prototyping so that stakeholders would have a concrete understanding of deliverables as early as possible.
- The need to be responsive and satisfy both DEA and a committee of assessment experts appointed to oversee the work.
- Use of customer personnel and facilities. Developed a breakdown of requirements and schedule to facilitate coordination with customer personnel.