Overview of the Talent Management Issues:

Governing Magazine reports (4): “In the Center for State and Local Government Excellence’s latest annual workforce survey, government human-resources managers cite staff development, succession planning, employee morale and retaining staff for core services as their top issues. Those issues were rated as greater concerns than compensation and health-care and retirement-plan costs.” “Competition from the private sector is stiff. Governments have much to offer, but they need do a better job of getting the message out.”

NASPO (1) Research reports this about talent required to perform public procurement: “The new procurement professional will need to possess a skill set greatly different from that of a few years ago. They are no longer just processing transactions. They are required to think strategically and critically. They are being asked to look deeper at issues and to analyze a myriad of elements for each decision they make. They face many new legal, ethical, social, technological, public perception, and environmental challenges and issues. They are required to listen to their stakeholders and to incorporate new ideas into their everyday responsibilities. They are taking on more tasks and documenting their actions and decisions for the benefit of future generations. They are required to be technologically savvy. In general, the position of the procurement professional has been elevated to one requiring a higher level skill set and one that leads to greater expectations for achievement and success.”

Recruit Talent: How could you find, interview, and select talent?

NASPO (1) Research reports: “In response to”… “challenges, what types of educational backgrounds, experiences, expertise and overall skill sets will this procurement professional of the future require? Not surprisingly, some of the desired traits in the future will mirror some of the general capabilities that have long been required of a procurement officer. Procurement has always required individuals to possess general office skills, communication and writing skills, and the ability to comprehend procedures and implement policies that comply with the various laws and rules that accompany public sector transactions. These skills will remain a requirement of the profession. However, the new procurement professional will also need to be adept at communicating with high-level managers, analyzing business problems, identifying alternatives in purchasing goods or services and acquiring an understanding of market conditions, industry trends and the technical details of the commodities and services being procured.”

As defined by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management: Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs) are the attributes required to perform a job and are generally demonstrated through qualifying service, education, or training.

1. Knowledge - Is a body of information applied directly to the performance of a function.
2. Skill - Is an observable competence to perform a learned psychomotor act.
3. Ability - Is competence to perform an observable behavior or a behavior that results in an observable product.

Public procurement skills listed in a report on “…Standardized Job Descriptions for the Profession” for the NCPPC (2):

1. Procurement Administration
2. Sourcing
3. Negotiation Process
4. Contract Administration
5. Supply Management
6. Strategic Procurement Planning
Retain Talent: How could you keep talent interested in staying with your Office?

To move towards “Becoming Employer of Choice” Frank Benest writes in an ICMA feature (5): “Providing competitive salaries and benefits is necessary but insufficient for attracting and retaining talented employees. Assuming that organizations provide good wages and benefits, they will either win or lose the war for talent based on organizational culture. In fact, a positive and engaging organizational culture must be viewed and marketed as part of the benefits packet.” ....”just as new talent is wooed as part of the recruitment process, existing employees must be reengaged as part of an ongoing process. Re-recruitment involves engaging employees in conversations and dialogues about the vision and goals of the organization; conducting “stay interviews” with employees regarding their individual hopes, dreams, and values and possible ways to fulfill their aspirations; offering people concrete opportunities to stretch and grow; and generally engaging them as part of an agency’s evolving “story.” Re-recruitment helps retain talented employees even though they could go elsewhere.”

In order to retain top talent, according to an article in Government Procurement Magazine (3), Ms. Jean Clark writes “To gain and retain top talent for your procurement organization, each procurement-leader must embrace change, continuous improvement, technology, and continuous learning and advancement. Without such a forward-thinking, transformative focus, the path is clear — you’ll struggle to gain and then to retain “top talent.” The struggle will dramatically impact your overall organizational performance.”

Develop Talent: How could you invest in improving the KSA’s of your talent?

Governing Magazine reports (4): “Investing in employees by helping them develop new skills not only benefits governments but also shows workers that they are valued. Offering cross-cutting assignments appeals to younger workers who are eager to gain experience and a bigger picture of organizational challenges.”

With face to face, webinar and on-line learning formats, NIGP: The Institute for Public Procurement (7) enables you to meet your need to learn the skills identified in the above “Recruit Talent” section. The Institute’s “Learning Central” web page indicates that it has been “Developing, supporting and promoting the public procurement profession through premier educational and research programs, professional support, technical services and advocacy initiatives that benefit members and constituents since 1944.”

A few of the Universities with public procurement/contract management courses:

- Florida Atlantic University (Florida)
- Old Dominion University (Virginia)
- The Ohio State University (Ohio)

Reward Talent: How could you offer different types of compensation to your talent?

Salary: Below is a listing of five job titles and the annual salary ranges identified in a survey and report on “…Standardized Job Descriptions for the Profession” for the NCPPC (2):

- Chief Procurement Officer: $90,000 - $124,999
- Procurement Manager: $60,000 - $124,999
- Procurement Analyst: $40,000 - $79,000
- Buyer: $30,000 - $100,000
- Procurement Assistant: $20,000 - $69,999
- Ranges within Ranges varied by job responsibilities
Benefits: A host of benefits listed on several public sector websites included the usual “retirement and medical, dental, vision and life insurances” at various employer and employee contribution levels. Some public sector websites also listed “flexibility and telecommuting for work/life balance,” “family” benefits in terms of childcare tax credits, “generous” leave allowances, and “health and wellness” programs.

Encourage Performance: How could you motivate talent to great performance?

Recognition: According to the Federal Office of Personnel Management (6), “A chief reason why some popular awards, such as vacation travel, automobiles, and expensive sports and leisure merchandise are not appropriate is because our awards are paid for not with private corporate revenues but with public monies. Even though the awards are not cash, some costs are involved and must be managed. In the past, some agencies have been subjected to severe Congressional scrutiny of their nonmonetary award programs, including their costs.”

“Generally, agencies make appropriate use of their honorary recognition authority by:
• granting formal, honorary awards for significant achievements;
• providing informal recognition items; and
• holding ceremonies and recognition events.”

Ensure Accountability How could you measure talent performance/competence?

According to the Federal Office of Procurement Management (OPM) (8), “Public sector organizations find themselves in a time in which the demand for services has increased, the expectation for quality service is high, and the accountability for results is exceptional. Agencies must be results-driven, citizen-centered, and market-based. In an effort to improve and enhance organizational effectiveness and to drive Federal agencies toward becoming high performing organizations, we work with agencies to develop workforce and succession planning processes at local and national levels.

“…To become a high performing organization requires an investment in the people working in the organization and an understanding of customer and stakeholder needs…”

“…Performance Management (PM) is more than the end of year appraisal. It’s about translating goals into results. Performance Management focuses not only on individual employees, but also on teams, programs, processes and the organization as a whole. A well-developed PM program addresses individual and organizational performance matters necessary to properly create and sustain a healthy and effective results-oriented culture…”
Sources: (check them out to learn MORE)


5. ICMA International City/County Management Association Publication Feature: Retaining and Growing Talent: Strategies to Create Organizational "Stickiness" by Frank Benest.  Web Address: http://webapps.icma.org/pm/9009/public/feature2.cfm?author=Frank%20Benest&title=Retaining%20and%20Growing%20Talent%3A%20Strategies%20to%20Create%20Organizational%20%26quot%3BStickiness%26quot%3B

