



**2008 Organizational Assessment Survey  
Comments/Content Analysis Report**

**Submitted to  
USDA Grain Inspection, Packers and  
Stockyards Administration (GIPSA)**

**October 2008**

**Marangeli Muñoz-Muetzel, Ph.D.  
Beckie E. Vischulis, M.S.**

**UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT**



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**INTRODUCTION**

During September and October 2008, personnel research psychologists from the Division for Human Resources Products and Services of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) conducted the Organizational Assessment Survey (OAS) for the USDA Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA).

OPM psychologists designed the OAS to provide agencies with a standardized instrument for assessing organizational climate. The survey is based on a comprehensive literature review and assesses dimensions of climate that organizational theory, research, and practice indicate to be related to organizational effectiveness. The OAS can help agencies maximize positive outcomes, such as employee retention and customer satisfaction, by acting on results and implementing improvements.

In addition to standard multiple-choice items, the OAS survey contained two open-ended questions asking employees to provide comments to agency leadership. These questions supplement the statistical survey results and provide additional insight into the opinions of USDA Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) employees. This report presents the responses to these questions.

**METHODOLOGY**

The 2008 USDA Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) OAS asked employees to respond to two open-ended questions:

Strength question: *“Please use the following space to describe what your organization is doing well. Your individual response to this item will be reported to your agency leadership. Please do not include any information that could identify a particular individual, including yourself.”*

Improvement question: *“Please use the following space to describe what you would like to see your organization change. Your individual response to this item will be reported to your agency leadership. Please do not include any information that could identify a particular individual, including yourself.”*

Approximately 192 responses to the comment items were analyzed using content analysis methodology. Each comment was coded as representing one or more of 21 categories, first using software with dictionaries developed specifically for the OAS, then reviewed and reallocated when necessary by personnel research psychologists. The categories consist of the 17 OAS dimensions, plus the following additional categories: Location, People, Work, and Contractors. Definitions of these categories are presented below:

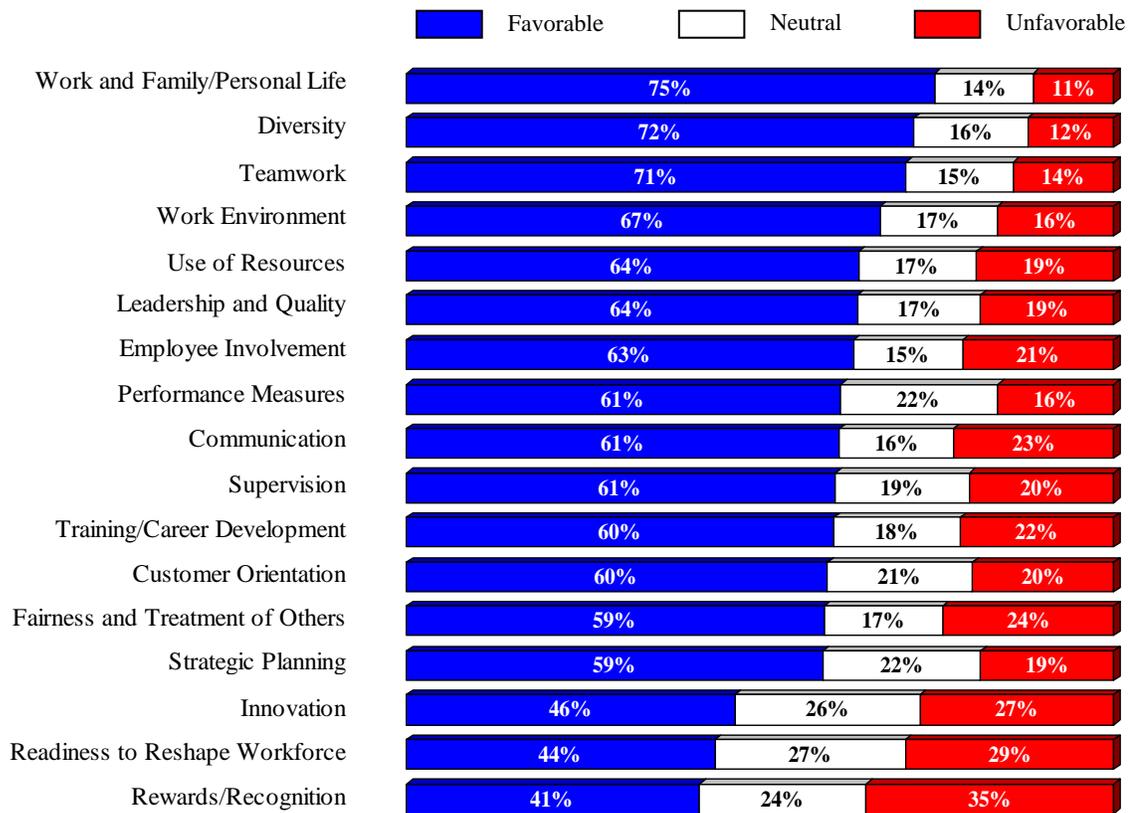
1. **Leadership and Quality** – Management promotes continuous improvement by setting performance goals and communicating the mission, vision, and values of the organization.
2. **Training/Career Development** – Employees are provided with continuous education and learning opportunities for effective job performance and career development.
3. **Innovation** – Creativity and risk-taking in adapting to change are encouraged and rewarded.
4. **Customer Orientation** – Employees are empowered to provide high-quality products and services, while soliciting feedback necessary to respond to customer needs and expectations.
5. **Rewards/Recognition** – Rewards are diverse, related to organizational values, linked to performance, and perceived as fair by employees.
6. **Fairness and Treatment of Others** – The rights of all employees to a fair and respectful work environment are protected by promoting trust and providing a fair dispute resolution system.
7. **Communication** – There is free exchange of information upward, downward, and horizontally to meet the need for effective performance and mission accomplishment.
8. **Employee Involvement** – Organizational emphasis is placed on involvement and participation in work design and decision-making.
9. **Use of Resources** – Necessary resources, including well-trained employees, are available and allocated to ensure effective performance.
10. **Work Environment** – Physical harm in the workplace is prevented through facilities that are conducive to safe and effective work, along with programs that encourage good health.
11. **Work and Family/Personal Life** – Flexible work schedules, leave, and other programs and policies that help employees balance work, family, and personal life needs are supported.
12. **Teamwork** – Teamwork is encouraged within units and across functions.
13. **Readiness to Reshape Workforce** – There is commitment to the morale and effectiveness of employees by emphasizing job security and training.
14. **Strategic Planning** – With an orientation toward the future, organizational leaders monitor and respond to the realities and requirements of the external environment.
15. **Performance Measures** – Information is regularly collected on employee and organizational performance and used for benchmarking, standard setting, and quality improvement.
16. **Diversity** – Differences in employee backgrounds, perspectives, and attitudes are valued by embracing programs that promote tolerance and equal opportunity across the broadest ethnic, racial, religious, and cultural groupings.
17. **Supervision** – Supervisors clearly communicate goals, priorities, and standards, provide constructive feedback and guidance, and give fair performance evaluations.
18. **Location** – Benefits or problems associated with the physical location of the office.
19. **People** – Individuals in the organization (without references to Teamwork, Supervision, or Leadership).
20. **Work** – Aspects of the work itself.
21. **Contractors** – Issues related to contractors.

In addition to coding comments into these 21 dimensions, comments were divided into positives and negatives. Comments were considered positive when they contained a positive statement about one of the 21 dimensions, and negative when they contained either a negative statement or a suggestion for improvement about one of the dimensions. Most comments were coded in multiple dimensions (i.e., positive Customer Orientation, negative Supervision). The term “coding” refers to the assignment of a comment to a particular dimension, positive or negative.

## OAS RESULTS

USDA Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) 2008 OAS results are summarized in the bar graph below. The blue sections on the left side of the bars represent “percent favorable” responses: a combination of “strongly agree” and “agree” responses. The white sections in the middle of the bars represent “neither agree nor disagree” responses. The red sections on the right side of the bars represent “percent unfavorable” responses: a combination of “strongly disagree” and “disagree” responses. The graph is presented to provide a context for interpreting the results of this content analysis.

**Percent Favorable Responses by OAS Dimension**



## CONTENT ANALYSIS RESULTS

Thirty-five percent (95/268) of survey respondents provided comments to the strength question. Also, 36% (97/268) of survey respondents provided comments to the improvement question. Although the strength question is designed to elicit positive comments, and the improvement question is designed to elicit negative comments, many respondents made negative statements when answering the strength question, and vice-versa when answering the improvement question. Therefore, these percentages do not necessarily reflect the number of positive or negative codings. Rather, 46% (n = 168) of the codings were positive, and 54% (n = 194) of the codings were negative.

The following graph displays the content analysis results. The blue upper bars represent the total number of positive codings in each dimension divided by the total number of positive codings in all dimensions (n = 168). The red lower bars represent the total number of negative codings in each dimension divided by the total number of negative codings in all dimensions (n = 194).

### Summary of Positive and Negative Codings by OAS Dimension

