



## Coast Guard HR Flag Voice 173

### HOW WILL THE ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT SURVEY (OAS) HELP?

**I recently received an e-mail from an officer with a lot of experience in human resources, but the question could be asked by anyone.** The gist of it was *So what? What will we do with the OAS results that we haven't tried to do before?* Here are a couple of excerpts. I paraphrased and reordered in places to maintain the intent of the writer:

“In the late 60s Dr. Frederick Herzberg published a paper on the methods of motivating employees -- with the ultimate goal being that they motivate themselves. Key to his study was the finding that the

‘factors involved in producing job satisfaction (and motivation) are separate and distinct from the factors that lead to job dissatisfaction. Since separate factors need to be considered ... it follows that these two feelings are not opposites of each other. The opposite of job satisfaction is not job dissatisfaction but rather no job satisfaction; and similarly, the opposite of job dissatisfaction is not job satisfaction, but no job dissatisfaction.’

Job satisfaction factors are: achievement, recognition for achievement, the work itself, responsibility and growth. Job dissatisfaction factors are: policy, supervision, working conditions, salary, status and security.

I believe that the CG acts as if they were opposites -- i.e. what is not satisfying must be dissatisfying, and vice versa. Why is this observation important? By all accounts we're a top-performing agency, with a patriotic mission and a solid strategy to replace our aging infrastructure. But I also see a huge gap between our potential and our performance.

A typical response to the survey will be several Headquarters Program-led efforts that address job dissatisfaction issues vice job satisfaction issues. Two years from now when people report they are still not satisfied with their jobs, senior leadership will discuss behind closed doors that the employees fail to appreciate all that we are doing, and yet, in the good CG spirit we'll move out more smartly to solve their newly (or repeatedly) defined problems.”

**It is the writer's view that, more often than not, the responsibility for solving problems is given to HQ**

**staffs who, in many cases, are not in a position to solve them.** If the results of the Career Intentions Survey (CIS) are borne out by the OAS, there will be a number of challenges that can only be addressed by leadership, the chain of command, and line managers and supervisors in the field. The writer continues:

“My suggestion is to not use the results of the survey to immediately do something. Instead we should ask ourselves who is in the best position to own this problem? Who should solve this problem? It appears to me that HQ has taken on this role in the past -- this is wrong in my estimation.” If there are aspects to member satisfaction that can only be addressed by line management, then...the field should resolve the issue. Yes it will place a workload on them and yes there will be job dissatisfaction issues for HQ to work on, but for the most part HQ should be about providing line managers with the tools they need, and creating a culture of responsibility for problem solving.”

**Here are excerpts from our response:**

"Your warning adds support to a growing chorus here in HQ ... In my opinion, a big contributor to the lack of progress since the 1995 Workforce Cultural Audit was that we assigned responsibility for changing things to a bevy of HQ offices who have no power to effect change in these matters. We will not make the same mistake this time. HQ should work on what HQ should work on (mostly the dissatisfiers you mention above), and line leaders and the field should work on what they control - satisfiers.

Your citation of Herzberg's work is exactly in line with our thinking, and in fact was the impetus behind our use of the Career Intentions Survey (CIS), designed to find the true dissatisfiers ... and the missing satisfiers as well. You can see the reports of results for the past year at <http://www.uscg.mil/ff21/surveys.htm>

Using (the CIS) we clearly demonstrated to the Leadership Council that although we should continue to make sure the dissatisfiers (pay, retirement benefits, housing, administration, security, etc.) are overcome, the real payoff would come when folks received the recognition, job satisfaction, sense of accomplishment and contribution to mission, responsibility, and other satisfiers that are controlled by supervisors and the chain of command. We can only do so much here in HQ to affect retention, for example; much of the responsibility lies with line leaders.

We have partnered with the two Area Commanders in that endeavor, currently figuring out how to make reliable unit level retention/attrition reports available to unit commanders so they can see if their efforts to improve retention are working. We are also making the Gallup 12 Question survey available to those commands choosing to use it ... the 12Q is designed specifically to address issues under local control, to catalyze a conversation between supervisors and workgroups about how to improve conditions enabling higher performance. It is part of the HQ contribution to solving the problem of retention--a tool for leaders and supervisors.

We will be doing our absolute best to identify the right 'owners' of the challenges we discover in the OAS. Your feedback on the survey itself, and on the reports as soon as they become available, will be valuable to us."

This summer we will all have the opportunity to digest the results of the OAS, from the Commandant to unit commanders. I anticipate a need for a true partnership between HQ and the field, and between leaders and followers, to make sure that the right actors are working on the right challenges and that each supports the other in making the Coast Guard a better organization.

Regards, FL Ames



## [Flag Voice Contents](#)

This page is maintained by [HR Webmaster \(CG-1A\)](#)

### **CG OAS 2002 FAQ on the website**

[<http://www.uscg.mil/FF21/CGOASFAQS.HTM>](http://www.uscg.mil/FF21/CGOASFAQS.HTM)

**Link to the 2002 Coast Guard Organizational Assessment.** The survey will be available until 14 Apr.

<http://www.paassessor.org/SURVEY/>

*Username: cgoas2002*

*Password: cgoas2002*

### **ALCOAST 092/02 for full details**

<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/mcpocg/1geninfo/cgoas02.htm>

### **Diversity/Diversity Summit Information**

Below is the internet link for the Diversity Summit Web page. The site contains pertinent Diversity Summit II information such as the schedule, a description of Summit topics and transportation information. It also contains several documents regarding Coast Guard diversity and effective Diversity management within our organization.

<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-w/g-wt/g-wtl/divsum2/>