

HR In The White House

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President Barack Obama recently appointed Jeffrey Zients as the federal government's Chief People Officer (CPO). Workplace HR & Safety recently spoke with Ron Wince, CEO of Guidon Performance Solutions, to discuss the recent appointment and what it means for the visibility of HR and performance management.

Workplace HR & Safety: Why did the federal government appoint a CPO for the first time?

Ron Wince: First, the Obama administration is incorporating business practices into its strategies, so a CPO is just one example. Second, the original intent of the position is to find wasteful programs and take them out of the budget. They need someone to act as an objective outsider, and provide guidance on what can be cut.

WP: What will be Zients' biggest challenge?

RW: The biggest challenge he'll run into is that the administration changes. Because there is a potential change every four years, governmental agencies may tend to just wait until the next administration comes in. There is a culture that has skepticism about the long-term prospects of new programs. There will be a natural skepticism as to whether this is just the flavor of the month, and people are going to be reserved about sharing information.

Zients can take on the challenges by setting the right tone from the beginning. In fact, he recently said that poor management is the reason most IT projects fails. He advocates a participative collaborative tone to be successful. He explained that it is important to find people who are knowledgeable, trust their expertise, and get beyond pointing fingers

The typical benchmark we give our clients is that at any one time, half a percent of the organization has to be working on process improvement. That means engaging the business staff to find the most waste. They know all the work arounds and where the system fails.

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About Guidon Performance Solutions:

Guidon is a global management consulting organization that helps clients achieve rapid, sustainable improvements in operational performance and growth. Guidon pioneered the combined application of Lean and Six Sigma in the service sector and has a proven track record working with clients in financial services, healthcare, government, retail, technology and other service organizations. With a full-spectrum of capabilities focused on people, process, and technology, Guidon provides strategic direction and hands-on implementation to guide cultural and organizational transformation. Guidon's approach, aligned with client leadership, generates measurable results including revenue growth, cost reduction, productivity improvement, increased customer satisfaction and innovation.