Identifying and Analyzing the Hiring Process for the Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Health Administration

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This thesis utilizes ideas taken from different Systems Engineering modeling tools to model the hiring process for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Veterans Health Administration (VHA). This model is a guide for understanding the current state of the hiring process and shows that inadequate Position Descriptions (PD) are not the primary reason why the VA cannot meet the 80 day window set forth by U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM). Additionally, the model can assist in identifying potential areas for reducing the overall process timeline and be used as a training tool to illustrate how the hiring process progresses. Existing models only show major steps in the process which can mask sources of delay, communication issues, and confusion. The developed model delves deeper into those major steps, showing individual sub-steps, accountability, timelines, and data flows. Data for the model was obtained by direct observations, interviews, analysis from data collected by the VHA, and documents released by the VA and OPM. When fully developed, the model allowed for the conduction of case studies on three different positions within VHA; these case studies illustrate that the inability to meet the hiring process timeline is only partially due to issues with the PD and that other factors (namely internal reviews and classification delays) have a significantly greater effect in the resulting timeline. The model itself and recommendations provided, such as establishing priorities, targeting specific areas of time delays, improving communication, and providing access to compartmentalized knowledge can help the VHA to achieve a streamlined and compressed hiring timeline.

Master of Science in Engineering and Management