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Abstract Title: Corporate Priority Action Items - A Lesson in Middle-Out Behavior Change

Abstract Text:

U.S. Forest Service Sustainable Operations (SusOps) Collective Corporate Priority Action Items (CPAIs) promote agency-wide engagement on initiatives that yield resource- and cost-savings plus large-scale behavior change. CPAIs are piloted prior to agency-wide adoption and are implemented in phases to allow for learning and program adaptation. The 2014-2015 SusOps CPAIs were Power-IT-Down (PID) and Utility Bill Cleanup (UBC). PID is a low-cost effort requiring employees to power down electronic devices and IT peripherals; UBC involves a comprehensive review of utility bills. In the first 14 months of implementation, PID saved the agency \$48,108 and 561,107 kWh, which is equivalent to CO₂ emissions from 43,537 gallons of gasoline consumed. Units implementing UBC have realized savings of up to 15 percent of annual utility expenditures. In addition to savings, PID and UBC participants demonstrated behavioral changes. Employees involved in PID demonstrated increased awareness about power draw from other office technologies. Similarly, UBC implementers have an improved understanding of utility bills and have eliminated idle utility bill accounts. CPAIs have also fostered partnerships and increased collaboration among traditionally distinct programs. PID resulted in increased cooperation between SusOps and the Chief Information Office, and UBC yielded a similar connection between SusOps and Budget & Finance. In 2016, PID will evolve from a Forest Service-only initiative to a "focus for learning" among U.S. Department of Agriculture's 25 sub-agencies, and CPAIs will expand into other areas such as "no vehicle engine idling" and use of 100% recycled paper.