

# KSAs and ECQs (Federal Government Resumes)

*The following is a fictitious example of a KSA  
(Knowledge, Skills, Abilities) statement.*

**US Department of Energy**

**Office of Human Resources Management,  
Office of Management, Budget & Evaluation**

**Position: Director, Office of Human Resources Management,  
ES-0340-01/06**

**Announcement Number: ETR-02-ES-007**

**Samuel T. Carothers**

**SS#: 999-99-9999**

■ **KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ABILITIES**

**1.** Demonstrated ability to design and implement corporate workforce planning, restructuring and management practices, techniques and evaluation methodologies.

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My ability to design and implement corporate workforce planning, restructuring and management practices, techniques and evaluation methodologies has been most notably demonstrated in my two most recent positions over the last 10 years.

As Director, Business Ethics and Compliance for Litton Industries, I was recruited for two primary purposes, which I carry out to the present day:

- (1.)** I designed and oversee an expansive Ethics and Compliance Program for 12,000 employees spanning Australia, Mexico, Canada and the United States. I have full responsibility for executing management training programs and on-site assessments to ensure full program compliance.
- (2.)** I implemented change management strategies, including organizational restructuring and offsite management evaluations, to strengthen management and leadership within new and existing sites. In performing these primary workforce management functions, I develop and perform targeted management training programs; assess and improve the organizational effectiveness of management at newly acquired and existing sites; evaluate complaints from sites and interview senior management and employees (conduct focus groups, attitude surveys) to determine areas for improvement; recommend intervention strategies such as offsite assessment for senior managers, converting to a different organizational structure and tailored management training; and maintain positive relationships with senior management and staff in every facility to successfully prevent ethics and compliance issues.

As Manager of Human Resources and Manager of Compensation, Benefits, and Training for Science Applications International, I oversaw staff development programs for compensation and benefits issues, directed all HR functions and implemented employee development, executive evaluation, and strategic planning objectives in a multi-level and highly diversified organization. I created

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a Management College for first-line supervisors and managers, performing targeted surveys and statistical analysis of results in designing courses for the college. I developed curriculum of core competencies in areas such as labor relations, leadership/motivation skills, accounting, and legal compliance.

**2.** Knowledge of and experience in managing a human resources or other major administrative management program at an agency, department, bureau, corporate equivalent level, including both operating programs/systems, as well as a broad range of policy/program development functions.

My knowledge of and experience in managing human resources programs over the course of my 25-year career has been at the corporate management level steadily increasing to the very highest senior corporate management level.

In my current position as Director, Business Ethics and Compliance for Litton Industries, I regularly apply a detailed knowledge of employment laws in overseeing the Ethics and Compliance program, such as EEO, OSHA, COBRA, FMLA, ERISA, ADA and FLSA.

As Manager of Human Resources and Manager of Compensation, Benefits and Training for Science Applications International, I applied the detailed knowledge I acquired in my studies of the state of the American workforce for my Ph.D. dissertation, and developed a successful employee-testing program. The program improved the overall proficiency of the BWX workforce and was marketed to employees as a way to control their own employment destiny. Subsequently, it has lowered costs and provided high paying jobs to people who were previously being left behind under the old system.

**3.** Ability to effectively negotiate with key officials within and outside the agency and successfully defend official positions on a broad range of human resources related issues.

My ability to effectively negotiate with key officials within and outside the organization, and successfully defend official positions on a broad range of human resources related issues is demonstrated throughout my career. It has always been a regular part of my human resources management responsibilities.

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In my position as Manager of Human Resources for Science Applications International, I successfully implemented a managed care network for the company's Lynchburg-based employees through negotiations with United HealthCare officials, McDermott Board of Directors, Trigon Officials, Piedmont Community Health officials, Centra Health Board of Directors, Aetna, and Lynchburg Area Physicians Association. Additionally, I arranged an alternative healthcare network for retirees after McDermott's decision to stop the corporate subsidy of retiree premiums and to remove retirees from the active group plan. In arranging this, I negotiated with McDermott's Corporate Benefits Group, major managed care providers, retirees and the media. Since this was such a heated issue, it received major media attention, and I was the primary media contact for articles covering the issues surrounding McDermott's decision.

While Manager of Human Resources and Manager of Compensation, Benefits and Training for Science Applications International, I negotiated grants through the Virginia Department of Labor to help finance a Technology Center at Central Virginia Community College, and improvements to the Danville Community College Technology Center. I did this by effectively convincing all the above stakeholders, including internal corporate elements, that a critical shortage of skilled trades graduates would have an immediate negative effect on the State's economic development and, therefore required immediate action.

**4. Experience in leading analysis and redesign of large-scale systems and processes (organizational systems, business processes and/or automated information systems) that have resulted in demonstrated cost efficiencies and program improvement.**

My experience in leading analysis and redesign of large-scale systems and processes, such as organizational systems, business processes, and automated information systems, that have resulted in demonstrated cost efficiencies and program improvements, has been demonstrated in each position I have held.

In my current position as Director, Business Ethics and Compliance for Litton Industries, I reduced employee complaints to federal agencies, such as the EEOC and OSHA by 75%, by redesigning the internal corporate process

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through which employees could lodge complaints and observed unethical practices. The major component to this redesigned process was the outsourcing to a third-party provider of the “helpline” feature, which greatly enhanced employee confidence that complaints could be made without reprisal.

As Manager of Production and Project Planning for United Technologies, I selected, customized and implemented a MRP-II (Material Requirements Planning) system integrating material requirements, financials, schedules, work center priorities, efficiency and utilization. In doing this, I recovered the costs of the system and conversion (roughly \$1 million) within three years through improved product delivery, work center load leveling and imposition of “just-in-time” inventory management. Additionally, in this position, I eliminated a record of behind-schedule operational processes caused by staffing delays, by replacing the problem-causing system with the development of an improved, redesigned labor planning system that focused on achievement of manufacturing milestones.

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*The following is a fictitious example of an ECQ  
(Executive Core Qualification) statement.*

**US Department of Energy**

**Office of Human Resources Management,  
Office of Management, Budget & Evaluation**

**Position: Director, Office of Human Resources Management,  
ES-0340-01/06**

**Announcement Number: ETR-02-ES-007**

**Gordon S. Cromwell**

**SS#: 999-99-9999**

■ **EXECUTIVE CORE QUALIFICATIONS**

***Leading Change***

By its very nature, my 25-year career in human resources management has been change management intensive. For example, as Director, Business Ethics and Compliance for Litton Industries, I implemented and led a corporate affirmative action and diversity initiative that is one of my most significant achievements.

Because of the nature of Litton products, we recruit primarily engineers. Until recently, the number of minority engineering graduates each year was low when compared to the number of engineering openings.

As part of our Affirmative Action Plan, and as a Federal Contractor, we establish plans to become more diverse among our professional ranks if minorities are under-represented as compared to their representation in the general population. Naturally, all federal contractors do this. Even though we have had some success in recruiting minority and female engineers, we often

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found ourselves losing out to heavyweight competitors. Over time, companies tend to become comfortable with this pattern and do not aggressively seek to become more diverse.

And, if companies do not develop and promote minority and female employees, it can be viewed as being aggressive on affirmative hiring, but with no follow through on promotional opportunities. From where I stood, Litton had not been an exception to this practice.

I approached this problem by showing senior management that diversity made good business sense. US demographics for the next 20 years shows more females in the professional ranks and graduating from college, thriving Hispanic and Asian segments, and fewer European White males as a percentage of the working population. I presented this information to management, and stressed that it was not good enough just to recruit and hire but to also develop and promote minorities and females. Management agreed with me that we simply were not positioning ourselves to attract the best available talent in the long term, and we were missing the value added through the influx of different ideas, perspectives and approaches that diversity generates. We committed to develop a diverse management team.

Because of the diversity initiative I led, the general manager of a major division now has two female department heads on his immediate staff, and the three levels of management below staff level have a greater percentage of minority and female incumbents than that of the general population from which we recruit. By implementing this initiative, we discovered that many tenured managers wanted an opportunity to manage a different functional area but were reluctant to ask. Others were contemplating retirements and jumped at a 24-36 month transition where they would be a co-manager with a diversity candidate and coach the new manager. There was a lot of movement for the first two or three years, but everyone benefited, especially Litton as a company. Litton has a model Affirmative Action and Diversity Plan, not just in word, but also in fact.

In another example with Litton, the most difficult change I led was when we, as a corporation, made the decision to stop funding retiree healthcare. I

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struggled with the change because it would put many senior citizens at risk of not having healthcare coverage. Because of rising healthcare costs and Federal Accounting Standards Board (FASB) rules, Litton stopped paying the premium for three-fourths of its retirees and took retirees out of the Group plan.

All during the 1990s, other companies had been doing the same, to the point that by 1998 only 42% of US corporations still provided retiree healthcare. Over time, medical advancements allowed retirees to live much longer. As our workforce aged and more people entered retirement, costs rose precipitously. This then affected premium costs for our active employees. However, the most significant catalyst that drove companies away from funding retiree healthcare was the FASB ruling in 1992 that corporations had to report retiree medical coverage, even for active employees, as a current liability. This made corporations look much less attractive to potential investors. Moreover, Litton was already strapped for cash at the time because of heavy losses on the marine construction side of the business. We had to remove retiree healthcare from the ledger sheet to have any chance of attracting investors.

So, while I fully understood from a business perspective why the decision was made to stop funding retiree healthcare, I also knew that the change would alienate every segment of our employee population – and it did. The full spectrum of the employee population began to question the integrity of the Corporation. This was a bleak time, and we sustained a public relations nightmare throughout the country as irate retirees wrote local newspapers to complain. I had to face angry retirees and allow them to vent their frustrations and educate to them on the economic realities of a national healthcare crisis.

I made some headway with key managers. I was able to get them to see that we had to team with Corporate if we wanted Corporate to be receptive later, should we come back with innovative options for somehow assisting retirees in securing affordable coverage on their own. I did a series of town meetings with retirees and told them that the company would try to assist them in seeking an affordable group plan of their own. However, I never gave them the false hope that they would be rolled back into the active Group Plan. I assembled a task



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force, and we researched the market for plans and prices for small groups, and at the same time I experimented with the cost impacts of doing a onetime uplift to retiree monthly pensions to help offset the retiree's higher premium costs. The pension fund was over-funded and we had not contributed to it for years. So I knew it could stand the burden. This approach also got around the FASB problem and did not require bringing retirees back into the Active Group Plan. We also have been able to keep a competitively priced group plan available to retirees. We've changed providers several times since 1998 to hold rates down, and Corporate did agree to the pension uplift to help offset the higher premiums.

### ***Leading People***

Throughout my 25-year career in human resources management, I have developed performance and training plans; appraised, hired and counseled employees; worked and negotiated with labor unions; taken disciplinary actions and developed and led organizational culture at the highest corporate levels. I have gone from supervising a few employees to overseeing a major Ethics and Compliance program for 12,000 staff members in four countries on two continents.

As Director, Business Ethics and Compliance for Litton Industries, I inherited an Ethics and Compliance program that had been in existence since 1996, but had made little progress in gaining employee trust and encouraging greater diversity – particularly in international locations (Mexico, Europe and Australia). We rarely received helpline calls, but there was a steady volume of complaints by employees to government watchdog groups such as EEOC and OSHA – and their international equivalents for locations outside the US.

A helpline, when properly setup and promoted, is intended to provide employees a safe way to anonymously report perceived ethical problems/violations.

These two pieces of data led me to believe that our employees did not really believe our ethics program was credible. The contradiction between the two also

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probably meant that employees had a genuine fear of retaliation if they reported some things through company channels. Diversity initiatives were nonexistent in the international offices where there were deep-seated animosities within offices that might have as many as five different ethnic groups reporting to an expatriate from the US.

I decided that it was incumbent upon me to lead an initiative to remedy this problem and lead senior management and the general employee workforce to work with me in re-engineering a meaningful Ethics and Compliance program.

I first addressed the problem by touring all sites and collecting pertinent information. I compiled the collected information into findings that would be meaningful to senior management. I presented the findings to senior management, explaining that our call volume was far too low for the age of our program and the size of our employee population. I persuaded senior management to outsource the helpline administration to a third-party provider. This would guarantee employees anonymity.

When using a third-party provider, a caller wishing to remain anonymous is given a Personal Identification Number and a time to call back to either check progress on the investigation of their concern or to provide further information.

However, providing protection from retaliation is one thing and getting employees to believe they are safe from retaliation is another. I conducted employee meetings at all sites and invested in an ongoing communication campaign until I finally began to achieve employee buy-in. We did that by not ignoring any calls and by concluding most investigations within two to three weeks.

Within 12 months of my initiating this program, we experienced a 40% increase in call volume. The volume has now leveled off to an average of about 3 to 5 percent of total employee population – about the industry average among mature “best practice” ethics programs.

As an added reinforcement of Litton’s commitment to diversity, we added an interpretive feature to the helpline so that the call specialist and employee

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can communicate through an interpreter, regardless of the caller's language. I have also announced that all ethics training will be available in the prevalent language at each of our locations.

I have convinced senior management that this will be a continuous process, and we already have some positive results that it is: complaints to government watchdog groups are down 75%; calls involving cultural clashes within overseas offices are down 50% and we've made a significant investment in leadership training and coaching skills.

### ***Results-Driven***

As Manager of Production and Project Planning for United Technologies, it was my responsibility to forecast the division's work for the current fiscal year, devise the necessary planning and follow up to ensure that the desired results had been achieved. In order to do that, I extrapolated how much and what types of equipment would be needed, how many people would be needed down to the work center level, the lead times for procuring raw materials and overtime requirements. For example:

The company had always struggled to start major new programs on time and never seemed to get new people hired and in the door in time to meet its cash commitment to Corporate without working massive overtime in the fourth quarter of each fiscal year. This problem required a strategic plan of accountability and improvement. I was charged with developing that plan.

Upon evaluating this problem, I learned that long before I came into the job, this set of events came to be expected and had been thoroughly incorporated into the division's culture. Cost center managers never started the year with enough people. Consequently, they would fall behind on labor hours early in the year. Yet they would resist any recovery efforts through working overtime because it was very unpopular with the hourly employees.

In addition, manufacturing and HR did not coordinate their data. Therefore, HR did not proactively recruit, but instead waited for manufacturing to tell it when more employees were needed. Moreover, manufacturing, because of a

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“just-in-time” philosophy regarding labor, would literally wait until employees were needed to contact HR. When the need for DOE security clearances was factored into this equation (which took from six to nine months to secure), understaffing, contract delivery delays and continual fourth-quarter recovery were the norm.

When I looked at the dips in five-year forecast, I knew we had to change both the culture and the operating style. I determined to achieve these results by

- (1.) using a new MRP-II system to define more precisely our current and future work, and
- (2.) integrating project planning product information with HR data by creating a span for hiring just like any other process span on the Production Plan.

To implement this two-fold plan, I initiated historical data-gathering on efficiency, utilization and overtime. I correlated that to headcount and labor hours. Once those benchmarks were established, I was able to successfully argue that, based on the evidence, we needed to start the year with a specific number of people in specific work centers, or work never-before-achieved levels of efficiency and utilization with existing personnel. I also determined that we needed to allow about a 9 to 12-month span for hiring new people. This spanned across every part of the hiring process from placing a job order with the employment commission through getting a DOE security clearance and actually hiring the individual.

The evidence also illustrated that we needed to begin forecasting labor needs for follow-on years midway through the previous fiscal year. That meant hiring managers needed to be held accountable to accurately forecast and provide this data. Hiring according to when work is scheduled to arrive, rather than waiting for it to arrive, meant supervisors might not always have enough work to keep new people continuously utilized. I was able to quantify that those possible short-term dips in efficiency or utilization were far less than the cost of waiting and then recovering through working massive overtime.

Senior management reviewed my strategic plan for accountability and

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improvement and bought into it. Together with senior management, I met with every work center manager and reviewed labor requirements, equipment and materials needs for the coming year. Cost center managers were expected to budget their headcounts accordingly. The net result of the implementation of the plan was a 30 percent reduction in overtime and a major decrease in contract delivery delays.

### ***Business Acumen***

My career in human resources management has given me extensive experience in acquiring and administering human, financial, material, and informational resources necessary to accomplish the corporate mission. For example, the first thing I did as Human Resources Manager for Science Applications International was to perform a detailed HR Audit. I knew the audit was necessary because the division I worked for was heading into significant change on several fronts.

First, after a period of downsizing scattered all through the 1990s, the naval division shrunk from 2500 employees to 1500 employees. Second, the Navy was again replenishing and increasing its fleet size. Therefore, my division would have to hire a significant number of new people. Third, when I looked at the age of the existing workforce, I knew I would be replacing massive numbers of retirees at the same time I was trying to fill new positions. Fourth, we had also diversified into other product lines during the 1990s in order to survive. Now those segments were also growing, which would require additional workers with different skill sets than we traditionally hired for “general manufacturing” jobs. Fifth, the staff I inherited in the HR department had never been through a huge hiring campaign and the strains it brings to an organization.

Therefore, I surveyed the landscape and developed a budget for a detailed HR Plan. First, I reviewed the division’s mission as stated in its comprehensive business plan. This told me what activities the division intended to pursue and what course management had charted for the future.

Next, I scanned the environment in order to survey, identify and interpret relevant data about external events, developments and trends in order to

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identify opportunities and threats that existed for the organization, and to assess how these factors might affect the availability of employees. Some of the factors I considered included economic indicators, workforce indicators, technological advances, social and labor force trends and significant changes in government and regulatory agencies affecting HR management and labor relations.

The third part of the audit was to forecast internal HR supply and demand. It was here that I looked at the division's short and long-term strategies and factored those into a computerized model that helped forecast flows of employees in, up, across and out of the organization. At this stage, I also did trend and ratio analysis projections, turnover analysis and a series of multiple linear regressions in which several previously identified variables were utilized to project future demand.

The fourth part of the auditing process was to complete a Human Resources Inventory, taking stock of current internal resources in order to plan appropriate actions to achieve the division's mission. This phase included skill-set inventories of all employees, replacement planning by the senior staff (to review their top executives in order to determine one of two key backups) and detailed succession plans.

The fifth and final part of the process was to execute the HR strategy. The data told me that the strategy must allow for significant expansion, which would require recruiting, management training, career path planning and promotions. We would also be transitioning into new processes and technologies, which would require transfers, cross-training and retraining.

In budgeting for the execution of the HR plan, I determined that HR would need to outsource benefits administration and add recruiters and trainers, functions that had been completely de-emphasized during downsizing. The benefits specialists would be transitioned into these roles.

We would also need to revamp internal HR systems to better coordinate recruiting, development and performance management. This also tied into manufacturing progress and would help us stay ahead of the labor needs. The

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entire five-part HR Audit was budgeted, approved by senior management, accomplished on time, achieved my intended goals and incurred no cost overruns.

### ***Building Coalitions/Communication***

As a human resources executive, I have wide-ranging experience in dealing and negotiating with labor unions, internal team building between management and workforce, external strategic alliance building and in corporate presentations and training. For example, leading an initiative to adopt employment testing during my tenure with Science Applications International challenged every coalition-building and communication skill I possessed.

Implementing an employee-testing program was difficult because all stakeholders had conflicting agendas and negative preconceptions about testing. Unions viewed testing as a way for management to bypass seniority. Management tended, frankly, to develop tunnel vision with testing and ignore the sacredness of seniority to their employees, in addition to having fears about discriminatory hiring accusations. Existing employees, particularly minority employees, were deeply suspicious of how we would apply test results.

Pre-employment testing was very common until the early 1970's when a series of court cases revealed a number of instances where employers were utilizing testing for discriminatory purposes, especially with regard to minorities. The courts then placed a heavy but necessary burden on employers to scientifically validate the correlation between what their pre-employment tests measured and what was essential for success on a particular job or a series of jobs.

The process of validation is extremely expensive and still was no guarantee or shield against claims of discriminatory hiring practices. Consequently, employers generally abandoned testing and it came to be viewed with great suspicion by protected groups. With all this baggage, I knew that business necessity alone wouldn't convince management to embrace testing. I needed a partnership with external stakeholders to successfully implement employee testing at Science Applications International.

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Three obvious stakeholders were Region 2000, an alliance of businesses and local governments in a three-county area, with an ongoing mission to attract new jobs and industrial development to the area; the local community college because I hoped to use it as the testing site; and the local state employment commission office, which I wanted to use to refer applicants to the community college before we even saw a resume. If the testing mechanism was valid and defensible, having the employment commission and community college handle upfront processing precluded our opportunity to discriminate.

Government created an opening for cooperation amongst my three targeted stakeholders with passage of The American Competitiveness and Workforce Improvement Act of 1998. That legislation made funds available to states to develop programs to address the skills gap.

I convinced Region 2000 that a skilled, versatile workforce provided by a partnership between it, industry and government would be a major drawing card to new industry. So, when Stan Goldsmith, Project Manager of Region 2000, and I approached the local community college, the administration was receptive, though hesitant until we convinced them that job profiling, testing and remedial instruction provided a significant revenue source for them and another avenue to adult learners.

More specifically, I was able to gain buy-in from each stakeholder by gaining consensus on the following:

- There was a legitimate gap between the entry-level skills of available workers and the skill requirements of emerging jobs.
- Unemployment was very low in our area, so the available unemployed already lacked basic employability skills.
- Testing was a way to “screen in” rather than “screen out” people – if we added a remedial component to help folks improve their scores.



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I agreed to the following to gain commitment from each stakeholder:

- I promised Region 2000 that BXW Technologies would be the pilot group for implementing a system, if it gained government funding for the effort. And I agreed to help Region 2000 promote testing to the other member industries.
- I promised the employment commission that they would be our exclusive referral source for filling all positions.
- I promised the community college that they would be our exclusive testing center and that we would fund and support remedial instruction and retesting for seriously disadvantaged individuals exclusively through them.

Once we agreed to a valid testing system (WorkKeys by ACT), the employment commission gained a way to place the bottom two percent of their caseload, and the community college gained a major source of revenue and another significant inroad to adult learners.

From there, employees and management were the toughest stakeholders to convince. It was a struggle to convince senior management that they needed to provide free testing and remedial help for employees on company time. If employees wanted to be retested to position themselves for other jobs and needed to use the remedial lab to prepare to be retested, management thought employees should do that on their own time and at their own expense.

I finally convinced management to view this cost as an investment in a more versatile workforce that could easily shift to new types of jobs as we incorporated new product lines. I also convinced senior management that if they offered unlimited free testing and access to the remedial lab, employees would, over time, come to view job profiling and skills testing as a benefit.

It took time, but employees eventually embraced testing and profiling as they saw other employees use the system to gain much better paying jobs.

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In addition, as we began to staff up, current employees helped train new employees who learned jobs much faster than those hired before testing was implemented.

Testing has improved the caliber of new employees, has been marketed to current employees as a way to control their own employment destiny, has lowered costs and has provided high paying jobs to people who were being left behind under the old system.