

## Opportunity Program

The Opportunity Program is the Veterans Benefits Administration's (VBA) new recruitment and training program for those newly hired employees who will administer VBA's product lines of Compensation and Pension and Vocational Rehabilitation & Counseling. Hiring and retaining the best and brightest individuals for these positions is a critical piece of the Program. Equally important and challenging is the training of these new employees.

To be successful, newly hired employees must not only receive a comprehensive and substantial orientation; but also thorough performance oriented technical training. Successful program graduates will provide benefits and services to veterans and their families in a responsive, timely, and compassionate manner that honors their service to the Nation.

Opportunity 2000 begins with a 2-week orientation program delivered by VA's top management. This year, there are ten Opportunity 2000 sessions scheduled, starting June 5 and ending December 15, 2000.

All orientation training will be conducted at the Veterans Benefits Academy in Baltimore, Maryland.

### ***VBA's Opportunity Program Mission Statement:***

*The purpose of VBA's Opportunity Program is to provide employees with a program of training that focuses on not only their technical capability, but also on their awareness of VBA's organizational/cultural mission to serve our Nation's veterans and their families.*

*We will accomplish this by:*

- *Instilling in our employees the values of VBA's culture, mission, and vision.*
- *Developing employees who will support communities of practice throughout their VA careers while serving veterans and their families.*
- *Introducing and instilling the concepts of teamwork, case management, Reader Focused Writing (RFW) and information technology from the very beginning of each employee's VA career.*
- *Creating a foundation for a program of continuous learning in the work place that will be available to all VBA employees from their early work and throughout their VA careers.*

The Opportunity Program is coordinated by the Employee Development and Training Staff (20T). Points of contact are George Wolohojian, Audrey Isett, or Sandra Keys at (202) 273-5446.

## Stakeholder Briefing Template

**Initiative:** VBA Learning Management System (Saba)

**Improvement Objective (s):**

The purpose of the VBA Learning Management System is to provide all employees and managers with a system that gives them the ability to create a career development plan that links their skills and competencies with training that can fill skill gaps, enhance performance and provide growth. The system will support VBA in the implementation of the Technical Skills Matrix for positions in each of its business lines. It will be instrumental in the successful implementation of new business processes for claims processing, customer service and employee development.

**Implementation Date:**

The VBA Learning Management System will initially be implemented with the Education business line and IT staffs. It will be fully integrated with the Technical Skills Matrix. Implementation will take place during the third quarter of this fiscal year.

**Description of the Initiative**

This initiative is a "proof of concept" project to assess the ability of the Saba Education Management System/Competency Manager software to meet VBA's learning management needs. The Education business line and the Information Technology staffs are the initial participants in the project.

The VBA Learning Management system will provide a tool to manage nationwide training and employee development activities among current and future employees. It will provide VBA staff with the ability to assess, plan, deliver, measure and improve the skills of the workforce in meeting the needs of America's veterans. When fully implemented, this learning management system will provide the ability to:

- Capture employees learning interests and career goals.
- Assess employee's skills and compare them with the skills required of their positions.

- Perform individual and organization skill gap analyses.
- Target learning interventions to specifically address skills gaps.
- Keep employee skill profiles current through self assessments, training completion and skill assessments.
- Promote self-development, career planning and skill development.
- Measure improvements in a learner's skills and know-how.
- Facilitate collaborative mentoring.
- Plan learning for employees and teams across the extended enterprise.
- Organize internal and external learning offerings in a unified catalog.
- Strategically use learning resources to support organizational goals and succession planning needs.
- Optimize learning resource planning, budgeting and tracking of expenditures.
- Integrate learning activities with financial and human resource systems.

**Future Enhancements that are planned (if applicable)**

Following the successful implementation of the VBA Learning Management System with the Education business line and IT staffs, VBA plans on sequentially expanding the application, by business line, to the entire workforce in the field and at headquarters. We also plan on reviewing for potential implementation future enhancement to the Saba Education Management System/Competency Manager product.



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
Veterans Benefits Administration  
Washington DC 20420

OFO Letter 201-01-14

Director (00)  
All VA Regional Offices and Centers

**SUBJ: Solicitation of Mentors for Division Leadership and Management Training (DLMT) 2000**

1. Mentors are being solicited for the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) Division Leadership and Management Training (DLMT), a 12 month program which begins in November 2000. Mentoring is an extremely effective method for:

- identifying and promoting talent from within the organization;
- building on and learning from one's particular skills and experiences; and,
- ensuring continued growth for the organization.

The mentoring element for DLMT will be a collaborative approach with mentor and candidate developing a learning partnership. The ultimate goal of this partnership is the development of one of our most important resources - effective leaders.

2. Selection is not limited to graduates of VBA's Division Leadership and Management Training Course. However, applicants must be willing to become:

- a coach, to motivate;
- a consultant, to identify problems and aid in finding solutions;
- a teacher, to support skill and competency development; and,
- a relationship builder, to facilitate and further interpersonal communication skills and relationships for our division chiefs.

3. The role of a mentor is a time-consuming and energy intensive activity but the benefits that VBA will accrue make it worth the investment. Selected mentors will be sharing organizational insight, providing feedback, acting as a sounding board, and building and fostering a new division chief's strengths and weaknesses. Mentors will be required to work closely with their protégé throughout the entire program; participate in an orientation/training session; and sign a Mentoring Agreement. Every effort will be made to limit travel requirements for mentors by utilizing the VBN Satellite System and Video Teleconferencing technologies.

Page 2

Director (00)  
See Distribution List Below

4. The attached list shows the graduates from the Division Level Management Training course for calendar year 1995, calendar year 1996, calendar year 1997 and calendar 1998. This list is being provided to assist you in recommending a potential candidate pool for mentors. However, selection of mentors is not limited to graduates of previous Division Level Management Training courses. If you have employees that you would like to select for the mentor activity, please notify Mike Brenny, Project Coordinator, Office of Employee Development and Training (20T). Once Mike Brenny has been notified of your selection(s), the mentor candidate will be notified to apply on-line via The Mentoring Connection Web Page at [http:// www.mentoringconnection.com](http://www.mentoringconnection.com).

5. The Mentoring Connection is a web-based program designed to help mentors manage the logistics of the mentoring partnership. The application form includes a brief biographical summary of the mentors' distinguishing qualifications and characteristics (e.g., years of experience, areas of expertise, community accomplishments, special skills, publications, etc.) Data obtained from this process will facilitate the mentoring matching process. Every effort will be made to match candidates with mentors who can best support their developmental needs. Mentor biographies will be shared with candidates and vice versa. Attached is a Microsoft Word file providing additional information about The Mentoring Connection.

6. Applications and profiles are due by close of business Thursday, November 16, 2000. Please provide your selection(s) via e-mail to Mike Brenny prior to close of business, Tuesday, November 14, 2000. Mentors will be contacted about the next step in the Mentoring program when the matching process has been completed.

Page 3

Director (00)

See Distribution List Below

7. If you have any questions about the Division Leadership and Management Training Course or about selections of mentors for the DLMT 2000 course, please contact Mike Brenny, Project Coordinator, Office of Employee Development and Training (20T), who can be reached on 410-230-4459.

/s/

Michael Walcoff  
Associate Deputy Under Secretary  
for Operations (West)

/s/

James A. Whitson  
Associate Deputy Under Secretary  
for Operations (East)

Enclosure

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
Veterans Benefits Administration  
Washington DC 20420

February 3, 2000

In Reply Refer To: 20T

Directors  
All VBA Regional Offices and Centers

SUBJ: SDN Training Coordinator Position

1. At the Circle meeting in Reston, we discussed the establishment of an SDN Training Coordinator position. We also reviewed the proposed training coordinator announcement and position description. It was recommended that the announcement and position description be revised.
2. A suggested announcement and approved position description are enclosed that contain the changes recommended at the Circle meeting. Given the importance of the work associated with this new position, I hope you can complete the recruitment and selection process by March 10, 2000.
3. Any questions concerning this hiring initiative should be directed to your servicing Human Resource Center.

/s/  
Michael Walcoff  
Associate Deputy Under Secretary  
for Operations (West)

Enclosures

**POSITION DESCRIPTION**  
**PROGRAM SPECIALIST**  
**SDN TRAINING COORDINATOR**  
**GS-0301-12**

**I. INTRODUCTION:** The employee of this position serves as a Service Delivery Network (SDN) Training Coordinator for one of the nine SDNs in the Veterans Benefits Administration. VBA SDN Training Coordinators play a key role in the development and maintenance of a training infrastructure for VBA by enhancing consistency of training initiatives, enhancing the network of training communication, reducing duplication and enhancing economy of scale, and serving as the point of contact for centrally directed training initiatives.

Incumbent also performs analytical duties for the SDN to which assigned. These duties include the conduct of a complete program of analysis directed at cost reduction, fund utilization and staff utilization. Management reports and study results provide substantive information, conclusions and recommendations for use by SDN Representative and individual SDN station Directors, in maintaining efficient use of resources and effective, customer-oriented delivery of VA benefits and services.

**II. EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Training and Surveys**

Conducts training analyses for positions with relatively difficult to understand work processes or with fairly specialized skills, e.g., technical, professional, managerial, and administrative and/or an employee development function(s) of moderate size, e.g., supervisory and managerial development, upward mobility, or equivalent program.

Conducts studies to determine immediate and long range activity training needs. Advises management on enhancing employee potential through training, and/or assists in resolving competency and skill imbalance problems, and/or helps to plan organizational or procedural changes by advising on skills sources, availability and utilization.

**Training Program Administration**

Advises employees, supervisors, and managers on basic program policies, regulatory requirements and procedures, e.g., answering inquiries about training opportunities, availability and eligibility.

Implements, maintains and updates centrally developed training programs.

Consolidate training requirements throughout the SDN, analyzes data and costs and determines individual RO and total SDN requirements.

Prepares, reviews, and/or monitors training budgets for the entire SDN.

### **Makes Arrangements for Training**

Provides information concerning available training and assists in making arrangements for the training to occur. Arranges training for a large and technically complex organization whose mission is highly dynamic, rapidly changing, and/or whose training needs are especially urgent or critical.

Acquires, provides and updates training information in coordination with the Learning Resource Center.

Prepares program publicity and training plan for portion(s) of the VBA employee development program and markets training.

Develops materials for management briefings and segments of such offerings. Utilizing general guidelines provided regarding parameters of the session, plans the information to be delivered, types of media to be used, designs, and/or procures audio-visual materials.

As a SDN representative for training initiatives, will be responsible for coordinating efforts with the SDN, the Office of Field Operations (OFO), and the Office of Employee Development and Training (ED&T).

Incumbent is the SDN coordinator for the Veterans Benefits Network (VBN) and will assure appropriate regional offices' staffs are advised of the broadcasts and facilitates the viewing and taping of broadcasts.

### **Training Evaluation**

Reviews, analyzes, and evaluates training courses and programs at local and SDN level to achieve greater consistency in VBA and to assess their quality and effectiveness. Assists Office of Employee Development and Training in the review and analysis of training programs and courses for a large, diverse, or complex organization whose mission is dynamic and rapidly changing, and whose training needs are especially urgent.

### **Training Program Development**

Develops, updates, and implements internal procedures, training plans, course materials and methods, and recommends new training sources for an organization which is either large and multi-missioned or one whose mission is highly dynamic, rapidly changing, and whose training needs are especially urgent.

### **III. ANALYTICAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Conducts management audits, surveys and systematic reviews of operations and service delivery systems in order to ensure that established policies, practices and procedures are effectively and

efficiently implemented throughout the SDN.

Conducts analytical reviews of Business Line performance in order to evaluate such performance in relation to VA, SDN and individual SDN station goals, and recommends remedial action

Proposes and implements new or revised training procedures, work processes, or other organizational changes that impact training.

Reviews, analyzes and evaluates division reports and statistical data, to include such items as workload, productivity, effectiveness, FTE and budget, in order to advise SDN management on trends, out-of-line situations and anticipated training needs.

Communicates findings, results and recommendations, both verbally and in writing, to SDN, management and when necessary to management at all levels in the SDN's jurisdiction..

Serves as a resource for work measurement processes, including Activity Based Costing (ABC) and Distribution of Operational Resources (DOOR). Provides support in the development, preparation and submission of consolidated administrative budget for various components of SDN and VBA.

Performs analysis of the full range of management information data, including gathering (through reports or personal study), compilation, and interpretation of quantitative and/or statistical data concerning management of national/SDN/regional program operations. Identifies aberrations indicated by data. Based on knowledge of VBA program operations, work processes and procedures, looks behind the data to determine what operational or management practices, workload distribution, or other factors cause the variances.

### **Factor 1 - Knowledge Required by the Position**

Comprehensive and thorough knowledge of laws, regulations, Executive Orders, and concepts and techniques related to the Federal employee development and training program; and skill to apply this knowledge to a variety of difficult and complex work assignments.

Thorough knowledge of the Department's operations, objectives and policies along with an in-depth understanding of management techniques, systems and procedures is required to effectively complete a wide variety of studies and projects related to productivity improvement, management improvement, operational and management controls and long range planning.

Knowledge of analytical and evaluative methods and techniques to accomplish assignments such as developing guidance on techniques for improving management and local procedures as related to training; analyzing and developing recommendations on proposed reorganizations and realignments; developing policy guidelines and directives regarding station policy and office operations.

Knowledge of and skill in applying principles, practices and techniques of education and training sufficient to develop, revise and present a full range of employee development and training courses.

Knowledge of alternative training delivery methods such as distance learning and computer-based instruction.

Knowledge of and skill in applying theories, principles, laws, rules, regulations and procedures sufficient to identify interrelated problems, draw conclusions, and recommend appropriate courses of action.

Ability to design, evaluate and develop employee development programs, training plans, course methods, materials and aids.

Ability to present ideas clearly both orally and in writing to effectively present findings and make recommendations.

Ability to establish and maintain effective relationships with and gain the confidence and cooperation of employees, supervisors and managers on difficult issues.

Skill in applying complex fact-finding, analytical and problem solving methods and techniques.

## **Factor 2 - Supervisory Controls**

Works under the general supervision of the VARO Director; however, may also receive general guidance from the SDN Leader, who may or may not be at another location. Assignments are given in broad, general terms, with the incumbent being expected to exercise independent judgment to achieve specified goals and objectives. Keeps station management/SDN leadership informed of any potentially controversial findings, sensitive issues or problems. Completed assignments are reviewed for compatibility with organizational goals and guidelines. Completed work may also be reviewed by other VARO Directors whose employees may be affected by the incumbent's recommendations.

## **Factor 3 - Guidelines**

Guidelines include the Government Employees Training Act, Executive Orders, OPM regulations, VA and VBA administrative policies, precedent setting management and organizational practices and theories specific to each area of work. Guidelines provide a general framework within which the employee applies creativity, judgment and interpretation to meet specific assignment issues.

## **Factor 4 - Complexity**

Performs a full variety of employee development duties affected by the requirements of the workforce serviced. Work requires in-depth analysis to isolate and the identify problems and/or potential problems, and to formulate the plans, methods and procedures for their solution.

The workforce serviced preponderantly involves work processes which are relatively difficult to understand or require fairly specialized skills, e.g., technical, professional, administrative, managerial or similar occupations.

Performs complete assignments with widely varying duties including: fact-finding, drawing conclusions and making recommendations. Complex assignments are typically characterized by many interrelated facts and sources of information, disputed or hidden facts, undefined issues, multiple cause and effect relationships, in-depth analysis of an organization's policies and procedures, identification of future training and development needs for employees and supervisors, introduction of new technology for development and delivery of training, and dealing with reluctant parties. Significantly modifies methods and approaches to problems when needed and retrieves relevant facts from a vast body of information, opinions and conditions.

Decisions are made at each stage of the assignment including: identifying issues, drawing sound conclusions and taking appropriate actions. Must understand the interrelations with other training and employee development programs.

#### **Factor 5 - Scope and Effect**

The purpose of the work is to facilitate the training and development of employees involving work processes which are relatively difficult to understand, or which require fairly specialized skills and competencies. The work also involves establishing criteria to measure and/or predict the attainment of various VBA mission related program or organizational goals and objectives, developing related administrative regulations, promulgating training program guidance for application across organizational lines and in varied geographic locations, and/or evaluation of programs.

Work affects the quality and availability of employee skills needed to accomplish the organizational mission. The work also contributes to the improvement of productivity, effectiveness, and efficiency in program operations at different echelons and/or geographical locations within the organization; and affects the plans, goals, and effectiveness of missions and programs at these various echelons or locations.

#### **Factor 6 - Personal Contacts**

Contacts include employees throughout the VARO, and the SDN, upper level management at the VARO and the SDN level, VBA Central Office management officials, federal offices involved in employee development and training, industry and academic personnel within the business community, representatives of local veterans organizations, subject matter experts of VARO operating elements, Office of Field Operations, and Office of Employee Development & Training.

#### **Factor 7 - Purpose of Contacts**

The purpose of contacts is to maintain effective working relationships within the organization(s) serviced, provide, clarify and exchange information on training availability, eligibility, and similar policies, regulations, and procedures. Contacts also involve recommending procedures and methods to be used for assigned work, evaluating and recommending improvements to and gaining acceptance of those previously established, and conferring externally on developments in the field of employee development and training.

The purpose of contacts is also to motivate, influence, and persuade individuals and groups who are suspicious, fearful or otherwise not inclined to be cooperative to accept changes in training development methods, practices or programs, or to adopt new approaches. Employee must be skillful in dealing with those persons and groups to achieve agreement on changes that will be in harmony with agency objectives and policies, or to gain compliance with training regulations and other legal requirements.

#### **Factor 8 - Physical Demands**

The regular and recurring work of the position is primarily sedentary. Occasional use of an automobile and public transportation may be required for visits to SDN ROs and/or to attend training sessions, conferences and meetings. No special physical exertion is required.

#### **Factor 9 - Work Environment**

The regular and recurring work of the position is performed in a work environment that involves normal everyday low risks or discomforts typical of offices or commercial vehicles. The work areas are adequately lighted, heated, and ventilated.

**Veterans Benefits Administration  
Human Resources Center  
(Detroit, Denver, Jackson, Baltimore)**

**Announcement Number:** 00-000-0000

**Opening Date:** February XX 2000  
**Closing Date:** February XX, 2000

**Position Title:** Program Specialist

**Series & Grade:** GS-301-12

**Number of Vacancies:** 1

**Position Location:** VAROs Within SDN 0 (See notes at the end of announcement for specific details)

**Area of Consideration:** (Note: To be determined by SDN Representative)

**Point of Contact:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**RELOCATION EXPENSES ARE NOT AUTHORIZED.**

**Equal Employment Opportunity:** Actions to fill this position will not be based on discriminatory factors that are prohibited by law.

**Minimum Qualifications Requirements:** Applicants must have one year of specialized experience. Specialized experience is experience which is in or directly related to the line of work of the position to be filled and which has equipped the applicant with the particular knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform successfully the duties of the position. To be creditable, specialized experience must have been equivalent to the next lower grade level in the normal line of progression for the occupation in the organization.

**Duties and Responsibilities:** The employee of this position serves as a Service Delivery Network (SDN) Training Coordinator for one of the nine SDNs in the Veterans Benefits Administration. VBA SDN Training Coordinators play a key role in the development and maintenance of a training infrastructure for VBA by enhancing consistency of training initiatives, enhancing the network of training communication, reducing duplication and enhancing economy of scale, and serving as the point of contact for centrally directed training initiatives.

Incumbent also performs analytical duties for the SDN to which assigned. These duties include the conduct of a complete program of analysis directed at cost reduction, fund utilization and staff utilization. Management reports and study results provide substantive information, conclusions and recommendations for use by SDN Representative and individual SDN station Directors, in maintaining efficient use of resources and effective, customer-oriented delivery of VA benefits and services.

Application Procedures: If interested in applying for this position, submit:

1. VA Form 5-4078, Application for Promotion or Reassignment, and
2. An Optional Form (OF) 612, or Standard Form (SF) 171, Application for Federal Employment, or a resume containing all the data required by the OF-612, and
3. A copy of your most recent performance appraisal and the associated performance standards, and
4. A copy of the most recent SF-50, Notification of Personnel Action, that shows your current title, series, and grade, and
5. Your description of situations and examples demonstrating possession of the Knowledge, Skills, and/or Abilities (KSA's), which make up the Rating Factors below. These may be submitted on VA Form 5-4676a, Employee Supplemental Qualifications Statement, or on bond paper, ensuring the announcement number and your name are listed at the top of each page, and
6. (Optional) VA Form 5-4667b, Supervisory Appraisal of Employee for Promotion.

**The basic application package (data specified in 1 to 4) must be received or postmarked by the closing date of the announcement.** Supplemental materials (data specified in 5 & 6) should also be submitted at that time, but will be accepted no later than close of business on the seventh day after the closing date of this announcement. Failure to submit complete documentation may result in less than full credit in the evaluation and ranking process.

Rating Factors (KSA's):

- Factor 1: Ability to deal tactfully and promote cooperation with persons at all organizational levels in situations which may sometimes be adversarial.
- Factor 2: Ability to conduct operational analyses to evaluate effectiveness and/or efficiency of a program, operation, or organizational element.
- Factor 3: Ability to work independently, setting priorities, organizing work and meeting deadlines.
- Factor 4: Skill in analyzing and identifying the training and developmental needs of employees.
- Factor 5: Skill in facilitating and coordinating adult learning.

Send applications by:

**U.S. Mail** to:  
Veterans Benefits Administration

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
ATTN: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Courier Service (FedEx, UPS, etc.)** to:  
Veterans Benefits Administration

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
ATTN: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

- 1) Application forms are available at <http://www.va.gov/forms/index.htm>.

- 2) *The position has no known promotion potential beyond the GS-12 level.*
- 3) *This position is excluded from the bargaining unit.*

The incumbent of this position will remain duty-stationed at their current facility. The incumbent will work under the direction of the RO Director, with assignments given from SDN members. For further information regarding this position, please contact \_\_\_\_\_.

Travel will be required.



***Maximizing personal, team  
and organizational productivity***

***Proposal For:***

***Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)  
Customer Service Training Program***

***Presented to:***

***Corrine Tucker  
Contracting Officer  
Department of Veterans Affairs***

***April 20, 2000***

***This document contains confidential and proprietary information  
belonging exclusively to PerforMax<sup>3</sup> Incorporated***

## ***PerforMax<sup>3</sup> Interactive Computer Based Customer Service Training Program***

### **Objective:**

Provide to Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) workforce, including those with disabilities, a comprehensive computer-based training program and implementation workshops that will educate them, and orient new employees, on VBA's specific vision, mission, policies, practices and standards when employees interact with veterans, as well as internal customers.

### **Background:**

PerforMax<sup>3</sup> staff established relationships with the Department of Veterans Affairs through contacts with Bay Pines VA Medical Center leadership in 1995. In December 1997, Bay Pines VA purchased six of our in-service, computer based compliance modules. In May 1997 Dr. Saundra Overstake Assistant Chief of Staff for Education outlined additional needs. A Purchase Order was issued authorizing PerforMax<sup>3</sup> to design, develop and deliver a computer-based employee orientation and mandatory topics program consistent with modules already purchased.

In December 1998, the program was officially implemented at Bay Pines, and networked across Bay Pines computer systems. Since January 1999, PerforMax<sup>3</sup> has been marketing the program across VHA. This Interactive Employee Orientation Program was nominated and selected as VHA best practice, and our company was invited to participate in VA's national conference on High Performance Staff Development in St. Louis in February 1999. To date, 38 VA Medical Centers have purchased the site-licensed program.

In October 1999, PerforMax<sup>3</sup> completed development of a new Customer Service module for VA Bay Pines. This program includes the following topics:

1. Involving all employees in customer service
2. Effective interpersonal communication
3. Meeting needs of veterans compassionately
4. Proper telephone communication and skills
5. Involving the veteran/family in care
6. Treating co-workers with respect
7. Demonstrating proactive customer service

### **Evidence of Contractor Experience with Veterans Administration**

Attached is a copy of a Contract Award letter dated 16 June 1999 and the signed Standard Form 1499 for contract V600P (C) -150.

### **VBA Needs/Requirements:**

Based on discussions held with Dr. George Wolohojian, VBA Director, Employee Development and Training, Washington, DC, and Jeff Goetz, the need for a similar program for the VBA was articulated. General requirements identified include the following:

1. Comprehensive and ongoing employee training in providing high quality customer service
2. Improve veterans' satisfaction with the services provided by the VBA workforce
3. State-of-the-art training, incorporating the most contemporary customer service approaches that are appropriate to a public sector service delivery organization
4. Use and leverage the latest multimedia computer based technology
5. Training that improves employee performance as it relates to interacting with veterans
6. Training that is appropriate for existing, as well as, new VBA employees
7. Consistency in delivery and content across VA (can be used by any VBA office)
8. Flexible program that can be integrated with existing Customer Service training
9. A program that maximizes actual training time and reduces travel time and overtime costs
10. Training that addresses different educational/experience levels
11. A self-paced program controlled by the learner
12. In-service test with "Test-out" option to assess student competency

### **General Approach:**

PerforMax<sup>3</sup> proposes to provide a computer based Customer Service instructional module on CD ROM to educate employees within Veterans Benefits Administration. The module will be designed and developed in collaboration with VBA staff and operations professionals who are subject matter experts.

VBA will provide media and graphics staff, and identify internal volunteers to act as talent in video vignettes designed specifically around VBA employee/veteran interactions. The program will be modular in format and consistent in content with the Customer Service module created for the VHA. The program will be specifically designed with the adult learner in mind and will focus at a level of depth that ensures transfer of knowledge from the learning lab to performance on the job.

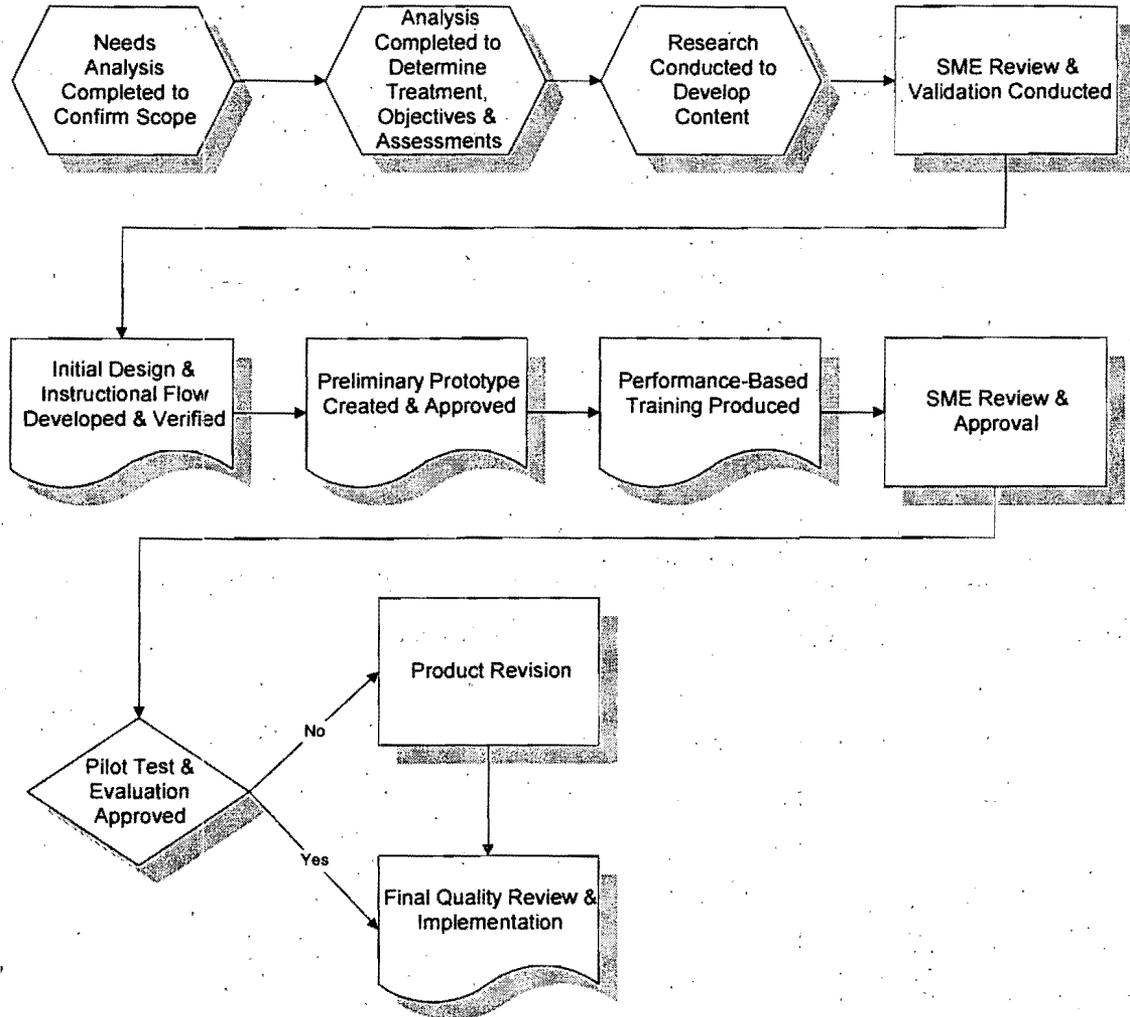
The program will be self-paced and controlled by the learner. The program will be designed so that, at VBA's option, it can be taught using a facilitator. The module is not dependent upon instructor availability, class schedules, etc. A test and minimum proficiency score can be included in the module at the discretion of VBA.

### **Advantages/Benefits of the PerforMax<sup>3</sup> Approach:**

1. Personnel acquire the skills and knowledge needed to perform their jobs effectively.
2. Personnel demonstrate proficiency/mastery on identified tasks.
3. Classroom time is reduced significantly, allowing educators and trainers to focus on other value added instructional programs.
4. Computer based learning reduces actual training time, travel time and overtime costs.
5. Learners complete in-service programs at their own pace. Staff who are knowledgeable and proficient complete requirements quickly. Learners needing practice and reinforcement master materials at a comfortable pace.
6. Individual learning styles are accommodated resulting in faster learning and better retention.
7. Administrative controls and record keeping are done through the computer, saving time and administrative costs.
8. Training addresses different educational/experience levels.
9. New programs can be quickly designed to address new requirements/regulations.

### **Training Program Development Stages:**

Developing PerformMax<sup>3</sup> products using Instructional Systems Design is core to all development processes. Below is a flow chart of the general production process:



Schedule of Deliverables:

Attachment A

<u>Deliverable Number</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Delivery Date</u>	<u>Assuming 5/1/00 Kick Off</u>
One	A detailed work plan and briefing for the VA Project Team	Within 21 calendar days after award	5/22/00
Two	Needs Assessment Summary	Within 49 calendar days after award	6/19/00
Three	Alpha version of customer service program	Within 105 calendar days after award	8/14/00
Four	Beta version of customer service program for evaluation	Within 126 calendar days after award	9/4/00
Five	Final CBT training program	Within 154 calendar days after award	10/2/00
Six	Two fully implemented workshops with VBA managers and two fully completed evaluations of the workshops	Within 182 calendar days after award	10/30/00
Seven	CBT customer service training program on CD-ROM, modified and enhanced for use by VBA employees with visual or hearing impairments	Within 217 calendar days after award	12/4/00