

Part 2.

To Create an Open Workplace Environment – In Consideration of the Actual Situation of Public Service Workplace Based on the Employees’ Voices

Introduction

It is essential to know what employees are thinking about their working conditions and workplace environment on a daily basis in order to create a better workplace environment. Among various methods to grasp these matters, one of the most effective methods is to capture the voices of employees received at the consultation desk.

In Jun. 2000, the NPA established the procedure to follow when receiving complaints from the employees of the Cabinet Office and each ministry regarding working conditions and other issues related to personnel management. In accordance with this procedure, the NPA handles complaints from employees who have worries about or dissatisfaction with the working conditions or workplace environment. Listening to the voices of each employee and responding to their worries and dissatisfaction is a task that requires steady work but plays an important role as one of the measures to resolve employees’ complaints promptly and appropriately.

It has been nearly 20 years since the launch of this framework. So far, the NPA has received more than 20,000 complaints, which implies that the complaint consultation service provided by the NPA has gained understanding from employees of the Cabinet Office and each ministry. The content of complaints varies widely ranging from appointment, remuneration, working hours, leaves, service discipline, health and safety, to harassment, which suggests that employees have various worries about personnel management.

Looking at recent workplace in the public service, it has been increasingly obvious that employees facing various circumstances such as childcare and nursing care are increasing; that a sense of value of young employees is diversifying; and that young employees are concerned about their future career and want to know how they can grow in the future. These facts suggest an emergence of new types of worries or dissatisfaction.

The trend of such worries and dissatisfaction was also identified in the consciousness survey that the NPA conducted and unveiled in Part 2 of the Annual Report FY2016 as well as in Part 2 of the Annual Report FY2017 (hereinafter referred to as the “Consciousness Survey FY2017”). In Part 2 of the Annual Survey FY 2017, the trend was particularly strongly indicated. Then, the environment surrounding the employees in their 30s playing a central role in practical business was summarized, challenges were considered, and the measures for such challenges were proposed in the report.

This report covers the complaints that the NPA actually received; identifies the issues arising from the worries and dissatisfaction of each employee in the work life; and proposes how to deal with them. It is hoped that this will help each workplace and managerial personnel to improve the workplace environment and management on a daily basis.

Specifically, Chapter 1 describes the overview of the complaint consultation system offered by the NPA and the trend in the contents of consultation. Chapter 2 shares specific cases of complaint consultation to identify

employees' worries about and dissatisfaction with their workplace as well as the challenges facing the workplace in the public service, which are causing such worries and dissatisfaction.

Furthermore, Chapter 2 explores in a complementary manner what causes worries and dissatisfaction of employees as well as the challenges facing the workplace in the public service based on the survey on the workplace in the public service targeting young and mid-level employees (hereinafter referred to as the "Survey of Young and Mid-level Employees") in addition to the survey targeting managerial personnel (hereinafter referred to as the "Survey of Managerial Personnel").

Next, Chapter 3 takes a look at the measures to effectively resolve such worries and dissatisfaction before they become apparent, including what is expected on managerial personnel, what should be done at the workplace as a whole, and the roles the NPA needs to play. In addition, the initiatives taken by private companies are introduced as a reference.

Chapter 1. Status of Complaint Consultation

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1. Establishment of the Complaint Consultation System

It is natural that employees have worries or dissatisfaction on a daily basis with regard to personnel management, such as their working conditions or workplace environment, as long as they work as a member of an organization regardless of whether it is in the public or private sector. If such worries or dissatisfaction of employees are resolved promptly and appropriately at workplace, this will lead to maintenance and improvement of employees' morale and vitalization of the workplace/organization. Otherwise, there are concerns that employees' desire and motivation for work will be lowered. Moreover, distrust in the workplace, superiors, coworkers may cause distortions in human relationships at the workplace, which can lead to mutual distrust among employees and can negatively affect the vitality of the entire organization. Furthermore, it is desirable that such worries and dissatisfaction are prevented as early as possible rather than resolved after the problems occur.

The NPA has long been engaged in the complaint consultation service. This service plays a role as a means to solve daily dissatisfaction of employees, which do not go as far as to be handled as equity process, such as appeal against disadvantageous action or request for administrative action. In the past, many requests for examination and requests for administrative action were associated with labor-management relations. Recently, however, more stable labor-management relations have changed the situation, and complaints of individual employees have become mainstream. In accordance with this, there is a growing need for complaint consultation as a means of solving complaints from individual employees. Under such circumstances, the procedure for complaint consultation was not made clear to the public. This made it difficult for individual employees to be aware of complaint consultation service provided by the NPA and to actually consult the NPA with their complaints.

In addition, increasingly complicated and sophisticated administration have been changing the working conditions and working environment of employees. Given this background, there is a growing number of