



IMPACT ON:

The U.S. Postal Service's innovation process and stakeholders who bring ideas for consideration to the Postal Service.

WHY THE OIG DID THE AUDIT:

Our objective was to identify and learn about innovation best practices/processes that can be considered for use by the Postal Service.

WHAT THE OIG FOUND:

As a result of examining innovation practices at 14 organizations recognized as leaders in innovation, we identified 19 best practices that can be considered for use by the Postal Service. The best practices fall into six categories: (1) integrating innovation and business strategies, (2) creating and capturing new ideas from internal and external sources, (3) deciding which innovations to pursue, (4) evaluating the progress of each innovation initiative, (5) managing the relationship between innovation activity and ongoing work, and (6) instituting key foundational elements to foster innovation.

WHAT THE OIG RECOMMENDED:

We identified 19 best practices the Postal Service can consider using. We recommended implementation of the following six of the best practices by September 30, 2012:

1. Leadership should provide strategic direction to focus innovation on the right outcomes.
2. Leadership should communicate the innovation strategy throughout the Postal Service and with stakeholders.
3. Dedicate full time staffing to innovation.
4. Establish a process to manage innovation within the Postal Service and with stakeholders.
5. Encourage sharing and cross-pollination of ideas across the postal community.
6. Establish dedicated funding for innovation.

We also recommended the remaining 13 best practices be phased in over the subsequent 24 months and that the postmaster general and chief executive officer incorporate innovation planning into the Postal Service's strategic plan by March 30, 2012.

WHAT MANAGEMENT SAID:

Management agrees that it could more formally document and improve innovation and innovation process management throughout the Postal Service.

AUDITORS' COMMENTS:

Management was responsive to two of our three recommendations.