

# THE SQUARED SCOOP

July 2011

## Save the Date: Interim All Hands Meeting set for August 4

The annual Interim All Hands Meeting is an all staff (including our AMPs!) meeting for us to come together for a mid-year touch-base. It is also an opportunity to meet and welcome new employees. This mandatory meeting will take place August 4, in the Grange Conference Room at headquarters, starting at 3pm. The meeting will be followed by an optional happy hour. We look forward to seeing everyone!

## HR Diligently Planning for the Future

With an eye on the future, the Human Resources team has embarked on a strategic planning process aimed at enabling M Squared to respond to forecasted growth while continuing to develop our existing human capital so that we can best serve our clients. The team has identified human capital acquisition and human capital development as the two primary areas to focus our efforts. We have already identified multiple initiatives and established target performance metrics so that we can measure the success of each.

Within human capital acquisition, we aim to develop a more robust candidate pipeline by enhancing our marketing efforts and establishing a greater presence in the industry. We are also further developing service-line-specific screening and testing methodologies to improve alignment of candidates with various positions. Finally, we plan to refine the internal communications process between business development, service line managers, and human resources to ensure that we call fill positions on newly awarded contracts in minimal time.

On the human capital development front, we are working to better define promotion paths within the human resources framework, identify and communicate opportunities for external recognition of staff, and develop a formalized training program. This not only includes identifying appropriate and required trainings, but also developing training content to support individual training programs.

This strategic planning process will be instrumental in properly aligning our human resources to best support the evolving needs and direction of M Squared Strategies. It is also an exciting new context for us to apply our strategic management models and expertise to another division of our own company.

## We've Been AMPed!

This summer the AMP Program has grown and flourished in more ways than one. Our ten AMPs from four universities are working hard on six projects in three different offices! In addition to their client delivery, they are developing three corporate projects for marketing, business development, and corporate giving. Squeezing in some time for trainings, excursions, and networking happy hours has not been easy, as these AMPs are staying quite busy! With only a few weeks left, it feels like this the summer has flown by. Please join us for their closing reception on August 8 to celebrate a summer of accomplishments!



# AMPs at the Department of Veterans Affairs



## Virtual Lifetime Electronic Record (VLER) Team

An AMP in our 2009 program, Jenny Weng has returned to M Squared this summer to serve as AMP Team Lead for the VLER team at the VA. One group is busy interviewing staff and contractors as part of their efforts to research, analyze, and create a process map of the current contractor onboarding process. The team will ultimately provide recommendations to improve the onboarding process by addressing two main challenges: time and communication. Meanwhile, another group of AMPs is interviewing program managers to research and analyze the VLER budget process. They will provide both short- and long-term recommendations to overcome challenges in standardizing and streamlining the budget process.



**Ethan Palmer** is currently a Master of Public Administration candidate at the Trachtenberg School of George Washington University, where he is concentrating in Public-Private Policy and Management and Federal Policy, Politics, and Management. Prior to graduate school, Ethan attended Brandeis University, where he graduated summa cum laude with a degree in Politics and French and Francophone Studies. Ethan has interned for Congressman Chris Murphy and with the Institute for Policy Studies and was a graduate assistant for the Trachtenberg School this past year.



**Rachel Brody** is currently a Master of Public Administration candidate with a concentration in Program Evaluation at the Trachtenberg School of the George Washington University. She works as the managing editor of the academic journal, Policy Perspectives. After graduating from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2008 with a double major in Spanish and Political Science, she served as an adviser with the National College Advising Corps helping under-served youth plan and apply to college. Most recently, she worked as a graduate fellow at the National Council on Teacher Quality.



**Alexandra Reames** just completed her first year at the University of California San Diego's School of International Relations and Pacific Studies (IR/PS) with a focus on development and economics within Latin America. Prior to IR/PS, Alex worked at the International Rescue Committee assisting refugees to find employment in San Diego. This included resume development and interview coaching. She completed her undergraduate degree in Global Studies at the University of California Santa Barbara, where she played club volleyball and won a national championship. She also interned at Segue Career Path Mentors, a nonprofit in Ventura, where she specialized in grant writing.



**Courtney Gleason** is an Arlington native who is currently working on her Master of Business Administration at Virginia Tech (VT) with a concentration in Organizational Management and Strategy. A loyal hokie, she also received her Bachelor of Science in Civil and Environmental Engineering from VT. At school she is active in student organizations and loves to travel whenever she has the opportunity.

## Information Technology Resource Management (ITRM) Team

Our own Nina Babel is serving as AMP Team Lead for the ITRM team at the VA. The AMPs have been working hard to create a new hire guide consisting of department overviews, organizational charts, and logic models that explain the office's mission and responsibilities. They are also documenting the service level agreement process for the Office of Information and Technology's (OI&T) data support provider to capture the current process and provide recommendations for improvements.



**Aryn Ehlw** is a Master of Public Policy candidate at The George Washington University focusing on program evaluation and foreign policy. Before pursuing her masters, she spent three years at Cone Inc., an international communications firm located in Boston, where she assisted in the development and management of national marketing campaigns for clients such as Barbour, Ben & Jerry's, and Nestle Waters North America. Originally from California, Aryn moved to the East Coast to attend Boston University where she received her bachelor's degree in international and public relations.



**Mark Buckley** is a 2011 graduate of the Master of Public Administration program at The George Washington University (GWU). During his studies, Mark completed internships in the policy division of the Department of Homeland Security and the intelligence division of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. Prior to moving to Washington, DC to attend GWU, Mark spent several years working in the administration at Columbia University in New York. Mark is also a 2003 graduate of Boston College with a degree in History.

# AMPs at the Department of Transportation



## Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) Team

An AMP in our 2010 program, Erin Farr has returned to M Squared this summer to serve as DOT AMP Team Lead. The AMP team at the DOT supports work in four areas within the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) IT Support Services (ITSS) office: Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) Development, Customer Account Management, Asset Management, and Change Management. Highlights of their efforts include work on or completion of nearly 20 SOP's, asset order filling support, asset database and order form management, communications support, distribution list management, asset verification, and software CI management.



**Carl Urness** was born and raised in Spokane, WA. In 2010 he graduated from the University of Washington with a Bachelor of Arts double degree in International Studies and Geography. Some highlights of his experience as an undergraduate include researching the business side of non-profits in Thailand and writing about cultural geography in the book *Seattle Geographies*. On the rare occasions when he can take a break from studying Public Financial Administration at Indiana University he enjoys a good round of disc-golf. Carl is looking forward to a summer in Washington, DC.



**Stacey Pollack** is currently a student at Indiana University, working to complete her Master of Public Affairs in International Policy Analysis. Prior to graduate school, she worked in program implementation and budget management for a non-profit organization on an international exchange program, where she had the opportunity to interact with high profile leaders from around the globe. In 2007, she graduated Magna Cum Laude from Barnard College, Columbia University with a Bachelor of Arts in Russian Regional Studies. Additionally, she is fluent in Russian and Hebrew, and has also studied Uzbek and Spanish.



**Greg Feldman** has just completed his first year in the Master of Public Administration Program at The George Washington University. Greg enjoys policy analysis, program evaluation, and leadership. Before joining the AMP Program, he was a government affairs intern for the American Bakers Association and unfortunately he did not get free baked goods every day. Prior to attending The George Washington University, Greg received his B.A. in both political science and economics along with a minor in business from the University of Florida. This is Greg's first venture living outside of Florida, and he already misses the ability to wear sandals all year.



**Elena Foukes** is a graduate student at the University of California, San Diego studying Pacific and International Affairs, with a focus on Intentional Economics and China. She holds a bachelor's degree in Political Science and Economics from Loyola University Chicago. In addition, she has studied in Rome, Italy and Beijing, China. She is very excited to be working for M Squared Strategies this summer in order to get hands on experience in the consulting field. Elena is a native of Detroit, Michigan and enjoys ice-skating and art.

## M Squared Cares: Shakespeare Theatre Company

M Squared Strategies continues its support for arts with its recent donation to the Shakespeare Theatre Company (STC). Dedicated to becoming the nation's premier classic theatre with a mission "to present classic theatre of scope and size in an imaginative, skillful and accessible American style that honors the playwrights' language and intentions," STC is one of the world's great Shakespearean companies. Starting in August, M Squared will be the sole sponsor during the 2011-2012 season for the STC Accessibility Program helping the theatre in its commitment to provide full access for people of all abilities. This

accessibility effort has focused to date on:

- Accessible seats for patrons with physical disabilities or mobility impairments
- An infrared audio enhancement system that is available for all performances
- One sign-interpreted performance and one audio-described performance for each production
- Program notes in large print and Braille for each production
- TTY (for the hearing-impaired)



M Squared Strategies' donation also helps to fund a new program this year for veterans, the "USO Metro / Wounded Warrior Date Nights." This outreach program provides access for wounded veterans in rehabilitation to attend theatrical presentations free of charge. USO-Metro will provide transportation, and STC will provide dinner at a local restaurant and theatre performance tickets to servicemen and woman on separate evenings across each mainstage production. The arts are for all to enjoy, and M Squared Strategies is proud to be associated with such an important institution in our nation's capital.

## UPDATE

# Department of Veterans Affairs

The Information Sharing Initiative (ISI) team has transitioned to a subcontract with Systems Made Simple (SMS). The subcontract falls under the Virtual Lifetime Electronic Record (VLER) Program Support contract that SMS has with the Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Information and Technology. The ISI team is looking forward to working with SMS and to having a successful pilot in September.



The HPTI subcontract team, with assistance from M Squared's facilitators, supported the VA's Unified Communication Strategy meeting in San Jose, CA. Andrew MacDonald and Nic Turrentine provided assistance in crafting the meeting's content, conduct, as well as tools for capturing meeting outputs. The HPTI subcontract team has also been assisting in the development of the FY 2012-2014 Veteran Relationship Management (VRM) Operating Plan. Inputs on total planned obligations, obligations scheduled, and project information have been provided to VRM leadership.

The FY 2012 Non-Pay Lockdown Round was a success. Clients and supporting organizations reviewed project requirements within their funding targets. Requests exceeding the funding targets for FY2012 were categorized as unfunded and not executable.

Overall, M Squared has made great strides in streamlining the lockdown effort from 5 days to 2.5 days. Our role starts with project managing the sequence of events, brief preparation with DAS, reporting the financials into one consistent view, developing and managing the SharePoint site, meeting management, and logistics. The premise behind planning and prepping the client for the 'BIG DANCE' has really paid off and things fell into place in a systematic fashion for all participants. At the end of August, Lockdown Round II will close out the budget execution process and the CIO will review and approve the final budget request before it is presented to Congress.

The VA Team is pleased to announce the arrival of our AMPs, Mark Buckley and Aryn Ehlow. They engaged in IT Budget Execution activities within IT Resource Management (ITRM).

## UPDATE

# Department of Health and Human Services

M Squared began working with the Department of Health and Human Services in the Office of the Chief Information Officer this past spring to provide meeting management and organizational design to the governance bodies responsible for Capital Planning Investment Control and managing the Enterprise Performance Life Cycle.

With thoughtful, outcome-oriented planning and a custom information capture tool, we are driving clarity, increasing accountability, and improving communication between all stakeholders so that our clients are able to make informed decisions important to development of their organizations.



## UPDATE

# Department of Energy

Rod Witschey and Ed Adelman are knee-deep in exhibit 300s, using the processes they have developed and honed over the past five years. They have been meeting with the federal project managers to assist in streamlining operations. We are looking forward to building stronger communication channels the newly-placed PMO. As a result of good teaming, relationships and partnerships, the contract has been extended through August.



## Facilitation Reboot

Nic Turrentine, Erin Bankey and Justin Heineman, the newest additions to the facilitation team, have been working to improve the established delivery foundation in many ways that clients are sure to notice.

Over the past two months, the new kids on the block have had quite the introduction to M Squared facilitations. They have been busy at work supporting three separate facilitations at the Department of Veteran Affairs, including Unified Communications, the eBenefits Portal Roadmap, and the Information Sharing Initiative. Each has had its own unique requirements and painstaking deadlines. From flying across the country with minimal notice to introducing our clients to the effectiveness of online collaboration tools, our facilitation team is raising the bar on client delivery.

In addition to successfully tackling client delivery, the facilitation team is busy planning the Interim All Hands Meeting to be held in August.

## Personnel Data Just Got More Secure

As part of our ongoing efforts to maintain the integrity and security of employee information, the M Squared Strategies personnel files are now fully encrypted, stored, and managed using Jungle Disk, which offers industry-leading security and privacy protection. This convenient online system not only offers real-time syncing but also automatic backups. We can all rest easy knowing our information is secured.

## Welcome, New Hires!



Born and raised in Santa Clarita, CA, **Nic Turrentine** graduated from California Polytechnic State University of San Luis Obispo and majored in Recreation Administration with a concentration in Tourism Planning and Development. He has recently returned from a three-year Peace Corps tour in the Fiji Islands where he worked as a Business Development Adviser assisting the community to improve the financial management and operations of a community-owned and operated eco-tourism project. He also facilitated sexual health educational workshops with youth and implemented an improved waste management system. For his final year of service, Nic worked as a Peace Corps Volunteer Leader training new volunteers and supporting others in the field.



**Justin Heineman** comes to M Squared with a year and half of experience working in public service at the state and federal levels. He earned a Master of Public Administration from The George Washington University. Before moving to Washington, DC, Justin worked in finance for a boutique financial management and planning firm and also has experience in litigation. He is originally from Santa Monica, California, and earned a Bachelor of Arts from the University of California Santa Cruz in European History with a minor in Legal Studies.



**Erin Bankey** recently graduated from The George Washington University with a Master of Public Policy. During graduate school, she worked in policy and data analysis at the District of Columbia Public Schools, U.S. Department of Education, and the GW Regulatory Studies Center (RSC). As a Research Associate for the RSC, Erin organized an international conference on engaging stakeholders in regulatory decision-making, and she was then invited to speak on a panel at the International Regulatory Reform Conference in Amsterdam, Netherlands. Before graduate school, Erin worked at a small credit union in western New York, and volunteered outside of Comayagua, Honduras. She is also a proud alumna of Penn State University where she studied public relations.

## The Buddy System

M Squared has launched a buddy program to integrate new hires into the company culture. Buddies are M Squared employees who will serve as a link to other service lines and a source of information for new hires outside of their supervisor. The success of mentoring through the Applied Management Professionals Program and the diversity of client delivery across M Squared is the foundation for this policy, and it will also give veteran employees an outlet for their wisdom and experience. Above all, the buddy program will help build bridges between contracts and service lines to create greater value for our clients in alignment with company values.

## Happy Anniversary!

Thank you to **Brenda Maynor** (5 years) and **Carl Crampton** (4 years) for your continued commitment and service to M Squared.



## Busy, Busy IT!

With all of the new hires and AMPs joining the company, the M Squared IT Services team has been hard at work on-boarding consultants with new hardware and software. In addition, the team completed a domain name change for the company. In support of M Squared's marketing efforts to maintain consistent branding, all '@m2strat.com' email addresses have been changed to '@msquaredstrategies.com'.

# ACT-IAC Conference is a Success

Returning for a second year, M Squared Strategies provided strong volunteer and participation support to the ACT-IAC Small Business Conference (SBC), which was held on April 7 at the JW Marriot Hotel in Washington, DC. Martha Johnson, GSA Administrator, Dan Gordon, OFPP Administrator, and Marie Johns, Deputy Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration, served as keynote speakers at this year's conference, which focused on the role of small businesses as "Drivers, Leaders, and Key Players" in the government marketplace.

With over 340 industry and government attendees, the conference was designed not only for small businesses looking to grow to the next level but also for large businesses interested in learning more about and pursue partnership opportunities with innovative small businesses. Throughout the day, attendees were able to choose from six interactive workshops that enabled them to develop a better understanding as to how they could be successful at growing their businesses.

Panelists included Tonya Lovelace and Terri Callahan from the Department of Interior, Rafael Roman from Department of Homeland Security, Michael Carroll from General Services Administration, Carole Dunn from Read Team Consulting, and M Squared's own Kendall Lott, who provided valuable government and industry insight regarding preparing, responding, differentiating, and assuring compliance during the bidding and proposal process.

Lunch with Leaders Committee Co-Chairs Brenda Maynor of M Squared and Brendan Walsh of 1901 Group successfully matched over 30 senior government executives with conference attendees as they participated in small group discussions over lunch. In recognition for her time and effort, Brenda was presented with a "Service Excellence" commemorative coin during the May ACT-IAC Membership meeting.



*ACT-IAC Small Business Conference Planning Committee – Featuring Government Conference Chair Beth Owen, Department of Interior and Government Vice Chair, Steve Cooper, Federal Aviation Administration*



*Service Excellence – SBC members*



*SBC Committee Chair, Onelia Codrington pictured with Lunch With Leaders Co-Chair, Brenda Maynor*



## M Squared on SRA's Winning Team for T4 IDIQ

SRA International has been named one of only 15 contractors, and one of eight large businesses, awarded an IDIQ contract for the Department of Veterans Affairs' Transformation Twenty-One Total Technology acquisition program, known as T4. As a member of the SRA Team, M Squared will have the opportunity to work with both current and new partners and clients at VA. T4 is a new \$12 billion dollar contract under which the SRA Team will compete to provide a broad range of IT and telecommunication services, including program management and strategy planning, systems and software engineering, cyber security, operation and maintenance, and training.

## Modifications to MOBIS



M Squared has successfully modified our MOBIS contract with two additional labor categories, including Facilitation Quality Manager and Consultant, and 13 adjusted rates via an economic price adjustment. For more information about this GSA schedule and M Squared rates, please visit: [www.msquaredstrategies.com/contracting](http://www.msquaredstrategies.com/contracting)

## Marketing is Getting Social

We have created a comprehensive suite of stationary for a wide variety of correspondence. From formal letters and proposals to proper handwritten cards to causal notes, we have created the paper goods (with matching envelopes, of course) to meet every need. We have also just started developing our presence in the social networking arena with a Linked In profile and a Facebook page. If you have not already, be sure to 'connect to' us and 'like' us, respectively.