



## (U) Informal Survey Results: When Is a Job Worth Keeping?

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*(U//FOUO) NSA has hired around 250 intelligence analysts over the past couple of years and plans to hire hundreds more. What will determine whether these analysts stay and make a long career at the Agency, or soon move on to other work? Deborah Maklowski, the Intelligence Analysis (IA) Skill Community Advocate and NSA's Senior Intelligence Authority, pondered this very question not long ago, and talked to some junior IAs to take a "highly unscientific survey" of their views. Here's what she discovered:*

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(U) I queried a small group of IAs who've been at NSA fewer than 3 years to see what positive factors keep them here, despite the availability of higher-paying jobs elsewhere, and what negative factors might influence a decision to leave. They gave me a lot of good information, which, distilled down, identified 3 key areas where success is imperative: the work, the management, and the opportunities for continued development.

(U) **The Challenge, Purpose, and Variety of the Work:** This was everyone's number one answer. People want and need to be challenged, to know that their work is making a difference to the nation's security -- even if they can't go home and tell their families about it. They want to work hard, they want to take responsibility, and they want to be given an amount of authority and autonomy commensurate with that responsibility. They also like the fact that an intelligence analyst at NSA can contribute in a wide variety of different ways, that an IA can be successful whether he or she chooses to develop great depth in a subject or great depth in an analytic discipline or methodology. They also see that continued advancement does not depend on giving up the challenges of operational work for the challenges of management: they can work to their own strengths and continue to develop expertise without necessarily reaching a promotion ceiling. Of course, the obverse of this is equally true: being given work that is neither fulfilling nor seen to be relevant will make them think hard about leaving, as will being forced to choose between a satisfying job and continued advancement.

(U) **Management and Communication:** This was a very close second for everyone. Put simply, the presence of good, enlightened management will make up for any number of less-than-optimum working conditions -- like a brutal operational tempo, a cramped working environment, or chronic lack of parking -- whereas the best benefits and amenities on the planet won't compensate for indifferent or inept management. Supervisors and leaders who are open to new ideas; who practice risk management rather than risk avoidance; who understand the value of positive performance feedback; who keep the lines of communication open and make sure that employees know what's going on at the higher corporate levels; who know how to share the good jobs, the responsibility, and the credit; who recognize and reward excellent performance and refrain from rewarding mediocre or poor performance; and who never, **ever** forget that people come first: managers like that are the key to keeping your good analysts.

(U) Last, an accessible program of relevant and continuing **education and training** is highly valued by the analyst employee. For instance, every intelligence analyst we hire who has fewer than 5 years' cryptologic experience is placed into our IA Development Program (IADP) which, to the best of my knowledge, is unique in the Intelligence Community. NSA also uses a construct called a Professional Health Program (PHP) to serve as a roadmap for every IA's continued professional development. All employees can benefit from the Agency's many options for continuing education offered by the National Cryptologic School and the After-Hours and Advanced Studies (20/20) Programs, as well.

(U) For more information about the IA Skill Community and its professional development programs, visit the [IASC web page](#) ("go iasc"); and for more information about continuing

education opportunities at NSA, visit [ADET's External Training Index](#).

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*(U) Do you have comments about this topic? Please use the comments/suggestions function below.*

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