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# Modernizing the intelligence community (IC) to take on tomorrow's challenges requires a multidimensional perspective.

**SEE EXAMPLES OF HOW INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES ARE USING A HYBRID WORKFORCE MODEL TO PROPEL THE MISSION FORWARD.**

Finding technical talent is a major challenge as the IC modernizes to manage evolving threats in a high-stakes world. Booz Allen is providing ideas to help leaders realize the benefits of nontraditional approaches like a hybrid cleared workforce—a team of experts holding varied clearance levels and working in classified and unclassified spaces. Here's an overview of how a hybrid model could look, along with a few questions to help leaders start their own transformation.

## **THE CHALLENGE: THE SHRINKING TALENT POOL**

Commercial industries are competing to hire cleared technical employees in today's race to operationalize artificial intelligence (AI)/machine learning, cybersecurity and other forward-looking capabilities. Technical jobs are booming in innovation hubs like D.C. This poses a critical challenge for government organizations and especially for the IC, which has traditionally operated in and near the nation's capital.

With a small pool of local highly cleared talent, how can the IC fulfill its mandate to operationalize AI, automate critical processes, incorporate Agile software development practices, and advance other modernization imperatives? The hybrid cleared workforce offers a way to modernize the mission rapidly while realizing greater return on investment (ROI). Here's how organizations may take advantage of this idea—and reap its benefits.

## **INNOVATION CATALYST: COVID-19**

The IC has made **secure modernization a priority**, but the need for social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic put workforce transformation at the top of the list. Agencies were ready to experiment beyond the traditional model requiring cleared talent to work in Sensitive Compartmented Information Facilities (SCIFs).

Prior to COVID-19, Booz Allen had already begun incorporating experts who were not yet cleared, speeding progress for programs where tiered access levels would be appropriate. We could therefore recommend the hybrid approach as a proven model, offering clients processes allowing them to prioritize both productivity and security. Seeing the rewards, today we continue to encourage agencies to experiment with this method. Our teams remain available to ease the transition, ensure security, and monitor outcomes.

The ongoing results demonstrate that a hybrid workforce can deliver ongoing benefits—and allow steady progress unhindered by pandemic unknowns and the trend toward flexible work arrangements.





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# The Hybrid Model: “Develop Unclassified, Deploy Classified”

What is the hybrid workforce? It’s a framework that could allow the IC to use digital experts, skilled but not yet cleared, to accelerate classified missions. In the case of our program, we found success in using uncleared technical talent to develop code that the already-cleared team securely migrates to classified networks. National security agencies receive advantages across three dimensions, working with teams that are:



**Distributed:** Cleared employees work at contractor SCIFs across country—receiving the benefits of varied knowledge and perspectives.



**Diverse:** Uncleared employees work either remotely or at contractor facilities—typically technologists highly skilled in AI, advanced analytics, and DevSecOps.



**Digital:** The IC quickly operationalizes forward-looking technology—as a new, digital-first mindset emerges.

This evolved way of working provides multiple advantages. Beyond rapid development of highly technical work, it boosts productivity, morale, and resiliency. And the flexible mindset supports new thinking to modernize IC infrastructure, with processes and policies providing new efficiencies. Here are some of the benefits agencies are experiencing with the hybrid workforce model.

## DISTRIBUTED GEOGRAPHIES DELIVER INCREASED ROI

Instead of competing with private industry for cleared professionals exclusively in D.C., the IC could explore opening up opportunities across the nation. From Silicon Valley to college towns, talent in remote locations can help move the intelligence ecosystem forward.

The IC can increase innovation by accessing uncleared technical talent anywhere, including on the West Coast where experts in niche capabilities can be brought on for special aerospace, defense industrial base, and scientific challenges. Intelligence agencies can also access cleared talent in varied geographies. For example, Booz Allen offers cleared facilities in states as diverse as Georgia, Colorado, and California.

Organizations can use contractor SCIF space in areas offering high real estate values, allowing the IC to bring team members in and out as the mission requires. Creating ongoing connections across country will also allow increased understanding across regions, opening up new conversations in addition to elevating innovation.

## DIGITAL-FIRST APPROACH INCREASES RESILIENCY

A flexible hybrid workforce allows the IC to modernize rapidly, allowing it to tackle problems from implementing **Second Epoch directives** to effecting **large-scale transformation**. With flexible architectures and workflows designed to accommodate ongoing innovation, national security missions can evolve and adapt as new challenges emerge.

What’s more, a distributed workforce improves continuity of operations. Regional disruptions due to random incidents and malicious localized disruptions won’t affect workers in other areas. And robust backup plans can be rolled out using resources across the country, with the ability to change quickly as a situation unfolds.

## DIVERSE, SPECIALIZED TALENT OPENS THE FUTURE

In addition to incorporating innovation from geographically dispersed areas, the “develop unclassified, deploy classified” concept encourages varied talent to contribute to unclassified technical components of the IC mission. Professionals who want to make a difference will be more likely to choose a national security career if they can be productive while waiting for a clearance and can choose a flexible work arrangement—for example, with the choice to work partly in an office facility, partly remote.

National security leaders can also increase access to diverse talent by:

- Bringing personnel on a project while they’re waiting to be fully cleared
- Hiring talented graduates immediately, without delays that work in competitors’ favor
- Giving uncleared talent opportunities to get hands-on experience

With rapid onboarding, technologists will quickly see that their work makes a difference—generating additional enthusiasm for the mission.

## IC INNOVATION: CASE STUDIES

OUR CLIENTS' FUTURE-FORWARD PROGRAMS ARE PAYING OFF. HERE ARE A FEW EXAMPLES OF WAYS THEY ARE MODERNIZING PROCESSES, INCREASING PRODUCTIVITY, AND INCREASING ROI.

### Leveraging Unclassified Modular Development for Repeatable Classified Deployment

One intelligence agency needed highly technical processing, analytics, and modeling capabilities during the COVID-19 lockdown. This gave us the opportunity to leverage our DevSecOps framework and methodology, which allows technical software to be developed in an unclassified environment for modular, repeatable deployment on classified networks.

Uncleared developers in the process of obtaining high-level clearances develop the code; the classified team securely migrates it onto classified networks. This minimizes the number of staff required in the SCIF.

It has also brought other benefits:

- Nearly 400 percent estimated increase in available tech talent
- Nearly 20 percent increase in productivity for many software development and integration activities
- The project delivered a measurable increase in ROI

Additionally, the remote team provides an increasingly higher level of collaboration as it works to continually refine its processes.

# Addressing the Gap for Mission-Critical Specialized Skills

Talent with highly specialized engineering expertise was required to develop mission-critical tools for a pioneering technical initiative. No cleared technologists could be found for some of the requisite skills. Booz Allen collaborated with the client to:

- Create a program allowing uncleared experts to work with cleared personnel
- Develop a program security plan documenting levels of knowledge to be communicated to staff at various clearance levels
- Arrange for specialized professionals to work in unclassified spaces across the country

The hybrid team accomplished the groundbreaking mission on time; our strategy succeeded by:

- Increasing the available tech talent pool by more than 1,900 percent
- Freeing up contractor SCIF space and the associated expense
- Significantly reducing developer costs





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## Acquisition: Three Key Questions

Adopting a hybrid cleared workforce provides a rapid way to realize game-changing benefits. If you're a leader interested in getting started, we recommend that you ask three questions when preparing to write future acquisitions:

1. Could this mission reduce costs, increase staffing agility, execute faster, or realize other benefits from an unclassified or lower clearance scope?
2. Can this initiative employ a “develop unclassified, deploy classified” model without compromising security or mission success?
3. Is there an opportunity to upgrade clearances—for example, open the door to essential support before workers have been fully cleared, increasing the size of the future cleared talent pool?

If the answer is “yes” to any of these questions, this may be the time to experience the advantages of a hybrid cleared workforce. For more details, we invite you to contact us at [NSG@bah.com](mailto:NSG@bah.com).



