

Developing Effective Leader Managerial Performance

By Darlene Seminko, DCMA Atlanta

Eight Defense Contract Management Agency professionals were graduated from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Graduate School executive leadership program June 29 after being selected through the DCMA centralized development program.

The 10-month ELP is based upon a model for effective leadership and managerial performance and the five executive core qualifications the Office of Personnel Management has identified as characteristics required of successful government leaders and managers.

The program curriculum consists of four residential training sessions and other developmental components. The leadership training focuses on developing leadership competencies and understanding the characteristics of leadership through classroom instruction, simulations and seminars with best-practice leaders from the private and federal sectors. Each participant learns from individual needs assessments and designs a leadership plan that will serve as a roadmap for his or her development.

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During the orientation session, each person was assigned to a team with members from other government organizations. The more than 230 ELP participants who were selected from agencies across the federal government formed teams of seven to eight individuals based on agency, gender, location and grade level. Program participant Kevin Rountree, DCMA ATK Thiokol quality assurance specialist, said, “An important lesson learned was that everyone has something valuable to contribute to the team, and by assuring diversity was distributed throughout, the ELP leadership ensured success overall.”

Rountree explained another

important lesson learned through this group experience is that leaders need to understand that something as simple as age affects the way they lead. “With traditionalists, baby boomers, generation X and generation Y come different ideas about what is important to them (time off from work, flexible work schedules, maternity leave, grand titles, compensation that is on par with private industry) and what motivates them to achieve,” he explained. “The federal government needs to be open to new ways of compensation and flexible work schedules that take into account the generational differences that make up the current workforce. By doing these things the federal government will be the employer of choice and attract and retain the best and brightest new talent.”

During graduation week, each team developed and presented a one-hour briefing about a current leadership or policy issue in the federal government. Each ELP participant was required to complete one 60-day (plus one optional 30-day) developmental work assignment outside of his or her normal duty position.

Partnership and Successful

The task was designed to provide exposure to different leadership and managerial experiences and perspectives.

Clay Chaffee, DCMA Atlanta contracts operations team supervisor, said, “The opportunity to work outside of [the Department of Defense] with the National Transportation Safety Board allowed me to push my personal boundaries and grow much more than I had anticipated.” He said the 60-day work assignment also expanded his horizons and allowed him to

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The recent executive leadership program graduates — front row, from left: Darlene Seminko, DCMA Atlanta; Lisa Pagliocchini, DCMA Huntsville; Christy Goodwin, DCMA Naval Special Emphasis Operations, Joplin, Mo.; Calvin Giles, DCMA Philadelphia; back row, from left: Gary Jacobson, DCMA Chicago; Clay Chaffee, DCMA Atlanta; Richard Lewis, DCMA ATK Launch Systems, Utah; Kevin Rountree, DCMA ATK Launch Systems, Utah

work in areas he usually would not have under normal circumstances.

Also as part of the program, employees were given the opportunity to shadow a federal manager or senior executive service employee. The group said by observing managers and executives in action, they gained exposure to different managerial duties, responsibilities and approaches and saw how to apply them to real-world situations. The employees wrapped up the program by writing a paper

discussing their experiences and how the program has impacted their career plans and goals.

After completing the program, DCMA graduates believe they have become more valuable leaders to the agency and are grateful for the opportunity to grow professionally. Lisa Pagliocchini, DCMA Huntsville computer engineer, added, “Just think — one day one of us might be the next director of the organization. We can say we knew that person when they were once a fledgling in the ELP.” **C**