

Enhanced DCMA eTool Serving Community Efficiently and Effectively

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In May 2006, the Defense Contract Management Agency Information Technology directorate was given a project: develop, produce and field an upgraded version of delivery schedule manager 1.5, a program within the agency's eTools software suite. The Web-based tool, which helps to ensure the timely delivery of shipments while maintaining a specified schedule, quantity and cost, required communications- and customer-requested enhancements. In June 2009, DCMA IT fielded its upgraded version, DSM 2.0, on time, and the tool is enjoying successful results.

"The new DSM product is very popular with customers, which is one of our [DCMA's] foremost goals," remarked DCMA e-Business director Dave Guinasso. "We're still adding about 50 new external users a month — a strong indication that it's useful, effective and gaining recognition."

DSM 2.0 advances DCMA and U.S. Armed Forces' contracting capabilities by identifying other sources of required products and services and providing support for those products and services already in the acquisition pipeline. The tool offers electronically transmitted and delay notices that are suspended,

measured, tracked and stored. DSM also has a robust suite of reports, making it a truly customer-focused tool. "Part of the reason we developed the 2.0 version is it took a lot of the customer feedback and made changes based on how they have been using the tool," Guinasso explained. "The main thing we're supporting is customer service through technology."

After fielding DSM 2.0 on time, Guinasso's staff immediately hit the road — and seas — to perform internal and external training at DCMA, Army, Navy, Air Force and various Defense Logistics Agency sites. "The training, especially when done face to face, has been an effective method of acclimating our current and potential customers to this valuable tool," remarked Glenn Seabridge, DCMA business processing reengineering program manager of production. "Not often is the feedback mostly positive, but our responses have been very encouraging."

A notable DSM enhancement is its open communication chain. When first fielded, DSM was primarily designed for delivery-related applications. Version 2.0 goes beyond this original concept by communicating to targeted individuals regarding specific contract



Dave Guinasso, DCMA eBusiness director, in his office at DCMA Headquarters in Alexandria, VA (DCMA photo)

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issues, such as payment information and problems. Additionally, DSM uses contract management team viewer, another eTool, to target the DCMA personnel responsible for customer request processing. "This is important because customers (e.g., DCMA, Army, Navy, Air Force, etc.) now no longer lose valuable time finding out whom to send information to at DCMA. ... DSM does it all for them," Seabridge said.

While DSM 2.0 offers more effective means of communication, the upgraded tool is being assessed chiefly on its increased customer use and increased DCMA responsiveness to customers. "That's the main thing we're looking at out of this — more responsiveness to customers," Guinasso said, as the tool has received more than 60,000 customer requests since its initial fielding in 2006. "Every time a customer asks us for help, we have to respond within a specific timeframe."

To measure the program's objectives, DCMA IT is using performance indicators based on approximately 134 metrics, such as the aforementioned customer requests and delay notices. The performance indicators aim to deliver items both in an automated collection capability and as a set of

analysis tools. This allows customers to avoid the hassle of creating their own data. "The data we collect as a byproduct is among the best data available in the department," Guinasso affirmed. He noted specifically that BPR is getting more out of DSM's resources through better filtering, better delivery and more useful tool formats.

A comprehensive DSM 2.0 evaluation will be done in December 2009, giving DCMA IT a full two quarters to gather data. If the objectives are achieved, then the BPR project will be deemed a success. "This is our first BPR project," Guinasso said. "We picked this one at this phase because we believe the training, the deployment and the policy is a significant part of this project. And this is when you get some experience in these areas right from the start instead of waiting through an 18-month development cycle."

Whether DSM 2.0 achieves its objectives, DCMA IT is already starting requirements for a follow-on version. "We're going to improve our

delivery notices to extend beyond the current 30 days because customers want to look further ahead," stated Guinasso. The modifications also will include portlet improvements. "We have a number of requests for changes in portlet formats, and there are performance indicators still being developed by the supply chain," he noted. Specific modifications will be driven by the metrics being assessed.

DSM 2.0 evolved from a simple blueprint to a completely fielded tool with an extensive customer base. While enhancements will continue to be developed, the eTool is currently serving its purpose efficiently and effectively. "DSM 2.0 is achieving the goals we set out to accomplish," Guinasso remarked. "But, regardless of a program's offerings, computers will never take the place of smart people doing good work." And thanks to the good work of DCMA IT, DSM 2.0 is proving to be a beneficial communications and operations tool to the agency and the U.S. Armed Forces contracting community. **C**

eTools software

To access DCMA's eTools software suite, visit <http://www.dcma.mil/aboutetools.cfm>.