

Fiscal Year 2007 Planning, Programming and Budgeting Workshop

by Ms. Katherine Crawford, Staff Writer

The Defense Contract Management Agency's (DCMA's) Strategic Planning and Programming Directorate recently held its annual "Planning, Programming and Budgeting Workshop" for fiscal year 2007. The approximately 140 employees in attendance were primarily performance improvement officers, planners and budgeteers who work, on a daily basis, with planning and budgeting tools.

The theme of this year's workshop, "Resourcing in a Performance-Based Management [PBM] Environment," was chosen by the Agency's planning team, which meets regularly throughout the year. The workshop, held in Springfield, Va., March 28-30, included guest speakers, presentations by senior leaders and three breakout sessions: "Enterprise Planner Hands-On Demo," "PowerPlay on the Web/Metrics Manager Training" and "Human Capital Strategic Planning and Resourcing Planning." Topics discussed focused on PBM, resourcing and customer focus. Other topics included the upcoming Program Objective Memorandum (POM), the budgeting process for the Department of Defense (DoD), which is also used by DCMA; the Agency's realignment; and DoD's new National Security Personnel System (NSPS).

The objective of the workshop was to help guide the planners, budgeteers and performance

improvement officers in resourcing in a PBM environment, focusing on the tools that are available to help them accomplish that goal. This theme has also been reinforced at individual contract management offices through training that guides employees in using the tools for resourcing to best satisfy customer outcomes. "That's really what PBM is all about," said Ms. Li Lammert, lead strategic planning analyst, Strategic Planning and Programming Division and this year's workshop manager, "and it's the place that we've had the most trouble. Our Agency has been cut in half in the last 10 years, and yet our workload — number of contracts, the amount of money and the programs we're involved in — has stayed the same or gotten bigger, so we really have to prioritize resources."

According to Ms. Lammert, the tools and resources available are often explained to the commanders, but "the word doesn't always translate down appropriately." With this in mind, the workshop was designed to take the information commanders had seen at the October 2005 Commanders' Conference, "down to the next level, keeping it intact as much as possible so that the message remained the same," explained Ms. Lammert. The workshop focused on the three primary Agency resource allocation tools: Enterprise Planner; the Performance, Labor and Accounting System (PLAS); and Metrics Manager, a tool that measures performance against customer-desired outcomes. Overall, the workshop was very successful in meeting its objectives. Ms.

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Lammert and her team distributed a post-workshop survey, and 87 percent of attendees felt that the workshop met its objective and contained relevant and useful information. “These are great results, especially with that many people and the fact that we’re an agency in flux with the realignment,” Ms. Lammert said with pride. “For us to pull the event together and have everyone walk out and say, ‘I feel a little better than when I walked in,’ — that’s a good workshop.” In particular, the “PowerPlay and Metrics Manager” breakout session was a workshop highlight. The briefings from DCMA leadership, Mr. Keith Ernst, acting director, and Ms. Rebecca Davies, Program Support and Customer Relations executive director, were also very well received, as was the guest speaker for NSPS.

From a planning perspective, one of the workshop’s primary lessons learned was the need to reincorporate a training session that had been offered in past years, an “after-hours, ‘I’m-new-to-the-process’ seminar,” as Ms. Lammert described it. In the past, this training session provided an opportunity to get everyone up to the same basic knowledge level. “There’s an expectation of a knowledge level at this

workshop, and it turns out that there are a lot of people who don’t come in with that level of understanding to begin with. You know the feeling — you start something brand new and you’re at a loss, and everyone else knows what he or she is doing,” Ms. Lammert elaborated. Many attendees noted on their post-event evaluation forms that they would like to see this type of seminar return for next year’s workshop.

The overarching success of this year’s workshop was somewhat of a relief for Ms. Lammert, as this was the first year she has run the event. She is extremely grateful to her planning team members, whom she describes as “awesome.” Ms. Lammert added, “They’re an amazing group of people from all over the country, including a representative from the DCMA Americas office in Ottawa, Canada, who come together a number of times per year and manage to put together a workshop for 140 or 150 people and pull it off every year, despite whatever’s going on. It’s just the most amazing group of people that I could work with.” The team members, all volunteers, are extremely dedicated and form a remarkably cohesive group. Members of the core planning team include: Mr. Michael Barbera; Ms. Wallis Berrios; Ms. Lucy Daris; Ms. Cheryl Gelazus; Mr. Richard Horne; Ms. Donne Howell; Ms. Jackie Johnson; Ms. Jennifer Kyle; Mr. Charles Lakowski; Ms. Susan Li; Mr. Thomas McGauley; Mr. Michael Morrissey; Ms. Brigitte Norman; Mr. Dan Reilly; Ms. Kylie Robertson-Mackay; Ms. Doris Sciarra; Ms. Chris Smigiel; Ms. Stephanie Strohbeck; Ms. Christine Stuhl-McMahon; Ms. Lynn Thorpe; Ms. Lisa Wolfe; and Mr. Chuck Zelenka.

Ms. Lammert and her “awesome” planning team soon will begin preparing for the fiscal year 2008 workshop, which they hope will be just as successful as this year’s.

(Above) Ms. Li Lammert, lead strategic planning analyst, Strategic Planning and Programming Division, addresses attendees of the May 2006 Commanders’ Conference in Houston, Texas. (DCMA staff photo)