

Employees' Thoughts on Realignment: Part II



The Defense Contract Management Agency's (DCMA's) realignment from four geographic-based Districts into four product-aligned Divisions and seven operational Centers has involved a tremendous amount of change. In this second installment of a two-part article, we asked employees from the Ground Systems & Munitions and Space & Missile Systems Divisions how the changes are affecting them and their customers. Due to space constraints, we are unable to print each respondent's comments in full. We would like to thank all who participated for taking the time to share their thoughts with us.



Ms. Lindy Bayer
*Customer Liaison Representative,
Johnson Space Center (Texas)
DCMA Business Support Unit
Space & Missile Systems Division*

Communicator (C): What are some of the challenges you are encountering with realignment?

LB: I may be in a rather unique position. As I moved into my new assignment as a CLR [customer liaison representative] at Johnson Space Center [JSC] last year, NASA Products Operations [NPO] was standing up. NPO personnel faced many challenges setting up their new organization, and I was able to assist them at times. This change helped me by placing the major DCMA offices supporting JSC into one organization — the NPO. This allowed me a single focus for DCMA that provides direct support to NASA JSC. [As a result], I did not face any real problems with the realignment.

C: Do you think realignment will enhance communication with our customers — how so?

LB: My customer has benefited from the realignment creating the NPO. Many times issues crossed DCMA organizational lines, often leading to many different responses to the customer. With the establishment of the NPO, JSC gets one response — the best response — from NPO.

Identifying which DCMA office handled a certain contract or issue was often time-consuming. Now if a customer needs to ask a question on how DCMA handles an issue, they have one place and only one place to look. My NASA JSC customer is thrilled with my ability to get quick results. I don't have to search the country for a specialist in space concerns — I know right where to locate him or her!

C: What has been the response thus far from your colleagues and customers?

“DCMA Lockheed Martin Orlando, like most CMOs, has encountered many challenges with realignment: ... a lack of communication, command and control challenges, customer engagement strategy and internal reorganization.”

LB: Speaking as a CLR, this move is great! It really allows DCMA to focus on the customer and ensures that specialists who understand the customer's products and services are developed. My JSC customer has been able to utilize many of the benefits offered by the NPO.



Army Lieutenant Colonel

Daryl Conklin

Commander

DCMA Lockheed Martin Orlando (Fla.)

Ground Systems & Munitions

Division

C: What are some of the challenges you are encountering with realignment?

DC: DCMA Lockheed Martin Orlando, like most contract management offices [CMOs], has encountered many challenges with realignment. For simplicity's sake, I will narrow the challenges down to: a lack of communication, command and control challenges, customer engagement strategy and internal reorganization. These viewpoints are strictly from my position as a tertiary commander who has not been privy to the decisions made by integrated product teams and senior management.

C: What are you doing to meet these challenges?

DC: In November of 2005, having received no further instruction on realignment, we sent a request through command channels requesting guidance on where to begin engaging for the pending realignment. The answer that came back was to wait because there was no guidance. [Thus] the CMO decided to try and offset some of the pain from not having the right skills mixes in place once we realigned under DCMA Raytheon Tucson. The CMO sent out a request within DCMA Orlando, asking for interested parties to fill functional positions where we anticipated a need for a skill that we currently did not have. Once

the names were received, we engaged with our higher headquarters, DCMA Orlando, to discuss possible laterals, job series changes, hiring, etc. to try and offset impending skill imbalances. We were able to identify internal assets that could fill critical vacancies and gain permission through DCMA Orlando to go forward for outside hires to fill the rest. The next step by the CMO was to reorganize and define its “most efficient and effective” organization. The organization was designed along program-focused teams aligned by commodity with capability to optimize in-plant product assurance with a focus on supply chain management.

C: Do you think realignment will enhance communication with our customers — how so?

DC: To date, I have not seen a difference in customer communications. Realignment could improve communications with customers in the future, but as it is structured now there are too many reporting lines of communications. The information technology infrastructures are not mature enough to expect optimal use from the CMOs. Metrics manager, Enterprise Planner and a few other systems have been put out into the field before they are mature enough to use. If these systems become mature in the future, they may help to cut across Divisional boundaries. The CMO has been very proactive with its customers and has enjoyed good working relationships. I believe the customers are a little bit more focused in what they want at the program management level as we go through the drill of determining outcomes.

What has been a detriment in customer communications is all the time required to meet internal Agency requirements. In this CMO, the senior level leaders, my operations chief and team leaders and I have been thoroughly wrapped up in trying to develop customer outcomes and transform them into individual performance plans. We have been trying to make a workforce that has been guidebook-oriented for years do a 180-degree spin and orient

“I think the Center structure will allow us to respond more rapidly to customer demands. Our challenge will be to continue to engage our CMO counterparts on transportation issues affecting our joint customers.”

their efforts on their own job performances. Not an easy task and very time-consuming.

C: What has been the response thus far from your teammates and customers?

DC: My teammates are very confused and do not totally understand the reasons for realignment. Although multiple All Hands Meetings have been had with the CMO and information has been passed along as it comes in, the CMO is not solid on realignment, and I'm afraid they feel it is another flavor of the month. What is clear to them and has been pointed out to me is the establishment of more senior grades in the Agency. At the same time, we are unsure of where any administrative support will come from as the CMO realigns under [DCMA Raytheon] Tucson.

The concept for all CMOs with missile operations to fall under one CMO to gain efficiencies in skill mixes and knowledge sharing is noble but yet unproven. We are geographically separate from our gaining CMO, and sharing “missiles” knowledge is going to be a challenge. The types of missiles developed under each CMO are different, therefore negating the ability to share technical information readily. Sharing of knowledge can be done but will lead to an increase in travel costs.



Mr. Kenneth McManus
Supervisory Traffic Management
Specialist
DCMA Hartford (Conn.)
Transportation Center

C: What are some of the challenges you are encountering with realignment?

KM: Defining Center/CMO relations, particularly as concerns CMO support to Center personnel in

areas as disparate as security classifications, training, supplies and workspace assignment.

C: What are you doing to meet these challenges?

KM: Engaging in mutual give-and-take with our CMO partners and then routing lessons-learned through our Center, both vertically and laterally.

C: Do you think realignment will enhance communication with our customers — how so?

KM: Absolutely. I think the Center structure will allow us to respond more rapidly to customer demands. Our challenge will be to continue to engage our CMO counterparts on transportation issues affecting our joint customers.

C: What has been the response thus far from your colleagues and customers?

KM: Our colleagues at the CMO generally have questions about our organizational structure. Thus far, our day-to-day relationships with our customers generally have not changed.



Army Major John O'Neill
Commander
DCMA Detroit
Ground Systems & Munitions
Division

C: What are some of the challenges you are encountering with realignment?

JO: DCMA Grand Rapids' only challenge has been understanding the realignment itself — its parameters and purpose.

C: What are you doing to meet these challenges?

“I am absolutely convinced that the realignment will enhance communications across NPO. We have already begun to see improvements.”

JO: Information is flowed down from [DCMA] Detroit. It is that office that has assured that the workforce is prepared and confident.

C: Do you think realignment will enhance communication with our customers — how so?

JO: Our customer relationships have not changed.



Mr. Harvey Person
Director
DCMA Johnson Space Center
(Texas)
Space & Missile Systems Division

C: What are some of the challenges you are encountering with realignment?

HP: In general, the realignment has been a very positive force for DCMA Johnson Space Center [JSC]. It has given the CMOs that work on NASA programs a consistent and focused voice from DCMA. [Air Force] Col. [Jeffrey] Brand, [DCMA NASA Product Operations commander], has been extremely effective in communicating with the customers and DCMA [employees] at senior levels and establishing DCMA's approach to doing business with NASA. We may still have a few minor challenges with CMOs that have NASA work outside of NASA Product Operations (NPO); however, they are being worked at the appropriate level within DCMA.

C: What are you doing to meet these challenges?

HP: Where issues surface that appear beyond the day-to-day operational level, they are elevated to [the] San Antonio [office] where Col. Brand and/or [Ms.] Susan Jackson, [DCMA NASA NPO principal operating manager], look at them with a systemic view to determine whether we have a unique problem or one that requires attention across NPO.

C: Do you think realignment will enhance communication with our customers — how so?

HP: I won't attempt to address this question on a global basis; however, I am absolutely convinced that the realignment will enhance communications across NPO. We have already begun to see improvements, for example, in the way our customers develop letters of delegation (LOD) for use by DCMA. Historically, our NASA customers had different approaches to LODs, depending on which facility was developing the document. We are starting to see more consistency with our customers on how they work with DCMA. I would expect the lines of communication between DCMA and NASA to continually improve as both NASA and DCMA embrace the new culture under realignment.



Mr. Mark A. Pickart
Deputy and Acting Commander
DCMA ATK Thiokol (Utah)
Space & Missile Systems Division

C: What are some of the challenges you are encountering with realignment?

MP: DCMA ATK Thiokol has been through both the streamlining and realignment processes in the last few years. Originally, DCMA ATK Thiokol was streamlined under the DCMA Denver office. While this was a positive experience attributed mostly to the professionalism of Agency leaders, it was a rather poor alignment from a customer perspective. DCMA ATK Thiokol manages major solid propulsion programs for NASA and the Department of Defense [DoD]. The streamlining under the Denver office was challenged mostly because DCMA Denver's workload was geographically dispersed. We were a large resident facility with collocated customers. DCMA ATK Thiokol also has a significant NASA-reimbursable workload. While DCMA Denver and ATK Thiokol worked together to understand the [inner workings] of the reimbursable workload,

“A high degree of coordination and responsiveness from the Centers regarding CMO requirements will be needed to ensure that we meet customer expectations.”

it took a considerable amount of time for us to appreciate others' positions as they related to reimbursable earnings and full-time equivalent positions.

The realignment of DCMA ATK Thiokol under the NASA Product Group (NPO) has been a positive experience and is a very good fit. The NPO and tertiary commands have common goals aligned with our NASA customers [and] DoD, and we speak the same language. This natural customer alignment allows for focused DCMA attention at the NASA Centers provided by customer liaison representatives and tertiary commands responsible for delivering hardware in support of NASA space exploration missions. [Other] areas to be keenly aware of include the Centers of Excellence and support of customer expectations, particularly concerning safety. ATK Thiokol is considered a national asset and is critical to the Nation's solid propulsion industrial base. Our customers are very sensitive to this fact and continue to look to DCMA to remain diligent in performing contractor safety oversight. We cannot afford a safety stumble that puts DCMA employees and industrial base assets at risk. A high degree of coordination and responsiveness from the Centers regarding CMO requirements will be needed to ensure that we meet customer expectations.

C: What are you doing to meet these challenges?

MP: Communication and customer focus are paramount in helping us meet the ever-changing DCMA and customer environments. The NPO commander, deputy and staff have established very effective communication forums to include routine Performance Management Council meetings and tertiary commander and resident customer visits. Unfiltered management and employee feedback is a pillar of NPO's infrastructure and success.

C: What has been the response thus far from your teammates/colleagues and customers?

MP: We have had very favorable responses from our teammates, colleagues and customers. However, our customers are keeping an ever-watchful eye on DCMA and our customer outcome execution. Our reimbursable customers expect great things from DCMA, and we desperately need to deliver the goods. Realignments are good for DCMA, but at the end of the day, it's about the customer and delivery of flight hardware within expectations and contract execution.



Mr. Jerry Richardson

*Deputy
DCMA Springfield (N.J.)
Ground Systems & Munitions
Division*

C: What are some of the challenges you are encountering with realignment?

JR: The most significant challenge for our CMO was convincing other CMOs that we were not trying to steal their full-time employees and that our proposed realignment was for the good of the enterprise and our customers. There seemed to be a great deal of skepticism on the part of other CMOs when it came to moving teams from one CMO to another.

C: What are you doing to meet these challenges?

JR: In order to meet these challenges, we had to spend a lot of time communicating with other CMOs to convince them that our plan was in the best interest of the enterprise and the customer.

C: Do you think realignment will enhance communication with our customers — how so?

JR: I am convinced that realignment will enhance our communication with our customers, since focus has been narrowed from communication with over 40 customers to one program executive officer and six program managers.

“The true test will be our collective ability to routinely re-engage our customers at all levels to effectively communicate and resolve difficult challenges, allocate resources and develop operational relationships.”

C: What has been the response thus far from your employees and customers?

JR: Our employees and customers are looking forward to seeing improved results since we have been talking about it for several months. In light of all the time and effort we have invested in the realignment, we cannot afford to let it fail.



Army Lieutenant Colonel L. Frank Steinbugl

*Commander, Joint Systems
Manufacturing Center
DCMA General Dynamics Land
Systems (Ohio)
Ground Systems & Munitions Division*

C: What are some of the challenges you are encountering with realignment?

FS: The biggest challenge is now working with the new Division headquarters, as DCMA General Dynamics Land Systems was previously aligned under District East. Internally, this presented some challenges, but to our customers it has been mostly transparent.

I think our progressing as expected. Initial senior leadership meetings with our program executive offices and other senior-level customers helped set the stage. The true test will be our collective ability to routinely re-engage our customers at all levels to effectively

communicate and resolve difficult challenges, allocate resources and develop operational relationships.

C: What are you doing to meet these challenges?

FS: As a streamlined command, we talk about this at All Hands, staff and customer interface meetings. We've encouraged everyone to explore the DCMA Web links and Division home page to better understand the realignment.

C: Do you think realignment will enhance communication with our customers — how so?

FS: Theoretically, the rationale for realignment by customer and commodity groups should improve communications. I believe it's still too early to determine whether the realignment has impacted this in a positive manner.

C: What has been the response thus far from your colleagues and customers?

FS: I believe some of the dust is still settling, and the response has been mostly mixed. Externally, I think the realignment has been transparent to our customers at the streamlined command level. Internally, we have to better understand the fit and function of our newly established Centers and how they integrate and operate in our existing footprint. This will come with time and experience.



(Above) Aviation Ordnancemen move a skid of AIM-120 Advanced Medium-Range, Air-to-Air Missiles (AMRAAM) across the flight deck of the conventionally powered aircraft carrier *USS John F. Kennedy (CV 67)*. The AMRAAM is an all-weather, beyond-visual-range weapon designed by Raytheon Missile Systems. (U.S. Navy photo by Photographer's Mate 2nd Class Michael Sandberg)